

[Press release: Food Waste Champion rallies major players to 'Step up to the Plate'](#)



A variety of fruit on supermarket shelves

Major players from the worlds of food retail and hospitality, along with social media influencers and chefs, will join forces today to pledge groundbreaking action to drive down food waste, a driver of climate change.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove and Minister Thérèse Coffey were among the first to sign up to the pledge – which includes a goal to halve food waste by 2030 – and will today be joined by players in the world of food including Nestlé, Tesco, Sainsbury's, and Waitrose to help halve food waste by 2030.

This comes as [Food Surplus and Waste Champion](#) Ben Elliot will today host a major symposium 'Step up to the Plate' at London's prestigious Victoria and Albert Museum.

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

Speaking at the event Environment Secretary Michael Gove is expected to say:

I want to thank our Food Surplus and Waste Champion Ben Elliot for bringing together the biggest players from the world of food today to 'Step up to the Plate' and slash food waste.

Every year, millions of tonnes of good, nutritious food is thrown away.

This is an environmental, economic and moral scandal, and I am determined to tackle it.

I urge businesses to join me in signing the pledge to deliver real change to stop good food going to waste.

Food Surplus and Waste Champion Ben Elliot is expected to say:

Climate change is no longer a buzzword – we must all stand up and be counted. We squander 10 million tonnes of food and drink every year.

Businesses throw away food worth an estimated £5 billion and £15 billion is wasted from our homes (on average around £500 a year), the emissions this creates is the equivalent of every third car on the road. We simply must put an end to this.

[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 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 a Food Value Champion at work and at home, buying only what they need and eating what they buy.

The food waste symposium runs 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 55,000 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 to be used for fuel and fertiliser, or animal feed. Wasting food squanders the energy and resources used in producing, transporting and packaging, and when sent to landfill it rots and produces methane, contributing to our greenhouse gas emissions.

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 [receiving £4 million of funding has just been announced](#). 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.](#)

Notes to editors:

- The food waste symposium runs 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.
- Anyone can sign up to the 'Step up to the Plate pledge' through sending a signed copy of the pledge to events@stopfoodwaste.net.

[Speech: High Commissioner Melanie Hopkins is guest speaker at the Pacific Regional NDC Steering Committee Meeting](#)

It's a pleasure to be here to represent the UK as a major donor to the Pacific NDC hub and to support our partners GIZ.

Climate change is the backbone of the UK-Pacific relationship and we stand side by side as global leaders on climate change. There are few subjects which unite people across generations and borders to the same degree.

The UK is leading by example domestically, our climate change act, which was the first of its kind, has just celebrated its 10 year anniversary and has been used as a model here in the Pacific.

Internationally, the UK continues to make the case for increased ambition and helping partners to deliver this. We are proud to be a member of the High Ambition Coalition and the Carbon Neutrality Coalition.

Here in the Pacific the UK contributes almost \$88 million USD to the International Climate Finance (ICF), covering a range of areas including renewable energy and wastewater management, with a particular focus on

strengthening climate and risk resilience.

The UK is also a significant contributor to key climate change multilateral funds, which provide support to the Pacific region, including £720 million to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), £250 million to the Global Environment Facility, and £40 million to the Climate Investment Funds.

To support the Fijian Presidency of COP23, the UK provided FJD\$4.4m and, most recently in our current role of Chair-in-office of the Commonwealth we have provided £1.2 million for the establishment of this Pacific NDC hub. The CHOGM communique recognised that concerted action is required to address the unique challenges and vulnerabilities of small and vulnerable states to ensure their full participation in and contribution to a more prosperous future.

Nationally Determined contributions are at the heart of the Paris Agreement. Each NDC reflects the country's ambition for reducing emissions, and whilst the contribution of PIC's to global greenhouse gas emissions may be small, a transition to a low carbon and green economy is critical for overall sustainable development.

I am proud to say that in the UK, since 1990, we have reduced our emissions by 42% whilst still growing our economy by 72%.

Ahead of the Paris Agreement, PICs were congratulated for swiftly declaring ambitious NDC's, but now 5 years on, at COP26, there is the opportunity to enhance these NDC's and most importantly, to further incorporate the resilience and adaptation priorities of the Pacific. Through the Talanoa Dialogue, countries are being asked to respond to three main questions, where are we now? Where do we want to get to? And 'How can we achieve it? The NDC hub will provide technical assistance to support PICs when answering these questions, and in doing so there is the potential to deliver significant social and economic benefits, and enhance resilience more broadly across the Region.

COP26 in 2020 will be a pivotal moment to take stock of global ambition and prepare the ground for further action. I am delighted to say that the UK has formally expressed interest in hosting COP26. The UK Government is determined to sustain our historic leadership on climate change, and believe we would be a committed, ambitious and effective host.

