

# Sustain's Manifesto for a Better Food Britain

General Election 2019



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### Sustain's Manifesto for a Better Food Britain

The food system in the UK employs 3.9 million people (13% of UK employment) and is worth £113 billion to GDP. A General Election will set the priorities for the next five years for this critical sector. The Sustain alliance want to see party manifestos across the political spectrum that improve the UK's food system, providing the opportunity to improve millions of people's lives; relieve the NHS of costly health problems; boost economic prospects for thousands of British farmers, fishers, businesses and communities; and help UK food contribute to national goals of preventing child obesity, improving animal welfare, slashing climate emissions to net zero and restoring nature.

Sustain is the alliance for better food and farming, representing around 100 national organisations working together to advocate food and agriculture policies and practices. We also work with many more at regional and local level and are a registered charity.

Below we set out our top ten priority areas and our key policy asks within them. Below is a ten-point summary, followed by a section containing further policy recommendations, details and evidence.

#### **1. Plan for an orderly Brexit, minimising the impact on our food, farmers and fishers**

- Acknowledge that leaving the European Union without a deal would be disastrous for the food and farming sectors, and avoid a no-deal Brexit
- Commit to maintaining and enhancing food, farming, marine conservation, antibiotics stewardship and environmental standards in future trade deals
- Commit to making future trade negotiations open, transparent and democratically accountable to our representatives in Parliament

#### **2. Support sustainable farming and food producers**

- Deliver a multi-annual budget to support a payment for public goods approach for farm support and recognise public health, whole-farm agro-ecological systems and soil health as public goods
- Introduce mandatory and enforced codes of practice to ensure all companies in the supply chain play fair to support stable trading and decent livelihoods for farmers, at home and abroad
- Reintroduce a body in England to improve farm and related workers' pay and conditions (matching or exceeding equivalent support in Wales and Scotland)

#### **3. Commit to net-zero emissions from farming and land use, and to restoring nature**

- Develop a Land Use Strategy that sets out priorities for farming and land use that meet the challenge of climate and nature emergency
- Establish a National Agro-ecology Development Bank to help fund the transition to climate- and nature-friendly farming and land use
- Introduce a new Environment Act, setting measurable, accountable cross-departmental targets
- Upgrade public sector food procurement standards to support farmers and fishers who are demonstrably working to address the climate and nature emergency (see point 8)

- Measure farm level waste and set targets to reduce food waste by 50 per cent from farm to fork
- Work with retailers to relax cosmetic standards for vegetables, to reduce waste and help farmers get paid a fair price for their crops regardless of minor produce imperfections
- Relax the rules on using food waste to feed animals, so that pigs and poultry can once again eat food waste and not resource-intensive soya or grain
- Develop a programme of education to promote sustainable diets to reduce consumption-based emissions and impacts

#### **4. Restore the marine environment and sustainable fishing livelihoods**

- Establish a legally-binding requirement to fish sustainably (at Maximum Sustainable Yield) as soon as possible
- Address data deficiency by fully assessing all UK fish stocks (estimated cost £30 million per year over the next five years), including collecting better data from fishing vessels, CCTV cameras on board and better observer coverage
- Reallocate fishing quotas to benefit small-scale fleets, coastal communities and to reward sustainability
- Extend mandatory codes of practice to fishers, to ensure all companies in the supply chain play fair to support stable trading and decent fishing livelihoods

#### **5. Cultivate a sustainable local food economy and jobs**

- Devise an investment plan for local food infrastructure, such as local abattoirs, processing facilities, wholesale markets, local food distribution hubs, in coastal and rural communities, funded by whatever replaces EU structural funding streams in the UK, for example the UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- Adopt a national action plan for increased food retail diversity, supporting alternative food retail (SMEs and non-multiples) to a 10% target of grocery retail market sales
- Set targets for adoption of certified (real) Living Wage employers across the food sector, with tax breaks for those companies renewing certification

