



Media Release | 03 July 2012

FareShare welcomes DEFRA roundtable with major retailers to prevent food waste

FareShare is meeting major retailers today to discuss new ways of cutting food waste at a roundtable facilitated by Environment Secretary, Caroline Spelman.

Today's meeting brings together interested parties with the aim of developing a concerted approach to enable charities like FareShare to tap into even more surplus food to redistribute to those in need.

While there are currently pockets of good practice taking place across the retail and manufacturing industries, ensuring that good food goes to people who need it as a priority, there is more that can be done. 15 million tonnes of food is wasted every year throughout the UK by households, manufacturers, retailers and the hospitality sector combined.

Lindsay Boswell, CEO, FareShare said: "An inevitable consequence of the public's expectation of constantly full shelves means that there will be store level surpluses. FareShare supports over 700 charities that are tackling food poverty and could collect these surpluses, thereby preventing unnecessary food waste."

FareShare welcomes this important discussion as it comes at a time when there has been a sharp rise in the demand for food, as people across Britain struggle to put dinner on the table.

According to FareShare's National Impact Survey, almost half of the charities it supports reported an increase in demand for food in 2011. This combined with soaring food prices and the recession has put further strain on families and people on low incomes.

Additionally, a third of the charities surveyed are facing funding cuts, with 65% of these slashing food budgets in an effort to stay afloat.

Environment Secretary, Caroline Spelman said: "Preventing food waste protects the environment, helps communities and makes good business sense. Charities and retailers are already working together to make great use of surplus food and I'm hosting the roundtable today to look at new ways to make the system work even better."

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Notes to Editors

To arrange a visit to FareShare or to speak with CEO Lindsay Boswell or Director of Food Jim Trower, please contact:

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About FareShare

FareShare is a charity that fights hunger and food waste. It does this by rescuing good quality surplus food that would otherwise go to waste and sending it to charities across the UK. By working regularly with over 100 food and drink companies, last year FareShare rescued 3,600 tonnes of surplus food. This contributed towards more than 8.6 million meals, feeding 35,500 people a day.

FareShare currently has 17 locations across the UK delivering to over 700 community projects, including hostels, day centres, women's refuges and children's breakfast clubs.

As well as being voted the Third Sector's Most Admired Charity in 2010, FareShare was recently named as one of the Global Journal's Top 100 NGO's worldwide.