



Veg Cities Handbook



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Introduction

Veg Cities is a feature campaign of Sustainable Food Cities, led by food and farming charity Sustain in partnership with the wider Peas Please initiative.

There are currently over 50 Sustainable Food Cities around the UK. Each has a cross-sector food partnership involving the local authority, local businesses and organisations, academics and NGOs working together for better and healthier food. To find out more about getting involved in your local partnership or getting a partnership established in your local area, go to www.sustainablefoodcities.org

The aim of Veg Cities is to increase availability and consumption of vegetables. Food partnerships and local authorities can achieve this by working with a range of local businesses and organisations, from convenience stores to schools and local markets, in six different areas:

- **Promote veg** through marketing work, public facing campaigns, challenges and competitions
- **Improve access to veg** through an increase in the lines available in retail, in out of school activities and to those particularly in need
- **Promote growing, cooking and eating** through support to food growing and investment in training and skills;
- **Support local businesses to increase veg on offer** through access to land, planning, business rate relief or other policy tools
- **Transform catering and procurement** by getting at least two portions of veg in every meal served by local restaurants and caterers
- **Reduce veg waste** through monitoring, redistribution of surplus, and roadshows, workshops and city-wide campaigns

The SFC Veg Cities campaign links with the Peas Please initiative which aims to secure commitments from industry and government to improve the availability, acceptability (including convenience), affordability, and quality of the vegetable offer in shops, schools, fast food restaurants and beyond. This will, in turn, stimulate increased vegetable consumption among the UK public, particularly children and those on a low income. Veg Cities works as the local expression of this national project.

The Veg Cities handbook is to support Veg City partners – **those running local campaigns across the UK**. We envisage that most of these campaigns will be run by the local authority or by the local food partnerships but we will consider working with any local partner as long as they can demonstrate that they are working together with other groups locally.

They in turn will recruit Veg City participants – **local organisations** taking action from increasing the portions of veg in every meal in restaurants and catering, to organising veg challenges and competitions in schools and events in the community

The campaign is starting to build a good set of resources available to support everyone interested in taking action to increase veg consumption, ranging from case studies to good practice guides. This offers local areas flexibility to encourage action in the themes and sectors that are priorities to them, and to reinforce schemes already up and running. The 'shopping list' approach allows participants to increase the number of actions they adopt over time, providing a way to keep them engaged. We're always keen to hear from those with assets to share, and others you feel we should create.

In the UK there is already interest from local areas around the Veg Cities concept. Cardiff, Brighton & Hove, Birmingham, Aberdeen and the London Borough of Redbridge have already started running Veg Cities campaigns.

Why veg?

We all need to be eating at least one extra portion of veg a day. Many of us, including children, are eating hardly any veg at all. The Healthy Survey for England, National Diet and Nutrition Survey and the voluntary Family Food Survey reveal the extent of the problem. We should be eating 3.5 portions/400g of veg per day but 80% of children, 95% of teenagers and 80% of adults are not reaching that target. People on lower incomes eat half a portion less. Our veg consumption is in decline and is no better than it was in the 1970s, in spite of the 5-A-Day campaign.

Diets that are low in veg are associated with more than 20,000 premature deaths across the UK.¹ Eating one more portion of veg, while reducing meat consumption, could reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by almost a fifth.² At the local level, community food growing spaces contribute to mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change and to the benefits of green infrastructure including biodiversity, amenity and environmental education.

If veg consumption increased in line with dietary guidance, the UK would have the chance to grow more veg, which would contribute to the economic growth of the sector. At the city level, small-scale community food growing and urban agriculture projects can contribute to increased access to veg as well as provide benefits to the individual for mental health and wellbeing and levels of physical activity. They can encourage the growth of the local food economy and develop skills and the improved employability amongst participants. Urban agriculture has a huge potential to produce a lot more veg. A recent study using Google's Earth Engine software, as well as population, meteorological, and other datasets, determined that if fully implemented in cities around the world, urban agriculture could produce as much as 180 million metric tons of food a year—perhaps 10 percent of the global output of legumes, roots and tubers, and vegetable crops.³

The Food Foundation analysed data on advertising spend in the UK from January 2010 to June 2016 and found only 1.2 per cent of food advertising spend went to veg. Most went to foods high in sugar, fat or salt such as cakes, biscuits and soft drinks.

Simultaneously, we need to ensure we reduce the current levels of food waste at all the levels of the food chain. The cost of food waste to farmers and the food industry, as well as individuals is enormous. WRAP research indicates that the cost of food being wasted in the UK from the UK hospitality and food service sector is estimated at £2.5 billion per year in 2011, rising to £3.0 billion per year by 2016 if no action was taken.⁴ Household food waste in the UK is at 7.3 million tonnes or 112.6 kg per person and is worth £13 billion.⁵ Fresh vegetables and salads are the largest contributor to avoidable food waste, making up 19% of household food waste by weight or 810,000 tonnes, worth £1.7 billion.⁶

Growing and eating more veg offers a triple win: a win for the local economy, a win for our health, and a win for our carbon footprints and environment.

¹ Jeurnink, S.M. et al. (2012). *Variety in vegetable and fruit consumption and the risk of gastric and esophageal cancer in the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition*; International Journal of Cancer; Sep 15; 131(6): E963-73. Available online at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22392502>

² Green, R. et al. (2015). *The potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the UK through healthy and realistic dietary change*; Climatic Change; 129 (1-2); pp.253–265. Available at: <http://link.springer.com/10.1007/s10584-015-1329-y>

³ Clinton, N., Stuhlmacher, M., Miles, A., Uludere, N., Wagner, M., Georgescu, M., Herwig, C., & Gong, P. (2018). *A Global Geospatial Ecosystem Services Estimate of Urban Agriculture*, Earth's Future, 6,40–60, <https://doi.org/10.1002/2017EF000536> Clinton, N. et al. (2018), *A Global Geospatial Ecosystem Services Estimate of Urban Agriculture*

⁴ WRAP (2013), *Overview of Waste in the UK Hospitality and Food Service Sector*. Available at: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Overview%20of%20Waste%20in%20the%20UK%20Hospitality%20and%20Food%20Service%20Sector%20FINAL.pdf>

⁵ WRAP (2017), *Household Food Waste in the UK, 2015*. Available at: [http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Household food waste in the UK 2015 Report.pdf](http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Household%20food%20waste%20in%20the%20UK%202015%20Report.pdf)

⁶ WRAP (2013). *Household Food and Drink Waste in the United Kingdom 2012*. Available online at: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/hhfdw-2012-main.pdf.pdf>

Get Involved - The steps to become a Veg City

Step 1 – Register your interest in running a campaign at www.vegcities.org

From June 2018, registering on the website will give you access to advice and resources to help you on the road to make your local area a Veg City. Sustain will receive a notification when you sign up and can support you with additional resources and advice. We encourage everyone within a local area to work together, so we are only able to accept one Veg City campaign per geographical area. We have a two part process of registering: The first, so you can find out more, and the second where you confirm your commitment to running the campaign locally.

Step 2 – Gather support and identify priorities

If you haven't already done so, it's crucial to form a partnership group including your local authority, and ideally local businesses, public sector organisations, NGOs such as those working on waste reduction, community growing networks and others.⁷ Get this group together to take stock of existing initiatives and action (e.g. in the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy or Obesity Strategy, activity of a local Food Partnership or food growing network) and start defining your priorities for the future campaign. You may find that Veg Cities offers a useful umbrella to bring all this work together and set ambitious new plans for moving the agenda forward.

Do a bit of research into the sectors and type of action you think are necessary to start tackling the problem locally. Brighton and Hove for example started by doing a survey to find out more about priorities for businesses and individuals. This is an opportunity to galvanize support and identify those who could be your first sign ups to Veg Cities. You may find that you have got a lot of willing allies already. We encourage areas to write an action plan to set out your aims and targets over the first year at least, as a way to help with communications, engagement, focus, and ultimately to be able to look back at what you've achieved at the end of it.

Step 3 – Make a public announcement and celebrate!

Some areas have kicked off their campaigns with an announcement (see Appendix 1) as a way to engage the public and get more local organisations on board. Hold a public event to bring partners together, announce your action plan and initial sign ups and celebrate the occasion. Publicise it to your local media and send photos to Sustain so we publicise it on our own websites and news too. This is an ideal way to reach out to get other businesses and organisations signing up to Veg Cities. You will also have the opportunity to showcase city progress at the annual [Peas Please Veg Summit](#) in the Autumn.

Step 4 – Keep going!

See the following chapter for information on working in the six key areas. We don't expect you to work on every area but focus on one or two areas where you can really make a difference locally. And don't forget to celebrate every action as a step towards success. Each new sign up is worth a press release. Encourage businesses and organisations already involved in the campaign to take more action throughout the campaign.

You can pre-register actions yourself on the website. For example, schools, caterers, retail and others, taking action to increase veg. You can also invite them to log in and register actions themselves.

