

# Waste not, want not

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How fairness concerns  
can shift attitudes to  
food waste

Natan Doron

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**Waste not, want not:**  
How fairness concerns can shift  
attitudes to food waste

Natan Doron

**FABIAN** SOCIETY

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## About the Fabian Society Environment & Citizenship programme

This report is part of the Fabian Society's ongoing Environment and Citizenship programme. The programme looks at environmental policy challenges and the role of citizenship: both in terms of democratic consent and personal behavioural change. It considers the interaction between environmental issues, fairness and social justice and how public support can be built for sustainability measures affecting personal consumption. The programme seeks to influence the ideas, policies and arguments of government, political parties and the private sector through a series of publications, lectures and seminars.

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To address the problem of food waste, it is essential we find fresh ways of communicating about it.

Building on previous research by the Fabian Society, this report illustrates how deep-rooted fairness instincts can help drive support for behaviour change and policy designed to mitigate the problem of food waste.

A deeper understanding of the social and environmental context of food waste allows people to view the problem of food waste from the vantage point of citizenship as opposed to individual consumers.

The research finds that:

- While individuals observe wasteful behaviours in others, they rarely reflect on their own lifestyles as contributing to the problem of food waste
- Information about the wider social and environmental context of food waste leads to a concern with the behaviour of others. This concern can be a powerful driver of more progressive attitudes to food waste
- Concerns about the environment can be as strong a motivation as financial worries for changing attitudes and behaviours on food waste
- Government action is seen as more legitimate once people are aware of the wider social and environmental context of food waste
- Participants supported the transparent publication of supermarket food waste information as well as the use of celebrity chefs to front campaigns to raise awareness in order to shift public perceptions of food waste in the right direction

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# 1 | Introduction

One third of all food bought by UK households is thrown away each year. The monetary value of this food waste is around £12billion. The carbon footprint of this food waste is the equivalent of a fifth of all cars on UK roads. Rising domestic food prices and the ongoing crisis of global hunger further underline the urgency of addressing the level of food waste in the UK.

Since most people do not consider themselves as high food wasters, appeals to individual households to save money will be limited in their efficacy. To find new ways of addressing the food waste problem, it is essential we find fresh ways of communicating about it.

Building on previous research by the Fabian Society, this report illustrates how deep-rooted fairness instincts can help drive support for behaviour change and policy designed to mitigate the problem of food waste.

A deeper understanding of the social and environmental context of food waste allows people to view the problem from the vantage point of citizenship as opposed to individual consumers.

This research reveals that such an approach to food waste can trigger a concern with the impacts arising from the behaviour of others. This concern can be a strong driver of support for policy measures designed to lower the overall levels and impact of food waste in the UK.

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The research led to five main conclusions:

1) While individuals observe wasteful behaviours in others, they rarely reflect on their own lifestyles as contributing to the problem of food waste

Understanding this is key to improving the ways in which we communicate about food waste. If people do not see themselves as wasting food, this indicates that there are serious limitations on communications that address people as individual consumers. This means that as well as the normative arguments for addressing people as citizens participating in a common endeavour, there is an important concern with food waste that such methods of communication will be severely limited in efficacy.

2) Information about the wider social and environmental context of food waste leads to a concern with the behaviour of others. This concern can be a powerful driver of more progressive attitudes to food waste

One of the strongest findings to emerge from this study was the extent to which participants were concerned with the behaviour of others. It is only through an appreciation of the impacts of food waste that one could become so concerned with the behaviour of others. This in itself is a demonstration of the strength of participant response to non-consumer narratives around food waste. Understanding the strength of this concern could be crucial in driving support for behaviour change and food waste policy.

3) The environment can be as strong if not a stronger motivation as financial worries for attitudinal and behaviour change on food waste

Another strong finding borne out in both the group discussions and accompanying survey data was that participants identified the environment as an equivalent or more powerful motivation for wasting less food than financial worries. This was despite a recruitment strategy that was

designed to exclude committed environmentalists from the respondent sample. Accepted wisdom tells us that people will not prioritise environment over monetary concerns in a period of economic downturn. This research challenges such wisdom and underlines the importance of communicating clearly about the environmental context surrounding problems such as food waste.

4) Democratic consent for government action is seen as more legitimate once people are aware of the wider social and environmental context of food waste

In the groups, as participants became more aware of the wider environmental and social context around food waste, support for government action increased. Debates about approaches to tackling environmental problems often pivot around whether the answer is public behaviour change or the implementation of structural solutions to unsustainable usage of resources in the economy. In both cases, the importance of democratic consent and a sense of public legitimacy for acting in the first place are often forgotten. Securing democratic consent and support for policy programmes is an important tool in the arsenal of effective government. What this research shows is that in issues of sustainability, the public actually expect the government to take a strong lead if they deem the problem serious enough. This means that if government is going to take effective action on food waste, it should understand how better to communicate about the problem. This also means understanding how it can best work with the private sector to maximise opportunities to reinforce messages.

5) The transparent publication of supermarket food waste information as well as the use of celebrity chefs to front campaigns to raise awareness would go a long way to shift public perceptions of food waste in the right direction

Participants said that government requiring supermarkets to publish and be graded upon their food waste performance would have a

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positive impact on public opinion. This would build on a recent increase in effective campaigning on food waste, and presents the government with an opportunity to target an intervention which would help to shift public perceptions of food waste. This also has the added bonus of representing very little cost to the taxpayer. Furthermore, participants believed that the success of celebrity chefs in influencing public opinion about food presented an opportunity to reinforce the messaging around such an intervention.

## Structure of the report

The report begins by exploring and detailing the responses of participants to information about the social and environmental context of food waste. This reveals the resonance of environmental information to the issue of food waste.

The report then features a consideration of participants' concerns with the behaviour of others. This is taken to signal evidence of fairness concerns driving attitudes. Arguments of fair shares and the behaviour of others only come into play when an issue is approached from a citizenship angle.

The report then examines what such views on fairness mean for attitudes to addressing food waste. These methods for addressing food waste are both at the household and economy-wide level.

Finally, the report draws out some key conclusions and explores some lessons for key stakeholders.

More information about methodology including the motivation behind the research, initial research questions, focus group participant recruitment, examples of stimulus material and a description of exercises can be found at the end of this report in appendix i.



## 2 | Finding fairness

- Participants rarely identified themselves as engaging in high food wasting behaviour
- Information about the increasing scarcity of resources used in food production provoked both participant anger and a concern for future generations
- Despite filtering out committed green activists at the recruitment stage, marginally more participants saw the environment as a motivating factor than the monetary value of food waste
- The social and environmental context of food waste triggers a concern with the behaviour of others

*Well on a personal level, I'm really proud about my food waste, I think I waste practically nothing.* [Male under 25, London]

*I don't tend to throw that much away, I've got two boys and they eat anything in sight, so, minimal amount of waste.* [Female, non-home owning parent, Gillingham]

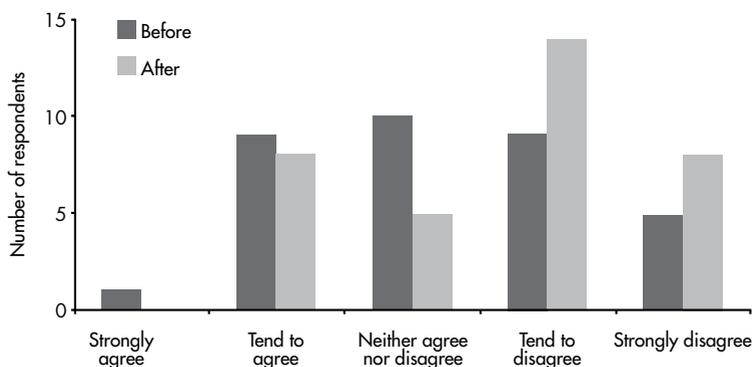
The quotes above illustrate a common theme from the start of most of the group discussions. When asked initially, for the most part participants reacted by stating that they had fairly low levels of food waste.

