

COMMUNITY FRIDGE

SET UP MANUAL

Registered charity no. 1158700

Welcome

This guide will help you understand more about community fridges, how they operate and how they're transforming communities across the UK. Whether you're interested in starting one, or simply want to know more, you'll find valuable insights here.

This guide is just one of many resources available to you and throughout you'll see links for further information along with stories of groups who've done it themselves.

Let's dive in!

When to use this guide:

- If you're considering setting up a community fridge
- When you need help finding certain resources and information
- If you've joined as an existing fridge and want to know more

Contents

1 Research

1.1 What is a community fridge and how does it work? 4

1.2 Benefits of a community fridge 5

1.3 What is the Community Fridge Network? 6

1.4 Things to consider before setting up a fridge 7

1.5 Are you ready to get started? 8

2 Planning

2.1 At a glance: Setting up your fridge 10

2.2 Covering your costs 11

2.3 Preparing your location 12

2.4 Health and safety 13

2.5 Staffing your fridge 16

2.6 Branding your fridge 17

3 Preparing to open

3.1 Pre-launch checklist 19

3.2 Working with local organisations 20

3.3 Spreading the word 21

3.4 Tracking your fridge's impact 22

3.5 Welcoming your visitors 23

4 Launch day & beyond

4.1 Preparing for launch day 25

4.2 Growing your fridge 26

4.3 What's next? 27

4.4 FAQs 28

Stage One
Research

This section explains what community fridges are, what they do and how they could benefit your community. Read through each step to decide if setting up a community fridge is right for you.

1.1 What is a community fridge and how does it work? 4

1.2 Benefits of a community fridge 5

1.3 What is the Community Fridge Network? 6

1.4 Things to consider before setting up a fridge 7

1.5 Are you ready to get started? 8





1.1 What is a community fridge and how do they work?

A community fridge is a space where anyone can share or take home food that would otherwise be wasted. Community fridges are open to everyone. Run by hundreds of community organisations and groups across the UK, fridges are found in public, accessible places such as high streets, community centres, schools and even shipping containers and sheds.

A 'community fridge' doesn't always involve an actual fridge. It could be a cupboard for dry goods, a freezer for frozen food or even a grocery stall for allotment veg. We use the term 'community fridge' in this manual to encompass all these food sharing activities that are intended to reduce local food waste.

Here's a basic run-down of how it works:

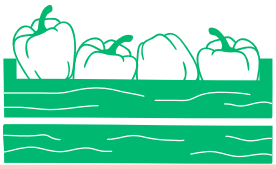
1 Connect with local food businesses

Each community fridge reaches out to their local supermarkets, farms, allotments and any other local food businesses to gather surplus food that is still good to eat.



2 Collect surplus food

This can involve visiting businesses to collect fresh, packaged and sometimes cooked food. Food safety regulations are always followed ensuring only fresh food is collected.







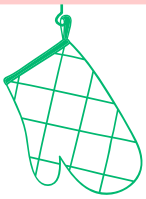
3 Store the food

The food is then stored in the fridge, freezer or in other storage areas, such as shelves for non-perishable food such as tins or packets of pasta.

4 Welcome visitors



Each fridge decides how it welcomes visitors and shares food. Many run on trust, with no formal checks, and ask people to take only what they need. Others use different approaches, such as sign-ups or volunteer-led sessions. We welcome all models.



5 Staff or volunteers maintain the fridge

Fridges are registered food businesses and operate within strict health and safety guidelines. Volunteers or staff ensure that the fridge is maintained to these standards and all food is safe to share.



6 Engage with the local community

Many fridges also host events or initiatives to educate the community about food waste and sustainability. This could include cooking workshops, gardening projects, or awareness activities.



1.2 The benefits of a community fridge



Community fridges are a tried and tested way of reducing food waste. The UK wastes around 10 million tonnes of food per year. The average UK household can save £730 a year by avoiding food waste. The collective impact of the network is huge as across the growing network, each community fridge can redistribute between 1 – 4 tonnes of surplus food per month.

See our impact

Community fridges record their visitor numbers and kilograms of food saved from waste each day. Once a year, these figures are shared with Hubbub as monthly averages, helping us track the impact of the Community Fridge Network. Hubbub features these impact figures in it's annual report.

Check this out here: **Our Impact**



Community fridges do more than just share food; they're a hub for community connection. By teaming up with local businesses, community groups, and residents, community fridges become a place where people can get to know their neighbours, spark new friendships, and create a sense of unity and strength within their community.

Listen to your visitors



"In the beginning I was really focused on getting everything perfect. But now I've learned that as long as you follow the CFN (Community Fridge Network) guidelines, make sure your team knows what to do and have safety measures in place, the way you run your community fridge can evolve to suit your team and the people who visit. Over the course of 6 years we've tried and changed everything, from opening hours to the activities - the important thing is to listen to your visitors and grow slowly."

Helen Innes, Old Bath House Community Fridge

1.3 What is the Community Fridge Network?

The Community Fridge Network brings together community fridge groups from across the UK to connect, learn from each other and access tools and resources. Hubbub coordinates this network and there are now more than 650 community fridges signed up. It's free and our aims is to make setting up and running a fridge as simple as possible.

Who can join the network?

The Community Fridge Network is for any community group or organisation who has set up or wants to set up a community fridge. To be part of the network groups must:

- Agree to the community fridge ethos
- Be running their community fridge as part of a constituted community group or non-for-profit organisation
- Have public liability insurance and a constitution/governing documents
- Register the fridge as a food business with their local authority and receive a food hygiene rating
- Risk assess and demonstrate that their health and safety procedures have the approval of their local Environmental Health Officer
- Agree to capture and report back on the impact of their fridge annually
- Have a secure covered space for the fridge/freezers available to the public

How can the network help?

