

[Press release: Slashing food waste: Major players urged to 'Step up to the Plate'](#)

Players from the worlds of food retail and hospitality, along with social media influencers and chefs, have been urged to take ground-breaking action to drive down food waste from all sources.

The ask comes from the government's [Food Surplus and Waste Champion](#) Ben Elliot ahead of a major symposium called 'Step up to the Plate', which he will host next week alongside Environment Secretary Michael Gove at London's prestigious Victoria and Albert Museum.

Attendees will be expected to sign up to a number of commitments on measuring and reducing their own food waste and inspiring others to follow their lead.

The full pledge has been published today, giving organisations and people an opportunity to do their bit and sign up to take action.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove and Minister Thérèse Coffey are among the first to sign up to the pledge.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

I want to thank our marvellous Food Surplus and Waste Champion Ben Elliot for his brilliant work in bringing together the biggest players from the world of food to commit to tackling food waste.

Together, we must end the moral, economic, and environmental scandal of food waste. The UK is showing real leadership in this area, but I urge businesses to join me in signing the pledge so we can bring about real change.

Every year, around 100,000 tonnes of readily available and perfectly edible food goes uneaten. It's time to join together and 'Step up to the Plate' to stop good food going to waste.

The pledge asks attendees to reduce food waste by:

- setting an ambitious target to halve food waste by 2030 in line with UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3
- adopting the WRAP and IGD [Food Waste Reduction Roadmap](#) to have half of all 250 of the of the UK's largest food businesses measuring, reporting and acting on food waste by 2019
- embracing a Food Conversation week of action in November 2019 to highlight the changes we can all make
- using their voice and profile to empower and encourage citizens,

including the younger generation

- changing their habits as an individual to be Food Value Champion at work and at home, buying only what they need and eating what they buy

Food Surplus and Waste Champion Ben Elliot said:

Wasting food is an environmental, moral and financial scandal. We intend for the symposium and pledge to spark action, not just conversation, and inspire us all to champion change.

It's time to 'Step up to the Plate'.

Susan Barratt, Chief Executive Officer at Institute of Grocery Distribution, said:

IGD is fully supportive of the 'Step up to the Plate' symposium as an important event that will drive awareness of the need to reduce food waste. Some 90 food businesses across the UK have committed to reduce food waste and share their data through the Food Waste Reduction Roadmap developed by WRAP and IGD, but there is more to be done. Our research highlights shopper concern, with 40% seeing the environmental impacts of their food purchases as either very important or extremely important.

The time is right for change, so it is encouraging to see so many representatives from both industry and government coming together to tackle this growing issue.

Helen Munday, Chief Scientific Officer, Food and Drink Federation said:

FDF fully supports the 'Step up to the Plate' pledge and the work being done to measure and reduce food waste. We actively encourage our members and the food and drink manufacturing industry as a whole to take advantage of the range of helpful tools available to do so. These include the 'Target, Measure and Act' approach set out in the UK Food Waste Reduction Roadmap, of which we are a signatory.

Food Waste is an important issue to FDF members and by working across the value chain, we can make a real change happen on this important social and environmental issue.

Marcus Gover, Chief Executive WRAP, said:

With climate change firmly in the political and social spotlight, it is worth reminding ourselves that unless we fix the world's food system we will not be able to bring about the reduction in global

warming we need to halt the damage to our planet. So we are delighted to pledge WRAP's support to Ben Elliot's bold rallying call to 'Step up to the Plate'. We need to wake up to the amount of food we waste as a nation and take action in our daily lives to stop throwing perfectly good food away.

WRAP's work through Courtauld Commitment 2025, the Food Waste Reduction Roadmap, and the Love Food Hate Waste campaign will support the far-reaching ambition of the pledge and we look forward to working with Ben closely as we join forces to tackle one of the key issues of our generation.

The food waste symposium will run alongside the V&A's [FOOD: Bigger than the Plate](#) exhibition, which will explore similar themes when it opens to the public on Saturday 18 May.

Currently around 43,000 tonnes of surplus food is redistributed from retailers and food manufacturers every year. It is estimated a further 100,000 tonnes of food – equating to 250 million meals a year – is edible and readily available but goes uneaten. Instead, this food is currently sent away for generating energy from waste, anaerobic digestion, or animal feed.

