

**Peas**  
Please

Making a pledge  
for more veg

**PROGRESS  
REPORT**  
2022



WE PLEDGE TO PLAY OUR PART TO HELP EVERYONE IN BRITAIN EAT MORE VEG

## Acknowledgements

We are extremely grateful to all those who contributed to this report, all our pledgers for reporting their progress in 2022, and to our Veg Advocates for their support and input over the past year.

A huge thanks in particular to our funder, The National Lottery Community Fund (UK Programme), for making all our work possible.



### About The National Lottery Community Fund

We are the largest funder of community activity in the UK – we're proud to award money raised by National Lottery players to communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Since June 2004, we have made over 200,000 grants and awarded over £9 billion to projects that have benefited millions of people. We are passionate about funding great ideas that matter to communities and make a difference to people's lives. At the heart of everything we do is the belief that when people are in the lead, communities thrive. Thanks to the support of National Lottery players, our funding is open to everyone. We're privileged to be able to work with the smallest of local groups right up to UK-wide charities, enabling people and communities to bring their ambitions to life.

## WITH THANKS TO OUR STRATEGY AND ADVISORY BOARDS FOR THEIR GUIDANCE AND EXPERTISE

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## SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND PLEDGERS



Since Peas Please was launched in 2017 >>

**771**  
MILLION

cumulative additional portions of veg sold or served



**THIS YEAR**

**16** pledgers have met their commitments

**59** Veg Advocate led activities have been carried out



**605,331**  
people have been reached through the **VEG CITIES** campaign

## VEGPOWER

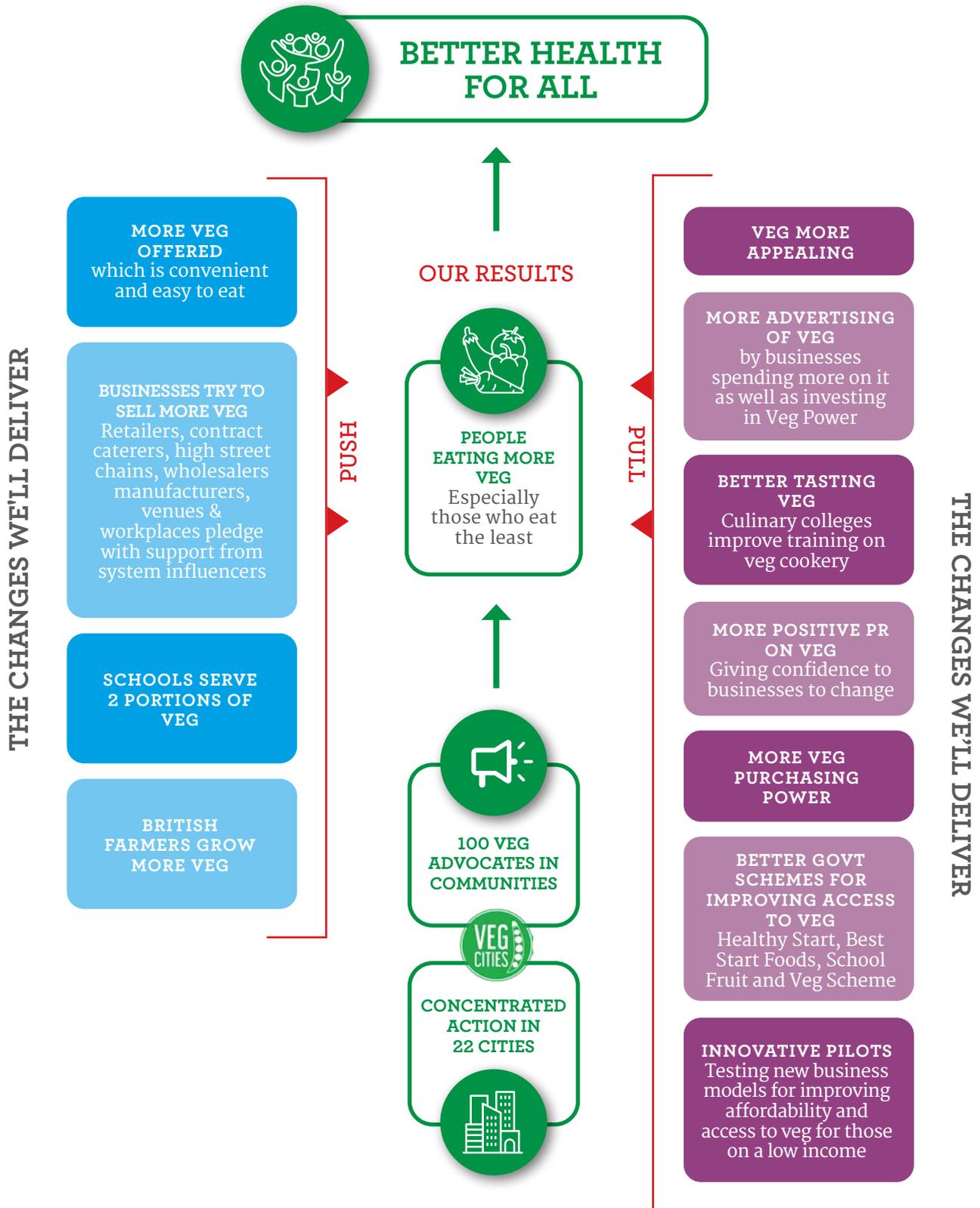
**40** MILLION people have been reached every year since 2019 by Veg Power



**3,845** schools took part in Veg Power's schools' programme



# Our theory of change



# An uncertain outlook for veg

We were lucky enough to obtain funding from the National Lottery back in 2019 for a four-year programme of work, taking Peas Please all the way through to September 2023. The world now looks quite different to when we kicked things off in 2019. The ‘new normal’ has become a constant state of flux and uncertainty. Hot on the heels of the Covid pandemic, which had severe operational consequences for many of our pledgers, we now find ourselves in a cost-of-living crisis. In the nine months to September 2022 levels of food insecurity doubled (The Food Foundation, 2022) as food prices and energy bills hit their highest levels in thirty years. A great many families who were previously just about managing are now struggling, with 9.7 million adults having experienced food insecurity in the month of September.

With budgets tight and supply chains struggling to cope under the combined strain of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, pledger progress has unfortunately stagnated this year. Although our cumulative portion total has increased to **771 million portions**, and there are some brilliant examples of innovation among our

pledging community, the progress made last year has not been repeated. **This year we added 147 million portions of veg to our running total, which while encouraging, is far off the 461 million portions added last year. Across both our catering and retail sector pledgers portion progress is slowing down, with restaurant chains the only sector showing meaningful growth this year.**

14% of our pledgers this year did not report back to us with the expected information – with many citing staff shortages and more pressing supply chain issues as barriers to being able to collect data on sales and servings of veg. This puts the number of pledgers

**IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT PROGRESS HAS SLOWED THIS YEAR AS SALES OF VEG HAVE BEEN HIT BY THE INCREASING COST PRESSURES FACED BY MANY HOUSEHOLDS**

receiving a black traffic-light score (no data received) at the highest level since the programme began. While this is partly a reflection of a sector struggling to recover post pandemic, it is concerning to see food businesses failing to engage with schemes to promote healthy and sustainable diets such as Peas Please. These remain of the utmost importance as both the population’s health and the impacts of climate change worsen.