1. **Education:** Access to free resources, guidance, tools and templates
2. **Member events:** Access to training webinars and networking events
3. **News:** Regular updates and the latest news delivered right to your inbox
4. **Networking:** A community just for community fridge groups to support knowledge sharing and friendships

Ready to join?

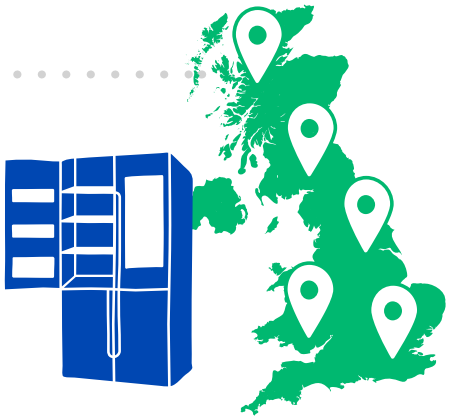
Once you join, you'll receive a link to our online member's area, be added to our CFN newsletter and will have access to all our resources, guidance and support.

Sign-up form

Where are community fridges?

Well, everywhere! There are over 650 open fridges (and counting) across the whole of the UK. To find your nearest fridge, visit:

https://bit.ly/CFN-map



1.4 Things to consider before setting up a community fridge

1 Find out if a fridge is the right project for your area

The primary purpose of a community fridge is to reduce food waste. Ask yourself why stopping food waste matters to you and your group. Are there others in your area already doing the same thing? Could you work together with them? What food waste initiatives already exist where you live?

Want to know the difference between a community fridge and a food bank? **See our FAQs.**

2 Does your community support the idea?

Before starting a community fridge, make sure this is something your community would like to see. Get early support for the idea - talk with your neighbours, host an information stand or reach out on social media. This way, you get to know what people think, and you make sure that setting up a fridge is a good idea.

3 Find surplus food

Finding surplus food is key to setting up your community fridge. Contact local supermarkets, retailers, allotments, farms, cafés and food shops, or use platforms such as Neighbourly, Foodiverse, Caboodle, Olio and FareshareGo to find surplus food.

If you have funding, The Felix Project's Community Food Membership offers access to surplus food for a small fee.

Community fridges aim to reduce food waste by sharing surplus food. If you're looking to buy food that isn't surplus to offer your community, a community pantry might be a better fit. Find out more at yourlocalpantry.co.uk.

4 Organisation type

Starting a community fridge is a big help to your area but it's tough to do on your own, mainly because of all the rules and paperwork involved. To get going, you'll need to set up as an official group or charity. This makes things like registering as a food business, sorting out insurance, and handling money through a bank account much smoother. It's pretty hard to manage all this by yourself, so building a team is key. This way, running the fridge and making a positive impact becomes much easier.

If you're not sure where to begin with setting up a group, take a look at **My Community** or find local support via **NVCO.**

5 Visit your local fridges to learn more

Check out our map to see your nearest fridge or put a shout out on our community fridge **Facebook Forum.** There's nothing better than hearing practical tips from those who are running one. They can tell you all about their experiences of:

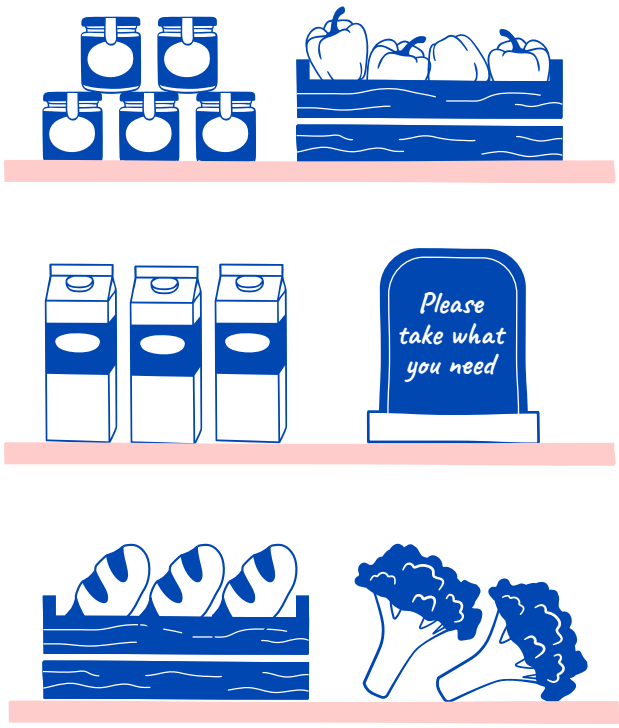
- The time commitment to set up and run their fridge
- How to get the best out of your location
- Publicity and how they raised awareness within their community
- The types and amount of visitors and surplus food you might expect
- How many staff/ volunteers it might take to run your fridge

1.5 All systems go! Ready to set up a community fridge?

So far we've covered:

- What a community fridge is, the benefits and how they operate
- How to find other community fridges near you
- The Community Fridge Network, what it is and what support is on offer
- The 5 key questions every group should explore to help you understand whether a community fridge is the right project for you, your group and your community

As you navigate the upcoming sections of this guide, you'll discover how to make your community fridge a reality. Throughout we share just enough detail to help you understand the key steps you need to take, but please note that every fridge and every group is different. There's no 'one-size-fits-all' here, so use these ideas as a starting point and do what feels right for you and your group.





Join our Facebook Forum

Step into a buzzing digital space where community fridges unite! By joining our Facebook Forum, you become part of a lively and supportive network. Share your milestones, swap stories, glean insights from others' experiences, or simply ask those burning questions.