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Our survey data backs this up, with only 6 per cent of participants identifying themselves as throwing away more than 'some' food each week.

In addition to reflections about their own food waste behaviour, before the groups' participants were fairly relaxed about the wastage of others. Asked whether people had the right to throw away food, responses were fairly split. Following the group discussions, views on this shifted strongly. This is illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Participants were given a survey before and after the group discussions. One of the questions was the extent to which they agreed with the statement 'It is the right of every person to throw away food if they want to'.



Some participants moved from neutrality on the right of others to throw food away at the start of the groups to deeming words such as 'inconsiderate' and 'selfish' as appropriate words to describe high food wasting behaviour by the end.

Whilst the majority of participants did not see themselves as wasting food, how did such a concern about the perceived right of others to do so undergo such a shift following the groups?

The answer is to be found in the information about the social and environmental context of food waste. When people understand the shared responsibility for managing scarce resources, and think explicitly about the ways in which everybody's personal choices contribute to the

problem of food waste, a concern with the behaviour of others is triggered. This concern with the behaviour of others can, as well shall see, be a powerful driver of attitudes to food waste.

The first way that the concept of food as a social issue was explored was through the notion of limits on the amount of food that the planet can produce. Participants were shown results from academic studies on the declining levels of available farmland and freshwater available globally over the last 50 years.

Common phrases used in response to the information on limits were 'scary' and 'shocking'. In the group of participants over 65 and those participants with children, a frequent response was a concern for future generations.

*Well I won't be here but for the future, your grandchildren, and the whole world actually. Well everybody's reproducing as well. And people are living longer, so that is scary I feel. [Female over 65, Carlisle]*

Whilst older participants or those with children voiced concern for future generations, the groups of younger participants saw the information as an indication of a more immediate problem. In one group, a participant responded to the idea of limits with anger and a call for solutions to go beyond 'just adverts'.

*It makes me angry again, everything that's going on, we can't keep up as a nation let alone the rest of the world is suffering a lot more than we are. So we just need to stop and do something globally about it, properly. Not just adverts, like switch your lights off, obviously that's energy but it's all the same thing. [Male, home owning young professional, Peterborough]*

A significant number of participants responded to the information about the limit on the amount of food that the planet can produce by stating that steps should be taken to ensure more responsible use of resources. Conversely, there were a number of participants who cited

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human ingenuity and the role of technology as factors indicating that food supply would never be a truly pressing problem for humanity.

*It's obviously massively worrying but I kind of also think it leaves a role for technology that the human race is never going to have a problem feeding itself; you could grow stuff hydroponically, Holland is the biggest exporter of peppers or something in Europe and a pepper wouldn't naturally grow in Holland it'll only grow because they've got so much glass to grow stuff underneath. So obviously the land is decreasing but the human race is never going to run out of food, it's not as if we're living off the land like animals are. [Male, non-home owning young professional, London]*

The next element of the social context of food waste explored was the notion of what kinds of harms arise from the depletion of our ability to produce food.

There was a variety of harms associated with approaching the limit of the food that the planet can produce. The diversity of harms identified by participants illustrates the many different areas in which vulnerability of food supply can have an impact.

Some of the harms identified included: rising food prices; malnutrition; increased global tension over scarce resources; a reduction in the range of foods available for consumption; the negative health impacts of more foods becoming luxury items; the rise in unemployment as a result of a less productive food industry; a rise in petty crime as a result of food scarcity; and the disproportionate impact upon those on low incomes – both within and between countries.

Some responses to the question of what would happen as we got closer to the limit of food that could be produced were of a particularly apocalyptic nature.

*Anarchy would break out; the system would begin to break down. [Male, over 65, Carlisle]*

Not all participants responded to this question with a negative vision of events. Some suggested that there would be positive outcomes from coming closer to the limit of food production. The group of participants over 65 used examples from their lifetime of what kind of positive outcomes could arise.

*I think we'd turn the clock back 20 or 30 years and we'd all start to grow a bit more of our own and in turn that would make us more healthy.*

[Male, over 65, Carlisle]

This idea was also common amongst younger participants.

*I think more people would try and grow their own crops and stuff, in their gardens. Things they can get away with doing in their garden.*

[Female, under 25, London]

In addition, the discussion of the more 'positive' impacts associated with increasing scarcity brought some participants to reflect on the role of food in society and culture. There was a sense of nostalgia for a time when families placed more importance on eating together. Some participants made the point that modern lifestyles have eroded the perceived value of food in society.

*Nobody sits around the table anymore, everyone just has lap dinners... But in France or Spain eating together is a big deal, they have wine at the tables and every meal is this big family thing whereas over here I don't see a lot of evidence.* [Female, home owning young professional, Peterborough]

As part of the process of providing information about the social context of consumption, participants were presented with statistics about the overall monetary value and carbon impact of household food waste in the UK.

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It was anticipated that during a period of economic anxiety, the information about monetary value would be of primary concern to participants. Responses to the statistic of household food waste being the equivalent of £12 billion a year certainly were of a shocked nature.

*Male 1: Yeah that's amazing, considering the state our economy's in at the moment, if you just think you could save £12bn for the UK*

*Female 1: We're literally throwing £12bn in the bin*

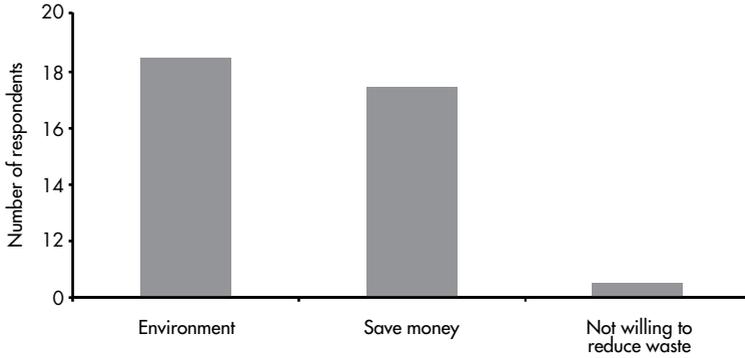
[Under 25, London]

The responses to the information about the carbon footprint were just as shocked in tone. One participant compared the wasting of food to running down a car engine without going anywhere.

*If he [high wasting character] went outside of his house every week and sat in his car, and revved the engine, revved the engine, revved the engine until he's used up half a tank of petrol, you'd say 'what are you doing? That's mental...' but that's exactly what he's doing but because it's hidden behind food you don't notice it. [Female, home owning young professional, Peterborough]*

In an attempt to ascertain which aspect of food waste was more of a motivation for attitudinal change, we asked participants to make a choice between the environmental and monetary motivations in the follow-up surveys provided at the end of the discussion. The results can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2 in a follow-up survey after the group discussion, participants were asked which was more of a motivation for reducing household food waste, the environmental impact or monetary value of food waste.

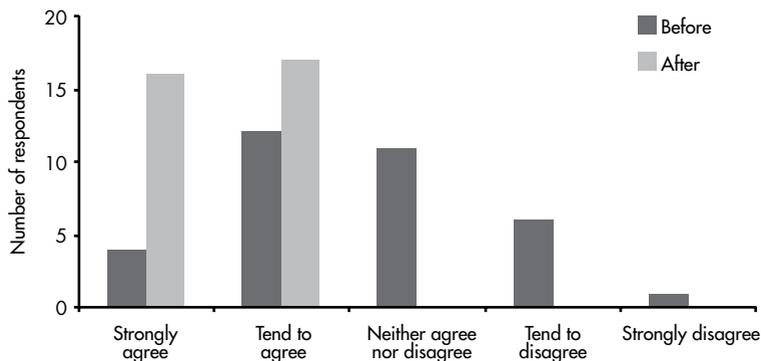


Bearing in mind that the participant recruitment strategy took specific steps to ensure that committed green activists were omitted from the groups, the strength of reaction to the information about the carbon footprint of household food waste was surprising.

This finding can in part be explained by the low level of prior knowledge about the environmental or climate impact of food waste. This is illustrated in the shift of opinions about whether food waste had a concerning environmental impact or not. Participants were asked for views about this before and after the group discussions. Table 3 below demonstrates a significant shift in attitudes.