#### **6. Commit to ending hunger and guarantee every child's right to food**

- Commit to introducing a Children's Right to Food in legislation and a cross-departmental government strategy to end hunger in the UK
- Commit to better promotion of Healthy Start food vouchers for low-income pregnant women and young children; increase the voucher value (unchanged from £3.10 in 10 years despite rising food costs) and align eligibility thresholds with other benefits, such as free childcare for two-year-olds
- Maintain funding for universal infant free school meals and extend free school meals to all children from families on a low income
- End the postcode lottery of meals-on-wheels provision by ensuring local councils receive sufficient funds to pay for meal deliveries for people in need

#### **7. Champion children's food and health**

- Commit to continuation of revenue from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy being ring-fenced for children's health promotion
- Protect children from exposure to advertising for unhealthy food and drinks, with a 9pm watershed on all media, including television, radio, online, cinema and digital

- Extend restriction of unhealthy food advertising within 100 metres of schools to include nurseries, children’s centres and community sports and leisure centres, and ban unhealthy food and drink sponsorship in schools and at major sporting events and venues
- Prevent child-friendly brand equity and licensed characters from being associated with unhealthy food and drink products

## 8. Require all government and public sector food to be healthy and sustainable

- Allocate adequate budget and other resources to enable all public sector settings to be able to buy and serve healthy, sustainable food
- Introduce and monitor mandatory public sector catering standards (such as Food for Life Served Here bronze award as minimum) for all public sector organisations

## 9. Require food safety, standards and clear labelling

- Ban the routine preventative use of antibiotics in groups of healthy farm animals, and oversee dramatic reductions, sometimes bans, on farm use of antibiotics 'critically important' for human medicine. Ensure that new trade deals support – and do not undermine – international efforts to reduce farm antibiotic use
- Champion mandatory food labels, especially for meat, fish and dairy, on where and how it is produced and processed, helping to stimulate public awareness, consumer choice and the market for sustainably produced and higher welfare food
- Commit to mandatory front-of-pack traffic light nutrition labelling
- Protect shoppers from being misled by introducing legal definitions for food names and marketing terms (for example, bread having definitions for sourdough, artisan, wholegrain, heritage, craft, and fresh)

## 10. Ensure good food governance

- Commit to all existing and future Government investment and spend on food, farming and fishing to be assessed against its impact on climate change and the natural environment
- Restore funding and other adequate powers and resources to the agencies and inspectors charged with keeping our food, animals and the environment safe and well protected
- Commit to a National Food Strategy and the mechanisms and budget needed to deliver it
- Give more powers to local areas to shape their food system and environment, and support the development of food partnerships in every area, building on the inspirational Sustainable Food Cities model

### Contact details

The Sustain alliance can connect enquirers with specialists working on the issues outlined in this statement.

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## 1. Plan for an orderly Brexit, minimising the impact on our food, farmers and fishers

The agri-food industry employs 3.9 million people (13% of UK employment) and is worth £113 billion to GDP. Food and drink exports alone generate £22 billion for our economy. The Sustain alliance has expressed profound concerns about the implications for food, farming, fishing and the environment of a no-deal Brexit. You can read them on Sustain's website, but in summary, a no-deal Brexit could interrupt trade routes worth billions to Britain's food, farming and fishing sectors and disrupt our everyday food supply. Over 8 million of our fellow citizens in the UK already live in food insecurity – around half of them children – and do not have the means to cope with the significant food price rises predicted by the Bank of England, nor to disruptions in supply, especially of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Sustain alliance members are dismayed at suggestions the UK might suspend or diminish our food standards or prop up poor farming methods, such as overuse of antibiotics in farming. The farming industry is clear that farm livelihoods will be put at risk if they have to compete with cheap food imports produced to lower standards. Analysis claiming we will have more 'cheap' food after Brexit is misplaced as cheap food comes at a cost – to the farmer or food producer, to consumer health, animal welfare, to the environment and jobs in British food and farming.

International trade in food provides great opportunities to support lower income countries and UK diets varied. However, [consumer research](#) carried out by Which? shows that 90% of people think it is important that UK food standards are maintained after Brexit.