Remember: Share ideas and experience with other Veg Cities using the forums and communications made available by the campaign and the Sustainable Food Cities network. If you are not already registered, join the Sustainable Food Cities email discussion group for peer-to-peer support and learning by emailing sfc-subscribe@lists.riseup.net and follow @VegCities, @VegPowerUK and @FoodCities on twitter. There will be regular Veg Cities webinars and a few face-to-face workshops in partnership with Peas Please.

⁷ SFC (2017). *GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT - A guide to SFC Network membership*. Available online at: <http://sustainablefoodcities.org/Portals/4/Documents/Getting%20the%20Basics%20Right%20Final%20DocumentAM.pdf>

Case study: Cardiff Veg City

In October 2016 [Food Cardiff](#) was invited to attend a Veg Retreat in Birmingham to contribute towards the discussion of declining veg consumption. Not long after, Food Cardiff became the Welsh arm of the Peas Please initiative. As it worked with the founding partners Food Foundation, Nourish Scotland and WWF to broaden collaboration with a wider range of stakeholders, it fell to Food Cardiff, together with Sustainable Food Cities, to research the options around the role of Urban Food Systems in driving up vegetable consumption.

Very quickly it became apparent that vegetables were the perfect conduit for working through each of the [6 key issues of the Sustainable Food Cities](#). Vegetables could become a central organising theme within Food Cardiff's strategy, triggering the idea for a potential Sustainable Food Cities campaign and Veg Cities indeed started to garner interest among other members of the Sustainable Food Cities network.

“Eat more veg” is a positive, energising message. Several Food Cardiff partners as well as the city in its own right have signed up Veg pledges at the October 2017 [Veg Summit](#). Pledges include restaurants working collaboratively, for example to reduce veg waste, and Farmers Markets expanding their veg offer and their market locations. Cardiff Council and Cardiff and Vale Health board have pledged to support people to eat two portions of veg and Cardiff University and Cardiff Metropolitan University have stepped up too.

Veg Cities is re-energizing and providing an umbrella for a lot of the amazing food work being developed in Cardiff. [Social enterprises](#) are using wonky veg to develop innovative soups and growing veg on Council land to supply local businesses. Cardiff Council has published [Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) to encourage developers to provide growing spaces. Edible Cardiff brings together those growing vegetables across the city and is working with Cardiff Council on a network of planters across the city. Healthy schools are developing “Veg resources”, [Farmers Markets](#) are expanding the veg offer and market times and artists are using i Veg Power graffiti on the Taff Embankment!

[Community centres](#) are supporting people to eat more veg through cooking classes, food parcels and fruit and veg co-ops. Healthy Start Vouchers can be spent on fruit and veg co-op bags and the partnership is looking at ways to ensure vouchers are used to their absolute potential. The partnership is expanding their school holiday enrichment programme in the city, [Food and Fun](#), to ensure that children are eating two portions of veg at lunchtime in the holidays. There is even a [GP surgery piloting](#) a social prescribing model alongside a community garden.

It is very exciting to see Veg Cities translating the National Peas Please initiative into a holistic place based approach that could create an impact on veg consumption across the Sustainable Food Cities network.

The six key areas – menu of actions

The campaign proposes action across six key areas and seven sectors to encourage growing and eating more veg. Under each sector there is a proposed menu or ‘shopping list’ of actions that participants, e.g. businesses or organisations can choose from. This menu of actions will be refined over time but it will give you an idea of the sort of commitment we are inviting participants to make.

Under each action, the campaign provides a multitude of assets to support you and participants to take action to increase veg and raise awareness. These will be available online.

Areas	Actions	Description	Councils	Community groups	Education	Health and hospitals	Workplaces	Restaurants and catering	Retail and markets
1	Promote veg	Use marketing work, social media, healthy eating campaigns or events to promote veg.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Good advertising	Give preferential treatment to healthy food ads, offer free advertising space. Restrict/levy junk food ads.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Veg competitions	Promote adverts or recipe competitions in your organisation or business.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Veg sessions	Assemblies, sessions or interventions to promote veg in schools, workplaces or community groups.	X	X	X	X	X		
	Veg challenges	Try 5-a-day, 2 veg with every meal, or a different veg every day for a week.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	Improve access to those in most need	Increase the uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers, Rose Vouchers or through other local initiatives.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	More veg out of school hours	Improve access to veg for children enrolled in after school or holiday activities.	X	X	X				
	Increase veg offer	Increase the lines, quality and display of veg in retail, particularly in deprived areas.							X
	Set up a veg stand	Set up a veg stand or corner or a food coop in your workplace or organisation.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3	Set up cooking classes and training	Cooking classes and training for veg-centred meals.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Set up network of growing spaces	Set up or expand a network of food growing spaces.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Increase in veg grown locally	Increase in veg grown in local gardens.	X	X	X	X	X		
4	Map access to food	Map access against of transportation routes, income, health data, proximity to schools and other factors.	X						
	Include access to food in planning	Include access to food in the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents or other planning policy.	X						
	Support healthier food businesses	Support food businesses through access to land, business rate relief or other financial incentives.	X	X	X	X	X		
	Increase in land area used for growing	Increase in land area used for growing food commercially.	X	X	X	X	X		
	Increase in veg traded	Increase in veg traded into box schemes, farmers’ markets, local retail and other outlets.	X	X	X	X	X		
5	Include 2 portions of veg in every meal	Include at least 2 portions of veg in every meal in public procurement and out of home sector.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Train caterers	Set up training on cooking with veg for caterers.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
6	Reduce waste with a focus on veg	Support food waste reduction through roadshows, workshops and city campaigns and initiatives.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Monitor food waste and educate	Monitor and educate about benefits of eating seasonal, local and the impacts of food waste.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Key area 1 – Promote veg

Actions include:

- Use marketing work, social media, healthy eating campaigns or events to promote veg.
- Give preferential treatment to healthy food ads or offer free advertising space. Restrict or levy junk food ads.
- Promote advert or recipe competitions in your organisation or business.
- Assemblies, sessions or interventions to promote veg in schools, workplaces or community groups.
- Try 5-a-day, 2 veg with every meal, or a different veg every day for a week.

When was the last time you saw an advert for carrots, peas or other vegetables? You probably can't remember. That is because the marketing spend for fruit and veg is negligible, especially when compared with that spent on foods high in sugar, fat or salt such as cakes, biscuits and soft drinks. According to the Food Foundation, the proportion of all food and drink (non-alcoholic) advertising spend on promoting veg remained roughly the same between 2010 and 2015, at 1.2%.

Junk food companies spend 27 times more on advertising than the Government does on promoting healthy eating, and the role of advertising in driving us towards unhealthy foods cannot be underestimated.

This is why Veg Cities would like every city to join in to promote veg through marketing work, public facing campaigns, challenges and competitions. A menu of actions is suggested and will be refined over time but it will give you an idea of the sort of commitment we are inviting participants to make.

Peas Please are creating a permanent advertising resource for vegetables – [the Veg Power fund](#) – a dedicated advertising fund to improve the image of vegetables for consumers. The initiative is backed by chefs Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and Jamie Oliver and the plan is to roll out an advertising campaign that will radically alter our perceptions of vegetables. We hope Veg Cities will join in and use the resources produced by the Veg Ad Fund in their local campaigns (resources such as posters available from Autumn 2018), as well as support other local public marketing campaigns to promote veg.

In the meantime, branding and website design agency Ifour has already had a go designing an ad for veg to support Veg Power which showed a cartoon boy playing with his carrots, holding them up to his head, to look like Batman. The image they created was simple but it offered the chance to tap into another great marketing ploy: participation. The poster was displayed in over 5,000 locations nationwide following its unveiling at the Peas Please Vegetable Summit in October 2017.

City campaigns can also promote competitions, sessions and challenges to participating organisations aimed at increasing the popularity of veg and get individuals to try new vegetables and recipes in a fun and collective way.

For years, the UK has been transformed by devolution which has allowed each of the home nations to pursue its own educational agendas. Regardless of where Veg Cities are running, we would like to see schools and other education settings and organisation incorporating veg in the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities and projects.

Resources

The national [5-A-Day campaign includes tips and guidance](#)

For recipes try the 5-A-Day campaign site as well as [Meat Free Monday, Part Time Carnivore or Vegetarian Society](#)

Resources to get kids to eat veg by [Eat Your Veg, a project of Behaviour Change](#)

Resources including lesson plans, lessons support and recipes by [Bristol's Teaching a City to Cook](#) programme

Case Study: London's Urban Food Awards and Urban Food Fortnight

Celebrating locally grown food and vegetables and the retailers, restaurants and food businesses who sell and use that food is an important part of promoting local food and vegetables. These two events are supported by the Mayor of London. With other schemes and initiatives aimed at helping community and small scale sustainable food enterprises to thrive and to find new markets for their produce, it has enabled the Greater London Authority and the London Food Board to win the SFC Silver award, one of only three awarded by the SFC to date.

Urban Food Fortnight

Urban Food Fortnight was launched in 2012 as Urban Food Week to help community gardens to be more enterprising and work towards becoming self-financing by linking up with local markets and retailers to sell their produce.