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Table 3 Participants were asked before and after the groups to answer the extent to which they agreed with the statement “throwing away food has an environmental impact and I am concerned about it”



The low levels of awareness about food waste’s carbon footprint were borne out in the group discussions.

*You don’t think about that at all, you just think ‘oh it’s food, it’s natural’, you don’t think ‘actually it’s going to produce CO<sub>2</sub>’. [Male, non-home owning parent, Gillingham]*

*That’s just the UK’s cars, well that is pretty bad isn’t it. Unless you’ve got a reasonable knowledge of the subject you’re probably never going to put two and two together that that is going to happen at landfill. You’re maybe thinking about the carbon footprint before it gets to your table, but I would never appreciate that would happen. [Male, home owning parent, Edinburgh]*

In addition, an interesting take on the monetary value of food can be seen in the attitudes towards 2-for-1 offers. At one point, a participant suggested that because an item was seen as ‘free’ it was easy to throw away.

*Yeah... because they didn't pay anything for it they're not going to care about chucking it away because as far as they're concerned they've not lost any money. If they had paid a bit they might think 'oh I had better use this' or put it in something.* [Male, non-home owning parent, Gillingham]

The subsequent identification of environmental motivations as more of or equal in resonance to monetary motivations can be seen as an explicit challenge to the idea of quantifying food only in terms of monetary value. As the quote illustrates, if it is 'free', it is easy to dispose of. When considering the environmental impacts, food can never truly be free as it is always the product of increasingly scarce resources (available farmland, freshwater etc).

Furthermore, the key to understanding the strength of reaction to the environmental information by a group of participants not naturally motivated by environmental concerns is in considering our initial finding that people do not naturally consider themselves as high food wasters. Knowing that money can be saved from doing less of something you don't consider yourself doing in the first place is not a powerful motivator. But information about the impact of such behaviour on a wider community of people is likely to provoke an increased concern about such behaviour. It is precisely a concern with the behaviour of others that forms the basis of participants' views about fairness in relation to food waste.



### 3 | Fairness as responsibility

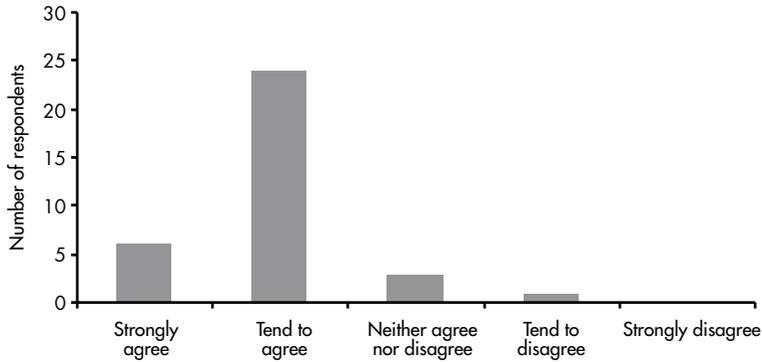
- Participants felt that it was a problem that some people wasted more food than others
- When asked to elaborate on why this was a problem, participants often made explicit reference to the impact that someone's food waste behaviour was having
- In response to the fictional characters, it was often the attitudes of the characters rather than volumes of food waste that drew criticism
- Participants showed a strong concern with the perceived awareness of those engaging in food waste behaviour

When presented with information about how different households produce different levels of food waste, participants were asked if it was a problem that some people wasted more food than others.

A large number of participants thought so. The data from the follow-up surveys illustrates this, as seen in Table 4 below.

## Fairness as responsibility

Table 4 After the group discussions participants were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'it is a problem that some people throw away more food than others'



Assuming some residual level of pro-social bias, it is still significant that so many participants showed a concern with the behaviour of others. When asked to elaborate on why it would be a problem that some people wasted more food than others, it is significant the extent to which answers focused on the impact it may have on a wider community.

*Well I initially thought, 'OK it's up to them', I'm not responsible for what they do or how they spend their money, but it was only when you put that up that I thought 'well yes, it is affecting other people as well', so in that case I would have said it was a problem. [Male, over 65, Carlisle]*

*I think people don't care about their impact or that it has an impact on other people. People just act as though they are like completely separate entities from other people but they're not. [Female, under 25, London]*

*Moderator: Ok well just to throw a strange question out there, is it a problem that some people are throwing away more food than others?*

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*Male 1: Yeah because it's collectively, then you've got that problem. It all comes down to the amount of food we're chucking away, and the way it's affecting the environment, so it's all very well us sitting here saying 'oh we don't do that', but other people do, and you've got to change their mind set, because they're the ones who are going to have this massive impact on the environment. [Non-home owning parents, Gillingham]*

In order to probe a bit deeper into participant views on the behaviour of others, we presented information on four characters. The characters were designed in line with previous research undertaken by Sainsbury's.<sup>1</sup> Each character had slightly exaggerated profile descriptions that illustrated a behavioural feature of different segments of food wasting population groups.

The character that drew the strongest reaction was also the highest-wasting character. In addition, this character was given a quote stating that they didn't care if food waste had an environmental impact or not. It was this element of the character's attitude that provoked the strongest responses from participants.

*I was going to say his comment, that's what would be upsetting. Because coming here tonight and seeing your statistic, that shocks me. You just used the word awareness, as you become aware of it, you then want to do something about it. I would say that everyone should care about it, because if you've got children, if you're looking to the future, if you live in this society then everyone should care. So on the education and awareness side, why would he [high-wasting character] have the attitude that he doesn't care? Why have we reached this point where nobody cares what they put in the bucket? If you educate them they probably would care. [Female, home owning parent, Edinburgh]*

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<sup>1</sup> A summary of the research is provided at: <http://www.j-sainsbury.co.uk/media/latest-stories/2011/20111107-sainsburys-reveals-we-are-what-we-waste/>

In contrast, the low waste, more elderly character drew near universal praise. His quote outlined a view that people should think about the impact of their behaviour and try to minimise their own. Again, it was the attitude revealed in the quote that drew the strongest response, and not the low level of his food waste.

*I think his philosophy of waste not want not is commendable. I mean you've got to be realistic and admit you're not going to live in a totally waste free world but he's getting close, that's realistic and his philosophy stands up. [Male, over 65, Carlisle]*

The other characters had higher levels of food waste but were again condemned or praised according to what their quote revealed about their attitudes as opposed to overall levels of food waste.

The character who was a parent with young kids had roughly similar levels of food waste to the character that lived alone but wasted because of a fear of sell-by dates. The parent character was sympathised with and acknowledged to have lifestyle constraints that could and should be addressed.

The character wasting because of a fear of sell-by dates received less sympathy and was largely deemed to be lacking in common sense. Despite this, many participants said that they knew people who held this view. A small number of participants (about 3 in total) admitted to throwing away food nearing sell-by dates themselves.

The strength of feeling in response to the perceived attitude of the high-wasting fictional character brought some participants to make more extreme judgements about him. On a number of occasions the group discussions featured unprompted usage of the word 'selfish' in relation to this character.

*Male 1: If you've got the money you can waste it...*

*Male 2: ... It begs the question. Is he acting that way because he isn't aware, does he not realise?*

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*Female 1: But he says he doesn't care*

*Male 2: OK so he does. I think his mindset is in many ways very typical, it's insular*

*Female 1: Selfish*

*Female 2: Arrogant!*

*Male 2: It's totally wrong*

[Over 65s, Carlisle]

These judgements about the character go some way to explaining the importance of awareness and the perceived attitudes of others for participant views on food waste behaviours.

Put simply, if someone is wasting food with serious lifestyle constraints (for example the pressure of working whilst having to feed young children) or is wasting food without an awareness of the impact, it is difficult to make a negative judgement about them. If, on the other hand, that person has an awareness of an impact and continues to waste food, then the severity of judgements about their behaviour are seen to increase.