It also seems likely that progress has slowed this year as sales of veg have been hit by the increasing cost pressures faced by many families. A number of our retailers who report back to us on sales of veg across product ranges and their businesses have seen a drop in the amount of veg they’ve sold in the past year. A survey earlier this year by our sister programme Veg Power found that 49% of low income families reported that they were buying less fresh veg (Veg Power, 2022), and food price inflation remains higher for vegetables than it does for some other food categories such as fruit and confectionary (📊 Figure 1).

**We know that when budgets are tight the food shop is often the first thing to be squeezed, with households more likely to prioritise cheaper, more filling calories than those from fruit and veg.** Data from the 2008 food price crisis showed that intakes of veg were hit particularly hard last time inflation was high, falling by almost 8% (IFS, 2015). The current squeeze is likely to particularly impact on the diets of low income families, with households experiencing food insecurity already reporting that they are buying less fruit and veg as a result (📊 Figure 2).



FIGURE 1  
**THE AVERAGE % CHANGE IN CONSUMER PRICE INDEX RETAIL FOOD PRICES FROM SEPTEMBER 2021 TO SEPTEMBER 2022**

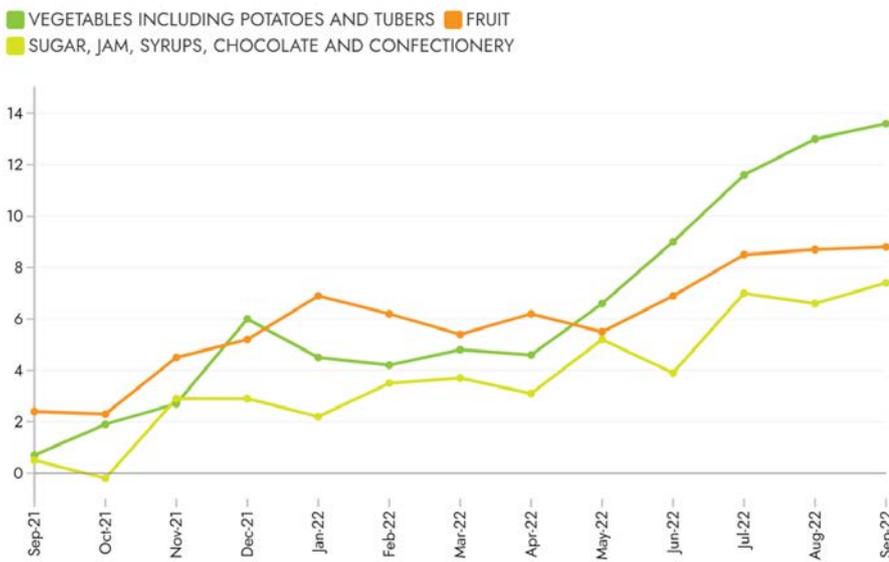
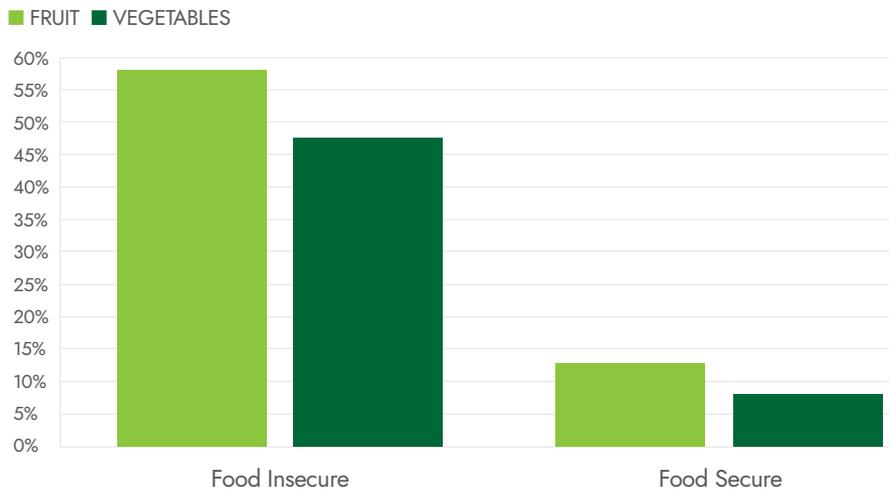


FIGURE 2  
**% OF HOUSEHOLDS REPORTING BUYING LESS FRUIT AND VEG IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, YOUGOV, SEPTEMBER 2022**



Data kindly provided by Kantar to the Peas Please programme shows that the proportion of shopping baskets that contain veg has fallen very slightly this year, with the gap between high and low income households having widened since 2020-21. **While our broader objective is still to see 3 billion additional portions of veg served or sold by our pledging community by summer 2023, it is now more important than ever that businesses act to ensure that low and middle income households are able to access veg as the cost-of-living crisis bites.** We must not let the wider national and political climate halt the promising progress we were beginning to see being made across the UK. The Peas Please mission to make it easier for everyone to eat more veg has never been more necessary or relevant, and we'll need all hands on deck in the year ahead to make this a reality.

**WE HAVE THREE GOALS:**

**1** **To see more veg eaten:** We want more veg on offer in convenient and easy-to-eat ways. We want veg to be more appealing and desirable. And we want low income households to have greater purchasing power to buy veg.

**2** **To catalyse a permanent shift in the food system** in favour of higher veg consumption, reflected in both business practice and government policies.

**3** **To establish a successful model for enabling people's voices and lived experience** to help create food system change.





### NEW PLEDGERS

With the current year (2022-2023) the last one within our current round of funding, we have switched our focus away from obtaining new pledges from organisations within the food system and are instead focussing on ensuring that current pledger commitments are met. Nevertheless, we were delighted to welcome **five new pledgers** to the programme.



### WHAT'S NEXT?

As this is the final reporting year which we have confirmed funding for, we are currently working to develop and plan the next phase of our work with organisations within the food system to make it easier for everyone to access veg. As we come towards the end of our four-year schedule of work, here's what we've got planned to ensure that, with your help, we finish with a strong set of results.



#### THE PEAS PLEASE PRIZES

Our annual prize ceremony will award those who've contributed the most over the past four years. Companies able to demonstrate progress against our three key metrics for assessing progress towards sustainable and healthy diets (sales of veg, sales of plan-based protein, sales of healthy food) will win our inaugural Golden Carrot Award.



# This year's highlights



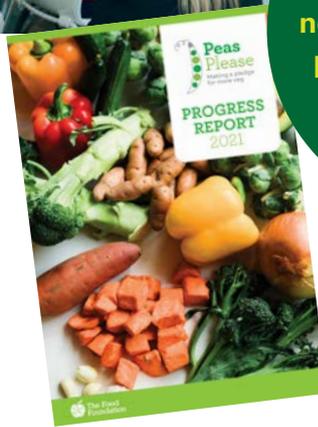
We welcomed **45** of you to our first in-person Pledgers' Conference since 2019



We launched our new online reporting portal for pledgers to report back to us on their progress



We awarded **100 small grants** to our Veg Advocates, supporting **59 activities** aiming to boost veg consumption within local communities



Peas Please reports were downloaded over **1,080 times** between December 2021 and August 2022



Peas Please and Veg Power received **347 media hits**

**180 PEOPLE** attended a webinar we held exploring the **POTENTIAL** for fruit and veg to be **INTEGRATED INTO SOCIAL PRESCRIPTION** schemes targeting low income communities



We held three People's Veg Events across the UK, bringing our Veg Advocates together for inspiration and planning

# PART ONE

## OUR WORK WITH BUSINESSES



### PEAS PLEASE PRIZES

This year's winners were announced at our Pledgers' Conference. The winners and runners-up were selected based on their progress during the 2021/22 reporting cycle.