Since then it has blossomed and became Sustain's [London Food Link](#) flagship event celebrating the food being grown, made, cooked and saved in the capital. Each Urban Food Fortnight now sees more than 100 events and special menus being organised over the course of a fortnight. Events range from special menus at top restaurants to supper clubs, garden open days to community brew days, and workshops to walking tours with those enterprises taking part building relationships with new suppliers, customers, as well as raising awareness of the local food movement to thousands of Londoners.

Urban Food Awards

The awards were launched in 2014 by Sustain's London Food Link and the Mayor of London's Food Team as part of Urban Food Fortnight. They were designed to celebrate the achievements of the capital's good food champions linked to the Urban Food Routes initiative (see Urban Food Routes case study under Key area 4).

The awards recognise fantastic food and drink grown and made across the capital, and the small, community-focussed producers behind them. Winners are chosen from eligible, participating nominees based on a combination of public votes and the views of a judging panel.

The 2016 edition of the awards attracted 3,450 public votes and for the second year, was also supported by Borough Market where the event was held, attracting more than 200 guests. It was used to highlight a number of sustainable food initiatives being supported by the Mayor of London and partners. Mayor of London Sadiq Khan gave one of the awards in person, for the best initiative diverting surplus food to useful purposes.

The awards took a break in 2017, when London Food Link organised the first [Urban Food Heroes award to find and celebrate people and organisations that are creating positive social change through good food ventures](#), who have received promotion and support via London Food Link and partners Unltd, the Foundation for Social Entrepreneurs. The Urban Food Awards are due to return in 2018.

Case study: Middlesbrough Town Meal

Middlesbrough Town Meal is an annual celebration of local food and growing, organised by [Middlesbrough Environment City](#) together with a range of public and private businesses, and community organisations. It's part of an annual programme of engagement in growing and food-related activities under the umbrella of the food partnership that also include regular supported gardening sessions in schools and community centres, horticulture and cookery training.

It is free to visit and take part in all the activities, which makes it very accessible to all the residents of the town. The central part of the Town Meal is the meal itself. This is prepared from donated produce, which is collected from allotments and community growers in the week preceding the meal. For many community growers, it is their opportunity to showcase the food they have grown throughout the year. School children save their favourite cabbages for the Meal and growers' prizewinning leeks have been amongst the donations.

The school meals service, together with volunteers, prepare the meal in a school kitchen and serve it on the day to around 2,000 people, who share the food free of charge around cafe tables and chairs or on deck chairs enjoying the music.

Also included at the Town Meal are vegetable competitions for growers, food market stalls for local producers, cookery demonstrations representing all of Middlesbrough's different cultures, farming and agriculture demonstrations and entertainment.

Case study: How Veg Power took over one city

The Veg Power campaign was launched in January 2018, with the display of the #VegPower poster in over 5,000 locations nationwide, including till screens in all Co-op stores, street art and a projection onto the City Chamber in Edinburgh, as well as in thousands of primary and secondary school canteens across the UK. The poster aims to reach out to children and adults and is the positive, fun approach to promoting vegetable consumption that is severely missing from the advertising industry today.

Cardiff Council backed the #Veg Power campaign. The poster was transformed into street art located on Millennium Walk alongside the Principality Stadium. The pupils from Ninian Park Primary School, who were involved in judging the poster, were at Millennium Walk to see their winning choice spray painted next to the Principality Stadium in the city centre. Schools across Cardiff displayed the poster in their school canteen, as did GP surgeries and hospitals.

Key area 2 – Improve access to veg

Actions include:

- Increase the uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers, Rose Vouchers or through other local initiatives.
- Improve access to veg for children enrolled in after school or holiday activities.
- Increase the lines, quality and display of veg in retail, particularly in deprived areas.
- Set up a veg stand or corner or a food coop in your workplace or organisation.

Healthy Start is the UK's food welfare scheme for pregnant women and infants and young children in low-income families, who are amongst the groups most at risk of being in food poverty. Healthy Start vouchers are an important means-tested scheme providing a basic nutritional safety net to encourage families to make healthy food choices. Pregnant women and children over one and under four years old can get one £3.10 voucher per week. Children under one year old can get two £3.10 vouchers (£6.20) per week.

Food partnerships and local authorities can take action to help increase uptake of Healthy Start vouchers and the number of retailers who offer and promote the scheme by:

- Providing information to local businesses about Healthy Start
- Helping ensure Healthy Start is available and promoted in relevant settings, with trained staff/volunteers able to support families to apply (e.g. children's centres, GP offices, etc.)
- Pooling resources among relevant local organisations to host or pay for joint staff/volunteer training
- Partner with Alexandra Rose to increase voucher value if applicable
- Supporting convenience stores, box schemes and food co-ops in accepting Healthy Start vouchers. Potentially map your local area to see how many accept the vouchers and start a local campaign to increase the percentage on board. Retailers also need to promote that they accept the vouchers.
- Local authorities can also play a key role in monitoring and improving the uptake of these vouchers by appointing a council officer or health professional to oversee Healthy Start in the area, ensuring an adequate supply of information is available and improving the diversity of retailers accepting the vouchers.

In Scotland the system has recently been revised and will be known as [Best Start Foods](#) from 2019. Some key changes introduced are the increase in weekly payments from £3.10 to £4.25 a week and simplification in application and use. Paper vouchers will move to a smartcard system and retailers no longer need to register to accept the vouchers.

Free school meals are a critical safety net (for schools meals see key area 5). But for 170 days a year those children who are entitled to free school meals cannot access their free school meal provision. A large number of community based organisations are responding to this challenge through offering holiday provision for children often including a food offer. Local authorities have a role to play in ensuring that these programmes reach those who need them most, and that the provision meets minimum standards. Holiday provision provides huge opportunities for connecting children with how food is grown, trying new fruit and vegetables, developing cooking skills and supporting healthy eating practices.

Increasing the lines, quality and display of veg in retail, particularly in deprived areas, is a real challenge. Often areas of higher deprivation coincide with areas of higher concentration of hot food takeaways and very little retail offer in terms of veg. There are examples of good practice where local authorities are addressing this. For example the London Borough of Tower Hamlets developed a number of projects aimed at helping local market stall-holders to increase sales of fruit and vegetables within a deprived area, leading to revitalised local markets. It supported the delivery of retail and marketing advice to traders which boosted the fruit and vegetables sales in the targeted markets by over £1.5 million a year during the project. On top of this initial project, the Borough developed an award scheme specifically rewarding increases in fruit and vegetable sales. Finally, it piloted the Healthy Start Vouchers scheme to the benefit of low income families and local market traders.

Setting up a veg stand, a veg corner, veg box pick-up point or a food coop in your workplace or organisation can help to increase consumption of veg. This is particularly true if they are set up in large employers such as hospitals or universities.

Resources

Healthy Start Voucher, Best Star Foods and Rose Vouchers

[Joint learning from a Healthy Start campaign](#) (Brighton & Hove Food Partnership 2017)

[Making the Most of Healthy Start](#): A Practical Guide (First Steps Nutrition Trust 2014)

[Best Start Foods](#): details about the new Scottish Welfare Foods scheme

[Healthy Start Alliance](#): Promoting, protecting and advocating for the Healthy Start scheme in the UK

[First Steps Nutrition Trust](#): An independent public health nutrition charity that provides information and resources to support eating well from pre-conception to five years

[Alexandra Rose Charity](#): The Rose Vouchers scheme for Fruit & Veg Project helps parents with young children on low incomes to buy fresh fruit and vegetables, supplementing eligible families' Healthy Start vouchers

Holiday provision

[Wales' School Holiday Enrichment Programme](#)

[Filling the holiday gap: Guiding points for organisations providing community holiday time meals for children](#), APPG on School Food, 2015

[Kitchen Social](#), The Mayor of London's programme delivering and trained holiday provision schemes

[Holiday Kitchen](#), An evaluation of Holiday Kitchen 2014: Learning, food and play for families who need it most in the West Midlands

Retailers

[Final report of Buywell project](#) aimed to support local convenience stores to improve access to fresh, affordable and sustainable fruit and veg in low-income areas of London.

[Food Foundation retailer toolkit](#) contains a menu of measures available to retailers to make vegetables more convenient, attractive and normal to purchase.

Case study: Increase the uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers in Birmingham

Birmingham is a young and diverse city where 40% of residents live in areas described as most deprived 10% in England. There are approximately 17,000 eligible beneficiaries but only approximately 70-75% are registered. This results in £1.4m-£1.6m unclaimed Healthy Start Vouchers (HSV) that could instead be spent in the local economy.

Based on this assessment, Birmingham City Council set up an action plan aimed at:

1. Increase registration of eligible beneficiaries.
2. Increase usage of HSV by parents and especially of children over 2 years old.
3. Increase numbers of retailers registered and accepting HSV.
4. Increase range of outlets registered and accepting HSV.

The first step was to identify who comes in contact with eligible women that could raise awareness about the vouchers and work out different strategies for each point of contact: Department of Work and Pensions, health visitors, family support workers, housing associations, financial inclusion, early education, early years' settings and schools.