This was illustrated very clearly in an exercise about the suitability of different phrases for describing food waste behaviour. The more that somebody was aware, the more appropriate severe words such as 'selfish' 'inconsiderate' and 'wrong' became to describe their high levels of food waste.

*I think selfish is used if you know you're doing it, like if Jeff [high-wasting character] knows how much he's wasting and he doesn't care, that I think. The same with Vera [character afraid of food near sell-by/use-by dates], she's wasting it for no good reason, just because it makes*

*her feel funny. I think that is selfish to do that, whereas Sara [character with young children] you could be more understanding because she you know, she hasn't got much choice, she's working full time, there's more of a reason I suppose behind, you can understand it more, she's unintentionally being selfish, I think that's the best way to put it.*  
[Female, non-home owning parent, Gillingham]

Whilst using harsh words like 'selfish' were dependent upon the level of awareness held by the person wasting food, in every group participants came to a majority view that responsibility was the most appropriate terminology for describing food waste behaviour.

*I think selfish might be quite a harsh way of putting it if they don't realise what they're doing. Like if Jeff's [high-wasting character] aware of the impact of what he's doing but he still carries on then he's selfish but he might not be aware. If he's not aware of the statistics you told us earlier I wouldn't say he's selfish he's just irresponsible.* [Female, under 25, London]

When asked to reflect upon why responsibility was so appropriate, in one particular group responsibility was actually seen to be an acceptable way of talking about fairness. This was because fair was seen as 'whiney'. This hints at a wider problem that participants had with using the term fairness. Without being sure about the level of awareness held by somebody engaging in wasteful behaviour, fair or unfair seemed overly judgemental. Responsibility on the other hand, was taken to have much of the same meaning as fairness. In some senses, it was almost a gateway concept to the use of fairness. Furthermore, one participant said that responsibility was appropriate to mean fairness but that the reverse did not hold.

*Moderator: A lot of people are saying responsible/irresponsible. Does anyone think anything different?*

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*Female 1: I actually think fair and unfair are appropriate, I just think they're not natural.*

*Male 1: See I think fair and unfair are just quite whiney.*

*Male 2: You shouldn't really use that, until you can clarify what is fair and unfair, you can't really use fair at all.*

*Moderator: That's a good point. What is fair in this context? Any thoughts on that?*

*Male 1: You could say that about all of the phrases.*

*Female 2: Fair is being more thoughtful about what food you buy and how you're going to prepare it. And planning things ahead.*

*Male 3: I think fair's being responsible. I'd use responsible to describe fair but I wouldn't use fair to describe responsible.*

*Moderator: Could you tell me a bit more about what that means? Why does fair mean responsible?*

*Male 3: This is more clear cut because you're thinking about what you have to do. If you're irresponsible you just buy your food and chuck it in, what Jeff [high-wasting character] does, he just buys stuff. If you're responsible you buy food you know you'll eat and you're planning things ahead. But with fair and unfair it's like you could say he's being fair because he does work very long hours, he doesn't realise it goes off, so you could put that in that category.*

[Under 25s, London]

## Fairness as responsibility

In another group, agreement that responsibility is the most appropriate term led to an unprompted reflection on what responsibility means. In this discussion a clear link was made between responsibility and the impact on the environment, other people both now and in the future.

*Moderator: Before we finish, what are the most appropriate words for talking about food waste?*

*Male 1: Considerate, responsible, irresponsible.*

*Male 2: Responsible and irresponsible.*

*Female 1: Responsible and irresponsible.*

*Moderator: A lot of responsibility.*

*Male 1: Yeah because you've got to consider the environment, consider all of us, we're all going to be affected later on in life.*

*Male 3: That's fair as an individual thing, but you are not going to get that much of a reaction unless you have some kind of community spirited or collective.*

[Home owning young professionals, Peterborough]

*Moderator: So you think the collective element is important?*

*Male 3: It has to be. Because if you think individually, 'right I'm going to save a third of my food', and then you see in China they're putting up nuclear power stations every other month, you think my individual effort is not enough, but collectively as a nation, you can say in the UK we want to do this. [Home owning young professionals, Peterborough]*

## Waste not, want not

What this research demonstrates is that once provided with information about the social context of consumption, the issue of food waste is approached from a citizenship perspective as opposed to that of a consumer. This is illustrated by the strength of responses to the behaviour of others. As a consumer, there is no reason to be concerned with how much food my neighbour is wasting. As a citizen, with a view on how my behaviour affects others, there is suddenly a concern with levels of food wasted by my neighbour.



## 4 | Fair solutions

- Household planning was seen as the most important and effective way to reduce food waste levels in the house
- Composting and the increased use of frozen food were seen as more favourable after the group discussions
- Government action was seen as legitimate and necessary in the context of the group discussions. This was particularly true in relation to the funding of awareness-raising campaigns
- There was wide support for supermarkets to publish and be graded on their food waste performance. This was acknowledged to perform a number of important functions, but specifically was seen as an effective form of awareness-raising

There was a clear link between the emphasis on responsibility as the most appropriate term for talking about food waste behaviour, and the options that were seen as suitable for addressing the issue of food waste.

At the household level, there are two significant things to note. Firstly, there was strong and overwhelming support for improved household planning as an effective way to reduce food waste levels. Secondly, attitudes shifted towards composting and frozen food as ways to both reduce food waste and mitigate the negative impacts associated with this behaviour.

## Waste not, want not

In the previous chapter, a discussion about fairness and what this represented in the context of food waste was highlighted. During a discussion about responsibility to the environment and other people, one participant offered the following definition:

*Fair is being more thoughtful about what food you buy and how you're going to prepare it. And planning things ahead.* [Female under 25, London]

This quote came in the first half of the group discussion, before any reference to methods for reducing the levels of food waste in the household. When the discussion came to different ways to lower levels of food waste, there was almost universal agreement that taking more time to plan meals was an effective way to do this. One of the reasons that better household planning was seen as effective was because it was seen to stop impulse buying. Many participants identified impulse buying, particularly if shopping when hungry, as a cause of food waste.

*I think it stops impulse buying, so you go 'oh yeah I fancy making this at some point'. So you buy some tomatoes to make a risotto then you have this have that and have that and because you haven't planned the fresh food that you've bought and you've thought 'well I fancy making that at some point', you've just bought it and it's gone off. That can happen but if you've planned so you know what you're having you end up not just buying things on impulse.* [Male, non-home owning young professional, London]

Some participants suggested that unless you were in the habit of planning meals and shopping efficiently, it was hard to make this change to your lifestyle. In response, other participants offered an argument that government attempts to raise awareness would improve household planning. In the below extract, a participant uses smoking as an analogy for how this could work in practice.

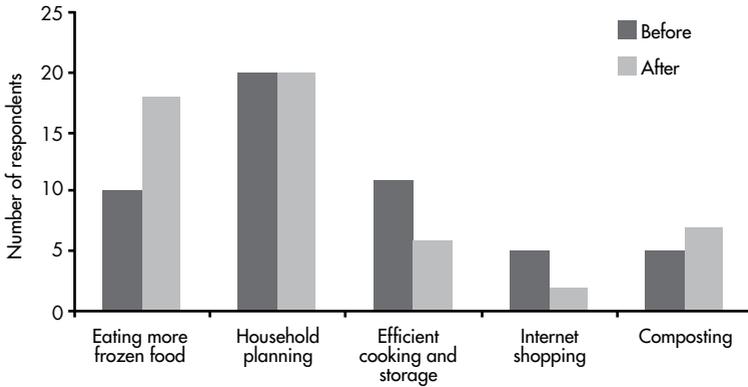
*Male 1: Like that [better household planning] would work if you [are] used [to] it, you would save food, you would save money. But where would you get that idea from? Like I would never ever think to do that so I suppose it's just a way of getting people to think like that.*

*Female 1: They will. I was going to say that like both [household planning and frozen food] are fantastic, because I'm here in this environment, answering questions. But I'll go home, I may not do them now. You mentioned smoking which is such a good example, I know so many people who were like 'I'll never quit, I'm never going to do it' - I don't know anybody now, even the die hard, who sit in their living room, on their couch, because the government have done enough to make us think about it. Freezer bags like your Auntie, that's brilliant, get one out, put you're spaghetti Bolognese in it, that's tomorrow night's tea. Do I do it? No, but you have enough of these things you'll convince me and it'll become normal. So if it's a good idea it will gradually work I think. Like the smoking, if it's something that goes on in your household, I've got kids, so I make these changes now and it's my routine that I say 'oh I've made too much so I put it in the wee bag and I put the wee date on it' then my son, my daughter, they will, even on their own or at university, even in the bad statistic, they will go with what they learnt in the home.*  
[Home owning parents, Edinburgh]

Table 4 below shows the results from the surveys completed before and after the discussion groups. As illustrated in the quotes above, household planning was seen as the most effective option for reducing food waste levels or the impact of food waste. What is significant is that views on composting and frozen food changed as both became to be seen in a more positive light.