### THE PEAS PLEASE INDIVIDUAL CHAMPION

*Recognising outstanding contribution made by an individual working within one of our participating pledger organisations to inspire and demonstrate leadership on their organisation's Peas Please pledge.*

**WINNER:**  
**MARK NEWBOLD, LIDL**

Mark has strengthened Lidl's commitment to promote and drive up veg sales. Lidl is also one of the first retailers to offer new transparent reporting of such sales. Mark also actively looked for ways to support the government's Healthy Start initiative and enthusiastically engaged with the Food Foundation's Veg Advocate Dialogues.

**RUNNER-UP:** Grace Ricotti, Aldi

### THE PEAS PLEASE PLEDGER CHAMPION

*This award recognises organisations who have effectively implemented Peas Please pledges as a core part of their business proposition, including Peas Please in their company reporting, or linking their pledges to company and staff performance appraisals.*

**WINNER:**  
**SAINSBURY'S**

Sainsbury's have renewed their pledge to increase the proportion of total vegetable sales by 1% of tonnage, and are encouraging customers to increase veg consumption with various schemes including the offer of competitively-priced 'Imperfectly Tasty' and 'Greengrocer' fruit and vegetables, to ensure that fresh produce is accessible to all customers.

**RUNNER-UP:** Henderson Group /SPAR NI

### THE VEG CITY PRIZE

*Celebrating effective integrated place-based approaches to increasing veg uptake at a local level for cities participating in the Veg Cities campaign.*

**WINNER:**  
**HULL**

Hull Food Partnership has worked with the city council, voluntary and community sector organisations and food businesses. A total of 35 organisations have made an impressive 48 extra veg pledges, and the scheme is continuing to grow.

**RUNNER-UP:** Leeds



### THE VEG-O-METER PRIZE

Rewarding the biggest percentage increase in vegetable portions sold or served by our pledgers between 2020/21 and 2021/22 reporting cycles.

**WINNER:**  
**BLACKPOOL CATERING SERVICES**

Achieved a 171% increase in veg consumption by implementing new menus with more vegetables and increasing vegetable intake within school holiday meal provision schemes.

**RUNNER-UP:** Giraffe

### THE PEAS PLEASE RISING STAR

Recognising new Peas Please pledgers who have made effective and ambitious pledges to help everyone eat more veg.

**WINNER:**  
**TastEd**

TastEd have engaged with 100 schools to help deliver taste education lessons and provide teacher training and resources so fresh fruit and vegetable can be brought into lessons. This aims to inspire children to use all their senses, encouraging them to explore and then choose to eat fruit and vegetables.

### THE PEAS PLEASE GOOD SOCIETY PRIZE

Championing efforts to improve access to quality veg through farming innovation, better school food, and programmes targeting low income groups.

**WINNER:**  
**FOOD AND FUN**

Food and Fun is a school-based education programme providing food and nutrition education, physical activity, enrichment sessions and healthy meals to children in areas of social deprivation during the school summer holidays in Wales. The Food and Fun Menu Principles ensure a minimum of two separate portions of vegetables and/or salad are served with every lunch meal.

**RUNNER-UP:** Bags of Taste

### THE PEAS PLEASE INNOVATION PRIZE

Recognising inspirational and innovative schemes to support organisational Peas Please pledges and our overall mission of boosting veg consumption. (Monitoring and evaluation by entrants of their own schemes is also considered by judges of this category.)

**WINNER:**  
**GROENTENFRUIT HUIS**

GroentenFruit Huis transitioned their in-store nudging experiments into an online shopping environment during the covid pandemic. The group that was nudged bought 7% more vegetables and 6% more fruit. Nudges used included a fruit and vegetable meter giving shoppers' baskets a high or low score.

**RUNNER-UP:** Tesco

# This year's pledger progress

## MONITORING PLEDGER PROGRESS

The primary purpose of publishing our progress report is to assess each pledger's fidelity against their commitments. Monitoring is conducted annually through a combination of:

- 1 Pledger self-reporting to the PP team, reporting back against their commitments and SMART targets.
- 2 Use of aggregate, independently sourced metrics (Kantar data and annual data from nationally representative dietary surveys such as the NDNS).
- 3 Visits, where applicable, to retail stores and restaurant chains, and social media channel checks that are conducted by our Veg Advocates and the Peas Please team.
- 4 Working with independent partners (Brightpurpose and City University) whose role is to evaluate the overall programme and assess the extent to which we are meeting our original objectives.

This year for the first time, pledgers used our new online reporting portal to report back to us. Pledgers were asked to self-assess their progress with a numerical rating on a scale of 1-3, and to provide a justification for the rating, which we then used to confirm or adjust their self-rating score. We publish two traffic-light colour codes for pledgers based on this numerical score when they are reporting their second and subsequent years of data (one for overall

progress, and one for portion progress where relevant). First-year results are shared with pledgers privately. Contributions to our annual and cumulative portion totals, however, are included from year one of pledger reporting in order to track our progress over the entire duration of the programme.

### The traffic-light rating is defined as:

- **BLACK:** No report from pledger
- **GREY:** First year of reporting (score will be reported next year)
- **RED:** Limited progress
- **ORANGE:** A good start
- **YELLOW:** On the road to success
- **GREEN:** Fully implemented all commitments.

For the past two years we have allowed pledgers to opt out of reporting back to us where they could prove that the disruption and restrictions caused by the pandemic had significantly affected their reporting ability and capacity. Pledgers in the Out of Home sector have therefore not consistently reported back to us over the past two years of reporting. **This year, no Covid-19 opt-out option was provided to pledgers given that the 2021/22 reporting cycle is the first one in three years where restaurants and caterers have not had to close for a portion of the year.**

## VEGPOWER

Sales data and more detailed results for our brilliant sister campaign Veg Power's programme of work are analysed separately as part of the annual campaign evaluation exercise undertaken by Veg Power. This year a whopping 1 million children have taken part in tasting, growing and vegetable fun thank to Veg Power and ITV's *Eat Them To Defeat Them* campaign, with 57% of parents with children who took part saying that they ate more vegetables as a result. Veg Power have also been hard at work launching a new website and Simply Veg – a new campaign helping families to navigate the cost-of-living crisis by serving affordable and healthy meals using veg and pulses. Visit their [website](#) for further details on their activities this past year.



## THIS YEAR'S PROGRESS

The majority of pledgers who submitted data have made progress on their pledges. **40 of the 61** who reported back to us this year received a yellow or green traffic-light score and are thus on track to fulfil their commitments or have already done so (see [Annex 1](#)).