The second step was to work with retailers to increase the acceptance of HSV. From the national database were able to identify retailers and categorised them into:

- Currently accepting HSV
- Used to accept HSV buy stopped
- Have registered but never accepted HSV

We also segmented the databases into large/small supermarkets, market stallholders, corner shops, newsagents, pharmacies, wine/liquor store.

The public health team went to a selection of retailers to ask them about their experiences, what was working well, what needed to change and if they had stopped accepting Healthy Start Vouchers, why that was the case.

Linked to that was a piece of work with Bull Ring fruit and veg market. Public Health found that many stallholders didn't know about the vouchers, there was a high turnover of stallholders many of who were non-English. The Public Health team worked with the management of the fruit & veg market and restarted the scheme whereby HSV could be redeemed against rent for the stall. The team is also promoting the idea of a £3.10 veg box (the value of one voucher).

The Public Health team are working with The Association of Convenience Stores to develop the promotion of HSV and materials to promote vouchers at the point of sale in order to increase awareness and use. The association will produce an animation that will help customers and retailers understand the HSV scheme and increase uptake by customers and retailers.

Future plans include:

- Working with Department Work and Pensions to increase awareness of HSV for people on universal credit
- Working with financial inclusion partnership, Citizens Advice Bureaux, housing association outreach workers to increase awareness of HSV
- Working with Birmingham City Council Business rates to identify retailers that haven't registered for the HSV scheme and encourage them to register
- Work with community groups, early years organisations to increase cooking skills
- Work with Food Foundation Photo voice project with retailers and users of HSV and look at the lived experience
- Increase registration of other outlets such as allotments
- Work with early years education settings to identify non-claimants and increase uptake
- Discussions with [Love Food, Hate Waste](#) of synergies with their programme

Case study: 365 days of school lunches in North Lanarkshire and Glasgow

North Lanarkshire and Glasgow City Council both recently committed to providing school lunches all year round. In North Lanarkshire, in the 2018-2019 Budget discussions, Councillors approved plans to provide free meals for children in low income households every day of the year. The "Food 365" programme will cover the 175 days of the year when pupils are not at school during weekends and school holidays. A [pilot project will take place in Coatbridge](#) during the 2018 spring break and, following an evaluation, the programme would then be extended to cover the whole of North Lanarkshire in time for the summer holidays. Based on a successful pilot, the programme will be delivered in 23 'hubs' across the authority area, usually in community facilities. Based on demand for other previous holiday initiatives, the cost is estimated to be half a million pounds.

Residents in both areas have high obesity rates and low consumption of vegetables so it is expected that lunches will provide much needed quality meals and to those that need it the most.

In its budget proposal for 2018-2019, Glasgow City Council allocated £1.5m to extend free school meals to every pupil in Primary 4 in publicly funded schools, and £2m to fund a programme to provide free meals for children from low-income families during school holidays. Since 2015, all children in primaries 1, 2 and 3 have been entitled to a free meal - but after that, many had to start paying.

Key area 3 – Growing, cooking and eating

Actions include:

- Cooking classes and training for veg-centred meals.
- Set up or expand a network of food growing spaces.
- Increase in veg grown in local gardens.

Getting people involved in growing and cooking vegetables, the “seed to table” experience will increase the desire to try a wide range of vegetables. Lack of time to prepare food and lack of skills and confidence in the kitchen can all get in the way of eating veg. Many local food partnerships and community groups are already supporting the development of cooking skills, but cooking vegetables so that they make delicious meals can be a challenge even for experienced cooks. We hope Veg Cities will make the development of veg cooking skills a specific aspect in the cooking programmes that they are already running.

Veg growing can be through allotments or home gardens, but one of the most impactful activities is through the additional benefit of encouraging community food growing – whether with existing or encouraging new gardens. These gardens could be in any of the settings and institutions we’re targeting: schools, healthcare, workplaces and community groups (including housing estates). Veg Cities has many suggestions of good practice guides (see below) on how to set up a food growing garden or project. For commercial growing projects, see also the resources and case studies under key area 4.

In Scotland, Food Growing Strategies are being developed in all local authorities, as a statutory duty placed upon them by the Community Empowerment Act. Part 9 of the Community Empowerment Act places a duty on local authorities to prepare a food-growing strategy for its area to identify land that may be used as allotment sites, identify other areas of land that could be used for community growing, and describe how the authority intends to increase provision for community growing, in particular in areas which experience socio-economic disadvantage. There are no restrictions on the scope of the Strategy. In Edinburgh, the SFC Partnership, Edible Edinburgh, is leading on the development of the Strategy through an inclusive, participatory process in 2018-2019.

In Northern Ireland, following an extensive consultation process with local stakeholders, Belfast City Council published its new [Growing Communities strategy 2012-2022](#). Starting in 2012, funding was made available by the Council, Public Health Agency and others to establish 10 new community garden facilities, with a further three added in 2013. Many of the new facilities have been built in existing city parks.

If you are focusing on supporting more food growing in your city, we hope a city-wide campaign like Veg Cities can galvanise activity and embed growing into local strategies and help you to expand the number of growing spaces, set up or expand a network of growing spaces and ultimately increase the amount of locally grown and traded veg so we get more veg into people’s diets. So let’s get growing more!

Key steps to running a city-wide approach to food growing:

- Identify existing community food gardens and any formal or informal networks.
- Bring those interested together and set up a local food growing network that can share information and potentially have a central information point so local people and other institutions can find out more.
- Sustain are keen to support anyone running a veg city campaign by hosting a ready-made mapping tool with information on your gardens locally. This not only provides a ready-made platform to map sites, it can also flag up those looking for volunteers, and gives access to the [Harvest-ometer tool so spaces can track how much they have grown over a season](#).
- Set yourself a target for how many gardens you want to create in your area – think about different sectors and settings that may be fruitful – schools and social housing have a good track record of interest in this issue.

- Rather than trying to find the land yourself, create a support package, so people come to you with the spaces they want to transform. Devise ways you can support potential and existing spaces – this could be networking sessions, training and competitions (many companies will provide free tools, seeds and materials to give away). Having a map and a coherent vision for what you are trying to do (with their input) will also attract people. Also be clear about who within the council they can contact to offer support.
- Plan a range of activities to engage with the public to get them visiting and ideally volunteering at the spaces e.g. [Big Dig day](#) (Spring), Urban Harvest (Autumn) and an online map.
- Help the gardens think about generating income – whether through selling produce, services or training (see list of resources below for more guidance on this point).
- Working with health service locally to see how food growing can support their plans to improve health and wellbeing, for example through social prescribing.
- Encourage gardens to keep track of who uses the gardens and evaluate the impact on the community and the local environment. This will help you and the individual gardens to tell their story and gain publicity.

Resources

Cooking and eating

[Food Teachers Centre resources](#)

[Big Barn](#), to discover local, seasonal, fresh food, from farmers' markets to box schemes

[FARMA](#), the not-for-profit association representing farm shops farmers' markets

[Eat the Seasons](#), to know what vegetables are in season in the UK

[Nutrition Skills for Life](#), a programme of quality assured nutrition skills training and initiatives developed and co-ordinated by dietitians working in the NHS in Wales.

Food growing

Getting started

[Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens](#) resources including community growing resource packs for Scotland, England and Wales.

[Lewisham's guide to creating a community garden](#)

Sustain's [Finding the Plot: Access to land for food growing groups in urban areas](#)

Sustain's [Grow More Food: Top Tips](#)

[Incredible Edible Network model](#).

For more ambitious projects

Sustain's [Growing Enterprise Guide](#)

Sustain's [Urban Farming Toolkit: A guide to growing to sell in the city](#)

Measuring impact

Sustain's [Which tool to use? A guide for evaluating health and wellbeing outcomes](#)

Sustain's [How much you're growing \(Harvest-ometer\)](#)

Linking with the health community / social prescribing

Sustain's [Guide to engaging with health service and getting commissioned](#)

Sustain's [Growing Health case studies](#)

Case study: Teaching a City to Cook to get young people cooking in Bristol

Teaching a City to Cook launched in February 2018 alongside a competition to find the city's Young Cook of the Year.

The programme has been developed with the help of local professional chefs including Josh Eggleton (from Pony and Trap), Adrian Kirikmaa (St Monica's Trust) and Barny Haughton (Square Food Foundation) to encourage young people to eat more healthily.

Teaching a City to Cook is part of the [SUGAR SMART Bristol campaign](#). The 91 Ways local initiative worked with the new programme to ensure it is culturally inclusive to the many diverse communities that make up Bristol. Gloucestershire County Cricket Club, the Girl Guides and schools have already signed up to take part in the scheme to support their young people and to link with local professional chefs, who can provide some expert advice.

The aim of Teaching a City to Cook is to educate and encourage Bristol's young people to cook for themselves using fresh, seasonal food. A new [digital support toolkit](#) is available for teachers and community groups to use, and includes videos from BBC's Good Food website with recipes to enable students to practice their new skills. Currently Bristol has the highest level of tooth decay (at nearly 30%) in the South West and higher than average levels of childhood obesity, with nearly a third of children aged 10 to 11 years old carrying excess weight. Both these conditions are associated with a poor diet and can lead to long term health problems later in life, but are entirely preventable.