Join our Facebook Forum

Have more questions?

Check out the FAQ section of this document for further guidance and tips for launching your community fridge.

FAQs

Stage Two

Planning

Now that you've decided setting up and managing a fridge is right for you, let's dive into the planning stage.

2.1 At a glance: Setting up your fridge 10

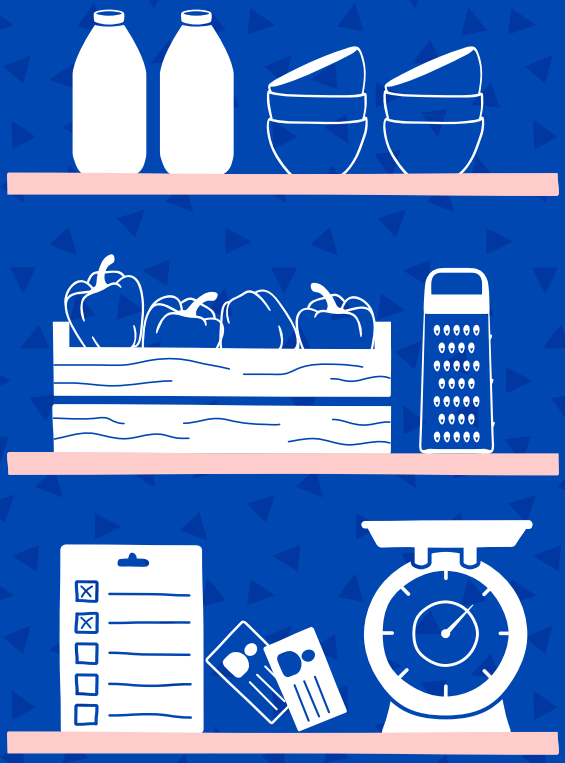
2.2 Covering your costs 11

2.3 Preparing your location 12

2.4 Health and safety 13

2.5 Staffing your fridge 16

2.6 Branding your fridge 17





2.1 At a glance: Setting up your community fridge

In this chapter we'll delve into the fundamental steps of setting up your community fridge, from addressing costs to ensuring the safety of everyone involved. The following is a brief overview of the steps each group should take.

Covering your costs

- Plan for costs: Equipment, running costs, staffing, travel.
- Consider multiple fundraising methods: Crowdfunding, grants, sponsorships, community events.
- Prioritise essentials first and expand gradually.

Preparing your location

- Choose a suitable venue for the fridge.
- Equip with a PAT-tested fridge, shelving, tables, scales, and the necessary signage.

Health and safety

- Adhere to UK food safety rules.
- Complete essential documents: Risk assessment, HACCP, fridge temperature log, food safety course and maintenance plan.

Staffing your fridge

- Recruit and train a team with diverse skills.
- Ensure everyone involved with the running of your fridge has a food safety level 2 certificate.
- Create a balanced work schedule/rota for volunteers.
- Appreciate and value the contributions of your staff and volunteers.

Volunteer considerations

- Comply with data protection laws.
- Consider insurance coverage for volunteers.
- Put in place volunteer agreements for clarity and organisation.

Branding your fridge

- Branding gives the fridge a recognisable personality.
- Use the Hubbub CFN posters and signage to ensure consistent use of logos, colours, and styles.

2.2 Covering your costs

Setting up and running a community fridge requires money. To make sure you can run your fridge, it is important to plan for any costs and think about how you'll raise the money to cover these. You can learn from other fridges and how they gathered funds, but many consider options like crowdfunding, applying for local grants, getting sponsorships from businesses, organising community events, or asking for contributions from people in their area.

What might we need to consider?

- **Fridges and freezers:** Depending on the type of food you'll share, you might need more than one fridge or freezer. Think about shelves for any dry goods (also known as 'ambient goods').
- **Extra costs for outdoor fridges:** If your fridge is outside, you might need to pay for things like a shelter to keep it safe from bad weather, and you'll need power.
- **Running costs:** Depending on your setup you may need to cover running costs like heating and electricity.
- **People's time:** Think about how much time people will spend running the fridge. This includes things like looking after volunteers and reaching out to the community, plus the shift patterns for when the fridge is open.
- **Travel expenses:** You'll need to cover the costs of your team picking up any surplus food. This can quickly add up so have a plan in place which ensures this is covered.
- **Other items:** Don't forget to budget for things like food safety training, insurance, printing materials and signs, scales for weighing food, and tables for sharing food.

Find out how much each item or aspect of your fridge will cost. Add up these expenses to create a budget.



2.3 Preparing your location

Where should we put our fridge?

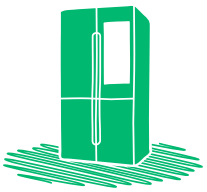
Community fridges can live in all sorts of buildings and structures. Depending on the space and facilities you have available, consider the following:



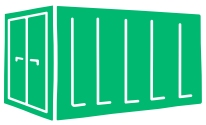
Building



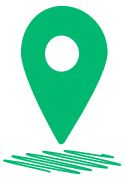
Outhouse



Foyer



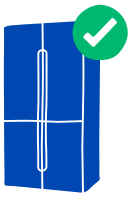
Shipping container



Somewhere else!

What equipment might we need?

Once you've chosen the venue where you'll host your community fridge you'll need to think about what should go in it.



A fridge for a community fridge!

You'll need to decide what fridge to get based on the type of food you'll share.

Lots of groups choose fridges based on their budget, but many like to choose glass-fronted fridges as they're attractive and can show your visitors what's inside (but can be more expensive). For insurance purposes you'll need to check that any fridge is PAT tested. All newly purchased fridges should be, but those which are second hand might not be.