### PLEDGERS RECEIVING A GREEN TRAFFIC-LIGHT RATING THIS YEAR

<p><b>ACS</b></p> <p><b>Ask Italian</b></p> <p><b>Bags of Taste</b></p> <p><b>Brewers Fayre (Whitbread)</b></p> <p><b>Caterlink</b></p> <p><b>Food and Fun</b></p>	<p><b>Giraffe</b></p> <p><b>Greggs</b></p> <p><b>Harvester</b></p> <p><b>Henderson Group and Spar NI</b></p> <p><b>Hungry Horse (Greene King)</b></p>	<p><b>JD Wetherspoon</b></p> <p><b>Lantra</b></p> <p><b>Ocado</b></p> <p><b>Soil Association</b></p> <p><b>Ulster University Business School</b></p>
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FIGURE 3

### THE PERCENTAGE CONTRIBUTION TO OUR TOTAL CUMULATIVE PORTION TOTAL, BROKEN DOWN BY SECTOR, 2018 - 2022

■ 2018/19 ■ 2019/20 ■ 2020/21 ■ 2021/22

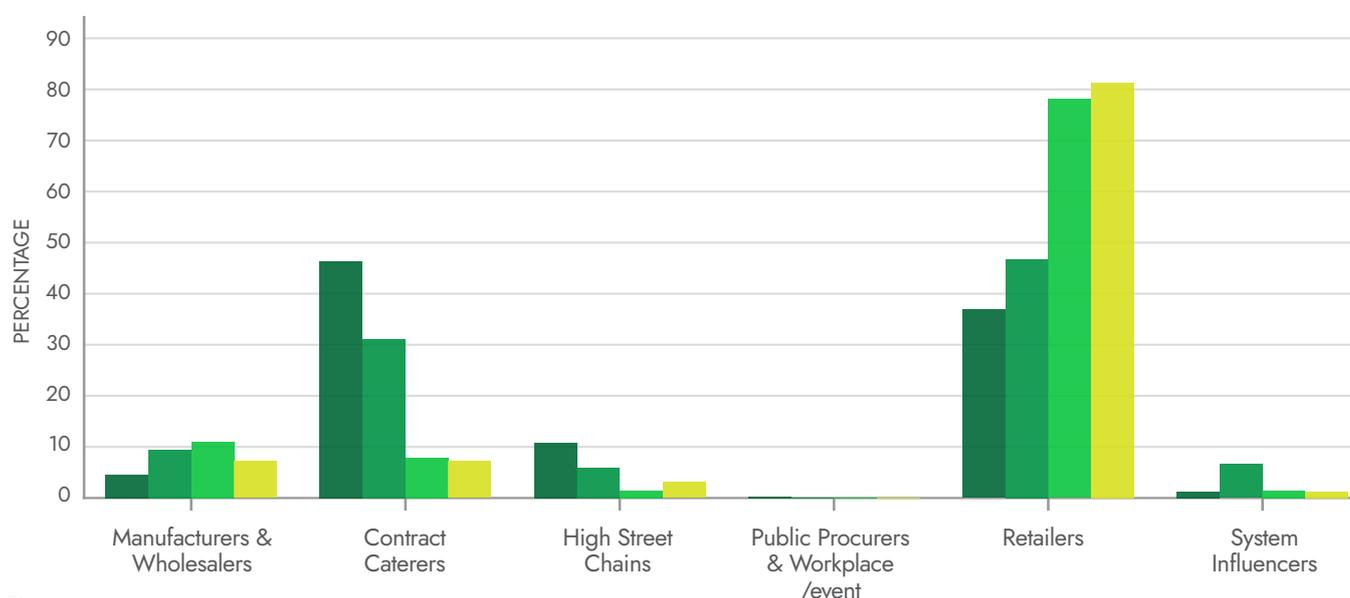


TABLE 1

### PEAS PLEASE REPORTING PROGRESS

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of pledgers due for reporting this year	41	49	70	74	76
Number of pledgers providing self-reported data	35	41	38	40*	53
Number of pledgers monitored by the PP team – no self-reported data	3	5	3	2	5
Number of pledgers who did not provide data	3	3	4 (2 of which have now been removed from the programme)	2 (1 of which has been removed from the programme)	15 (5 have been removed from the programme)
Number of Veg Cities	**	22	25	25	10

\* An additional 26 pledgers did not provide data due to capacity issues caused by Covid-19.

\*\* Three initial Veg Cities participated in the monitoring process as pledgers in 2017/18 and are counted above in the number of pledgers due for reporting.

## EXAMPLES OF VEG INNOVATION

As ever, pledgers have taken on the veg challenge in a number of innovative ways this year – all of which are helping to inform our knowledge of what works to drive up veg consumption.



### MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

- **Aldi** transformed the humble carrot into a trending Christmas advert character in 2021. Kevin the Carrot was the most Google searched Christmas character of the past five years, beating an M&S advert featuring Paddington Bear. Aldi teamed up with Marcus Rashford MBE on 'The Christmas Carrot' featuring his very own veg character 'Marcus Radishford', and highlighted his campaign for free school meals. Their unique take on the classic Christmas Carol story put the spotlight on fruit and veg characters including Tiny Tom and Peas and Goodwill.
- **Millbank Farm** are part of the collective veg producers, Veg NI, working to highlight the benefits of consuming more veg and – in particular – Northern Ireland-grown veg. With a DAERA Cooperation Grant, Veg NI were able to create an online platform: Parful Produce. Parful hosted regular food demos in the Healthy Horticulture section at the Balmoral show which had up to 120,000 visitors including a number of politicians, government officials and businesses.
- **Ocado** have created 'magical meal bundles' inspired by

Disney to create affordable, well-balanced meals for families. The meal bundles include at least one portion of veg and with a green or amber front-of-label traffic light.



### PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

- **Tesco** launched a Better Basket campaign aiming to tackle the barriers customers face when looking to fill their basket with healthier choices. They also launched a new Meat & Veg mince product which contains 30% veg as part of their Better Basket initiative to support families to increase their veg consumption, with the product offered at a lower Clubcard price and proving a success with customers. At the end of last year we filmed our Veg Advocates visiting Tesco's development kitchen to hear about their work around their Peas Please pledge and their new Meat & Veg product range. Watch our short video [here](#).



- **Waitrose** launched their Eat Flexi range to help customers eat more veg and a little less meat. By combining meat with veg and pulses, products still have the taste, succulence and texture of meat but with less fat and saturated fat, more veg and more fibre. Each product in the Eat Flexi range contains at least 25% vegetables and pulses.
- In June 2022, **Greggs** launched two brand new salad options within their Balanced Choice range which contain at least one portion of veg: Sweet Potato Bhaji and Rice, and Smoky Cajun Rice with BBQ Chicken and Sweetcorn Fritters. Following a successful trial in the North-East, the new salads were rolled out nationwide for Greggs fans across the UK to enjoy.



### MENU DEVELOPMENT

- **Bartlett Mitchell** continue to create fresh and creative recipes that ensure focus is given to both vegetable and fruit ingredients. They have created a new concept called 'Eat with the Earth in mind' which substitutes high carbon meat ingredients and replaces them with lower producing carbon ingredients (i.e. fruit and vegetables), without losing the taste and integrity of the dishes. It is a very subtle change that nonetheless packs a nutritious punch.



## CHANGING THE ENVIRONMENT

- During the summer, a collaborative project between Food Sense Wales, **Castell Howell**, Cardiff Council, Blas Gwent, Food Cardiff, and Cardiff & Vale University Health Board was piloted with the aim of increasing the use of locally grown produce in school meals through engagement with children and the supply chain. It also supported Castell Howell's Peas Please commitment to increase veg sales by adopting new measures to promote the inclusion of veg in meals, as well as Cardiff Council's commitment to supply two portions of veg in all school lunches as part of their Food Cardiff Veg Cities pledge. The courgettes were used in schools taking part in Food and Fun – a Welsh Government

initiative that's coordinated by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA).