The programme will lead up to the Young Cook Awards later in the year which will provide an opportunity for children in years 6, 7 and 8 to put into practice the new skills that they've learnt in a competition. Young adults between the ages 15 and 17 years will have an opportunity to apply their cooking skills for the Young Apprentice Award. Winners from both of these competitions will be announced during [Bristol Food Connections Week](#) in June 2018.

Key area 4 – Support local businesses

Actions include:

- Map access to food against transportation routes, income and health data, proximity to schools and other factors.
- Include access to food in the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents or other planning policy.
- Support food businesses through access to land, business rate relief or other financial incentives.
- Increase in land area used for growing food commercially.
- Increase in veg traded into box schemes, farmers markets, local retail and other outlets.

Councils can encourage a thriving, healthy food system from food growing through to food retail using their powers as landowner, local planning authority or licensing authority to support local businesses. They can show leadership through non statutory roles such as economic regeneration, business support and town centre management. They can support businesses to sell more veg through some of the ways listed in key area 2, including acceptance of healthy start vouchers.

The Town and Country Planning Association's work on Healthy Environments found "access to healthy food" to be one of the six key criteria to tackle obesity in new developments.⁸ A 2017 Public Health England report provides public health planners and local communities with evidence informed principles for designing healthy places including a chapter on food with references to food retail.⁹

Mapping and including access to healthier food in planning policy are important first steps for getting good food in the agenda. But it's the implementation and use of the full arsenal of instruments available that will make the most difference to help promote veg. There are a range of instruments which local authorities can use to support the promotion of veg in shops, cafes and restaurants and re-establish vital infrastructure such as wholesale markets, Grade 1 and 2 land, local processing, food hubs and distribution networks.

Councils and other public bodies can also facilitate access to land for food growing, food and farming hubs or other vital infrastructure. There is a huge potential to grow more food and particularly vegetables in urban areas. Often, Councils and other public institutions have unused land that could be transformed into productive spaces to help feed the city. Whilst much of this is community run and may be more relevant to Key area 3, the most successful and longstanding gardens sell some of their produce to differing degrees, in order to cover running costs. Fresh, high value crops such as salad leaves could supply local restaurants and cafes, generating jobs and income locally. For example [Bristol City Council Parks and Open Spaces](#) (which includes allotments and smallholdings) led an internal resource assessment mapping exercise to identify all available land for food growing. The team are working with Bristol Food Producers to link up with people seeking land for food growing. They have provided free 'set-up agreements' and early years peppercorn rent on larger areas of land for community growing projects.

Discretionary business rate relief

Before the end of this parliament, councils will keep 100% of local taxes including all £26 billion that is generated from business rates. In addition councils will be given powers so that they can cut business rates across the board to go alongside their existing discount powers allowing them to incentivise, for example, those selling fruit and veg. Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1998 has been amended by the Localism Act 2011 to give councils the power to give a locally determined discretionary discount on business rates. This is different from other business rate relief as it can be allocated to any business against the local authority's own criteria. The allocation of this relief is 50% funded from local authority budgets and 50% funded by Government. A fund of £300m was allocated for this in The 2017 Budget. Haringey Council, for example, offers [discretionary business rate relief for businesses](#) temporarily occupying and using a space whilst a new development project is being completed (meanwhile activities). They could include 'pop-up' market stalls, street food, art exhibitions, performances and events. Decisions

⁸ <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/healthy-environments>

⁹ Public Health England (2017), *Spatial planning for health: an evidence resource for planning and designing healthier places*. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spatial-planning-for-health-evidence-review>

on offering relief are judged on the benefits that the meanwhile activity can bring to residents and the local area and the financial case for offering relief.

Financial contributions from hot food takeaways

Section 106 Agreements (Section 75 or Section 69 agreements in Scotland) or 'planning obligations' are legal agreements between the developer and the local authority for money or in-kind support for additional services or developments that relate to the proposed development. These can be used to require financial contributions from hot food takeaways to support the Council's initiatives to tackle obesity. These can also be used to create more food growing spaces or to encourage retail diversity by supporting independent retailers.

Food shops and essential retail

Specifying food shops as 'essential retail' can enable local planners to restrict applications for a change of use from this specific shop type to one less essential (within A1 retail and service outlet category) which would normally not require planning permission. It could for example prevent a greengrocer being replaced by a hairdresser.

Sustain may be able to offer support and guidance to partnerships who want to get involved in local planning so if you are planning to do work in this area get in touch.

Special support for small and social enterprises and markets

For many people the best way to access veg is through stalls and markets, and some councils have realised the benefit of regenerating these spaces for the local economy as well as for the health of local residents. Whilst not necessarily unrelated, some local areas have focused on providing business support to start ups, and small and social enterprises. Whilst these do not always focus on veg, the most exciting schemes have incorporated this into the criteria by which they select those businesses to support or within the advice they give.

Resources

Council interventions

Sustain's [Planning sustainable cities for community food growing](#)

Sustain's [Good planning for good food - using planning policy for local and sustainable food](#)

Association of Convenience Stores, [Discretionary Rate Relief and High Streets: A Guide for Local Authorities](#)

Chartered Institute of Environmental Health/Mayor of London (2012), [Takeaways Toolkit - Tools, interventions and case studies to help local authorities develop a response to the health impacts of fast food takeaways](#)

Enterprise support networks

[Food Coops and buying groups](#)

[Better food traders](#)

Support for farm shops and farmers' markets - [FARMA](#)

Food growing

[The Landworkers' Alliance](#)

[Soil Association's Future Growers programme](#)

[Permaculture Association](#)

[FarmStart](#) farm incubator run by the Kindling Trust in Stockport

Case study: London's Urban Food Routes

Urban Food Routes was an initiative funded by the Mayor of London and organic food business [Seeds of Change](#). It aims to help both social enterprises and privately-owned businesses become more sustainable, have a greater positive impact in their local communities, and help more people in the capital to buy and eat locally-produced food.

The programme was delivered by the [Plunkett Foundation, Growing Communities](#) and Sustain's [London Food Link](#). It provided small grants and business support tailored to their needs, as well as marketing and other expert advice to small food enterprises in London to help them thrive and benefit people in their local communities.

Between 2013 and 2016, the programme supported around 60 sustainable food businesses, helping them to expand and develop their operations and to highlight the important role that such businesses can play in building diverse economies and helping to develop communities. Businesses were from the whole range of the food system in London, and included many food growing initiatives supplying locally grown veg to local restaurants, as well as markets, retailers and box schemes encouraging the trade of more veg through to caterers using this locally grown food. A few of the businesses that received support included veg growers [Sutton Community Farm](#), [Organiclea Community Growers](#) and Keats Community Organics who have since then grew to become more established growers trading into local markets.

This business support was distinct but linked to celebratory and promotional elements – Urban Food Fortnight and Urban Food Awards (see case study under Key area 1).

With other schemes and initiatives aimed at helping community and small scale sustainable food enterprises to thrive and to find new markets for their produce, it has enabled the Greater London Authority and the London Food Board to win the SFC Silver award, one of only three awarded by the SFC to date.

Case study: Getting food growing into the local plan in Hull

Back in 2014, the Hull Food Partnership, the local food network, responded to the public consultation on Issues & Options for the future of the area and pointed out how local food growing contributes to the future vision for Hull especially as health is a key priority.

Hull Food Partnership submitted a detailed response to the consultation looking at the wider benefits of growing food and in particular how the Council was missing an opportunity to address health inequalities. Promotion of local food could also address the council's climate change priorities (reducing food miles, reducing urban heat island, increasing permeability of urban land).

The consultation asked questions about housing. Hull Food Partnership suggested all new developments should have well-designed, usable open spaces that connect to the wider network of green infrastructure and provide space for residents to grow food close to where they live – this is not necessarily dedicated land for allotments but for community gardens embedded into the design of new communities.

Late in 2015 when the first draft plan was published they were disappointed no policies specifically mentioned food growing. They submitted a robust response and in June 2016, the (next final draft contained a whole new section on local food growing. By December 2016, the policies and text had been further edited and they could see the results of their efforts in getting food on the planning radar.

The city is the third most deprived local authority area. Residents typically suffer from poorer health and lower levels of educational attainment than the national averages. So once the relevance of planning for food growing had been pointed out, Hull Council was amenable to using its planning powers to address this issue.

Hull Food Partnership's involvement in the emerging plan has enabled them to raise local food growing at an early stage of plan ensuring it would be featured in the detail of the plan. Getting involved in plan making has needed a lot of patience. It has taken 3 years from the first consultation to the sight of the final draft plan. Now local organisations have a firm policy footing to raise awareness of the food system in Hull.

Case study: Locavore Glasgow

Locavore is a social enterprise formed to help build a more sustainable local food system, better for the local economy, the environment and the communities. It comprehends a grocery store, an urban farm, a veg box scheme and wholesale trading.