Note – Hubbub no longer has access to any discounted fridges. Each group will need to purchase their own independently.



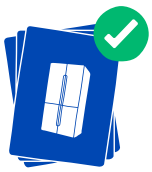
Tables and shelves

You'll want shelving and tables to store items which don't need to be put in the fridge.



Scales

You'll need a way to weigh food that comes in and out of your fridge. This helps you keep track of how much food is being shared to keep track of the impact you're having. So that we can track the collective impact of the network, each autumn we ask community fridges to share their monthly average visitor numbers and kilograms of food saved from going to waste over the past year.



Posters and signage

Hubbub has created editable posters you can use to bring your fridge to life. You can find out more about these in section 2.6 where we talk about fridge branding. Once printed, these posters can help explain what a fridge is (for anyone walking by), how it works and instructions for use.

2.4 Health and safety

All community fridges must register as a food business with their local authority, and it is a requirement for joining the Community Fridge Network.

Hubbub doesn't have an official food safety advisory role. Instead, we can signpost you to the information that will help you to safely run a community fridge and join the Community Fridge Network.

This guidance will help you with a checklist of steps for getting your community fridge up and running safely. This draws on guidance from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) which you can find here:

Registering as a food business

Checklist

1. **Register:** You must register as a food business with your local authority. You will receive a visit from an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) to make sure that your space is suitable for food storage and sharing. Your EHO is there to help and guide you. Do make the most of their knowledge!

2. **Risk assessment:** Conduct a health and safety risk assessment. This allows you to anticipate and plan against things that might go wrong. It might seem a bit daunting to write down all the risks around running a community fridge. However, it greatly reduces the chances of things going wrong and helps you manage the situation if there is an issue.

3. **Level 2 food safety:** Complete Level 2 food safety training so that you know how to handle food and keep it safe. There are many good quality, very affordable courses available online and they are designed to be simple and clear. The number of people you need to train will depend on your set up. There should always be one trained team member on site who can provide others with advice on how to keep food safe.

4. **HACCP:** You will need to develop a food safety management system. You might hear the term HACCP (pronounced "Hassap") used in food safety training, or in a conversation with your EHO. It refers to a Hazard and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system for keeping food safe in food processing and manufacturing, but it can also help you identify and manage the food safety risks that are relevant to your community fridge. FSA Safer Food Better Business (SFBB) guidance (see below) will help you with this.

5. **Stay up to date:** You must notify your EHO of any significant changes to your operations after you have started. For example, if you have been running a community fridge and then decide to start cooking a regular community breakfast, you must tell your EHO so that they can help you assess the additional risk and processes needed to do this safely and update your food safety management system as necessary.

Safer Food, Better Business

The Food Standards Agency has created a **simplified guide** called Safer Food, Better Business for small food businesses. It can help you develop a food safety management system based on HACCP principles but cuts out some of the complexity and jargon that is more relevant to larger food operations.

Your HACCP or food safety system may depend on the activity you're undertaking. For example, some community fridges offer cooking classes or cook community meals, while others mostly or solely share pre-packaged, ambient surplus food. Your EHO can help you find the right guidance to follow.

Food safety incidents

If you are in any doubt or if there's a food safety incident at your community fridge, contact your local food safety team for support. There's a handy locator here:

Find a food safety team

Transporting, storing and logging donations

Most, if not all, community fridges collect surplus food from food businesses, such as supermarkets, and should take the following steps to ensure that food is safely transported and shared:

- Do not accept any donations that are opened, damaged or missing their ingredients label unless it's a single ingredient item e.g. apples.
- Check use by or best before dates to make sure the food is not out of date.
- Refrigerate chilled foods immediately on arrival at the community fridge.
- Log where the food came from and how much there is.
- Ensure that all foods being shared have ingredients listed, including the main allergens.
- Transport any chilled or frozen food in a cool bag to keep it below 8 degrees. If you don't have a cool bag, make sure you know how long food has been on display or kept out, and check its temperature regularly. Food that has not been used within four hours can be put back in the fridge and kept at 8°C or below until it is used. If it has been out for more than four hours, it should be thrown away.

Handling product recalls

It is the fridge co-ordinator's job to make sure everyone is aware of any product recalls. This is when a food producer or seller asks for their product to be returned because there might be a food safety problem.

To keep on top of this, the easiest way is to sign up for recall alerts with the Food Standards Agency (FSA). That way, you can make sure the food you're sharing is safe and sound.

Allergens and Natasha's Law

As a result of a rule called 'Natasha's Law' every packaged food item coming into your community fridge must list all its ingredients on its packaging with any of the 14 major allergens it contains in bold.

In order to run the fridge safely, you must only accept food items that are clearly labelled and packaged by the food business or retailer. That includes individual bakery items too. So, if it's packaged and not labelled, you can't accept it.

The Four Cs

Most food businesses, particularly those that prepare and/or cook food on site, will have to consider the 'Four Cs of food safety'. The FSA website has more information on cooking temperatures and the Four C's

Food hygeine for your business

Cooking and cleaning

- Make sure all cooked food is piping hot and cooked through before serving by checking with a probe thermometer.
- Record cooking temperatures in your HAACP or food safety folder or log.
- For food prep and storage, all surfaces, appliances and tools/utensils, along with hands, must be kept clean. Hot soapy water and sanitising spray should be used at opening, closing down and every time food is handled and prepared throughout the day.
- Use separate cloths or sponges for different tasks, wash thoroughly between uses and ensure they are laundered at the end of every day.