- **Compass Group** delivered the catering for COP26 at Glasgow in 2021, pledging to source at least 80% of their food locally in Scotland and 15% from within the UK, with all produce sourced from high-welfare producers using sustainable agriculture processes. They created a menu where 60% of the options were vegetarian and plant-based dishes.
- **Food and Fun** is a school holiday enrichment programme that provides food and nutrition education, physical activity and healthy meals (including two portions of veg) to children in areas of social deprivation during the summer holidays in Wales. A survey of over 2,000 children showed nearly 50% of children reported having eaten more fruit and vegetables during the days they attended the Food and Fun programme. Overall, children considered themselves to be eating healthier when they were

at Food and Fun activities compared to the other days during the school holidays.



## VEG PLACEMENT

- At the beginning of 2022, **Sodexo** partnered with WWF to launch Plant+ by Finer Diner, a campaign to help increase consumption of plant-based food in 16 secondary schools, with menus focussed on 100% plant-based ingredients which were seasonal and locally sourced. Plant+ aimed to inspire everyone to take an active role in a shift towards a more plant-based diet by providing toolkits and guidance to catering managers, student ambassadors and teachers. A survey after three months of the campaign was positively received as all the catering teams were willing to continue using the Plant+ recipes and actively promote the dishes.



# Our impact

TABLE 2

## ADDITIONAL PORTIONS OF VEG

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Additional portions of veg as reported to PP	n/a	4.8 million	87 million	70.7 million	461.2 million*	147.6 million
% shopping basket that is veg (Kantar)	7.2%	7.3%	7.1%	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%

\*Please note this figure has been adjusted to take into account a calculation error that occurred last year.

**771.4**  
**MILLION**  
additional portions of veg sold or served by pledgers over the course of the programme



## ADDITIONAL PORTIONS OF VEG SOLD OR SERVED

Building on the success of the programme in previous years, our pledgers have cumulatively sold or served an additional **771 million portions** in the five years we have been monitoring Peas Please pledger progress. Over the course of the past 12 months, we **added 147 million portions** to our total. Although this is encouraging progress, it is a much smaller addition to our total than in the previous reporting year. As things currently stand it seems unlikely that we will meet our goal of 3 billion additional portions of veg sold by 2023 if the 2022-23 reporting year sees a similarly sluggish rate of change.

Looking across our different sectors, it is interesting to see different trends emerging. Across the retail sector volume sales of veg reported back to us are down on last year – across both fresh and composite categories. This is likely reflective of sales shifting out of retail and back into the Out of Home sector as pandemic restrictions ended, but

it may also indicate that customers are buying fewer vegetables and food in general. This is supported by a similar drop in sales of veg reported by our manufacturing pledgers. Among our Out of Home sector pledgers we see a more positive picture. Those restaurant chains reporting back to us this

**OUR PLEDGERS  
HAVE CUMULATIVELY  
SOLD OR SERVED  
AN ADDITIONAL 771  
MILLION PORTIONS  
OF VEG**

year have, perhaps unsurprisingly, seen sales of veg increase since last year. The picture is not as rosy for caterers who remain down on their pre-pandemic baselines.

However, although tracking the additional portions of veg sold or served by our pledgers is one of our core metrics, it should not be taken

as a representative measure of UK food sector progress given that not all our pledgers currently report back to us on portions (see Annex 1 for further detail), and because the proportion of total market share our pledgers have varies from sector to sector. **The lack of mandatory reporting for businesses in the UK means that there is widespread inconsistency in how companies report on sales of key food categories.** The portion figures reported here are estimates made by Peas Please using the best available data we have. To complement these we use data kindly provided to the programme by Kantar.

### WHAT'S GOING ON ACROSS THE COUNTRY?

When Peas Please was launched 7.2% of the weight of the average shopping basket was composed of vegetables (Kantar, 2017). We know, however, that to be in line with the government's Eatwell Guide 20% of the shopping basket should be made up of veg.

As Table 2 shows, this reporting year (July 2021–June 2022) the proportion of the shopping basket that is veg has remained flat at 7.0% when rounded to the nearest decimal point. **However, the volume share of veg purchased has fallen very slightly, from 7.04% last year to 6.98% this year.** Although these are very small percentage changes they nonetheless potentially translate into a considerable amount of veg at a population level.

The Kantar figures only capture fresh, frozen, chilled, prepared and canned vegetables, and therefore do not capture some of the progress being made by our retail pledgers in their ready meals and other composite and packaged products which is captured in our additional portion total. Kantar data captures retail grocery sales only and does not include veg served by caterers and casual dining chains in the OOH sector, nor vegetables sold directly to citizens, for example through veg box schemes.

Nevertheless, these figures show that there is plenty of scope for everyone to continue to better promote veg if we are to achieve the recommendations in the Eatwell Guide. Urgent action is required to ensure that the cost-of-living crisis does not mean households

### VEG INEQUALITY CONTINUES TO BE A SERIOUS CONCERN

What is particularly concerning to see is that dietary inequalities continue to widen. Among those earning under £10,000, the proportion of the shopping basket that is veg fell from 5.9% to 5.8% this year compared to those earning over £70,000, where the proportion remained stable at 8.4% (Kantar, 2022).

Data from the most recent ONS Family Spending survey, conducted in 2020, show that even before the rise in food and energy prices, those households in the top 10% of disposable income were spending twice as much as those in the bottom decile on vegetables (Figure 4). Targeted support to ensure that the UK's poorest households can still access and afford veg is therefore urgently required to prevent further widening of existing diet inequalities.



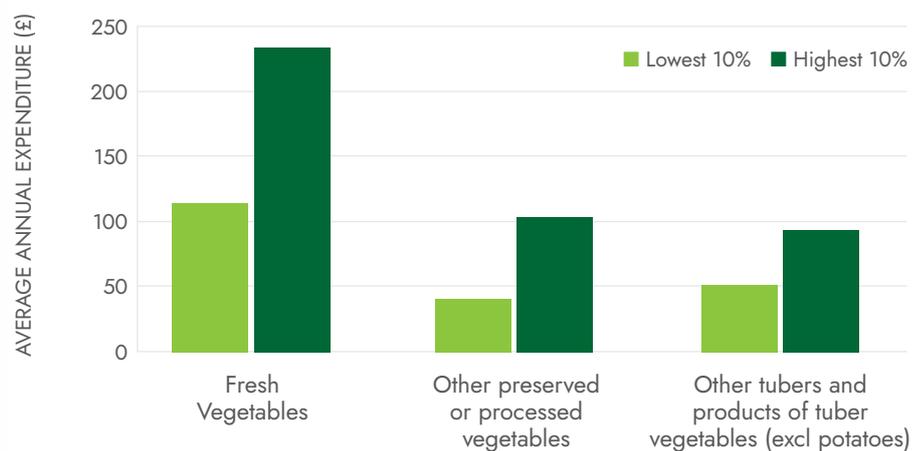
can no longer afford the cost of healthy staples. The proportion of the basket that is veg is now lower than at the start of Peas Please, with this year's slight fall reversing any marginal gains we saw last year (where the proportion of the basket increased from 6.98% to 7.04%).

The Kantar basket data show the same trend as the sales data kindly provided by IRI, analysed by our partner organisation Veg Power, which shows that as a percentage of all retail food sales the proportion of food sales that are veg decreased by 0.4% during the same period of time.\* Although there are a number of reports at the moment that suggest sales of certain types

of veg, such as wonky veg, have increased, these often rely on revenue rather than volume data and therefore include the effects of increasing inflation. Overall, the picture emerging is one where volume sales of all foods are falling as the cost-of-living crisis continue to bite (Baker, 2022). Although it is too early to say with certainty whether any particular categories are being affected, according to some sources fresh foods are being hit particularly hard (Reuters, 2022). This has obvious ramifications for vegetables.