The UK will also lead the resilience strand of the UNSG's Climate summit later this year and we are keen to work in partnership with PICs to bring commitments to the summit that will drive truly transformational change and accelerate the transition to a climate resilient planet.

In its leadership role the UK Government has the opportunity to use its diplomatic weight to amplify the voice of the Pacific on the global climate change platform.

I would like to encourage all country representatives here this evening to draw on the technical expertise of the NDC hub. The deadline for resubmission

is around the corner and this regional hub offers not only the potential to build resilience regionally, but also present renewed opportunity for the Pacific to lead from the front at COP. Thank you, vinaka vakalevu and Fa'eksea!

[Press release: New public buildings to have Changing Places toilets for severely disabled people](#)

- Changing Places toilets for severely disabled people to be made mandatory in new buildings used by the public, under government proposals
- Buildings covered will include shopping centres, supermarkets, sports and arts venues
- Proposal expected to add facilities to more than 150 new buildings a year

New, or majorly refurbished, large buildings used by the public must have Changing Places toilets for severely disabled people, under government proposals announced today (12 May 2019).

The proposals, being consulted on from today, are expected to add the toilets to more than 150 new buildings a year, including shopping centres, supermarkets, cinemas, stadiums and arts venues.

Changing Places toilets are larger accessible toilets for severely disabled people, with equipment such as hoists, curtains, adult-sized changing benches and enough space for carers.

There are over 1,300 Changing Places toilets in the UK, up from just 140 in 2007, but more are needed to support the more than a quarter of a million people who need them in the UK.

Without access to these toilets, it can be challenging for people to enjoy daily activities.

Local Government Minister, Rishi Sunak MP, said:

Everyone should have the freedom to enjoy days out in dignity and comfort. For severely disabled people, this is made very difficult because there are not enough Changing Places toilets.

We've made some progress, but I'm determined to increase the number of these life-enhancing facilities, so people are given the dignity

they deserve.

I'm pleased so many people will be helped by this major change.

Catherine Woodhead, Chief Executive of Muscular Dystrophy UK, which co-chairs the Changing Places Consortium, said:

People living with disabilities go to work, visit shops and enjoy days out with friends just like everyone else. But a lack of Changing Places toilets make these seemingly simple tasks a challenge. Too often, we hear stories of people not leaving their homes, having to be changed on dirty toilet floors or even having surgery because there are not enough facilities.

The government's consultation on making Changing Places toilets mandatory in new, large public buildings is hugely encouraging. Along with our fantastic campaigners, we have long pushed for changes to legislation, and now we are one step closer to that being reality.

This is wonderful news for everyone who needs Changing Places toilets. We look forward to working with the government and campaigners in making society more inclusive.

In the absence of Changing Places facilities, disabled people and/or carers face:

- limiting what they drink to avoid needing the toilet when they are out – risking dehydration and urinary tract infections
- sitting in soiled clothing or dirty nappies until a suitable toilet is found or they return home
- having to change a loved one on a dirty toilet floor
- manually lifting someone out of their wheelchair – risking safety
- reducing their time out of the house – restricting their social lives

The government has launched a [10-week consultation](#), which proposes the required size and shape of Changing Places toilets as well as the range of equipment that must be included.

It also proposes thresholds at which the facilities will be made mandatory in new or largely refurbished buildings of different types, such as overall floor space or attendance capacity.

Last month, the Department for Transport, in partnership with Muscular Dystrophy UK (MDUK), launched a £2 million fund for Changing Places to be installed in existing motorway service stations, which is now open for applications.

The Department of Health and Social Care will also soon launch a £2 million fund for NHS Trusts to install new Changing Places in over 100 hospitals

across England.

Examples of how Changing Places can help

Lauren West, from London, needs Changing Places toilets. She is MDUK's Trailblazers Manager.

Lauren said:

As a Changing Places user, I'm delighted to see the potential change to building regulations to include these life-changing facilities. Currently provision is very hit and miss with some areas having none at all. This means people like myself can't visit these places or can't stay as long as they'd like. This consultation is an encouraging step towards making the right facilities accessible to those that need them.

With Changing Places, disabled people have the ability to travel, to work, to enjoy leisure activities and to spend valuable time with family and friends. It's not only the right thing to do, but it also makes business sense. By providing these toilets, you're giving disabled people the opportunity to visit your venue, to spend money and to spread the word about its inclusivity.

Fiona Anderson, 30, from Bolton, is part of MDUK's Trailblazers network, and needs Changing Places toilets.