Cross contamination

- Keep raw foods separate from cooked and ready-to-eat food at all times. In particular, keep raw meat, fish, poultry and other raw foods away from ready-to-eat foods such as salads, bread and sandwiches.
- Never put cooked food on a plate which has previously held raw foods until it has been thoroughly washed.
- Use separate chopping boards for raw and cooked foods.
- Wash hands after handling raw foods and before touching other foods and utensils.
- Wash or change dish cloths, tea towels, sponges and oven gloves regularly. It's important to let them dry before you use them again. This is because dirty, damp cloths allow bacteria to breed.

Chilling

- Do not put hot food directly into the fridge or freezer as it may bring up the temperature to an unsafe level.
- Let it cool sufficiently first; but remember that cooling should be completed within one or two hours after cooking, depending on the food type.
- To speed cooling, divide foods into smaller portions.
- Check the temperature of your fridge (and freezer if relevant) at the beginning and end of each day.
- Make sure that all chilled foods are put into the fridge immediately upon arrival at the fridge site.

2.5 Staffing your fridge

A community fridge needs people to make it work. Unless the fridge is a small part of your organisation's activities, it will likely be too much for 1-2 people to handle.

Building a great team

1. **Finding people:** First, you need to find people who want to help. This could be by putting up flyers, posting on social media, or asking around your community. Think about the skills you need, like people who are good at organising events and making things happen, or people who know a lot about food safety. Start small with a handful of helpers and add more as you grow.

2. **Training and getting started:** Once you've found your team, you'll need to get them ready. This could be by showing them how the fridge works, teaching them about the way you're managing food safety, and explaining their roles and responsibilities. Make sure everyone knows what they need to do and who they can ask if they have questions.

3. **Making a schedule:** With your team ready, you'll need to make a schedule/rota. This is a plan of who will do what and when. You can keep it interesting and varied by spreading the work evenly, just aim to make sure no one gets too tired or too busy.

4. **Keeping your team happy:** Staff and volunteers are the heart of any community fridge, make sure they feel both valued and happy. This could be by saying thank you, giving them a chance to learn new skills, or just making sure they're having fun. By taking care of them, you can make sure your fridge stays successful for a long time.

Hiring a co-ordinator

A question many groups ask is whether you need to hire a part-time or full-time coordinator for your community fridge. In short, no you don't - but, having a paid coordinator can really help make your fridge a success. A dedicated paid role ensures someone has guaranteed time to help everything run smoothly. They can take care of important tasks like coordinating food collections, managing volunteers, promoting the fridge, and keeping track of the fridge's impact. This can also help as the project grows, having a dedicated person to help manage the day-to-day operations so others can focus on planning the fridge's growth.

Volunteer management

Want to learn more about managing volunteers? Then check out NCVO's brilliant guide on involving volunteers:

NCVO Volunteer Guide



Safeguarding

Safeguarding is about protecting the people who visit and volunteer or work at your fridge, especially children and adults who may be vulnerable. Having a clear policy, with a named person volunteers can go to, means everyone knows how to spot concerns and what to do about them.

All network members are expected to:

1. Have a safeguarding policy and named Designated Safeguarding Lead or contact
2. Provide safeguarding training to staff/ volunteers in relevant roles
3. Follow safe recruitment practices, including DBS checks as appropriate
4. Report serious safeguarding concerns to Hubbub where they relate to funded or co-branded activities
5. Uphold zero tolerance for harassment, abuse, or discrimination

2.6 Branding your fridge

Ever wondered how to make your community fridge look and feel more than just a fridge? Branding is the answer.

Branding is like giving your community fridge a personality or a look that people can easily recognise and connect with. Just as a person might be known for their friendly smile or a particular hat they always wear, a community fridge's branding helps it stand out and be remembered in the community.

What's available?

Hubbub has created lots of materials you can print out and change up a bit to help people know about your community fridge. Here's what we've got for you:

- **Posters:** Highlighting key information, upcoming events, or specific needs of the fridge.
- **Leaflets:** Easy to hand out, they help tell people about the fridge and what it's all about.
- **Signage:** Clear, visible indicators for fridge operations, do's and don'ts, and more.
- **Digital assets:** For online promotions on social media, community forums, and more.

Click the link below to access our library of printable and digital materials.

Branding Library





Stage Three

Preparing to open



By this stage you should have a clear plan for how to set up and run your community fridge. Next, let's focus on opening your fridge, building relationships with local organisations and welcoming your visitors.

3.1 Pre-launch checklist 19

3.2 Working with local organisations 20

3.3 Spreading the word 21

3.4 Tracking your fridge's impact 22

3.5 Welcoming your visitors 23



3.1 Pre-launch checklist

Before we dive further, let's pause and review the crucial steps in preparing your community fridge for a successful launch. This page provides a snapshot of the main points from Chapter 3, ensuring you've got a firm grasp on the essential elements. Whether you're checking off items you've completed or revisiting areas for more clarity, this at-a-glance summary is here to guide you. Read on for a quick refresher!

Working with local organisations

- ◯ **Identify potential organisations,** businesses, charities, schools, local leaders.
- ◯ **Share mutual benefits** and explore opportunities for support.
- ◯ **Communicate** actively and keep them both involved and informed.
- ◯ **Express your appreciation** for their contributions regularly.

Communicating your project

- ◯ **Promote on social media** to engage with followers and make it easy to understand.
- ◯ **Partner up** with local newspapers, magazines or radio stations for wider outreach.
- ◯ **Make clear** your fridge's opening hours, location, and accessibility.
- ◯ **Consistent branding** to make sure all of your promotional materials feel consistent.