The farm

The farm is set up over 3 sites totalling around 3 acres, which are all within 10 miles of Glasgow city centre. They are managed to organic principles and all sites are in conversion to organic certification.

The Croft site is half an acre of mixed vegetable production which is used both as a productive garden and as a site from which to give people experience of small scale organic horticulture through the Grow the Growers scheme.

This site is open to the public weekly to offer volunteering and informal training opportunities to local people. Part of the area is also rented out to local charity South Seeds who let out small raised beds to people who want to try out growing for the first time.

The Croft was taken in 2013 under a rental agreement with Queens Park Bowling and Tennis Club. The site was formally their tennis courts, which had become overgrown.

The Left Field site is the largest garden at 2.5 acres and The Rouken Glen site is the newest and smallest garden occupying just a 10th of an acre. The Rouken Glen is a former council plant nursery and comprises of a glasshouse and two poly tunnels which are valuable protected growing space to grow greens through the cold months and hot crops like tomatoes, chillies and aubergines through the summer.

Grow the Growers scheme

The Grow the Grower scheme enables keen gardeners to take their interest further and take their first steps into growing commercially.

Through this programme, each new grower gets a 25 square metre plot at the Croft where they can grow organic produce to sell to Locavore. They are supported with monthly sessions at other sites where they can experience scale-appropriate market garden tools and pick up experience of working with a larger site. The aim of the programme is to increase the number of skilled and confident organic gardeners in the Greater Glasgow area so the local food network becomes more diverse and sustainable.

Case study: Cardiff Salad Garden

Cardiff Salad Garden is a Community Interest Company growing high quality mixed leaf salad in the centre of Bute Park, Cardiff. The garden is a commercial enterprise and community space with a focus on working with disadvantaged members of the community to offer gardening opportunities and stimulate social interaction and community cohesion. The primary focus has been on working with Asylum Seekers and refugees, but the garden is broadening this to work with a range of community members.

The challenge

The idea for the project began several years ago, with founders Fissha Teklom and Sophie Durnan using their skills in community engagement and organic growing to develop the idea for a commercially successful community garden. The aim was to secure a central location to avoid the need for transport and be fully accessible. They identified Bute Park Education Centre as the perfect spot and entered into lengthy discussions with several Cardiff Council departments. The tenacity paid off and the duo signed a three-year contract for one 5m x 30m greenhouse in the nurseries area behind the Education Centre and Secret Garden Café. The work started in May 2017, using a small Do-It Award from UnLtd and they have since built raised beds, created the infrastructure to pick and pack salad and host volunteer days.

The Vision

Cardiff Salad Gardens aim is to produce enough salad to be a profitable company with two part time employees whilst offering volunteer opportunities to the wider community. The vision is to grow high quality salad in an organic way and deliver a high quality product all year round to restaurants and the public in Cardiff. Even though the product is not currently certified organic, the grower Sophie is experienced with Soil Association Standards. Most deliveries are made on bicycle.

From this strong initial focus the team wants to open the garden up to the community to be a place where people can come to experience food growing, enjoy meeting new people, build confidence and promote wellbeing.

Successes to date

The company delivers to over 10 restaurants across Cardiff, including the Secret Garden Café and Pettigrew tea rooms located less than a few hundred metres from where the salad is grown.

The company is already self-financing the core overheads but not yet employee wages. They have the capacity to double the customer base and will use this income to pay staff wages over the long term.

A number of informative volunteer taster days have been held and the company is now opening the garden up for volunteers to join on Mondays and Wednesdays for regular sessions. Working with Cardiff Health Access Practice, the garden is offering opportunities to asylum seekers who are interested in coming to the garden. The garden is also exploring a social prescribing model with GPs, where people can come to the garden to reduce isolation, promote positive mental health and improve fitness.

Marketing is one area where the team would like more support and therefore welcomed the opportunity to get involved in Cardiff's Veg City. The campaign will provide an umbrella to bring together potential customers, new volunteers and opportunities for expansion.

Key area 5 – Transform catering and procurement

Actions include:

- Include at least 2 portions in every meal.
- Set up training on cooking with veg for caterers.

Along with retail, restaurants define the fabric of local areas and define the food choices of residents and workers in your area. Restaurants popular with young people, a celebrity restaurant, or learning kitchens are of particular importance. They can inspire others and help gather media and popular support for the campaign.

Local authorities contract out multiple services which include food provision. The UK public sector spends in the region of £2.5 billion a year on food and catering services. In England efforts have been made to improve purchasing through Government Buying standards (GBS). While the GBS and accompanying balanced score card make some provision on veg they do not go far enough. Peas Please are asking public procurement bodies to sign the 2x2020 veg pledge which commits signatories to support the principle that all main courses should include 2 portions of vegetables as standard, within the price, in all public settings. Local authorities and food partnerships can ask their contractors to support this pledge.

You can get your local restaurants and caterers to act now to include at least 2 portions of veg in every meal, make vegetarian meals and side dishes the cheaper and better promoted options on the menu and join the local Veg City campaign. We would like partners and participants to target independent restaurants and food outlets, your workplace or hospital caterer, your local school meal provider and others. The wider Peas Please initiative may already be in touch with some of the larger national and international restaurant chains so if you are planning on getting in touch with local branches of these chains please let us know so we can join forces. For example the [Out to Lunch](#) campaign is calling on all high street restaurants, pubs and cafés to improve the service and food they offer children and one of their criteria is serving two portions of veg with every child's meal.

Local authorities can promote the implementation of healthy food standards which include a strong veg offer in workplace settings. They can also offer award schemes which recognise healthy food being offered out of the home. You can encourage restaurants and caterers to work towards these standards or national accreditation schemes such as [Food for Life Served Here](#).

There is a clear opportunity to improve the veg offered outside of the home and therefore increase consumption. To do this, however, we need to ensure there is a rich skills base within the food sector to do interesting and tasty things with veg.

The employment and skills agenda continues to be determined, largely, at the national level. However, local authorities, food partnerships and other key stakeholders have a number of levers through which to encourage skills development for both adults and young people, which could be used to develop veg-specific competencies in the catering and hospitality industries.

English local authorities are now subject, under the Enterprise Act 2016, to 'apprenticeship start' targets for public bodies; with 2.4% of the workforce of all but the smallest local authorities required to be apprentices by 2020. Where local authorities run in-house catering services, apprenticeship starts in the hospitality and catering trades could count towards this target, and in-turn could contain veg-specific training modules determined by the local authority employer and its contracted training providers.

The 'Metro Mayor' combined authorities have been granted some skills responsibilities: with decision making powers over, variably, the distribution of Adult Skills Budgets, the creation of Apprenticeship Grants for Employers schemes, and the structure post-16 education systems. Some English local authorities have also worked in

partnership with local businesses through Local Enterprise Partnerships to influence the distribution of funds allocated by the national Skills Funding Agency.

Resources

[Healthier and more sustainable catering: A toolkit for serving food to adults, PHE \(2014\)](#), practical advice on how to make catering affordable, healthier and more sustainable. They are being updated to include the latest dietary advice on fibre consumption and are therefore likely to include recommendations for increased veg.

[Corporate Health Standard, Public Health Wales \(2015\)](#), includes a requirement for “A balanced menu with promotion of healthier options, which shows the types and proportions of food that employees need to eat to achieve a healthy diet”.

Case study: Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice in Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Background

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (UHB) has a statutory responsibility for improving the health of their population and providing individual patient centred care. Over half (54%) of the adult population and 21.5% of children in Cardiff and Vale are overweight or obese and just 31% of adults report eating at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables daily.

With a population of 445,000, the Health Board has a significant opportunity to promote health and wellbeing – a quarter of residents attend a hospital based service each year. Cardiff and Vale UHB recognises that it's 14,500 staff, as well as providing high quality care and treatment services, are role models for healthy lifestyles and aims to set the highest standard possible for healthy eating for staff and non-patient food.

Making the healthy choice the easy choice

Policy

Catering, Procurement, Clinical and Public Health Dietetics and the Public Health Team formed a partnership to develop and implement a Healthy Retail Policy. The policy requires their outlets (restaurants, cafes and retail outlets) to ensure the healthy choice is the easy choice, through compliance with specific criteria. One key criteria is that every restaurant and retail outlet has a minimum of 75% of the food and drink sold to be a healthier option. Healthy is defined based on a combination of the Eatwell Guide, the Food Standards Agency traffic light system and Welsh Government Health Promoting Hospital Vending Guidance.

Freshly prepared food and refurbished restaurant

The restaurant at the main hospital in Cardiff (University Hospital of Wales) was refurbished and re-launched as Y Gegin (Welsh for 'The Kitchen') in October 2016, and takes it back to basics of cooking, preparing food fresh on site.