Earlier this year the government launched a [£15 million scheme](#) to tackle food waste, building on its landmark [Resources and Waste Strategy](#) which sets out how the government will introduce annual reporting of food surplus and waste by food businesses. The first round of successful applicants will be announced shortly. Should progress be insufficient, we will consult on legal powers to introduce mandatory targets for food waste prevention. The Resources and Waste Strategy also sets out how the government will ensure weekly collections of food waste, which is often smelly and unpleasant, for every household – restoring weekly collections in some local authorities, subject to consultation.

The government is committed to supporting the [United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 2 to end hunger by 2030](#).

Further information

- The food waste symposium will run alongside the V&A's [FOOD: Bigger than the Plate](#) exhibition, and bring together big players from the worlds of food retail, hospitality, chefs and social media influencers to promote awareness of food waste and help drive it down from all sources.
- In 2017, [205,000 tonnes of surplus food in the retail and food manufacturing sectors was wasted](#). Some of the surplus is difficult to minimise, costly in that it would need to be reworked or repackaged, and some surplus would not be edible. It is estimated by WRAP that 100,000 tonnes of this is both accessible and edible with the remaining being more difficult to redistribute.
- Food waste in the UK totals 10.2 million tonnes per year, of which 1.8 million tonnes comes from food manufacture, 1 million from the hospitality sector, and 260,000 from retail, with the remainder from

households.

'Step up to the Plate': My Pledge, April 2019

I _____ will step up to the plate to stop the food waste crisis by adopting the following commitments.

As an Organisation:

Commitment 1: Target Measure Act

My organisation will set an ambitious food waste reduction target, report on progress and prioritise action. We will support collaboration with our partners, playing our part in helping the UK deliver UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 target², helping to reduce our impact on climate change. As a food business, my organisation will adopt the WRAP and IGD [Food Waste Reduction Roadmap](#).

Commitment 2: Collaborate on tackling citizen food waste

My organisation will embrace a Food Conversation week of action in November 2019 by spearheading activities and engagement with citizens, including the younger generation, to highlight the changes we can all make. In preparation for that week and beyond, we will work with WRAP to develop messaging, coordinate announcements, pilot and implement proven interventions to spark a new movement to change the social norm around valuing food.

As an individual:

Commitment 3: Inspire continued action

I will use my voice and profile to empower and encourage citizens, including the younger generation. I will work alongside Ben Elliot, the Government Food Surplus and Waste Champion, to inspire action to reduce the amount of food being wasted, reaching a crescendo of action during the Food Conversation week and thereafter.

Commitment 4: Change my habits

I will be a Food Value Champion at work and at home, buying only what I need and eating what I buy, wherever I am.

How to guide: Steps to fulfilling the commitments

As an Organisation:

Commitment 1: Target Measure Act

- My food business will set a food waste reduction target for our own UK operations, measure in a consistent way and share what we have learnt, and take action to reduce our own food waste, adopting the WRAP and IGD [Food Waste Reduction Roadmap](#).

- If I am a Hospitality and Food Service business I will amplify WRAP's Guardians of Grub campaign, and embed the campaign into my organisation's plans.
- As a non-food business I will set an internal food waste target and take action.

For tips and tools see the [Love Food Hate Waste website](#).

Commitment 2: Collaborate on tackling citizen food waste

- My organisation will work with WRAP to share data from existing interventions and/or pilot new Behaviour Change Interventions.
- My organisation will tie in new and existing announcements and activities into the Food Conversation week in November, to raise the profile of food waste prevention and accelerate serious action.
- My organisation will tailor WRAP/partner developed consumer messaging to resonate with our customers and underpin our own activities during the Food Conversation week, creating a consistent narrative for citizens.
- My marketing team will work closely with WRAP in order to develop activity to provide ongoing support to Love Food Hate Waste and for the Food Conversation week.

As an individual:

Commitment 3: Inspire action

- I will use my influence, through media and during public appearances to promote the value of food and spread the message of prevention to consumers.
- I will use messaging developed by WRAP for the Food Conversation week during all media related activities.
- I will work with Ben Elliot, the Government Food Surplus and Waste Champion, to create content for the Food Conversation week.
- I will embed food waste prevention messages when communicating with my colleagues, and encourage everyone to participate and amplify the Food Conversation week.

Commitment 4: Change my habits

- I will buy only what I need: checking my fridge before I go shopping, using a shopping list and planning my meals.
- I will eat what I buy: storing my food correctly, freezing what I cannot eat and checking my fridge is set at 0 – 5C.
- I will strive to achieve the behaviour I want to see in others.