We recommend the following:

- Acknowledge that leaving the European Union without a deal would be disastrous for the food and farming sectors, and avoid a no-deal Brexit
- Commit to maintaining and enhancing food, farming, marine conservation, antibiotics stewardship and environmental standards, and do not lower them
- Make future trade negotiations open, transparent and democratically accountable to our representatives in Parliament
- Prioritise healthy food and put our domestic health considerations first. We do not want trade deals to facilitate an influx of unhealthy food and sugary drinks that contribute to increased obesity, heart disease and diabetes; trade deals promoting products high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) would put additional pressure and costs on our NHS
- Require imported food to have high climate, sustainability, safety, health, animal welfare, labour, and antibiotics stewardship standards, certainly no lower than those that apply to domestically produced food
- Refuse investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) (otherwise known as corporate courts) in all future UK trade and investment policy. ISDS allows corporations to sue governments for democratic decisions on things like protecting the environment and public health
- Set out the UK's approach to new development-friendly trade policy by marrying up trade deal with the UK's international commitments on the environment, climate change, human rights and UN Sustainable Development Goals

## 2. Support sustainable farming and food producers

Our health, soils, bees and many British farmers are in trouble, and changes in policy and public investment could do much more to help, for the benefit of everyone. Brexit means that the UK must now take control of how it supports and sets standards for farming, which covers about 70 per cent of the UK's land, and other land use.

The £3.2 billion we are currently spending to support farming under the EU Common Agriculture Policy is not working for the environment or for our farmers. The [Environment Agency](#) says that agriculture is now the largest sector responsible for water pollution in England; wild bees and other pollinators are [in decline](#) and there has been a [48% decline in farmland birds](#) such as the turtle dove, grey partridge, and tree sparrow since 1970. Between 20 to 30% of greenhouse gas emissions are [from food and farming](#) but soil and plants can also act as a carbon sink, as well as help with adaptation, with the right support and advice.

There has been a dramatic loss of English farms over the past decade - a fifth closed between 2005 and 2015 - threatening damage to landscapes, rural jobs and cohesion and natural habitats. The market is also failing farmers as they are often given a poor deal by the major buyers and they receive just 8 per cent of the value of food spend in England.

Poor public support and market returns mean farm workers can suffer. Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland still have agriculture sector wage boards or advisory panels; England does not. Agricultural workers are no longer protected by a specific body in England and we need a new, fair and effective means for farmers and land managers to agree annual wages, with grades for career progression and recognition of skills, and additional issues such as overtime, suitable housing and sick pay.

We recommend the following:

- Support an Agriculture Bill with a multi-annual budget that secures farm payments and a wider framework of advice and training to reward all farmers and land managers for delivering public goods - protecting our precious biodiversity and natural assets, such as climate, soil health, biodiversity, pollinators, water and flood protection and including public health, whole-farm agro-ecological systems and soil health as public goods
- Introduce programmes to encourage production that contribute to public health outcomes, including reducing the over-use of farm antibiotics and dramatically increasing sustainable domestic fruit and vegetable supply.
- Introduce new agriculture, competition and related policy to deliver mandatory codes of practice with an enforcement mechanism to ensure all companies in the food supply chain play fair, to support stable trading and decent livelihoods for all farmers (and fishers), at home and abroad.
- Reintroduce a [body](#) in England to improve farm and related workers' pay and conditions (matching or exceeding equivalent support in Wales and Scotland)

### **3. Commit to net-zero emissions from farming and land use, and to restoring nature**

The United Nations says we could have [just 11 years left](#) to set in motion the necessary changes that would limit the risks of a climate change catastrophe. In 2018 the UN Secretary General [said](#) that humanity and life on Earth now face a 'direct existential threat'. There is widespread agreement that human beings need to change what we produce and consume in order to [keep global warming under 1.5°C](#) and avoid terrible impacts to life on Earth.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released [a report](#) in October 2018 on the 1.5°C target; it concluded that global emissions need to reach net zero around mid-century to give a reasonable chance of limiting warming to 1.5°C. In June 2019 the UK Government announced that the UK would eradicate our net contribution to climate change by 2050, but some MPs and campaigners are calling on the government to make the changes much more quickly. Environmental groups are also concerned that the UK could achieve its goal by using highly questionable international carbon credits, putting pressure on developing nations, whilst avoiding change to our own production and consumption.

