# Expression of Interest and Guidance Form – Food Access for Asylum Seekers in London Project

## London Food Poverty Campaign – August 2023

We are looking to commission a frontline organisation (or organisations) to run focus groups with people with lived experience of the asylum seeking system, as well as interviews with staff and volunteers working in frontline services that support this population, to provide evidence for a report/briefing aimed at local authorities.

Apply by returning this form by **Friday 22 September, 17.00** to isabel@sustainweb.org

#### Overview

Sustain’s London Food Poverty Campaign works to influence councils and other relevant organisations to improve work on tackling the root causes of food poverty. This includes producing the annual [Good Food for All Londoners](https://www.sustainweb.org/good-food-for-all-londoners/?m=0&b=0&y=2022&t=2&v=1) report.

Anecdotally through our work with London councils, food partnerships and other food organisations and charities, the issue of food access for asylum seekers in London and a lack of research and good practice guidance has been raised several times, along with a desire to explore how local authorities could do more in this area. There is serious concern that asylum seekers in London are at high risk of food insecurity, and often do not have autonomy over the food they eat. This results in concerns around nutrition and health for this population, alongside a lack of dignity, enjoyment and ability to connect to cultural aspects of food. Many do not have access to sufficient funds or kitchen facilities to be able to access, prepare, store, or share food in a way that is appropriate to them. Additionally, emergency food aid providers in London areas near dispersed accommodation provision are reporting to their local authority that high volumes of refugees and asylum seekers are attending services as they are not being provided sufficient or appropriate food at their accommodation, which is placing additional demands on the food aid providers, who are already under high pressure during a cost-of-living crisis with surging food insecurity across the country.

There is currently limited evidence on issues to do with food access for asylum seekers and refugees in London and elsewhere, and a lack of opportunities for people with lived experience of the asylum-seeking system to have their voices heard, amplified, and advocated for.

As accommodation and food provision are directly commissioned by the Home Office, not by local authorities, councils are limited in how they can intervene, however they do have scope to provide additional support services and commission frontline organisations that provide good quality food projects to support this group.

Through this project, we seek to hear from the voices of people with lived or living experience of the asylum-seeking system about their access to food, any issues and challenges, any valuable services that have supported them, and what kind of services they would like to see at the local level to improve their experiences, as well as having discussions with frontline service providers on the same issues. Our aim is to draw attention to this issue and produce guidance and recommendations for councils and food partnerships on improving food access for refugees and asylum seekers in London, based on the lived experience of this population. While the final report/briefing will be London based, the recommendations and good practice shared will also be relevant to other local authorities working to improve food access for this group.

To achieve these aims, we plan to commission a frontline organisation (or organisations) with experience of working with asylum seekers and refugees to host focus groups in London, as well as interviews with staff and volunteers working in frontline services that support this population, to provide evidence for a report/briefing aimed at local authorities. We have **£7,500** to commission work from partner organisations between October 2023-March 2024. Additionally, Sustain will host a facilitated discussion with London councils on the topic of food access and asylum seekers in London, to inform the recommendations and briefing.

#### Partner role

We have a budget of **£7,500** to commission a frontline organisation (or organisations working in partnership) with experience of supporting people with lived experience of the asylum-seeking system in London. The organisation/s will organise and facilitate a minimum of 3 focus groups of 5+ people in 2-3 locations in London, to share their experiences of food access in London and ideas of local support that would be beneficial.

This funding is to cover staff costs for the frontline organisation/s delivering the work, as well as the costs involved with holding the focus groups which may include room rental, refreshments, stationary, interpreter fees, and shopping vouchers to reimburse participants. We anticipate this requiring approximately 20 days of work between October 2023 and March 2024.

The organisation must have a proven track record of building trusting relationships, safeguarding, and supporting this community, as well a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**The organisation would be responsible for:**

* Planning the content of the focus groups (in partnership with Sustain)
* Organising the logistics of the focus groups, including interpreters if necessary
* Recruiting participants for the focus groups
* Organising appropriate reimbursement of participants and appropriate refreshments
* Facilitating the focus groups
* Writing up findings from the focus groups
* Managing the budget for hosting and running the focus groups
* Organising and conducting interviews with staff and volunteers working with frontline organisations that support asylum seekers and refugees
* Writing up findings from interviews
* Gathering information and writing case studies for organisations and/or councils exhibiting good practice in supporting food access for asylum seekers and refugees
* Working with Sustain to produce content for the final report and briefing
* Supporting Sustain with presenting and disseminating findings including presenting findings at roundtable with London councils in January and at the launch event of Good Food for All Londoners report in March

#### Proposed timeline:

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| Month | Activity | Lead  |
| August  | Release EOI | Sustain |
| September  | Shortlist and select partner/s | Sustain |
| October-January | Focus groups, interviews, and site visits, write up findings | Frontline partner |
| January | Roundtable with London councils | Sustain (partner support) |
| February-March | Writing of briefing report | Sustain (partner support) |
| March (end) | Launch of report (combined with next year’s [Good Food for All Londoners](https://www.sustainweb.org/good-food-for-all-londoners/) report) | Sustain (partner support) |

#### Expression of Interest

Please complete and return this form by **Friday 22 September, 17.00** to isabel@sustainweb.org. We will get back to all applicants via email (by Friday 6 October) and may invite you for an online interview.

*Note: We have indicated some word limits below. Please try to stick to these, however, if you run a few words over, we won’t be counting them, and we won’t exclude proposals on that basis.*

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| **Contact Information** |
| Lead Contact Name: |  |
| Role or job title:  |  |
| Email: |  |
| Phone number: |  |
| (Optional) Second Contact Name: |  |
| Role or job title:  |  |
| Email: |  |
| Phone number: |  |
| **Organisational information** |
| Name of the lead organisation applying: |  |
| Please briefly describe your organisation. Please tell us how long you have been active, your priorities, and a summary of any achievements so far. Include a link to your website and/or social media channels if you have them: (max 300 words) |  |
| Company number (if applicable): |  |
| Charity number (if applicable): |  |
| Which areas of London does your organisation operate in? |  |
| **Suitability for role** |
| Please explain why your organisation is suitable to carry out this project (i.e. why it compliments your work, why you are well-placed to deliver, your experience etc): (max 300 words) |  |
| Do you feel confident in delivery of the above activities? How do you propose to deliver on the expected outcomes? Include here initial thoughts in terms of location and running of the focus groups, interviews and case studies: (max 300 words) |  |
| Who would be delivering the work? Do you have any match funding or other complimentary activities or projects that would add to this work? (max 100 words?) |  |
| How do you propose dividing the budget available to cover staff costs (please include number of days and your day rate), event costs and overheads?  |  |
| This project will be delivered as part of Sustain’s commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, in line with our work on [diversity and anti-racism](https://www.sustainweb.org/reports/may23-progress-on-diversity-and-anti-racism/), and work on centring marginalised voices. How will you ensure that diversity, inclusion and accessibility is built into the project design? (max 200 words) |  |
| This project will involve working with vulnerable adults. Does your organisation have a safeguarding policy and/or signposting procedures? |  |

Please return this form to isabel@sustainweb.org.

**Contact: Isabel Rice, Food Poverty Campaign Coordinator, Sustain.** **isabel@sustainweb.org**

Sustain is a powerful alliance of organisations and communities working together for a better system of food, farming and fishing, and cultivating the movement for change. [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org)