Tracking your fridge's success

- ◯ **Monitor** food shared, visitor counts and feedback.
- ◯ **Share stories** which can inspire others and boost fundraising.
- ◯ **Go digital** and use tools like Excel or Google Sheets for data tracking.
- ◯ **Complete** Hubbub's annual impact survey when requested each autumn.

Managing your visitors

- ◯ **Prioritise safety & accessibility** to make your fridge a welcoming and accessible space.
- ◯ **Inform** with leaflets, signs, and guides.
- ◯ **Create fair access** and have a plan in place to manage high visitor demand.
- ◯ **Regularly communicate** what's going on with your community.

...and finally

Get added to the map. Once you've followed our steps to get your fridge set up, you've got your compliance document in place, and opened your doors, it's time to get added to the public CFN map.

Get added to the CFN map

Have more questions?

Check out the FAQ section of this document for further guidance and tips for launching your community fridge.

FAQs



3.2 Working with local organisations

Having close relationships with local organisations can make your community fridge even better. They can help in different ways, like sharing food, money, time or by spreading the word about your fridge. Here's how other's have done it:

1. **Look for them:** Think about who might be able to help. This could be businesses, charities, schools, community groups as well as local councils and housing associations. You might also want to think about local leaders who are well-known and respected like councillors.

2. **Get in touch:** Once you've got a list, it's time to contact them. You can do this in person, by phone or by email. Tell them about your plans for the community fridge and why/ how you think you can support each other.

3. **Appreciate your partners:** Always thank local organisations for their help. You might want to acknowledge them publicly by tagging them on social media or mentioning them at a community event. Remember, every organisation is different. What works for one organisation might not work for another. The most important thing is to keep them involved and make sure they feel valued.

Speak to your community

"I don't think there's any substitute for just visiting and speaking with people. Take a step back and look at who is working in your local area and take the time to go and speak with them. Set up meetings with store managers and other local contacts, connect and try to introduce the concept, building relationships as you go – this helps you understand how you all fit together. When we were setting up our fridge we reached out to all the local businesses in our area and this has been a great advantage in helping us along the way."



3.3 Spreading the word

Setting up a community fridge is fantastic, but it's even better when people know about it. That's why promoting your fridge is so important. It helps to let people know that the fridge is there for them to use, how they can use it (especially important for those who've never heard of a community fridge before) and it can also attract funding support.

How can you promote your fridge?

1. **Online:** Social media is a great place to let people know about your fridge. You can post pictures, share stories, and update people on what's happening.

2. **Local organisations:** Ask local organisations to spread the word or reach out to local media outlets like newspapers or radio stations to help.

3. **Let people know when you're open:** Make sure people know when and how they can use the fridge. Put your full address, opening hours and contact information on your social media and website pages (and any other places people might look). You can even add your fridge to Google Maps so people can easily find you.

Want some inspo?

Head over to social media channels like Instagram and search for #Communityfridge:

#CommunityFridge

Don't be afraid to ask

"The trick is to simply ask, get people involved right from the start. It could be as simple as asking local schools to contribute artwork or asking for ideas on how to decorate your fridge. The point is to make the community feel like this is their project, not just something that's being dropped into their neighbourhood."

Beth Rice, Repton Community Fridge



3.4 Tracking your impact

Keeping tabs on how well your community fridge is doing is important. It helps you, your team and your visitors see the good you're doing, identify where you can make things better, and show potential funders how great your community fridge is too.

Measure success by tracking:

How much food is being shared each month:

XX kg of food

How many visitors you have:

XX visitors this month

Any feedback from visitors on the difference the fridge has made to their lives:

Quotes and testimonials

Sharing your fridge's story and its effects on the community can be a real inspiration for others. Not only can it encourage local support, but it can also boost your fundraising efforts.

There are many ways to capture your fridge's impact. You might use forms or surveys to gather comments from people, a logbook to keep track of the food that's been shared or use a tablet or mobile phone to take photos and videos.

The key is to make this part of your everyday routine. By doing so, capturing the impact of your fridge becomes a simple, ongoing process rather than a daunting task. This way, you'll always have fresh stories and data to share with your community and beyond.

Share, share, share

It's important to remember that your team have joined you because they're interested in reducing food waste and supporting their local community. Help them stay motivated and proud of their work at your fridge by sharing the impact their work has had.

Groups who display their impact at their community fridge have said volunteers have appreciated seeing the difference they are making and this has encouraged them to help track the fridge's impact. An easy way to share your impact with volunteers is by creating a simple sign that shows how many tonnes of food all your volunteers have helped to save: e.g. 'X tonnes of food shared since November 2023'.

Go digital

Try using Excel or Google Sheets to capture and store all your groups data on the amount of food shared or the number of visits each month. This way you have a permanent record of the impact your fridge is having which you can use time and time again.

How should I share data?

Each autumn, the Hubbub team will email the main contact at each fridge to collect your average monthly visitor numbers and kilograms of food saved from waste for the year to date.

Sharing your figures helps us show the collective impact of the Community Fridge Network and celebrate the difference you're making together.

We'd also love to hear about the stories behind the stats! Get in touch with the CFN team to share your successes, which we can shout about in our quarterly newsletters and share with the wider Network.

We love hearing what you're achieving, so let's celebrate it together!

3.5 Welcoming your visitors

Keeping tabs on how well your community fridge is doing is important. It helps you, your team and your visitors see the good you're doing, identify where you can make things better, and show potential funders how great your community fridge is too.