Increasing availability and consumption of fruit and vegetables

Through the Peas Please veg pledge the UHB have also committed to increase the intake of fresh vegetables in restaurants and cafes by:

1. Stir Fry pasta dishes are cooked fresh in front of the customer and incorporate up to eight fresh vegetables and spices in every stir fry and pasta dish.
2. BBQ marinated meats go into artisan bread accompanied with a fresh rainbow salad
3. Homemade sandwiches contain a minimum of three vegetables; tomato, lettuce and courgettes.

In September 2017, as part of their Veg Pledge, a fruit and vegetable stall was set up outside the main entrance to the University Hospital of Wales, and due to the success, another stall is now being trailed at the University Hospital Llandough.

Auditing compliance

The Partnership audits the restaurants, cafes and retail outlets bi-annually against the criteria. The latest audits show 77.5% of the food offer is healthy across the outlets, with Y Gegin achieving 85%. The sales figures are also astounding, projecting an annual profit after a long history of deficit. Income is re-invested back into patient care and services. Healthy food certainly sells!

See this [short film for more information](#).

Key area 6 – Reduce waste

Actions include:

- Support food waste reduction through roadshows, workshops and city campaigns and initiatives.
- Monitor and educate about benefits of eating seasonal, local and the impacts of food waste.

When we throw food in the bin, we are effectively throwing away all the energy, labour, water and natural resources that went into making that food in the first place. About one third of food produces is never eaten and is thrown away – on the farm, by companies, by supermarkets and at home. That’s enough to feed three billion people, so the consequences of food waste are economic, environmental and humanitarian, and simply unacceptable.

Many local food partnerships are developing work in this area, either by bringing people together in events to raise awareness of food waste or actively getting involved in redistribution networks linking up retailers and other food businesses with charities and end users.

Veg Cities can provide a framework and amplify the work you are already doing, or bring other partners into the fold who can help towards the bigger vision of this work. Fresh vegetables and salads are the largest contributor to avoidable food waste, making up 19% of household food waste by weight or 810,000 tonnes and worth £1.7 billion.¹⁰ In the out of home sector, fruit and vegetables they make up 15% of avoidable food waste.¹¹

There is a strong argument for campaigns which focus on reducing food waste to focus specifically on vegetables and promote strategies to cut back vegetable waste and in turn promote greater consumption.

Resources

Small Scale Food Waste Event [toolkit from Feedback](#)

Feeding the 5000 [toolkit from Feedback](#)

Schools education resources from [Resource Futures](#)

First year Report of [Waste Less Save More project of Sainsbury’s](#)

Social network [Plan Zheroes: linking up food businesses and charities](#)

Charity [Fareshare: redistributing surplus food to charities](#)

Tips for reducing [food waste at home from Love Food Hate Waste, a project of WRAP](#)

Rescuing farm food – fruit and veg in the field that would otherwise never be harvested – [the gleaning network](#)

¹⁰ WRAP (2013). *Household Food and Drink Waste in the United Kingdom 2012*. Available online at: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/hhfdw-2012-main.pdf.pdf>

¹¹ WRAP (2013). *Overview of Waste in the UK Hospitality and Food Service Sector*. Available online at: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Overview%20of%20Waste%20in%20the%20UK%20Hospitality%20and%20Food%20Service%20Sector%20FINAL.pdf>

Case study: Wasteless Suppers

Wasteless is a collaborative platform where food businesses get involved to deliver feasts using food surplus, food that would have been wasted and food that is produced in a less wasteful manner. It was initiated in 2017 by Food Cardiff members Lia Moutselou ([Lia's Kitchen](#)) and Rebecca Clark ([Green City Events](#)).

Wasteless builds from the work Lia and Rebecca have been doing together on food waste reduction projects through community cook ups with food destined for the bin, roadshows, school lunch clubs and pop up street food stalls, in collaboration with Love Food Hate Waste campaigns and other local partners. It's a platform to help local businesses tap into their creative and sustainable practices and to showcase elements of Cardiff's existing and emerging 'wasteless' food movement as well as to bring new businesses to the table to inspire and be inspired by them in taking a wasteless approach.

Wasteless also aims to bring crowds to the table inspiring and educating them about the potential of food they may waste and informing them about ways to be savvier at home. The events have been much more than a meal with guests, engaging people in discussions about their environmental footprint, leaving more empowered after having shared knowledge and ideas on their journey to becoming wasteless.

The project joined Cardiff's Veg City campaign early on to help support people and businesses to eat their veg not waste it.

Why food waste?

'Food waste is bad business practice - akin to throwing money in the bin. It's unsustainable for future generations, and breeds bad habits in an already throwaway society', says Melissa from the Penylan Pantry. 'Being part of Cardiff's Wasteless dinners was a huge honour and a very exciting prospect, working with others to help raise awareness, offer support and encourage businesses, and the public to think differently about food waste.'

The Suppers

Three Wasteless suppers have taken place in the Welsh capital of Cardiff so far, preserving, pickling, cooking and serving around 261 kilos of food and feeding 155 guests and volunteers. The food was collected in the weeks prior to the events, then safely handled, stored, distributed and cooked by the participating chefs/businesses and volunteers to offer five-course feasts transforming food surplus into a fine dining experience. All participating chefs and cooks helped develop the menu as collections went along with a lot of last minute adaptations.

Jan's (Anna Loka) recipe of mixed vegetable rostis with a butternut squash sauce and crisp fried greens (a great use for wilted greens) inspired a lot of our diners to go home and look at their vegetable draw twice before clearing it up. Penylan Pantry's starter balls mixing various vegetable, fish and meat into delicious bites showed people you don't need much to create an impressive party platter. Lia's Kitchen also demonstrated how to make the most of seasonal resources through her new-found, personal obsession with dehydration, pickles and pickling methods from around the globe.

The Wasteless suppers have involved a range of food businesses with different practices and business models. In total, 18 Wasteless partners to date have prepared, donated food and hosted the suppers - a number that has by far exceeded Lia and Becca's expectations.

Celine Anouilh from the Chartered Institute of Waste Management in Wales said, 'I much enjoyed Wasteless dinners raising awareness of food waste. Lia and Rebecca used of the right ingredients to produce a taste meal and an inspiring event: a partnership between enthusiastic and ethical businesses, forgotten food from super markets shelves, great cooking skills, creativity and passion! I ate a delicious meal, met wonderful people''

Much of the food donated by retailers was mixed vegetables past its best before date. Meat is the 'guest' and when it's present it's often the lesser known cuts and types of meat such as mutton, inspiring people to make the most of vegetables and the offer aisles to help contribute to waste reduction and save money.

Wasteless was a finalist for the Cardiff Life Awards in the first six months of its life and has received much attention from the public and the media. The question the project keeps getting is: when is the next Wasteless happening?

Case study: Cutting back on waste so more vegetables are eaten

Brighton and Hove was one of the first Veg City pilots. The city pledged to work with caterers in the citywide Good Food Procurement Group to increase veg consumption by, among other actions, inviting them to take the '2 x 2020' pledge to serve two portions of veg with each main meal. The Group is made up of a range of large organisations including all three local NHS Trusts, the City Council and County Councils, education establishments including nurseries, primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, venues like the Brighton Pavilion, Brighton & Hove Albion football club, local leisure provider and workplace canteens. Collectively they serve over 2 million meals a month. Feedback from an online survey showed that 45% of the caterers that responded already serve two portions of veg with every meal and 45% pledged to do so.

One of the key caterers in the group is the Brighton and Hove City Council's Primary School Meals Service. Working with their contracted caterer, Autograph, almost 11,500 meals are served in 90 mins every day across 64 primary schools in the city. Children choose from 2 hot options daily which are cooked from scratch. The children are given two 35g portions of veg with every meal plus they also have a salad bar – so they already meet the target of 2 x 2020.

The council asked the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership to carry out a food waste audit at two of the primary schools to better understand:

- HOW much food is actually being wasted
- WHAT is being wasted
- WHY the food is being wasted

The most wasted type of food was vegetables. The reasons behind this had to do with consistency (many children prefer their vegetables raw), shape or simply the type of veg on offer. The favourite vegetables were carrots, followed by cucumber and corn.

Based on the findings of the food waste audits, the Food Partnership made a number of recommendations and the Brighton & Hove City Council Primary School Meals Service pledged to:

- Trial raw veg
- Promote "Eat a Rainbow" message
- Train staff to reinvigorate salad bars
- Increase consumption of vegetables by children, rather than just increase number of portions available, with a target to reduce food waste.

The Food Partnership will be running two more food waste audits in the summer of 2018, so they can see if any of the interventions have been successful. They will combine the audit with some classroom activities to help the children understand about food waste and about different types of vegetables.

FAQs

What is Veg Cities?

Veg Cities is a feature campaign of Sustainable Food Cities. The campaign is currently coordinated by food and farming charity Sustain in partnership with the wider [Peas Please](#) initiative.

The aim of Veg Cities is to increase availability and consumption of veg. Food partnerships and/or local authorities can achieve this by working with different local businesses and organisations, from convenience stores to schools and local markets, in six different areas from promoting veg to supporting local businesses and transforming catering and procurement.

Is Veg Cities the same as Veg Power?