Fiona said:

A lack of Changing Places toilets has led to me deciding to have surgery, which will give me more freedom to go to the toilet. If these facilities were in every large public building, I would no longer have to endure the pain of postponing going to the toilet all day and the ever present dark cloud of sepsis occurring would be lifted. Ultimately, I also wouldn't need to have a catheter fitted, which would mean the world to me. I'm not incontinent – I simply can't transfer to a toilet without a hoist.

Changing Places toilets are a much-needed lifeline. But with so few of them available, people like me are forced to sacrifice our dignity and independence.

Buildings covered include shopping centres, supermarkets, cinemas, hotels, hospitals, leisure centres, libraries, motorway service stations, sports stadiums and arts venues.

The changes to change Building Regulations would apply to England only.

Users of the facilities, carers and other interested charities, campaign

groups, and members of the construction, planning and building sectors have been engaged with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ahead of the consultation, including a roundtable for users and carers with Local Government Minister Rishi Sunak MP.

The 10-week consultation, which closes on 21 July, has been published on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

[News story: Response to Guardian story about language learning in schools](#)

Response to Guardian story about language learning in schools – GOV.UK

Our statement responding to news coverage criticising grading in modern foreign language GCSE and A level subjects



Today's (11 May 2019) Guardian reports concerns raised by representatives from higher education about grading standards in modern foreign languages, and our work to maintain these. We take seriously these concerns and are currently conducting a comprehensive review of grading standards in GCSE French, German and Spanish. We are looking at statistical evidence, contextual data including trends in the numbers taking these subjects, and considering the quality of students' work through looking at how GCSE grades relate to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), to see if there is compelling case for an adjustment to grading standards in these subjects. We are talking to subject experts and other stakeholders and we welcome thoughts and contributions. We are due to report on this work in the autumn. We will report any feedback about subject content to the Department for Education, which is responsible for this.

Our work on inter-subject comparability to date:

- We [published in November the outcome of an extensive research programme into the comparability of MFL \(and science\) subjects at A level](#) which considered a broad range of sources of evidence. This included a comprehensive programme of research looking at factors such as student motivation and subject choices, and engagement with the broadest possible range of interested parties, including Ofqual's Standards Advisory Group, higher education, subject experts and teachers
- We judged the evidence against 4 criteria:
 - statistical measures of subject difficulty show evidence of persistent grading severity over several years
 - persuasive evidence of the potential detrimental impact caused by severe grading on those who use the qualification, and on society at large, over several years
 - evidence which shows that those who use the qualification and those responsible for maintaining the grading standard judge an adjustment to be acceptable
 - likely benefit to users of the qualification and society as a whole from a change to grading standards must outweigh any potential negative effects
- We set these criteria to reflect our view that any adjustment to grading standards must be informed by a wide range of factors
- Statistical evidence is an important consideration in our view, but it has limitations. For example, simple interpretations of subject difficulty based on comparisons of results do not take into account student motivation or their ability in that subject
- As such, it would be inappropriate to make adjustments to grading standards by looking at such statistics in isolation or in limited combinations
- Nor is it the case that numbers of students studying subjects perceived to be more difficult than others are falling; entries for some A level science subjects, for example, have increased over the past 10 years
- That's why we believe it is essential to take a broad range of information into account before taking any decision
- Our criteria were developed with input from our Standards Advisory Group, which comprises experts from across the educational community, and they allow us to make consistent and secure judgements in all circumstances. This is essential for the acceptability of any change to those who rely on qualifications and for public confidence
- While we did not find a compelling case to adjust grading standards in the A level subjects we reviewed, we did recognise that perceived grading severity undermines confidence and we committed to working with the exam boards to ensure that these subjects do not become statistically more severely graded in the future
- There may be many reasons why students are choosing to take, and schools are opting to offer, one subject – or modern foreign language (MFL) – over another. [Research conducted by Cuff \(2017\), found \(in a qualitative survey of 112 students\) that perceptions of difficulty were not the main basis of their decisions](#) and instead their choices were focussed more upon enjoyment and usefulness
- We looked at the issue of native speakers in detail, quantified the impact we judged they were having and made an adjustment to grade

standards that was then built into future awards

- We are also [undertaking work to review the effectiveness of the reformed MFL GCSEs](#). As part of this, we have spoken to a number of MFL teachers – they have told us that reformed GCSE and A level question papers assessing writing are fair. They also felt that the speaking assessments were better than those of the legacy qualifications
- We are aware of statistical evidence that suggests that GCSE MFL subjects may be more severely graded than many others. As we explained in detail in relation to our work at A level, given the limitations inherent in these statistical approaches, we do not believe that such evidence on its own is strong enough to justify a change to grading standards. As such, our work at GCSE will consider these statistics but also a wide range of other evidence, including the quality of students' work

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Thank you for your feedback