Biodiversity loss is also at a critical level. In the UK, over 70% of the land area is used for farming, over 30% of greenhouse gas emissions arise from the food system, and a third of the food we produce goes to waste. Intensive farming and fishing practices are the main drivers of biodiversity loss on land and at sea.

Over 320 pesticides can routinely be used in non-organic farming (and many more could be used in our food production if new trade deals facilitate ill-advised changes to our standards). [Research](#) suggests that if all farming in England and Wales was organic, pesticide use would drop by 98%. Organic farming is more climate-friendly; it stores higher levels of carbon in the soil. If organic farming was common practice in the UK, we could offset at least [23% of agriculture's](#) current greenhouse emissions.

We recommend the following:

- Develop a Land Use Strategy that sets out priorities for farming and land use that meet the challenge of climate and nature emergency
- Establish a National Agro-ecology Development Bank to help fund the transition to climate- and nature-friendly farming and land use
- Help farmers to implement their commitment to net-zero emissions from farming by 2040 and support for farmers and land managers in the transition
- Adopt an interim target of 10% of land being certified organic by 2030, with financial support to help farms go into conversion, alongside promoting other environmental accreditation (such as 100% pasture fed) and measures to build domestic and export markets
- Upgrade public sector food procurement standards, and make this mandatory across all public sector institutions, to support farmers and fishers who are demonstrably working to address the climate and nature emergency. Standards for the £2.4 billion of public money spent annually on food should include less and better meat and dairy; more seasonal fruit and veg; more wholegrain foods; zero waste; certified sustainable ingredients; and verifiably sustainable fish. This would help meet both environmental and public health objectives
- Introduce a new Environment Act, as recommended by the Environmental Audit Committee, setting measurable and accountable and cross departmental targets
- Measure farm level waste and set targets from farm to fork: the current target to reduce food waste in the UK is a modest voluntary agreement of 20 per cent between 2015 and 2025. This does not go far enough and does not include waste at the farm level. A national target commensurate with climate and nature emergency would be to reduce food waste by 50 per cent from farm to fork by 2030, in line with Sustainable Development Goals
- Work with retailers to relax cosmetic standards, to reduce waste and help farmers get a fair price for their crops regardless of minor produce imperfections
- Relax the rules on using food waste to feed animals. Pigs and poultry are primarily fed on pulses, oilseed and cereal crops, using up valuable resources. They should once again be fed on food waste, releasing land and resources for other purpose and reducing feed costs for farmers.
- Promote healthy and sustainable diets – government should introduce a strategy to ensure the UK can radically increase consumption of fruit, vegetables and wholegrain foods and reduce consumption of livestock products, in line with priorities identified by the recent IPCC report on Climate and Land Use. This could include a national education and promotional campaigns for eating seasonal British fruit and veg, for which there is plenty of scope for import substitution. The UK imports £11.1 billion of produce that is in season in UK. Only 17% of fruit consumed in the UK is produced domestically, and self-sufficiency in veg has dropped from 83% thirty years ago to only 54%
- Update the UK's dietary guidelines to include sustainability (environmental impact) as a core indicator. acknowledging that a planet-friendly diet is also good for human health

#### 4. Restore the marine environment and sustainable fishing livelihoods

Historically, the UK's seas have been an abundant source of food, income and employment, but today they are failing to meet their economic potential. [Two thirds of UK stocks](#) have been fished beyond sustainable limits. If allowed to recover they could yield [45% higher landings](#), an additional [2,400 full-time equivalent \(FTE\) jobs](#) and could be worth [£1.4 billion](#) every year to the UK economy. Rebuilding fish populations in our oceans is a win-win for the economy and the environment.

It also makes good business sense for UK caught fish to be sustainable. Demand for sustainable fish is growing [ten times faster than for conventional fish](#). However, some of the UK's cod, herring, plaice, scallop, langoustine and seabass catches are [red-rated 5 \('fish to avoid'\)](#). Businesses that have adopted a sustainable fish policy (including public-sector caterers as part of official Government Buying Standards and voluntary Food for Life Served Here catering mark standards) are not permitted to buy these fish and UK fishers are missing out on valuable markets.

