

Be Enriched's innovative Food Bus Highly Commended at national award

Be Enriched, a local charity which brings people together over food, is delighted that its first-of-a-kind Food Bus has been Highly Commended at the Social Value Award.

The national competition recognises organisations that champion social value creation and community wellbeing. The Food Bus was commended in the Social Innovation category.

Be Enriched Founder and CEO Kemi Akinola said: "We are delighted that The Food Bus was recognised in this way. It has been a labour of love to get to this point. I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has supported this important work, especially the team on board the bus. They work hard each and every week to bring low cost, healthy food and essentials to those who need them in Lambeth and Wandsworth.

"This commendation demonstrates the positive impact we are having, especially at a challenging time, and we look forward to taking this further in the future. Everyone is welcome on board The Food Bus. When you shop with us, you can feel confident that you are also supporting the local community. If there is anyone who would like to get further involved in this work, including sponsoring the bus, please do get in touch."



The Food Bus is a specially converted double decker, which includes a mobile greengrocers, as well as a small kitchen and café. Every week it takes low cost, fresh produce, and essentials, to areas which struggle to access these. It also offers a point for people to meet, share a hot drink or meal, and catch up. The bus has a set route including stops in Kennington, Roehampton, Stockwell and Tooting, and attended a number of community events during 2021, with more planned for the coming months. Recently the bus's team even delivered free food packages to early years families in Wandsworth, helping to support those increasingly affected by the cost of living crisis.

Despite the challenges of the past few years, The Food Bus has an established customer base and feedback has shown:

- 100% of customers surveyed confirmed The Food Bus provides a good choice of food options
- 39% of customers are currently unemployed
- Over half of customers support at least one child, and a quarter support two other adults

Be Enriched has been running Community Canteens for the past eight years, where volunteers turn surplus food into a free, healthy meal for anyone from the local area, as well as it's Healthy Holidays programme, sessions that help to provide food and fun to children when school is closed. Feedback from these activities showed that many people from the local area faced the challenge of only being able to shop at high cost, small shops, where there were little alternatives to food high in salt, fat and sugar on offer. When Be Enriched founder and CEO, Kemi Akinola, reflected on the problems, she thought back to her life experiences buying food from a man in a van. She was inspired to see how she could use that approach to address the challenges facing so many families. More details, including the stopping pattern of the Food Bus, can be found at <https://www.be-enriched.org/the-food-bus>

Anyone interested in sponsoring the bus, or further supporting its work, can get in contact at hello@be-enriched.org