

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership Media Statement



Love Food Hate Waste Campaign

The following has been compiled by Vera Zakharov, Love Food Hate Waste co-ordinator. Vera is available for interview and additional comment.

Facts

49% of all food waste comes from households in the UK
UK households generate 7m tonnes of food waste a year
60% or 4.2m tonnes of it is avoidable, costing about £12.5billion
The most wasted foods are bread, potatoes and milk
20-40% of crops are wasted at farms due to supermarket restrictions and buying practices

Frequently asked questions:

Are individuals really causing that much food waste?

Yes. While individual farms and retailers are also wasting food, proportionally speaking the average consumer throws away more. When you factor in consumer-created food waste at restaurants (34% of total restaurant food waste), it's over 50%. It is important to remember that retailers (and restaurants) are partially responsible for the food waste caused by consumers, but there is a great deal of individual responsibility that we must take on to tackle food waste and the big financial loss it creates.

What's the most important thing people can do to tackle food waste?

Everyone can do something more to tackle food waste, even the thriftiest of foodies out there. We all have our part to play, from planning meals more carefully, to composting, to sharing advice with others and supporting campaigns. But the most important message is to consume mindfully. Don't buy more than you need, and cook only what you can eat. Remember the natural resources, energy and human effort within each item of food, be thankful and enjoy it.

Why is there no food waste collection in the city?

The Council is committed to bringing food waste collection into the city, but budget constraints and the complex variety of types of households in Brighton & Hove means that it will take time. Because a high proportion of the population live in flats, food waste collection in many areas will likely be complex. The council is working to secure funding to do this. In the meantime, they offer heavily subsidised compost bins and wormeries, as well as supporting free community composting. Composting is still the most sustainable way of processing unavoidable household food waste, so we encourage everyone to get composting.

What should supermarkets be doing to reduce food waste?

While retailers are directly responsible for less than 1% of the country's food waste, they are still responsible for a great deal of the food waste caused at the farm level and by consumers.

Retailers have a responsibility to develop more flexible and efficient buying strategies with farmers to address surpluses and erratic growing seasons. They need to be more active in

promoting food waste reduction to consumers through in-store messaging and by re-evaluating some of their marketing strategies, such as multi-buy deals. Retailers should also make their waste audits public and continue working with WRAP to address some of the biggest causes of consumer food waste.

Also, retailers have a social responsibility to donate perfectly edible surplus food to charities and food banks wherever they can, before sending it to landfill or anaerobic digestion.

UK and EU government also has a role to play in helping retailers to reduce food waste at farm and home level. One example is re-evaluating cosmetic standards for produce and legislation around date labels (again, on items such as live plants and produce). Government should also lead on making surplus donations and waste audits an industry standard.

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