One of the main reasons for UK fisheries getting a poor rating for sustainability is *data deficiency*: an absence of information on fish populations, the impact of fishing on marine habitats, bycatch, and/or fishing activity. The absence of such data means that management measures cannot be applied effectively and sustainability cannot be proved.

The UK currently receives the second largest share of fishing quota of any EU country but gives [98% of it to the large-scale fishing fleet](#) - much of which is controlled by a few companies profiting from leasing-out the rights to fish. Small-scale fishing fleets particularly benefit coastal communities because they land [over 99%](#) of catches into UK ports, to the direct benefit of local sales, processing and transport businesses. By contrast, [around 30%](#) of the fish caught by the large-scale fleet is landed into overseas ports. Shifting just 10% of quota allocation to the small-scale fleet would create an estimated 7,000 jobs. Quota could also be used to reward sustainable fishing and data collection.

We recommend the following:

- Establish a legally-binding requirement to fish sustainably (at Maximum Sustainable Yield) as soon as possible
- Address data deficiency by fully assessing all UK fish stocks (estimated cost £30 million per year over the next five years), including collecting better data from fishing vessels, CCTV cameras on board and better observer coverage
- Reallocate fishing quotas to benefit small-scale fleets, coastal communities and to reward sustainability
- Extend mandatory codes of practice to fishers, to ensure all companies in the supply chain play fair to support stable trading and decent fishing livelihoods

#### 5. Cultivate a sustainable local food economy and jobs

Thriving local economies need to provide diverse enterprise opportunities, jobs with decent pay and conditions, and access to the natural and other resources necessary to help sustainable food producers and enterprises flourish.

A report by the [New Economics Foundation](#) shows the value of supporting local businesses: in one study, Northumberland County Council found that their local suppliers of items such as bread re-spent on average 76% of their income locally, while suppliers based outside the county re-spent on average only 36%. In this example, £1 spent with a local business yields £1.76 for the local economy, while £1 spent with a business outside the area would contribute just 36p. Because of the multiplier effect, it has



been calculated that, as a result, local spending contributes around four times as much to the local economy as spending with non-local businesses.

Take just one example – bread. Sustain runs the Real Bread campaign and we know that industrial plant bakeries are designed to be ‘cost-efficient’. In part, this means an ongoing drive to keep staffing levels to an absolute minimum. We know that 80% of the UK’s 12 million loaf a day market is sliced up between a mere nine companies, operating just 47 factories between them. If the job of baking those loaves were transferred to small local bakeries, the demand of approximately 12 million loaves a day would support 25,000 small bakeries each employing three people – offering a total of 75,000 skilled jobs for local people.

Meanwhile, [our research](#) has found that only one major UK supermarket (Lidl) was paying the (real) Living Wage to their employees, and none were paying this rate to contractors, and that some supermarket leaders (for example, Asda) were being paid over 1,000 times more than the people who work in their shops. Supermarket workers are [presenting to food banks](#) because they cannot afford to buy the food they help sell.

In addition, the ability to buy local and sustainably produced meat, one element of a sustainable diet, is under threat. More [than a third](#) of small abattoirs closed between 2007 and 2017, leaving only 56 small red meat abattoirs in the UK. In 1970 there were reportedly about [1,900 abattoirs](#) in the UK, underpinning the viability of diverse livestock farmers.