[Veg Power](#) is a national marketing campaign, part of the umbrella of Peas Please. Peas Please are creating a permanent advertising fund for vegetables – the Veg Power fund – a dedicated advertising fund to improve the image of vegetables for consumers. The initiative is backed by chefs Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and Jamie Oliver. Veg Cities will tap into campaigns such as Veg Power to radically alter our perceptions of vegetables, as well as support alternative local public marketing campaigns.

What support is available for Veg Cities campaigns?

The Veg Cities team can support you with relevant resources, advice, and in developing your local campaign plan, as well as helping to promote and track your achievements and news through our website, social media and other campaign communications. We organise meetings and webinars to train local campaign leads and coordinate national action. The website (to go live in June 2018) hosts assets for those involved including campaign logos, case studies, posters, activities and much more.

Veg Cities is the featured campaign of the Sustainable Food Cities network until end of June 2019. There are currently over 50 Sustainable Food Cities around the UK. Each has a cross-sector food partnership involving the local authority, local businesses and organisations, academics and NGOs working together for better and healthier food. If your local area is not currently a member of the Sustainable Food Cities network, get in touch with Sustainable Food Cities to enquire about joining the network: www.sustainablefoodcities.org

Who is the target audience and who can get involved?

'Partners' are responsible for running the campaign locally, from setting up a core working group to engaging participants to take action. They are typically led by one or more individuals working in a local authority or food partnership, working alongside other individuals and organisations interested in promoting and delivering the campaign locally.

'Participants' are organisations or businesses, e.g. schools, hospitals, restaurants, retailers, community organisations etc., taking action to increase vegetable consumption and promote veg. If you have organisations or businesses who want to take action but don't fit into one of the seven sectors, get in touch with us to see if there's a way we can work with them.

The campaign is not directly targeting individuals, although it seeks to influence them through different settings in the sectors listed above. However, individuals can sign up through our website to our mailing list and opt to join as volunteers or supporters of their local campaigns. Individuals are encouraged to speak with their local restaurants, retailers, and other venues within their communities to take action through the Veg Cities campaign. Individuals can also get involved in other existing Sustain campaigns such as the [Children's Food Campaign](#).

What kinds of actions/activities are involved?

There is a menu of options for each sector taking part, allowing the institution or business to choose the action that is best suited to them. Activities include promoting veg, increasing the lines of veg in retail, more veg out of school hours, setting up a food growing network, getting 2 portions of veg in every meal, and others.

Can participants take different actions to those suggested?

It's important we keep an accurate record of all action on veg taking place in your local area, so we can see collectively what difference it is making nationally. Therefore we encourage partners and participants to record what action they are taking on the website, as well as the expected impact, e.g. number of meals influenced, number of people engaged. If a large number of participants in your local area are interested in taking a different set of actions, please get in touch with us, so we can consider refining and improving the proposed actions on the website so that all actions can be logged.

Why veg and not fruit as well?

Despite the mounting evidence of the beneficial health effects, we now buy about the same amount of veg as we did in the mid-1970s. Fruit purchasing (fresh and processed), on the other hand, has increased by over 50% over the same period, indicating that specific attention is needed on veg purchasing and consumption.

Are you prioritising veg that is produced sustainably?

We encourage all involved in Veg Cities to prioritise more sustainably produced vegetables where possible. We appreciate that with some audiences there is a reluctance to spend more, but through our case studies we hope to show how this can be offset by serving less, wasting less or changing recipes and menus. This may include promoting certified veg that is more environmentally sustainable such as LEAF marque, Organic or Biodynamic, or considering the economic sustainability that may come from shortening supply chains, or supporting producers and suppliers who are paid a decent wage, rather than be encouraged to reduce prices or supply veg for free.

Appendix 1: Veg Cities pilot announcements

← → ↻ 🏠 <https://www.cardiffnewsroom.co.uk/releases/c/16704.html> 📄 ☆ ⚙️ 🔍 📄



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Cardiff pledges to become an Urban Veg Pioneer

Cardiff has become one of the first UK cities to sign a Veg Pledge committing it to using its influence to increase the consumption of vegetables.

The latest government dietary guidelines suggest that we should be eating 7 portions of fruit and vegetables a day, yet a recent report by the Food Foundation revealed that 80% of adults and 95.5% of children aged 11 – 16 are not eating enough.

Council Leader, Cllr Huw Thomas, who signed the pledge on behalf of the city at a Vegetable Summit held in Cardiff Bay yesterday, said: "My administration is determined to get to grips with the issue of health inequality in our city. That's why I'm proud to sign this pledge, to help give residents the opportunity to make healthier choices. On average we should all be eating at least one more portion of vegetables every day to decrease the risk of diet related diseases, so by becoming a 'veg city' we want to educate our children about the importance of a healthy diet, and ensure our schools and Council premises support people in eating at least more vegetables."

As part of the pledge Cardiff Council will:

- Promote a campaign aimed at getting children aged 5 - 11 to eat more vegetables.
- Continue to support the rollout of the award-winning School Holiday Enrichment Programme (Food and Fun) in areas of need across Cardiff to ensure children are receiving two portions of vegetables in their main meal.
- Work towards supporting people to eat two portions of vegetables in main meals provided by the Council's catering services, specifically in schools catering, staff canteens and external venues.

Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment, Cllr Michael Michael, said: "Getting people to eat more vegetables is no easy task and will require public, private and community organisations to all work together. Thanks to the fantastic work being done with our partners via Food Cardiff, we are already a Bronze Sustainable Food City and signing this pledge take us closer to our shared goal of making local, healthy, affordable and environmentally friendly food a defining feature of Cardiff."

Katie Palmer, who heads up Food Cardiff said: "We are delighted that stakeholders from across the food system in Cardiff have taken the "pledge for more veg" and we look forward to working with organisations in the city as we develop our campaign to become one of the first Veg Cities in the UK."

Making a pledge for more veg

We pledge to play our part to help everyone in Britain to eat an extra portion of veg per day

by Chloe Clarke, Project Manager

We are excited to be making a joint pledge with Brighton & Hove City Council to make it easier for everyone to eat more veg as part of the national **Peas Please** campaign.

We pledge to become a pioneer **Veg City**. It sounds good but what does this actually mean? These are some of the actions that our city has committed to so far:

- We will work with public and private sector caterers who serve over 1.5 million meals a month, to serve an extra portion of veg with each meal.
- We will run training for chefs and cooking classes for the public to make veg the star of the plate.
- We will promote veg eating in schools and nurseries alongside our Sugar Smart work.
- We will promote the uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers to help low income families with young children buy fresh or frozen veg.
- We will work with developers to include spaces for food growing and access to places where residents can buy veg within new developments.

On Tuesday 24 October at The Vegetable Summit, a national conference in London organised by healthy eating charity [the Food Foundation](#), Deputy Council Leader Gill Mitchell and Vic Borrill, Director of the Food Partnership will make the pledge on behalf of residents.

Cllr Mitchell said; “We are extremely proud to be making this commitment to become a ‘Veg City’ and encourage everyone in Brighton & Hove to include more vegetables in their meals.

“From our very youngest children in nurseries and schools, to the owners of our many cafes and restaurants and major food producers and suppliers, and developers delivering landscaping that could include edible planting, we will work with Brighton & Hove Food Partnership and others in the city to explore exciting and innovative ways to improve access to fresh good healthy food.

“Embedding ‘Veg City’ in the heart of our five year food strategy will also build on the success of our Sugar Smart campaign and further improve the health of our residents.”

Trailblazers

The national campaign, which will run for the next three years, aims to change how people eat at home and in restaurants or catered environments by encouraging extra portions of vegetables to be included in meals. Other ideas include asking food manufacturers to include more veg in their products such as having bigger vegetable portions in ready-meals and launching an ad campaign aimed at making veggies appealing to children.

Brighton and Hove will be one of only a handful of cities pledging to become a pioneer Veg City so will be presented as ‘trailblazers’. Our Primary School Meals Service that provides lunch for every primary school in Brighton & Hove will lead the way, committing to increase consumption of vegetables by the children, rather than just increasing the number of portions of vegetables available, with a target to reduce food waste. They will also be trialling raw veg as well as cooked on the new menu.

About the Peas Please campaign

[The Food Foundation](#) conducted a wide-ranging consultation with over 150 organisations including farmers, retailers, fast food and restaurant chains, caterers, processors, civil society organisations and government departments to identify the food system challenges to veg consumption and find ways in which these barriers can be overcome.

The Peas Please campaign is about getting people in the UK to eat more veg. Initiatives such as 5-a-day have had little impact on veg consumption and consumer behaviour change so Peas Please aims to change the food system to support consumers to make healthier choices.

Veg Cities are those where the city or local authority, in partnership with the private sector and community organisations use their powers to drive up vegetable consumption.

Organisations and individuals can sign up to the Peas Please Pledge:

“We pledge to play our part to help everyone in Britain to eat an extra portion of veg per day.”

If you would like your organisation to be part of the Veg City initiative or would like to find out more information please contact Chloe Clarke on 01273 431 700 or email chloe@bhfood.org.uk.