## Waste not, want not

Table 5 Participants were asked to select the two best options for reducing food waste before and after the group discussions.



Part of the explanation for why frozen food (both freezing food you have already prepared and buying food in a frozen state) became more popular as an option for reducing food waste amongst participants was a result of the process of deliberation in the groups. In most of the groups, there were participants who thought that frozen food was a blanket rule, inferior to fresh food. However, in these groups, such views were challenged by other participants. In some groups, participants suggested that the media portrayal of fresh as superior was an important factor in views about this.

*I think what's interesting about frozen food is that you've got, amongst society, we're encouraged to eat fresh and healthy foods, but I think sometimes frozen food, the way it's branded and marketed, doesn't really give off the same sort of image as fresh food does. [Male under 25, London]*

*I think just because it's always drummed into you in adverts and everything. Like you said, I can't say why but you just think 'yeah, fresh'. [Male, non home owning young professional, London]*

Some participants suggested that frozen food had to be marketed in a way that challenged the assumption in favour of fresh. The reason for this is because both buying frozen products and freezing leftovers were seen as effective in lowering food waste levels.

*It's a method that works, it just needs to be branded in a better way. Marketed and promoted as, 'this is no longer something that's not good for you, it's not dead, it's healthy'. [Male, under 25, London]*

Another aspect of why frozen food became more popular during the group discussions was that it was seen as a convenient way to waste less food for those with lifestyle constraints. It was seen as an effective method to provide flexibility to household planning.

Composting also saw a rise in approval after the group discussions. This increase was very slight but it underlines a point about changing attitudes and increasing willingness to change behaviour after becoming more aware of the social and environmental context of food waste. One participant expressed a view that such was the importance of food waste as an issue, that it was right that some comfort be sacrificed to address it.

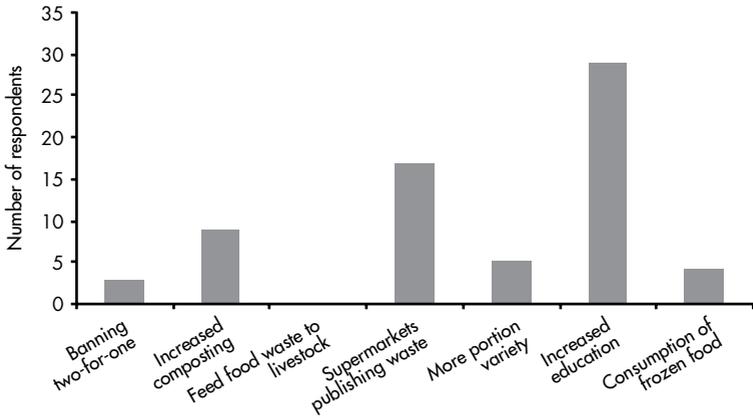
*... Even if it does interfere with your life, there's going to be some good out of it at the end of the day, so you have to give it a try. With all of this, if you're going to reduce your food waste you're going to have to sacrifice some kind of comfort. [Male under 25, London]*

Other participants did not extend such a view to composting and argued that it would be too much of a burden. Such participants often preferred other options such as frozen food or better household planning. Composting was certainly an issue that divided participant opinion but what is clear is that for a small number of participants this became more attractive in the social context of food waste. This highlights the importance of linking discussions of schemes such as composting to the reasons for partaking in such schemes in the first place.

## Waste not, want not

As well as looking at options for addressing the issue of food waste at the household level, participants were asked to discuss a range of options at the economy-wide level. As Table 5 below illustrates, there was an overwhelming level of support for increased education to be used to address the problem of food waste.

Table 6 Participants were asked to select the two best options for reducing food waste levels and mitigating negative impacts of food waste after the group discussions



The call for increased education was linked to earlier discussions in the groups about the importance of awareness in making judgements about others. When asked what increased education actually represented, many participants made reference to the information about the social and environmental context of food waste they themselves had seen at the start of the group discussions. When pressed for ideas on who should deliver such increased education, a number of participants suggested that **celebrity chefs** could make an important contribution.

*Female 1: I think that's probably the key, teaching people, definitely.*

*Moderator: Key for?*

*Female 1: Key for any of this to work, like, people need to know because, I didn't even give it a second thought before we came here, and it makes you think. You're so busy with your day to day life, and this is the time to catch them, in school when they're young. I know my kids tell me off when I put something in the wrong bin, or I'm not recycling or whatever, they let me know about it.*

*Male 1: It is being done, I think it's whether people are listening or not. You can see they're trying to tackle it with different ideas, feed your family for a fiver adverts on telly and Jamie Oliver's always enforcing stuff.*

*Female 1: He got a lot of flack, and it's come amazing now, the kids' school dinners. Compared to when I was at school. At the school it wasn't popular, when the show was going on I was thinking 'you're giving him a lot of grief, it's only vegetables, you should be pleased', but actually he's made a huge impact by doing what he's done. [Non home owning parents, Gillingham]*

An attitude expressed in all groups was the view that government action on food waste was legitimate and necessary. In a number of groups there was some tension expressed between personal freedom and the legitimacy of government intervention. In these discussions there were some points where certain freedoms were deemed to be of less importance than preventing the depletion of valuable resources.

*I think it's like this thing about freedom, and it's something that we really take for granted, because if we eat and drink all our resources away then we're not going to have freedom, and we'll be saying 'in 2012 we should have thought about this', because it's really something, you can say 'it's my right as a consumer I can do this I can do that', but what happens when you get to a place where you can't? [Female, home owning young professional, Peterborough]*

## Waste not, want not

As well as seeing increased legitimacy for government action in the context of scarce resources, some participants saw a dual role for government and business to address food waste.

*Moderator: Who should be responsible for this [increased education]?*

*Female 1: Government*

*Moderator: And why is that?*

*Female 1: Because the government are the most influential, so it will be from them that they have the power to ensure that these educational efforts are on TV, they have the funding, they have the power to control funding, so even if we had things like educational food programmes for families when we spoke about it being linked into communities, it would be government that would be able to provide financial support for programmes like that which would then educate people on budgeting, educate people on wastage, educate people on our economy and the current climate and how much waste we use, it would educate people on the financial impact it has on us as well, erm...gosh, it just goes on! It's all, the government hold the key to the opportunity for everyone to be educated and they would also have the power over our stores.*

*Male 1: But I also think the private sector should kick in over education though. If supermarkets aren't paying any attention to the amount of food they're throwing away and legislation is brought in saying educate their customers saying 'OK you buy a kilo mincemeat, there's this much waste', I mean they've started doing it already on showing the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that's produced on every packet of crisps you buy and you know it's small in the bottom corner but you still read it. So maybe it's not just the government who should take responsibility but the people who are actually selling the product.*

[Non-home owning young professionals, London]

The idea of supermarkets publishing information and being graded upon their food waste performance was popular in the groups. Furthermore, such an initiative was seen by many participants to represent a virtuous circle in the sense that it would drive down food waste amongst supermarkets whilst also raising awareness of the issue amongst customers.