We recommend the following:

- Devise an investment plan for local food infrastructure, such as local abattoirs, processing facilities, wholesale markets, local food distribution hubs, in coastal and rural communities, funded by whatever replaces EU structural funding streams in the UK, for example the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and other funding sources. This could also include a food innovation fund, governed by ethical and sustainability criteria
- Adopt a national action plan for increased retail diversity, supporting alternative food retail – such as street and covered markets, food co-ops, box schemes, independent and symbol group shops and community-supported agriculture (CSAs), towards a 10% target of food retail market share
- A plan, supported by appropriate investment and policies, for increased sale of organic and other agro-ecologically produced food to 10% of the retail and foodservice market, and progressively more over time.
- Set targets for adoption of certified (real) Living Wage employers across the food sector, with tax breaks for those companies renewing certification. This would help to improve the quality of jobs and livelihoods, as well as reduce food poverty
- Require all government funding, investment and procurement to abide by key criteria, explicitly to help shift the food, drink, farming and fishing sectors to meet health and sustainability objectives and provide good jobs
- Work with skills sector organisations and industry bodies to devise a plan, with policy and investment commitments, for improving food skills for food innovation, production and preparation that meet the needs of a healthier population, as well as a more seasonal and sustainable diet
- Create a national business advice programme targeting SME food businesses and social enterprises to enable systematic growth in this area, focused on sustainability and creating viable market outlets for agro-ecologically produced food
- Reverse cuts in resources to enforce labour standards in the food system to end worker abuse in terms of pay and conditions and monitor and eliminate modern slavery from the supply chain here and overseas.

## 6. Commit to ending hunger and guarantee every child's right to food

The UN estimates that there are 8.4m people living in households in Britain where adults reported food insecurity, of which 4 million are children. Household food insecurity is “limited access to food ... due to lack of money or other resources”. The issue of lack of access to adequate food has greatly increased in the context of austerity, welfare reform, rising cost of living, increases in food and fuel prices, and stagnant wages.

An assessment of welfare reforms since 2010 showed that these policies affected those in the bottom income deciles the most, in particular, single parents, ethnic minorities, migrants and disabled people. A recent study on food poverty in low-income families found that welfare and immigration policies were “creating hunger among children and families”.

An estimated 1 million children are not currently eligible for free school meals due to changes to free school meal entitlements, despite living in poverty and an estimated 3 million children in the UK are at risk of going hungry during the school holidays.

In the UK more than 1.3 million people over the age of 65 are malnourished. Malnutrition makes people more susceptible to physical and mental ill-health, extends hospital stays and makes re-admission more likely; indeed malnutrition accounts for nearly £20 billion of health and social care spending in England alone. Yet the average cost of a 2-course meals on wheels lunch is only £3.60.

We recommend the following:

- Commit to introducing a Children's Right to Food in legislation and a cross-departmental government strategy to end hunger in the UK. This would ensure that children receive healthy food in nurseries, schools and in holiday programmes, and their families or carers receive support to be able to access and afford a healthy diet
- Commit to better promotion of Healthy Start food vouchers for low-income pregnant women and young children; increase the voucher value (unchanged from £3.10 in 10 years despite rising food costs) and align eligibility thresholds with other benefits, such as free childcare for two-year-olds
- Maintain funding for universal infant free school meals and extend free school meals to all children from families on a low income. The grant for free school meals per pupil should be reviewed and updated to bring it into line with cost of healthy, sustainable food required by School Food Standards, in line with the ambitions of the Department of Health's Eatwell plate
- Provide statutory funding for school holiday provision that includes food
- End the postcode lottery of meals-on-wheels provision by ensuring local councils receive sufficient funds to pay for meal deliveries for people in need

## 7. Champion children's food and health

More than one in five children are overweight or obese when they start primary school, and this rises to one in three children by the time they leave. Obesity prevalence in children in the most deprived areas is around twice that of children in the least deprived areas, a gap which appears to be widening.

Whilst voluntary industry sugar and salt reduction programmes are off-track in meeting targets, the introduction of the Soft Drinks Industry Levy in April 2018 removed an estimated 90 million kg of sugar through reformulation in its first year and had been forecast by the Office of Budget Responsibility to raise an estimated £1.37 billion from 2021-24, ring-fenced to invest in children's health. However a commitment to continue ring-fencing the income from the levy for child health is dependent on the next Comprehensive Spending Review (whilst no mention of this income was made in the spending round announced in September 2019).