Creating a welcoming space

Here are a few handy tips:

- **Safety first, always:** The fridge should feel safe for everyone. That means physically safe (no clutter, spills, or obstacles) and emotionally safe (no judgment, just kindness).
- **Informational leaflets:** A small takeaway leaflet with FAQs about the fridge, its purpose, and some fun facts can help ease someone into the community vibe.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure the fridge is accessible for everyone, including those with disabilities. This might mean a ramp for wheelchairs or tactile signs for the visually impaired.
- **Managing busy times:** Expect more visitors during peak hours and plan ahead to keep things running smoothly.
- **Understanding date labels:** Educate your visitors about 'best before' and 'use-by' dates to reduce confusion and waste.
- **Display key information:** Use clear signs to provide essential instructions and disclaimers to your visitors, so everyone knows what's expected.
- **Language matters:** If your community speaks multiple languages, consider having multilingual signs or volunteers who can communicate in those languages.

Fair access to food

Managing fair access to your community fridge can be a challenge, especially if the demand is high. For strategies on how to do this check out our members portal on the Hubbub website:

Members Portal



Stage Four

Launch day and beyond



A launch event can really stir up excitement about your fridge. You could keep it low-key to give yourself time to test it out or throw a big bash where you invite the whole community, either way we've got you covered!

4.1 Launch day 25

4.2 Growing your fridge 26

4.3 What's next? 27

4.4 FAQs 28

4.1 Launch day

Launch day provides the perfect opportunity to introduce and celebrate your new community fridge. Whether you choose a low-key gathering or a grand celebration, the main goal remains the same: to raise awareness and get local people involved.

Before you dive into the detailed planning take a moment to consider:

1. **Your aims and objectives:** is it to show off your project, recruit volunteers, find fundraising opportunities or meet potential supporters?
2. **Who to invite:** will you involve local leaders, councillors, or MPs to endorse and support your fridge?
3. **How to keep your visitors entertained:** consider a variety of activities for all ages, from smoothie-making sessions to games for children, ensuring a fun atmosphere that appeals to all.

Why is launch event important?

- It helps raise awareness about your community fridge and how people can get involved or support you.
- It serves as an opportunity to engage with your wider community and potential supporters.
- It's an exciting moment which can inspire your team

Launch event checklist

- ◯ **Venue and fridge area ready**
- ◯ **Community fridge team ready**
- ◯ **Spoken with local fridges for ideas**
- ◯ **Activities and schedule of the event confirmed**
- ◯ **Secured food for the fridge and checked in with pick-up locations**
- ◯ **Posters, stickers, leaflets and signage all ready**
- ◯ **Invites sent**
- ◯ **Photo permission forms ready so images can be used for future promotion**
- ◯ **Social media posts scheduled**
- ◯ **Hubbub have been updated confirming your launch plans**

After your launch event

- ◯ **Thank your team and your visitors:** A small gesture like sending out 'thank you' messages or notes to those who attended can go a long way in building long term support.
- ◯ **Have a post-event 'wash up':** review the feedback gathered during the event and ask your team on their reflections to understand what went well what could be better.
- ◯ **Share on social media:** share photos, videos, and highlights of the launch on social media to keep the momentum going.

Want some inspo?

Read about Oldham Community Fridge's launch event with the Mayor of Manchester

Oldham Community Fridge launch

4.2 Growing your fridge

Congratulations, you've successfully launched your community fridge!

The first few months are all about finding your groove and gaining confidence as a team. Soon you'll be able to think about the future and how you can make an even bigger impact. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- **Get creative:** Dive deep into brainstorming sessions to come up with exciting new ideas on improvements or new activities for your fridge.
- **Community feedback:** Include your community within the running of your project. Actively seek feedback, respond to concerns, and adapt your fridge plans to better serve your community.
- **Secure the future:** Plan your fundraising strategy to make sure you have enough money coming in to cover all your future costs.
- **Beyond the fridge:** Mull over potential activities. This will vary depending on your groups overall vision and mission, but it could be anything from workshops, cooking classes, or food growing. Keep an eye out for any funding opportunities to bring ideas to life.
- **Make things run (more) smoothly:** At first, running your fridge might feel tricky. Over time, find ways to make things easier and faster. This could be by using simple tools, giving short training sessions to your helpers, or making a list of steps to follow. When things run smoothly, you'll (hopefully!) have more free time to spend on taking your group to the next level.
- **Network and learn:** Stay connected with similar organisations and use what they've learnt. Regularly check Hubbub's newsletter and events page for new opportunities and workshops.

Check out our community fridges in action



4.3 What's next?

Hopefully you now know all the steps which can help you plan and make your fridge a reality. Now it's over to you. We wish you the very best of luck!

Feel free to print this guidance and use the checklists within. The best way to learn is to speak with and visit other fridges – we highly recommend you arrange a visit to another fridge and get a peek behind the curtain! And a final reminder it's now time to join the Community Fridge Network (CFN) and unlock all the benefits which can help you along the way.

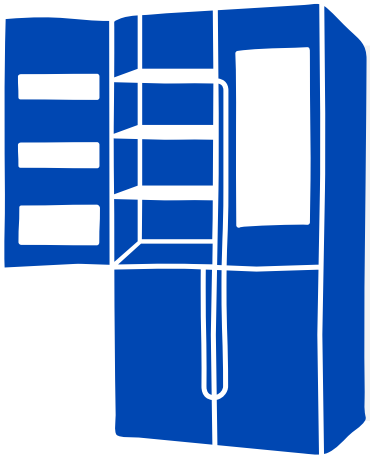
If you have any questions or need further help, please don't hesitate to contact us. We're here to support you every step of the way or via the Facebook group. The community fridges in the group are a fountain of knowledge and there's a great culture of sharing and problem solving together. Please also let us know how you're getting on - we are so excited to see your community fridge thrive and the positive impact it will have on your community!

GO

Ready to join?