*Male 1: Well I've got a Sainsbury's and a Tesco by me, roughly the equal distance and if Tesco was an A+ and Sainsbury's was a B I'd go to Tesco definitely.*

*Moderator: Do you agree?*

*Male 2: Yeah definitely, you name and shame. You know how competitive they all are, it can only be a good thing.*

*Female 1: Completely 110 per cent agree.*

*Moderator: Should it be compulsory?*

*[all]: Yes*

*Male 2: Yeah no brainer.*

*Female 1: Yeah.*

*Moderator: Do you think it would be efficient at reducing the waste?*

*Male 1: Well it would depend on who was setting the grading. If it was on average or if it was here's our targets we need to target it to here.*

*Whereas if Tesco, or anyone else, were saying they're A+ but in reality they're still wasting a lot more. If there was government targets or European to waste whatever stock they get in, x percentage then yeah I think it should work. And also with the supermarket doing it, surely it*

## Waste not, want not

*raises awareness for everyone shopping there, they take it on board, 'oh they're an A+ on their wastage'*

*Female 1: Yeah definitely, I think the key word is wastage that information should also be information that is made public to us. 'They scored this A+ because of x amount of reduction in waste, and this supermarket is a D minus because they have x amount of waste;' so you can see for yourself, and [I] think it would just, you know, become second nature to the consumer to think about how much waste we have at home, or if we're loading up our shopping basket we'll be thinking 'do we really need five of the same product?'. Maybe think about it, but I love a buy one get one free!*

[Non home owning young professionals, London]



## 5 | Conclusions and lessons for stakeholders

### Lessons for government

This research demonstrates that the public see government's role as multi-faceted and central. The responses to the information in the discussions give an idea of how government can better design programmes to address food waste.

They suggest a trajectory of government intervention that focuses on awareness-raising at first before moving on to more targeted interventions. The latter will be accepted as long as the former takes into account the need to address people as citizens and not just consumers.

This is a hard lesson for politicians to learn in a climate when public opinion is sometimes feared as a constraint on policy. Politicians should however feel emboldened that they can make arguments to take the public with them in efforts to address environmental problems. The success of such efforts also greatly depends on the notion of democratic consent, and this research has illustrated how to better communicate about food waste in order to secure such consent.

An illustrative example of a targeted intervention would be for government to insist that supermarkets publish and be graded on their food waste performance. Not only would this play well with the views revealed in this research, it would help raise awareness about food waste and lay the foundation for further communications.

# Waste not, want not

## Lessons for industry

This research shows that there is a desire amongst the public for business to take food waste seriously as an issue but also to make it easier for us as citizens to make greener choices. This could be done through a number of ways, but a strong emphasis was placed on the role that business could play in raising awareness of things such as household planning techniques as well as environmental information.

Through the love food hate waste campaign, government and business have already achieved a huge amount to engage people with food waste reduction initiatives. This research shows that in order to motivate even greater engagement with and take up of such initiatives, industry must be bolder in going beyond the use of consumer narratives in communicating with people.

Participants talked about harnessing the competitive nature of the food sector to incentivise a 'race to the top' in terms of communications and policy on food waste. An example of the kind of communications that businesses such as retailers and food manufacturers could use would be to emphasise their own progress before asking customers to do the same.

This work, as well as previous Fabian Society research, shows that such co-operation between business and individuals can be a very powerful motivator of attitudinal change.

Some businesses are already taking bold steps to address their own food waste in wider sustainability programmes they are committed to. These businesses should shout louder about their achievements and work with environmental campaigners and sympathetic parliamentarians to push such issues up the public and governmental agendas. Business must show how it can be a progressive voice in calling for standards and regulation that incentivise best practice. This is particularly relevant given the increasing importance of debates about 'good' and 'responsible' capitalism.

# Conclusions and lessons for stakeholders

## Lessons for campaigning groups

This research should serve both as an optimistic contribution to the evidence base on food waste whilst also providing some strong lessons. The findings of this research lend further support for the importance of communicating with people as responsible citizens as well as the traditional approach of appealing to people's financial self-interest as consumers.

In recent months, there has been an increase in campaigning about food waste, with Friends of the Earth and Tristram Stuart pushing the issue up the agenda with the 'feeding the 5000' campaign. This kind of work is very important and has laid the foundations for some important government action to reinforce the importance of this issue in the public consciousness.

Environmental campaigners should seek to work ever closer with business and government on these issues. This should be both in terms of encouraging and drawing attention to the progress of some but also to scrutinise and hold feet to the fire in highlighting bad practice.

## The public politics of food waste

As well as government, business and campaigning groups, participants felt that individuals had an important part to play. Reinforcing this report's argument about democratic consent, participants suggested that making individuals change their habits was key for long lasting change.

*It has to be all three or it wouldn't work. You need the government obviously for funding and things like that, you need the supermarkets because they distribute it all, and we need to want to care about it for it to work. I don't think it can be left to one group. [Female, non-home owning parent, Gillingham]*

This report therefore calls upon the government to make a short-term targeted intervention in the area of food waste to lay the ground for

## Waste not, want not

continued long-term awareness-raising and more substantive policy interventions in future. In addition, all major parties should promise to back the development of a national food strategy that includes action on addressing food waste, both at the business and household levels.

It is a mark of shame that we collectively throw away so much food both as businesses and households. That we continue to do so, despite food waste serving no useful purpose, illustrates the environmental challenge. The resources that fuel our lifestyles and economy are limited. We must understand this and shape our lifestyle and economic decisions around this fact.

This does not mean that we must accept a lower quality of life, but that we must make more responsible choices about our lives and the structure of our economies. The alternative – pursuing business as usual – is the real threat to us all. We must make the collective choice to meet this threat and make the changes we need to. We will only be able to do this by the power of our collective endeavour. A world of atomised consumers will fail. A world of empowered citizens can succeed.

## References

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- DEFRA (2008). A Framework for Pro-environmental Behaviours
- DEFRA (2007) Survey of Public Attitudes and Behaviours toward the Environment
- Horton, T., & Doron, N. (2011). Climate change and sustainable consumption: what do the public think is fair? Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- WRAP (2009). Household Food and Drink Waste in the UK



## Appendix i | Methodology

### About the research

This project explored public attitudes to food waste through the lens of fairness. The aim of the project was to evaluate the extent to which the issue of food waste could be seen in terms of fairness, citizenship and stewardship over scarce resources. This was investigated through a series of deliberative focus groups in a range of locations throughout the UK. The groups took place in January – February 2012 and featured over 40 participants.

### Motivation behind the research

Food waste represents 2.4 per cent of the UK's annual Greenhouse Gas emissions<sup>2</sup>. In addition, food prices in the UK have steadily risen over the last few years. Furthermore, we have consistently seen horrifying scenes of famine throughout the world over the last few decades. This underlines the moral imperative of dealing with our food waste in terms of our responsibility to the global community. In addition, where other environmental problems struggle with the externalities of useful behaviour (eg. travelling, water efficiency), food waste serves no purpose and involves no obvious bearing of burdens from people. Herein lies a political curiosity. For an activity that has no utility, food waste is strangely low on the agenda of environmental policy. If we cannot drive

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<sup>2</sup> Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP), 2009, Household Food and Drink Waste in the UK

attitudinal change in this policy area, what hope is there for the bigger challenges posed by climate change?

Previous research done by the Fabian Society investigating different areas of sustainable consumption suggest that public attitudes play an important role in efforts to advance a wider sustainability agenda<sup>3</sup>. Particularly, our work for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation demonstrates that fairness can be a strong driver of support for sustainability policy measures. Understanding the social and environmental context of consumption can trigger deeply held fairness instincts that can motivate notions of responsibility and citizenship in relation to scarce environmental resources. Such approaches are currently absent from discussions of food waste policy and could be key to moving the agenda on beyond the landmark Courtauld agreement. This agreement has seen retailers go some way address food waste in the last 5 years. There has been some suggestion that it is hard to disaggregate the effects of the agreement from the effects of a recession on consumption and economic recovery could trigger a 'bounce' in levels of food waste. Current policy making is therefore progressing without a deep enough understanding of public attitudes in this area.