Research from [Public Health England](#) and the [Obesity Health Alliance](#) (of which Sustain is a member) shows that advertising of unhealthy food and drink can influence children's purchases, consumption and food preferences; also that advertising and marketing on the television, internet and in shops is skewed towards unhealthy products. Over the last year, Sustain's Children's Food Campaign had six complaints to the Advertising Standards Authority upheld as the advertisements broke rules designed to protect children from unhealthy food advertising. We believe that there is a systemic failure of due diligence in relation to protecting children from unhealthy online and outdoor advertising.

We recommend the following:

- Commit to continuation of revenue from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy being ring-fenced for children's health promotion
- The Government must maintain and strengthen a priority commitment to halving child obesity by 2030, as outlined in the Childhood Obesity Plan (Chapter 1 2016 and Chapter 2 2018) and the 2019 Prevention Green Paper.
- Make a firm commitment to continue collecting the Soft Drinks Industry Levy (sugary drinks tax) and ring-fencing the proceeds to tackling childhood obesity and poor health.
- Extend the Soft Drinks Industry Levy to include sugar-sweetened dairy drinks. To incentivise further reformulation, the threshold should be lowered and levy rate increased above inflation rises, with the revenue raised reinvested in measures to improve children's health.
- Strengthen interventions designed to make schools Healthy Food Zones and ensure that all schools in receipt of state funding are meeting or exceeding School Food Standards, in recognition of the fact that children are in school for 190 days each year.
- Protect children from exposure to advertising for food and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt with a 9pm watershed on all media including on television, radio, online, cinema and digital out of home
- Restrict multi-buy price and location-based promotions of unhealthy food and drink products in shops, recognising their persuasive effect on purchasing and consumption
- Extend restriction unhealthy food and drink advertising within 100 metres of schools to include nurseries, children's centres and community sports and leisure centres, and ban unhealthy food and drink sponsorship from schools and at major sporting events and venues
- Prevent child-friendly brand equity and licensed characters from being associated with unhealthy food and drink products
- Explore application of fiscal measures (such as changes to VAT or further levies based on calories, sugar or energy density) to other product categories where sugar or calorie reduction/reformulation is not yet in line with Government targets
- Make the Healthy Schools Ratings Scheme mandatory for all schools in receipt of state funding and require schools to supply evidence of (a) compliance with the School Food Standards and (b) delivery of mandatory food education as part of the scheme
- Adopt a plan for the UK to become leaders on breastfeeding rates, with actions and investment to support an increase so that 75% of infants at 6-8 weeks receive some breastmilk and half are exclusively breastfed, with support to continue breastfeeding throughout the first year
- Use planning and licensing tools to tackle the issue of food swamps and food deserts and create a healthy high street standard that tackles proliferation of outlets selling large amounts of unhealthy products and which promotes retail diversity
- Back the Peas Please campaign's call for 5 billion more portions of fruit and veg to be consumed by 2020, and increase fruit and veg production in the UK by 100,000 hectares to help meet healthy eating targets whilst benefiting British producers

## 8. Require all government and public sector food be healthy and sustainable

Unhealthy diet is now the largest contributor to disease burden in England (including diabetes, diet-related cancer and heart disease), closely followed by tobacco. Scientists estimate that about a third of the 13 most common cancers in the UK could be prevented through improved diet, physical activity and body weight.

The public sector feeds millions of UK citizens every day through school meals, hospital food and meals on wheels. This is an opportunity to help people eat well and live well, and could also provide opportunities for British and sustainable food producers.

We recommend the following:

- Allocate adequate budget and other resources to enable all public sector settings to be able to provide healthy, sustainable food
- Introduce and monitor mandatory public sector catering standards (such as Food for Life Served Here bronze award as a minimum) for all public sector organisations. At present, for example, only half of NHS hospitals currently meet the Government's food standards, and there is little incentive for them to improve
- Strengthen public sector food procurement rules for health and sustainability, making it mandatory to prioritise health and sustainability in procurement decisions. One clear opportunity beneficial to health and sustainability is that public sector procurement should prioritise fresh and seasonal fruit and vegetables in schools, NHS hospitals and government funded food schemes, such as the £40 million fruit and veg in schools scheme, and the £160 million Healthy Start vouchers scheme. This could pump-prime British food producers and support thriving local supply chains

