Sustain annual conference

Making food and farming a priority in the Local and General Elections

#sustain23
Fiona Harvey
Environment Editor, The Guardian

Craig Bennett
Chief Executive Officer of The Wildlife Trusts

Dee Woods
Food and Farming Actionist

In conversation with...
(Chair) Orla Delargy, Head of Public Affairs, Sustain

Richard Sloggett, Founder, Future Health & former special advisor, Secretary of State for Health and Social care

Dev Sharma, Youth MP for Winchester and award-winning activist

Ali Plummer, Head of External Affairs and Advocacy, RSPB

Sarah Williams, Head of Greener UK Unit, Green Alliance

Panel
How to talk about food, farming and climate in an election year
Next year we celebrate 25 years of impact and influence in the food and farming sector.
Panel
Making a difference locally

Sofia Parente (Chair)
Head of Local Action, Sustain

Denise Bentley
Co-Founder & CEO, First Love Foundation

Ellen Pearce
Farm-Start Coordinator, Food Futures Network

Kathy Lee
Senior Officer, Birmingham City Council

Andy Gold
Head of Food Strategy, London Borough of Newham
Eat for Free (EFF)

In Newham, pre-Covid data showed 91% of KS2 pupils having having a school meal, compared to 60% in comparable boroughs without a scheme and 48% before the scheme began. Today around 50% children are estimated to be in poverty but only around 30% qualify for a free school meal (FSM).

What are the benefits of EFF to our community?

1. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

   - On the curriculum
     Universal participation in meals normalises healthy eating as a core part of the school day – key as we face challenges such as obesity, oral health and food poverty.
   - Less packed lunches
     Only 4.6% (nationwide) of packed lunches meet the government’s school meals nutritional standard. More cooked lunches eaten equals more children getting a healthier diet.
   - Higher quality meals
     EFF schools all serve meals at the higher Food For Life Bronze standard – an independently certified standard.
   - Every school 50 Steps
     EFF grant principles require all schools to participate in certified whole school accredited programmes on food and health. These are important tools driving engagement and investment in a healthier Newham.

2. EDUCATION

   - Disadvantaged pupils
     EFF has a marked difference amongst disadvantaged pupils.
   - Concentration
     Pupils who eat a nutritious and filling daily meal have better levels of concentration.
   - Performance & Attainment
     Most recent data indicates that the average performance attainment score (50) for pupils in boroughs with a universal free school meal scheme is higher compared to neighbouring boroughs without the scheme (65). This trend is also prevalent in disadvantaged pupils in boroughs with a universal scheme (65.5) in comparison to boroughs without (61).
   - More time
     Time spent by parents preparing packed lunches can be better spent with children (e.g. with homework).

3. LOCAL JOBS AND ECONOMY (COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING)

   - Local jobs
     86% of those who work in school meals are Newham residents.
   - Benefits to Newham workers
     EFF schools are required to pay London Living Wage and local government pension. Grant conditions have successfully shaped schools’ tenders this year.
   - Benefits to the Newham economy
     Without EFF, providers can push for lower wages to generate corporate profits – less money for Newham residents, money leaving the borough.
   - Rewarding careers
     A certified higher standard for meals makes it difficult for companies to squeeze down on working conditions and jobs which results in more working hours for Newham residents.

OTHER BENEFITS: ENVIRONMENT

   - Climate Now
     The grant requires schools to enrol in the Mayor of London Healthy Schools Programme Bronze and the Soil Association Whole School Food for Life accredited programme. In addition to health work, these programmes promote action on climate and environment.

Anchored spend

We invest £5.889m*, but this keeps anchored all £14m** that our primary schools spend on meals.

* £3m Public Health Grant and £2.889m General Fund
** Our investment plus £6.5m Central government money (FSM at KS2 and UIFSM at KSI)

What’s next?

There are 66 participating schools in the EFF programme. Continuing to evolve the grant conditions enables us to increase outputs that advance our agenda on children’s health, education, climate and environment and community wealth building.

AT RISK

Over £2m in wages
if schools are not required to pay London Living Wage and local government pension

384 hours of employment lost every day
if school meal take up drops back to pre-EFF levels (over £1m of lost employment a year)
A vision for local food production in north Lancashire: our journey, challenges, opportunities and next steps

November 2023
The journey and visions:
Challenges, opportunities and next steps

22 projects in Lancaster and Morecambe celebrate getting share of £2.7m Government cash

A total of 22 local projects are celebrating receiving their share of Government cash totalling £2.7 million.
Lucia Monje-Jelfs  
Senior Policy Officer, Soil Association

Will White  
Sustainable Farming Coordinator, Sustain

Sam Hayward  
Food for the Planet Campaign Officer, Sustain

Kate Howard  
Children’s Food Campaign Coordinator, Sustain

Pitches
What policy solutions do we have to help fix the food system?
Supporting the UK’s production and consumption of agroecologically grown fruit and veg
Environmental Land Management (ELM) Schemes
Fairness in the Food Supply Chain
Planning for the Planet: Harnessing the planning system to save our rivers

www.foodfortheplanet.org.uk
Our call to action:

1. For government to build on the success of the SDIL by introducing a new levy on unhealthy food

2. For businesses to change the recipes of the food and drink that they sell to make them healthier for all of us

3. To invest revenue raised from the levy in children’s health and access to good food

Contact: kate@sustainweb.org
Thank you
We hope you found the event inspiring.

Please take a moment to complete our event feedback survey.