FIGURE 4  
ANNUAL AVERAGE EXPENDITURE ON VEGETABLES BY DISPOSABLE INCOME DECILE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 2020 (ONS, 2021).



\*Note that IRI numbers are based on Veg Power's definition of vegetables.

# PART TWO

## OUR WORK WITH CITIES AND CITIZENS

### Veg Advocates

Veg Advocates work with us to champion our mission of more veg, feeding their own lived experiences of accessing and affording veg into everything we do. This year has been a busy one for the Advocates with Peas Please awarding 100 micro-grants to support the Advocates in running their own vegtastic activities, as well as continuing to support the programme more generally.

#### VEG ADVOCATE ACTIVITIES

In March 2022 we launched our Small Grants Programme during an online event with the Veg Advocates. Advocates were invited to apply for grants of up to £200 per person, to deliver an event or activity which encouraged vegetable consumption in their local community. Veg Advocates in the same local area could apply together.

**One hundred £200 grants were awarded, contributing to the costs of 59 activities.** These have been varied, with grants tackling issues from food waste to cooking skills, promoting growing and health and nutrition, and based in settings from nurseries, schools, community gardens, cafés and shops.



#### VEG AND GROWERS MENU, PRESTON, LANCASHIRE

Three Veg Advocates came together to pilot an initiative which connects local farmers with people living in Preston, aims to pay a fair price to farmers for their produce and promotes seasonal vegetables through easy simple recipes.

Using funding from the Peas Please Small Grants Programme, these Veg Advocates have been promoting a monthly dish on the menu at The Larder — a social enterprise café, arts and community hub in Preston with a mission to achieve 'food fairness for all'. Each dish has featured a particular seasonal vegetable — so far, spring greens, courgettes and cauliflowers. The Veg Advocates have also designed, and printed recipe cards featuring a short biography of the farmer the vegetable had been sourced from, which are shared at the café and across social media.



#### FUN GARDENING PROJECT, BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND

One of the Northern Ireland Veg Advocates, Camilla, has teamed up with local community gardens in Belfast to create opportunities for people to access community gardens and learn about growing their own vegetables. The project - the Fun Gardening Project - was created to engage with the asylum and refugee communities, migrant workers and other minority ethnic communities in Belfast, to introduce them to

the many benefits of growing their own veg and create a welcoming environment to the city.

The Peas Please Small Grants Programme grant enabled the Fun Gardening Project to organise four visits to community gardens across the city (North, South, East & West). Each event included practical educational activities, planting veg, seed saving and sharing a delicious vegetable meal



provided by the host garden. Attendees were encouraged to take cuttings/seeds to grow at home and come back to the gardens for future opportunities and volunteering.

## CEGIN HEDYN COMMUNITY CAFÉ, CARMARTHENSHIRE, WALES

Alex Cook, Veg Advocate in Carmarthenshire, brought together local chefs with local vegetable growers with the aim of discussing the challenges they face in the workplace, sharing recipes and service ideas. The evening focussed on sharing ways to utilise and promote the amazing seasonal produce of the local growing community

Guests gathered on a Monday evening for a free meal prepared by volunteers that showcased some great local produce. Attendees were all provided with a comprehensive working list of local suppliers. Ideas were shared about how to increase the amount of local vegetables on menus from what's available and best in season to business advice on how to maintain value on menus while increasing vegetable content.

A wide variety of local cooks, TV chef presenters, commercial growers, community growers and restaurant/venue managers attended. Cooks who work in the public sector were invited but unfortunately none were able to attend the first meeting.

This will be a quarterly meet-up hoping to co-create Carmarthenshire as a food destination by harnessing the power of local, seasonal and sustainable Welsh produce. Alongside the social aspect Alex aims to support chefs' health and well-being with signposting to organisational and peer to peer support, creating community resilience through economic value and co-creating a marketing campaign to achieve this.

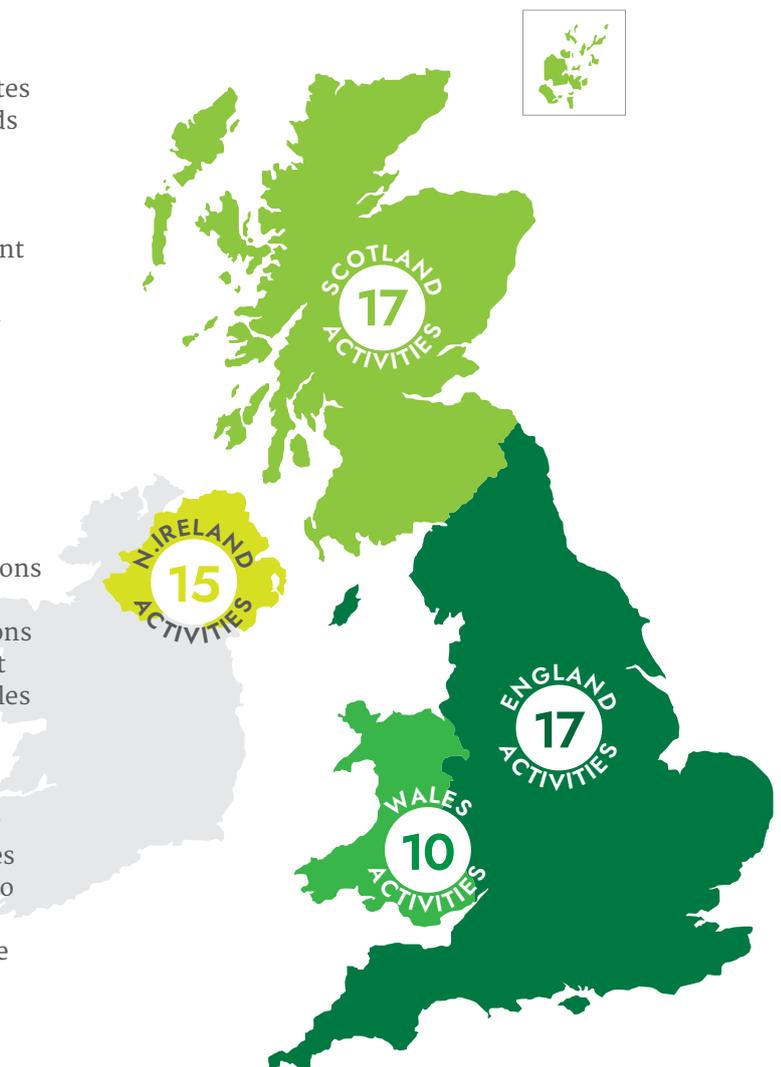


## OUT OF HOME SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

As part of the Out of Home (OOH) Activity, Veg Advocates in Scotland were able to collaborate with Food Standards Scotland (FSS) and explore vegetable provision at OOH establishments. The focus was on children's menus. This engagement provided valuable evidence for FSS workstreams related to improving the OOH environment and supported the forthcoming development of a children's menu code of practice as part of the Scottish Government Action Plan.