## 9. Require food safety, high food standards and clear labelling

The UK is rightly proud of our high food safety standards, with laboratory-confirmed cases of Salmonella and E.coli food poisoning having both dropped significantly [since 2000](#). However, Food Standards Agency data show that thousands of people a year are still hospitalised as a result of food poisoning, food allergies, and food intolerance, and hundreds die. Investigations by the FSA and local authorities also regularly show that food is mislabelled – beef as lamb, cobbler as haddock, and in 2013, horse as beef. High-profile cases of poor hygiene and mislabelling – especially in meat production – often make the news.

Debate has also raged since the EU Referendum result into the future of our food standards, with [public polling](#) showing that the public would rather sacrifice a trade deal with the United States (as an example) rather than accept low food standards.

Sales of free-range eggs in the UK doubled between 2006 and 2016, thanks to changes to the law and consumer pressure. However, Eurobarometer research has found that [55% of people](#) say that existing labels don't help them to identify welfare-friendly products.

We recommend the following:

- Ban routine preventative use of antibiotics in groups of healthy farm animals, and oversee dramatic reductions, sometimes bans, on farm use of antibiotics 'critically important' for human medicine. Ensure that new trade deals support – and do not undermine – international efforts to reduce farm antibiotic use
- Champion mandatory food labels as one way to ensure transparent supply chains, with full traceability. Require food – especially meat, fish and dairy – to be labelled with where and how the

food was produced and processed, helping to stimulate public awareness, consumer choice and the market for sustainably produced and higher welfare food

- Protect shoppers from being misled by introducing of legal definitions for food names and marketing terms (for example, bread having definitions for sourdough, artisan, wholegrain, heritage, craft, and fresh)
- Commit to mandatory front-of-pack traffic light nutrition labelling

## 10. Ensure good food governance

In the process of withdrawing from the European Union, the UK must develop and enhance its own systems for setting food, farming and fishing standards in relation to safety, health, trading standards and the environment, as well as the governance and inspection systems to ensure these are delivered. New and enhanced institutions at local and national level must be committed to meeting public objectives, transparency and independent scientific advice.

Such principles and standards should also be applied to the UK's development of our international trade mandate, as the UK starts to become an independent trading nation, ensuring that trade contributes to social and environmental objectives and – in an era of climate and nature emergency - does not drive damaging livestock production, deforestation and biodiversity loss.

At a local level in the UK, there is an exciting resurgence of interest in working to improve the food system, with over 50 towns, cities and regions now involved in the thriving [Sustainable Food Cities](#) network, implementing food strategies to improve health, tackle inequalities, support local farmers and tackle climate change. This citizen movement for a better food system should be recognised and supported nationally as a force for positive change.

We recommend the following:

- Commit to all existing and future Government investment and spend on food, farming and fishing to be assessed against its impact on climate change and the natural environment
- Set out clear proposals for new governance arrangements post-Brexit that ensure the continued provision of robust checks, monitoring, enforcement and other functions currently provided by the EU institutions, for example on issues such as information-sharing, food safety, food traceability and environmental protection. Also, what democratically accountable process the government will follow to ensure that these matters are dealt with during trade negotiations and in the international Codex Alimentarius process that informs World Trade Organisation agreements and dispute resolution processes
- In the UK, ensure that our food standards inspectors have adequate staffing, powers and resources, and independence from the food and farming industries that they regulate, to meet high consumer, health and environmental expectations.
- Commit to a National Food Strategy setting out a vision and committing to the necessary legislation, duties and investment to deliver it. Link this to domestic implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the UK, with reporting on measurable outputs and outcomes for each relevant government department
- Appoint a Minister for Food with a mandate to ensure all policies related to food must be complimentary and deliver health and environmental benefits, and create a food policy council informed by wider citizen consultation to monitor implementation of the National Food Strategy
- Give more powers to local areas to shape their food system and environment, and support the development of food partnerships in every area, building on the inspirational Sustainable Food Cities model, which already works with partnerships in over 50 UK towns, cities and regions