

May 2025

Urgent call for increased access to fruit and vegetables

We are writing to you on behalf of a coalition of concerned charities, NGOs, not-for-profits, food businesses, and individuals who are deeply troubled by the number of people across the UK who continue to struggle to access fruit and vegetables.

It is a national scandal that in the UK, two-thirds of adults and nine out of ten children aren't getting their recommended 400g of fruit and vegetables per day¹. This is particularly concerning when we know that a better diet can significantly improve or even reverse long-term health conditions.

One in ten deprived areas in the UK are classified as food deserts², lacking access to fruit and vegetables. Over 10.2 million people are living in areas where access to affordable, nutritious food is severely limited². In these deprived regions, 41% of households lack access to a car, making it even more challenging to reach supermarkets that offer fresh produce³. This lack of availability and affordability exacerbates the issue, making it difficult for many to meet their recommended daily intake. Addressing the problem of "fruit and veg deserts" is crucial to improving the nation's diet and overall health. We propose a collaborative approach involving local authorities, charities, and the food industry to improve access to fruit and vegetables. We advocate for government policies that make nutritious food more accessible to all and encourage everyone across the UK to eat more fruit and veg, in line with the Eatwell guide.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has recently announced it will create a new National Food Strategy in 2025 working cross-departmentally, which we warmly welcome. It is vital that Defra works with the Department for Health and Social Care, the Department for Education, the Department for Business and Trade, and the Treasury to deliver an effective strategy that places access to nutritious fruit and vegetables at the heart.

We propose the following policies to achieve our collective mission of making fruit and vegetables more accessible to all, thus aiding the nation's diet and wellbeing:



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1. **Establish a national Fruit and Veg forum** to foster collaboration and leverage impact.
2. **Simplify funding models** to reduce bureaucracy for charities and not-for-profits.
3. **Launch a Community Eatwell programme** to provide targeted healthy eating support.
4. **Increase funding for the Healthy Start scheme** in line with inflation.
5. **Promote education on food and healthy eating** in schools.

We hope that you will work with us to deliver these policies, so that we can collectively turn the tide on nutritional deficiency and ensure that access to nutritious fruit and vegetables is a reality for everybody.

Yours faithfully,

Alexandra Rose Charity, Barfoots, Community Shop, Feeding Britain, Felix Project, FEAST With Us, Gavin Wren, Hackney School of Food, Hubbub, IGD, innocent drinks, Joe Woodhouse, Squished, UKHarvest

¹National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS). Results from Years 9 to 11 (2016/2017 to 2018/2019). Public Health England, 2020.

²Social Market Foundation and Kellogg's. "Food Deserts in the UK." Kellogg's, 2018

³Sky News. "UK food deserts: 1.2 million people too far from supermarkets to get cheap fresh food." Sky News, 2018