**Thirty-one OOH establishments were visited: Veg Advocates provided constructive feedback on how children's menus can be improved, in terms of nutritional quality and range of choice.** Most participants reported that vegetables were available within children's menus; however, they made suggestions such as improving the display of the menu to make vegetables more appealing, increasing vegetarian options and the variety of vegetables offered, and ensuring that children aren't being asked to choose between vegetables and other accompaniments, such as chips.

This activity also provided Veg Advocates with the opportunity to meet with friends, family and other Veg Advocates. It allowed people with very limited resources to enjoy a relaxed time. A couple of families were able to celebrate birthdays which wouldn't have been possible in other circumstances. This helped us reflect about the significance of going out for something to eat and how this can be a real luxury for many people.



## ADVOCATES ARE NOW SUPPORTING US WITH OUR EVALUATION OF PEAS PLEASE

Ten of our Veg Advocates are now working as documenters, working alongside City University to evaluate the impact the Veg Advocate programme has had and looking at whether we've been successful in delivering a participatory citizen model.

## VEG ADVOCATE FEEDBACK ON THE GROUP EVENTS AND PROGRAMME SO FAR

- “Every conversation brought new ideas and solutions”
- “I am now a Veg City Coordinator and that is all down to being a VA”
- “I have learnt so much. Hearing what other people do is the kick I need”
- “It has been so inspiring and now I feel driven to go and do something”

Follow our Veg Advocates on Instagram and on TikTok

[@veg.advocates](#)  
[@peaspleaseproject](#)

## Veg Cities



The Veg Cities initiative is coordinated by our partner Sustainable Food Places. Organisations participating in the Veg Cities campaign encompass a range of different areas, including schools and community groups, restaurants, caterers, councils, and food growing enterprises. After the most recent

round of funding in 2021, seven places were awarded Veg cities funding.

As a result of this effort, 9.6 million portions of veg have been served over the past four years by Veg Cities.

**A large number of people have been reached directly as part of initiatives run by Veg Cities:**

**605,331**

people have been directly reached through veg promotion activities.

**18,070**

people have taken part in growing and cooking classes.

**598**

gardens have been set up or supported as part of creating a network of growing spaces.

**392**

initiatives to monitor and reduce food waste have been established.

**32**

fruit and vegetable markets and stands have been set up.

### LEEDS

FoodWise Leeds are working with local partners to encourage the growing, sale, sharing, cooking, eating and composting of vegetables across Leeds since 2017. A total of 28 participants have made 43 pledges for more veg to date. Leeds has embedded Veg Cities across existing initiatives such as in the Healthy Holidays programme and has trialled innovative approaches such as the Little Veg Libraries, Sow a Row Xtra or Healthy Start Veg Boxes.

In collaboration with Leeds City Council, the University of Leeds and

Climate Action Leeds, FoodWise have launched a new recipe hub to share tasty, nutritious and affordable recipes for everyone and highlight the carbon footprint per serving. The hub builds on their previous work with the community and their #JustOneMore campaign; the online hub also encourages users to add more veg into their dishes.

It is believed to be the first recipe hub to include carbon calculation for each recipe added. These calculations have been made using the Carbon Footprint Calculator

from the Consumer Data Research Centre (CDRC) at University of Leeds. This information has been provided to help build more understanding and support further conversations around the sustainability and carbon impact of the food we eat.

By making small changes to what we eat, while maintaining a nutritious and balanced diet, we can make big differences to our individual carbon footprint – for example, by choosing seasonal and/or locally grown veg and fruit where possible.



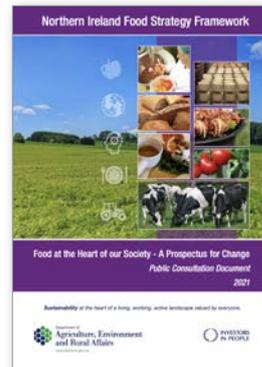
# Our impact externally



## SOME NOTABLE REFERENCES TO PEAS PLEASE IN THE LAST YEAR



A Food Standards Agency **report** looking at consumer attitudes towards sustainable diets referenced some of our work with citizens looking at the affordability of vegetables



Stats from **Veg Facts 2021** on vegetable consumption in Northern Ireland were referenced as part of the **Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework**.



The Welsh Government's updated *Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales* **strategy** stated that it will support Peas Please to work with caterers and businesses to increase fruit and vegetable consumption within meal options. This is part of a national priority focus on shaping the food and drink environment towards sustainable and healthier options.

A **commentary piece** in Nature Food referenced our work looking into the increase in veg boxes during the pandemic



Peas Please participated in two official side events at the 2021 *Nutrition For Growth* Summit. We hosted a panel sharing lessons learned from setting up Peas Please as a multi-stakeholder initiative, and Sainsbury's discussed their Peas Please journey and announced their N4G commitments to better health and nutrition as part of an international panel event.

# PART THREE

## OUR IMPACT ON POLICY

### Policy

#### THE NATIONAL FOOD STRATEGY AND LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPERS

The Government Food Strategy white paper, published in response to the independent National Food Strategy for England, was on the whole met with disappointment – failing to advance the ambitious strategy needed to transition the food system towards delivering healthy and sustainable food. However, several policies that Peas Please and the Fruit and Veg Alliance (a coalition of fruit and veg producers, founded by Peas Please) have been advocating for a number of years were committed to in the white paper. This was a significant win for Peas Please, with commitments from the government to implement:

- a new horticulture strategy for England
- mandatory buying standards for food in all public sector settings
- mandatory business reporting, which would require all businesses over a certain size to report transparently on the proportion of sales which are vegetables

If implemented these policies would support both growers and consumer-facing businesses to grow, serve and sell more vegetables. **Although we welcome these commitments, without robust regulatory mechanisms to ensure that they can be delivered and enforced, the proposals do not have the clout that will be necessary to deliver real impact.**

Similarly, the new government must commit to implementing the policies put forward in the Levelling Up white paper during Boris Johnson's premiership. This committed to supporting citizens to access to fruit and vegetables through a Community Eatwell prescription scheme pilot in low income areas, in addition to encouraging sensory taste education for school children. Both of these are policies Peas Please supports.

#### THE GOOD FOOD NATION ACT

In June 2021 the Good Food Nation Bill passed in the Scottish Parliament with unanimous support. The passing of the Bill is the culmination of many years of work by our partners in Scotland, Nourish Scotland. The Bill requires the Scottish Ministers, local authorities and health boards to prepare food plans. These bodies will need to have regard to the right to food in the preparation of their plans, and to consider many aspects of the system: environment, health, poverty, to name just a few. Finally, the Bill establishes an independent Food Commission, to offer advice and scrutinise progress. This Bill is a milestone in Scottish (and UK) food policy, and a reason to celebrate.



## HEALTHY START AND BEST START

Peas Please has continued to work with both retailers and government to advocate for continued support of the Healthy Start scheme (Best Start in Scotland). We've hosted several meetings with UK retailers to explore the potential for adding value to the scheme in its new, digitised form, and in Scotland our retail pledgers supported the Best Start team in its recent evaluation of the scheme.

**Research from the Universities of Leeds and Birmingham separately evaluating Sainsbury's and Lidl's value-add offers during 2020-21 have found that both approaches materially impacted on the amount spent on fruit and veg.** Healthy Start therefore remains an effective route through which to support low income groups to access fruit and veg.