## Research aims

Much work has been done to identify the types of food waste behaviour in the UK as well as the differences amongst individuals and households. The key element of this report is to add value to this evidence base by exploring the possibilities for shifting attitudes in this area as well as examining a range of methods through which resonant arguments could be constructed. Evidence from these previous studies show that 60 per cent of all household food waste is avoidable<sup>4</sup> and households account for 50 per cent of our food waste, this shows that the public has

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<sup>3</sup> Horton, T., & Doron, N. (2011). Climate change and sustainable consumption: what do the public think is fair? Joseph Rowntree Foundation

<sup>4</sup> Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, 2011

## Waste not, want not

an important role to play in facing this issue and as a result our research focused on reducing household food waste.

This is not to suggest that government or business do not have important roles too, and attitudes to the actions of such actors were also explored. Solving food waste and issues of sustainability more broadly do not only involve behaviour change when the public is concerned. There is also an important notion of democratic consent for government and business frameworks to address the issues.

Through the use of deliberative focus groups we explored our central hypothesis that fairness can be powerful motivating frame for building such public support as well as the acceptability of specific measures to reduce food waste. In addition to exploring the motivating of support and acceptance of different policies, we were interested in examining the levels of burden that the public are willing to accept in reducing their food waste behaviour, if any. For example, are people keen to work with the opportunities provided by internet shopping to better plan their meals and reduce their food waste? Do people feel that basic information about food waste is lacking and if so, who are seen to be the most relevant voices and vehicles to deliver such information?

Our initial research questions were:

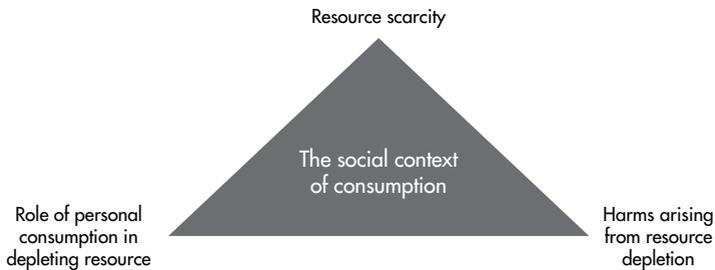
1. Can fairness be a strong driver for building support for measures to reduce overall volumes of household food waste in the UK?
2. What types of information and language are key to constructing resonant arguments for reducing food waste?
3. What can public attitudes teach us about the perceived responsibility of different actors in this policy area? (government/business/civil society)
4. What are the main barriers that people have in engaging with food waste as an issue? What strategies can enable us to better understand and overcome such barriers to engagement?

5. What kind of burdens, if any, are the public willing to bear in addressing the overall reduction of household food waste?

### Social Context of consumption

Building on previous Fabian Society research, we have found that in order to harness fairness instincts in approaching environmental behaviour, it is vital that people understand what we call the social context of consumption. The social context of consumption refers to the information required for people to view environmental issues through the lens of fairness. The three conditions of the social context of consumption are i) an understanding of the limited nature of the resource ii) the impacts arising from depleting levels of the resource iii) an understanding of how personal consumption leads to depleting levels of the resource<sup>5</sup>. These are represented in figure 1 below.

Figure 1 the Social Context of Consumption



These three concepts relate to distinct areas types of information:

1. **Resource scarcity** – this concept is explored in our groups as the notion of limits. Our research has shown that understanding that

<sup>5</sup> The theoretical basis of the social context of consumption is developed in detail in Horton, T & Doron, N. 'Climate Change and Sustainable Consumption: What do the Public Think is Fair?' (2011). Joseph Rowntree Foundation

## Waste not, want not

there is an ultimate limit on the availability of a resource is key to accepting the need to manage this resource in a responsible way.

2. *Harms* – our research has also shown that there must be some acknowledgement of harms that result from depleting a resource in order for fairness to figure as a consideration in relation to the resource.
3. *Personal use* – understanding how we all personally contribute to the depleting of the resource is the final piece of the consumption triangle that signals both our responsibility but also the opportunity to make a difference in securing the long-term sustainability of a resource.

## Scope of the report

This research was based on qualitative research and it is worth sounding a note of caution as to the extent to which claims can be made on a sample of the size used in this research. Despite this, the commonalities in the themes that emerged in response to the information presented in the group discussions does provide some grounds for optimism in the scalability of lessons from this work.

Furthermore, group discussions lasted 3 hours and during this time participants were exposed to a lot of information about food waste. There should therefore be a consideration of this in drawing out lessons for communications. The narrative journey illustrated in the group discussions is perhaps more suited to a long-term communications campaign.

## The focus groups

The deliberative research comprised six three-hour focus groups with 6-8 participants each. These were undertaken between January and February 2012 in five locations around the UK (Carlisle, Edinburgh, Gillingham, London, Peterborough). Participants were aged between 18 – 85, and drawn from the full range of socio-economic groups as well as from a broad range of political identification. The series of groups included

one specifically with older participants (over 65) and one specifically with younger participants (under 25).

Based on an extensive literature review as well as discussions with members of our advisory network, we decided to use 4 of these groups to explore attitudes amongst two specific population segments. These segments had been identified (with valuable input from Waste & Resources Action Plan (WRAP) as the parts of the population with the highest levels of food waste behaviour. The two groups were:

- Adults of 25-44 years of age with children under 16 years of age
- Young professionals working full-time aged 16-34

In addition, home ownership had been identified as a further variable linked to high levels of food waste. As a result we ran one group for each segment with all participants being renters and one each group being home owners to understand more about the importance of this variable.<sup>6</sup>

Beyond this used the two final groups to explore the differences in age groups (from the range of social classifications) to see how the process of deliberation differs. One group was formed of people under-25 and one of over-65s.

In addition we filtered recruitment to ensure that participants are responsible for shopping, planning and cooking meals in their household. Although research has shown that women waste slightly less food on average, gender does not have a huge effect on food waste levels. As a result we had a fairly even gender split in our focus groups.

To filter out climate sceptics and those hardened to information about the environment, we used two statements from DEFRA's survey of attitudes to the environment (DEFRA, 2007) and strong agreement with these statements was taken to indicate climate scepticism. The questions

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<sup>6</sup> According to quantitative research done by Brook Lyndhurst (2007) for WRAP there are three key food waste groups: Young Professionals aged 16-34 in full time work (42% are high wasters), Young families aged 25-44 with children aged under 16 in the home (45 % are high wasters) and renters in class DE (35% are high wasters)

## Waste not, want not

were asked twice, once at the recruitment stage and once just before the groups:

- “The so-called ‘Environmental Crisis’ facing humanity has been greatly exaggerated”
- “The effects of climate change are too far in the future to really worry me”

To filter out committed green activists we used two further statements from DEFRA’s survey. Again the questions were asked twice, once at the recruitment stage and once just before the groups:

- “I would be prepared to pay more for environmentally friendly products”
- “Any changes I make to help the environment need to fit in with my lifestyle”

As a result of the recruitment process we ensured that no participant strongly agreed with the first statement or disagreed with the second. As an additional step we filtered out members of pro-environmental non-governmental organisations such as Greenpeace or WWF.

Although with extreme environmental views (pro- and anti-) are important, they represent relatively small parts of the population and we were keen to work the broad majority of of people with the more centrist viewpoints.

## Stimulus material

The groups began by exploring our theoretical framework by providing participants with information about limits on our ability to produce food, harms arising from increasing food scarcity as well as information about personal food waste behaviour.

Participants were presented with a range of statistics and graphs about available farmland, freshwater and the trajectory of food prices over the

last few decades. In addition, we provided data on the total carbon and monetary impact of household food waste, as well as breaking it down by household type.

The next exercise in the groups presented a range of fictional characters with different lifestyles and food behaviours. This projective technique allowed participants to cast judgements on different lifestyles without having to talk about what they do at home. This was an effective way to elicit a discussion about possible taboo or embarrassing behaviours as well as different lifestyles. The inequalities of food waste behaviour (some throwing a little and some a lot) stimulated interesting discussion about what fairness means in terms of food waste collectively.

