

Cash support for food redistribution during coronavirus outbreak

Food redistribution organisations across England will benefit from £3.25 million of government funding to help them cut food waste and redistribute up to 14,000 tonnes of surplus stock during the coronavirus outbreak.

From overcoming operational barriers in obtaining, storing and transporting food safely from restaurants as they close in response to coronavirus, to supporting drops in volunteer numbers, grants will be available to redistributors working hard to ensure valuable food supplies do not go to waste.

All food redistribution businesses and charities will be encouraged to bid for grants over the coming month, including those whose volunteer programmes have been affected by social distancing measures or those that cannot access their usual commercial support network.

This funding comes as the government continues to engage with the food industry to ensure the nation is fed, and people across the UK are supported in getting the food and groceries they need.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

I am proud of the many organisations across the UK working to ensure food and supplies are provided to those who need it most need during this challenging time.

This funding will support people in need while ensuring that we minimise the amount of food which goes to waste – benefiting both society and the environment.

Food Waste Champion Ben Elliot said:

Now more than ever, it is of paramount importance that we ensure good food does not go to waste.

This money will support food redistribution organisations to continue their pivotal work in delivering food to those who need it.

The Defra-funded grant scheme will be managed by sustainability not-for-profit [WRAP](#), which works closely with governments, businesses, and redistribution organisations to minimise food waste.

Chief Executive of WRAP Marcus Gover said:

It is critical in these unprecedented times that we maximise the amount of surplus food redistributed.

These grants offer crucial financial support to redistribution organisations, where it will have the most impact. We know from managing redistribution funds that this money will make a huge difference to many people.

Today's funding is the latest in a series of government grants to help tackle food waste, with last year's Food Waste Reduction Fund ensuring nearly 2,000 tonnes of surplus food did not go to waste.

Rene Meijer, CEO of Sheffield-based food redistribution organisation The Food Works, said:

Over the past two weeks we have doubled the amount of food we redistribute, as many tonnes of food goes spare from businesses closing and people change their shopping habits.

Surplus food redistribution is all about providing resilience to the community, and at a time like this we need resilience more than ever to ensure good food does not go to waste and reaches those who need it.

It comes as the government introduces a series of measures to support people in getting the food they need during the coronavirus outbreak. On Sunday 29 March, the government [delivered the first food parcels to vulnerable people](#) who are being shielded from coronavirus – containing food and household items such as potatoes, fruit and tinned goods.

The government has also temporarily relaxed competition law to allow supermarkets to share data with each other on stock levels, co-operate to keep shops open and share distribution depots and delivery vans.

Application windows for the fund will be split in to three phases. For more information [click here](#).