Although this remains technically challenging to do now that recipients receive funds on a Mastercard, we were delighted to see Sainsbury's reintroduce their £2 coupon offer for Healthy Start in October. 4 million children are now living in households with food insecurity (The Food Foundation, 2022), so there has never been a more important time to add value to the scheme. **In lieu of being able to add monetary value to Healthy Start, we would encourage all retailers to support communication of the scheme to customers given that uptake rates remain low.**

Iceland are a great example of using communication and marketing creatively to increase

awareness of the scheme: 81 million of their own brand milk bottles will advertise the Healthy Start scheme in England, and a further 9 million will carry information about the Best Start scheme in Iceland's Scottish stores. The retailer has also created special campaign home delivery vans which will deliver in areas of low Healthy Start take-up across the UK. From September 2022, a second phase of the campaign will also see Healthy Start and Best Start Foods promoted on 100 million packs of frozen fruit and vegetables over the next two years – a partnership with Del Monte will also see the Healthy Start scheme on 4.6 million packs of the brand's frozen fruit products.



## HORTICULTURE POLICY

The Fruit and Veg Alliance continues to go from strength to strength, feeding into DEFRA's edible horticulture roundtable every three months.

Last year we presented a discussion paper to the DEFRA teams working on healthy, sustainable diets and the Government Food Strategy white paper, sharing our learnings and recommendations for ways in which UK businesses and government can work to increase fruit and veg consumption. We hope that this impacted on the government's commitment to implement a horticulture strategy in England, which presents a great opportunity for more closely aligning production with consumption.

In April, Welsh Government announced that it would

be making £227m available over the next three years to support the resilience of Wales' rural economy and its natural environment – including schemes to support the Welsh horticulture sector. The small scale horticulture project funded by Peas Please and the work of the Horticulture Alliance influenced this funding decision.

In Scotland, Peas Please has been investigating whether channelling funding through local authorities might be a useful way of supporting the expansion of urban horticulture. Partners Nourish Scotland have been making the case for a skills, land and funding investment in the expansion of market gardening and controlled environment glasshouses. A pilot project has got under way in the Highlands region.

# KEY LESSONS AND NEXT STEPS

As we enter the fourth and final year of Lottery funding, maintaining support in the UK for the production and consumption of veg remains absolutely vital, even as we start to think about what the veg agenda needs to focus on going forward to remain relevant beyond 2023.

Covid-19 transformed how many of us work and eat, hot on the heels of the UK's exit from the EU which

continues to impact on supply chains and the horticultural and hospitality workforces. The past year has seen food prices at their highest level for 30 years, with a cost-of-living crisis pushing many who were just about managing into poverty and food insecurity. Meanwhile citizen behaviour has also changed, with concerns around climate change taking demands for more sustainable and plant-based products to new levels. The veg agenda continues to evolve, even as sales of vegetables have stagnated.

Among the Peas Please pledging community tangible actions that can be taken to support our mission include:

1. **making sure that all Peas Please commitments are met by June 2023**
2. **supporting implementation of mandatory reporting via the Food Data Transparency Partnership (FDTP). Only when there is a level playing field will we be able to effectively assess business progress and set the direction of travel for sales of veg**
3. **working to ensure that veg are as accessible and affordable as possible for low income and underserved citizens**

Over the past five years we've already helped to make a difference. By going the last mile together in the final year of Peas Please we can build a strong foundation for the future, and prevent the cost-of-living crisis from further impacting on the amount of veg households are able to access.



# Annex

We've grouped our pledgers by sector, in line with our [commitments framework](#), where the actions organisations sign up to as part of their pledges vary depending on an organisation's business model and sector. A detailed breakdown of pledges can be found on the [Peas Please microsite](#). Pledgers are removed from the Peas Please programme where no report is received for two consecutive years or pledgers can no longer support the scheme.

## TRAFFIC LIGHT RATING KEY:

- **BLACK:** No report from pledger
- **GREY:** First year of reporting (score will be reported next year)
- **RED:** Limited progress
- **ORANGE:** A good start
- **YELLOW:** On the road to success
- **GREEN:** Fully implemented all commitments.

## SYSTEM INFLUENCERS

1.3% (the proportion of our cumulative portion total contributed by our system influencer pledgers)

PLEDGER	TRAFFIC LIGHT	
	OVERALL PROGRESS	PORTION PROGRESS
ACS		N/A
Bags of Taste		N/A
Community Supported Agriculture		N/A
Food and Fun		
Food Standards Scotland (FSS)		N/A
GroentenFruit Huis	Removed - funding finished	
Horticulture Forum		N/A
Lantra		N/A
Millbank Farm		Does not report
Social Farms and Garden		N/A
Soil Association		N/A
Sustainable Food Places (SFP)		
Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA)		N/A
TastEd		N/A
TUCO		N/A
Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU)		N/A
WRAP		N/A

## RETAILERS

81.5% (the proportion of our cumulative portion total contributed by our retailer pledgers)

PLEDGER	TRAFFIC LIGHT	
	OVERALL PROGRESS	PORTION PROGRESS
Aldi		
Asda		Does not report
Co-op		Does not report
Henderson Group/SPAR NI		
Lidl		Baseline
Morrisons		
Ocado		
Sainsbury's		
Simply Fresh	Removed	
Tesco		
Waitrose		Baseline

## OUT OF HOME – CONTRACT CATERERS

7.1% (the proportion of our cumulative portion total contributed by our contract caterer pledgers)

PLEDGER	TRAFFIC LIGHT	
	OVERALL PROGRESS	PORTION PROGRESS
A & J Catering		
Bartlett Mitchell		
Blackpool Catering Services		
Caterlink		
CEC catering		
Compass Group		
Hampshire County Council Catering Services (HC3S)		
Havering Catering Services (HES)		
ISS	New pledge	
Olive Catering		
Sodexo		
Vacherin	Removed - under new ownership	
Vertas		

## OUT OF HOME – HIGH STREET RESTAURANT CHAINS

2.9% (the proportion of our cumulative portion total contributed by our high street restaurant chain pledgers)

PLEDGER	TRAFFIC LIGHT	
	OVERALL PROGRESS	PORTION PROGRESS
Ask Italian		
Brewers Fayre (Whitbread)		
Giraffe		
Greggs PLC		
Harvester (Mitchells & Butlers)		
Hungry Horse (Greene King)		
JD Wetherspoon		
Leon		
Prezzo		
Subway		
Zizzi		

## EVENT SPACES, WORKPLACES AND PUBLIC PROCURERS

0.03% (the proportion of our cumulative portion total contributed by our event spaces, workplace and public procurer pledgers)

PLEDGER	TRAFFIC LIGHT	
	OVERALL PROGRESS	PORTION PROGRESS
Aramark Robert Gordon University		
Aramark University of Westminster		
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board		Does not report
Dynamic Earth	Removed	
Edinburgh School of Food & Wine		
Twickenham Stadium	Removed	
Ulster University Business School		Does not report
University of Edinburgh		
University of South Wales (USW)		
University of Stirling		
University of Stirling Student Union		
University of West London (UWL)		Does not report

## MANUFACTURERS & WHOLESALERS

11% (the proportion of our cumulative portion total contributed by our manufacturer and wholesaler pledgers)

PLEDGER	TRAFFIC LIGHT	
	OVERALL PROGRESS	PORTION PROGRESS
Bidfood		Does not report
Birds Eye		
Castell Howell		New baseline
Mars		New baseline
Mash Direct		N/A
Moo Too You	No longer in business	
Nestle UK		Does not report
Puffin Produce		N/A
Quorn		N/A
Strong Roots		
Source Grow		
SwperBox		

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