Following the characters, we explored other aspects of the issues in the context of fairness. These aspects ranged from people's attitudes to frozen food versus fresh food, as well as how people feel about the importance relative difficulty of planning meals, cooking skills, storing, composting etc. All of these were presented as measures that individuals can take to minimise the amount of food or the impact of food that is being thrown away.

The discussions then moved onto an exploration of economy-wide approaches to addressing food waste to see what participants felt warmest towards. This was done by separating them into two groups where we presented them with a range of options and asked them to choose two as well as constructing arguments for why they were the best two.

Examples of policy options:

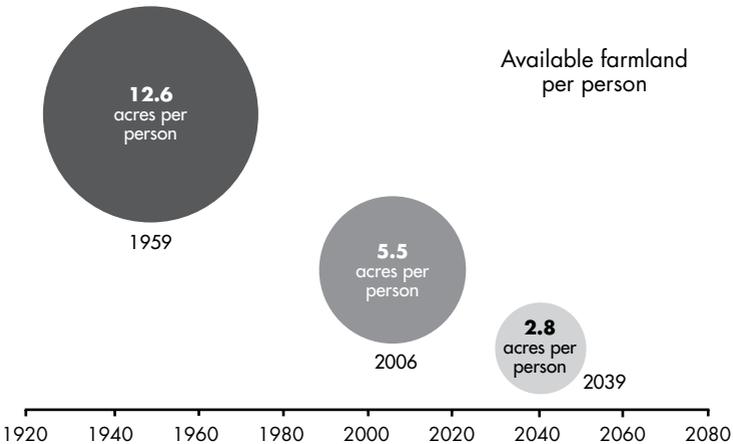
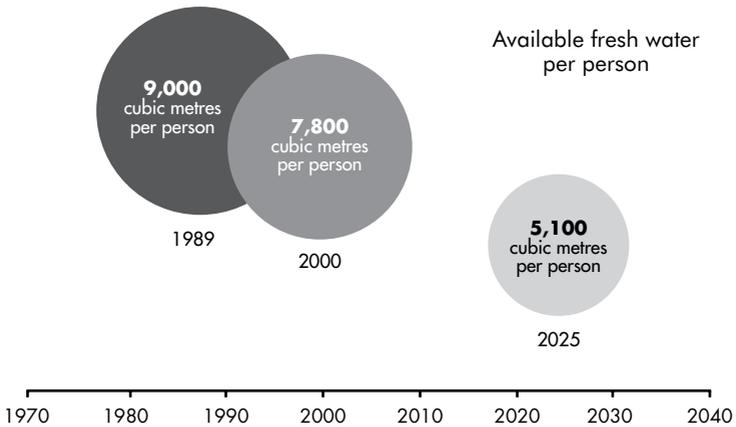
- Banning two for one offers altogether
- Compulsory composting/Bin taxes
- Allowing food waste to be fed to livestock
- Supermarkets being forced to publish how much food they waste and a grading system established

## Waste not, want not

- Portioning (both in supermarkets and restaurants)
- Education (whether in schools or wider public engagement)

Group discussions ended with a reflection on where responsibility for tackling the problem of food waste should lie in terms of the role of Government, individuals and business. Participants were then asked to offer closing remarks.

Some examples of stimulus material are presented below.





**Jeff**

Single, age 32. Lives in a large house in central London. Regularly flies for both business and personal reasons.

Flights per year: 1 return flight to Dubai; 2 return flights to New York; 12 flights to Manchester (for work)

Flying carbon footprint: 9.63 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>

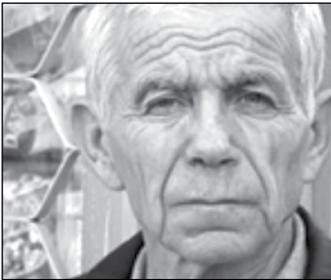


**Vera**

Single, age 55. Lives in a maisonette in a suburban area. Occasionally flies to visit family abroad, or for a holiday.

Flights per year: 1 return flight to Barcelona; 1 return flight to Glasgow

Flying carbon footprint: 0.85 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>



**William**

Single, age 68. Lives in a flat in a small town. Retired, and very rarely flies abroad for holidays or to visit family.

Flights per year: 1 return flight to Dublin

Flying carbon footprint: 0.09 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>



**Sara**

Single, age 30. Lives and works in London. Sara is Australian and flies back home to visit her family and friends twice a year.

Flights per year: 2 return flights to Sydney

Flying carbon footprint: 6.04 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>

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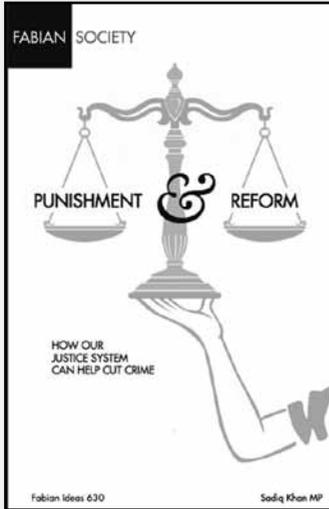
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The Fabian Review

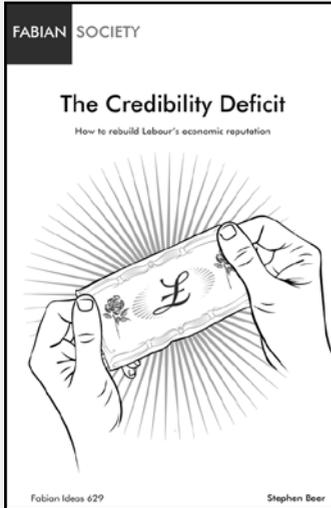


## Punishment and Reform

How our justice system can help cut crime

‘Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime’ was more than a clever soundbite, it was a successful approach to criminal justice policy that left crime 43 per cent lower when Labour departed office than when it entered. ‘Punishment and Reform: How our justice system can help cut crime’ addresses the challenge of how Labour is to build on this legacy and further reduce crime, but within the tough spending constraints imposed by straitened times.

Edited by Sadiq Khan MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Justice, the pamphlet is a collection of essays by members of the Justice Policy Working Group and other commissioned experts, brought together to inform the conclusions of the Labour Party’s policy review. It includes a chapter by Barry Mizen who, along with his wife Margaret and the rest of their family, set up the Jimmy Mizen Foundation following the murder of their son in May 2008. Other authors include Lord Victor Adebowale, Baroness Jean Corston, Dame Helen Reeves, Professor Julian V Roberts and Matthew Ryder QC.



## The Credibility Deficit

How to rebuild Labour's economic reputation

In this Fabian Ideas pamphlet, Stephen Beer argues that Labour's economic credibility gap is wide but it can be closed.

The party entered the 2010 General Election campaign unable to explain its approach to the economy. It lost credibility on fiscal policy with financial markets and it lost credibility with the electorate because it did not answer the concerns of people faced with declining living standards and little decline in inequality. To restore credibility, Labour should revisit its values: everyone should be able to participate in our economic life and inequality works against this. Applying these values will require Labour to take some tough decisions.

In 'The Credibility Deficit', Beer argues that Labour also needs to understand economic realities, including the power of the bond markets. Stimulus measures should focus on investment to raise the productive potential of the economy and, at the heart of what we are about, on employment. Labour must support – and learn to love – a reformed City with a refreshed reputation and understanding of the common good.

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## Waste not, want not

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How fairness concerns can shift attitudes to food waste

Natan Doron

One third of all food bought by UK households is thrown away each year. This is not only a huge financial cost but an environmental one too: the carbon footprint of this food waste is the equivalent of a fifth of all cars on UK roads.

Most people do not think they waste food. So how can policymakers encourage people to change behaviour they don't see themselves as practising anyway?

This report says the answer lies in getting people to understand the social and environmental context of their consumption. This triggers a set of 'fairness instincts' and a concern for the behaviour of others. This can motivate strong public support for policy measures designed to lower the overall impact of food waste in the UK.

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