Now you know what we're about, join the network to access the benefits and get your community fridge off the ground!

Join the Community Fridge Network



Email
COMMUNITYFRIDGE@HUBBUB.ORG.UK

Facebook
@HUBBUBUK

Instagram
@HELLOHUBBUB

COMMUNITY FRIDGE

HUBBUB.ORG.UK/COMMUNITY-FRIDGE-NETWORK

Registered charity no. 1158700

4.4 FAQs

Research

What's the difference between a community fridge and a food bank?

Community fridges and food banks sometimes get confused because they are both a way of providing food to the public, however they should be seen as different. Community fridges let everyone share surplus fresh food (food which would otherwise be thrown away) to stop it from going to waste. They're open to all and the amount and variety of food depends on what might be available that day.

Food banks give food to people who really need it, but you need to be sent there by someone through a 'referral'. So, community fridges help save food and share it with anyone and everyone in a community, while food banks help people who are experiencing a difficult time and need support. Some groups have decided to have both models in the same space but always keep them separate to highlight their difference. For more info on the 'ethos' of a community fridge check out our guide.

Can I set up a fridge without a bank account?

No. You'll need a bank account to cover the fridge's operating costs and manage any money raised through fundraising. Having a separate bank account will make it much easier to manage your project's finances and keep them separate from your personal money. It's important not to mix the running of the fridge with personal finances.

What can we do if we don't own/have a space?

Reach out to local businesses, schools, or community centres. Many places might be happy to host your fridge and support a great community initiative. Let them know all the wonderful benefits a community fridge can bring to your local area.

Can a for profit business, school or council set up a community fridge?

Absolutely! Any organisation that is keen to support your community, reduce food waste and make good food accessible to everyone is welcome to set up a community fridge. Just make sure it's free and open to everyone in the community. The more the merrier!

Can we buy food for our fridge?

The primary aim of a community fridge is to reduce food waste by sharing surplus food that would otherwise go to waste. Purchasing food doesn't align with this and so technically would see the project become less of a community fridge and more of a community pantry. You can find out more about community pantries on YourLocalPantry.co.uk.

Planning

Creating your space

What size of fridge is suitable for a community fridge?

This depends on the size of the community you're serving and the expected food donations. However, we suggest starting with a standard commercial-sized fridge. You can then expand as the demand grows.

Do Hubbub offer discounted fridges?

Sadly, we are no longer able to directly offer discounted fridges. Reach out to your fellow community fridges on our Facebook channel to hear their advice on finding an affordable fridge.

Can I set up a fridge in any public space?

While the idea is community-centered, always ensure you have the required permissions from local authorities or property owners. It's also important to consider safety and accessibility so this rules out residential buildings.

What if I can't cover the costs right away?

Many community fridges start small and grow over time. There are lots of ways you can cover your costs as outlined in our earlier chapter on funding. In some instances, we've known groups to set up surplus tables which accept only ambient packaged food (such as tins or dried pasta). This gave them time to build up their confidence and understanding of community need while buying them valuable time to raise the funds they needed.

How can the community get involved in setting up the space?

Encourage locals to volunteer for fridge setup, maintenance, or decoration. Workshops, brainstorming sessions, or community voting on fridge design/themes can also increase involvement.

Do I need insurance for my community fridge?

Yes, it's essential to have liability insurance in place. This covers potential accidents or issues that might arise from use of the community fridge.

Staffing your fridge

How many volunteers do I need for my community fridge?

There's no exact number as it varies depending on the fridge's size, operational hours, and tasks involved. A small fridge may require 2-3 volunteers while a larger operation could benefit from a team of 10 or more.

Can anyone volunteer?

Yes, anyone can volunteer. However, certain roles, especially those involving food handling, will require food safety certification. It's also a good idea to look for volunteers with particular skills or expertise if there's a specific need or gap within your team.

Where can I get more advice on recruiting or managing volunteers?

For step by step guidance to help you manage volunteers and the processes involved, check out the **guidance provided by NCVO.**

Branding your fridge

Can we add our symbols or logos to the fridge branding templates?

Absolutely! Incorporating familiar community symbols can help people recognise and relate to your fridge. Just make sure you have the rights or permissions to use them.

I'm new to Canva. Is it hard to use?

Not at all! Canva is pretty simple. Pick a design you like, and if you want, change a few things. When you're happy, you can print or share. And if you ever get stuck, they have helpful guides to show you around.

Do I need to pay for Canva?

Our designs are made using Canva's free version so you can edit and download them without any cost. Some extra fancy bits on Canva might have a cost, but you don't need them for our designs.

How should we print our designs?

This depends on your budget. Most community fridges will use a local printing company to handle their printing needs. This means everything is produced professionally and they can also give you advice on the types of materials which work best.

For size: A standard A4 size works well for most places. But if you have a big space and want something larger, A3 is also good. It's worth measuring the space and speaking with a professional printer.

Preparing to open

Tracking your fridge's impact

How frequently should I update our records?

It's best to update your records at the end of each month. Many fridges find a monthly routine the most manageable and effective.

What if we miss collecting data for a period?

Don't worry, just pick up from where you left off. Consistency is key but there will always be times when things don't go to plan.

How can we use the data we collect?

You can use your fridge data in any way you want to help people understand the great impact you're having. For example, it can help you understand where to improve, motivate your team, attract more visitors and strengthen grant applications or fundraising campaigns.

Welcoming your visitors

Some visitors take more than their fair share. What can I do?

A simple, friendly sign suggesting how much each visitor might take can help. E.g., "Consider taking what you need for a day or two. This ensures everyone gets a share."

How do I manage someone who isn't following the fridge guidelines?

Approach them with empathy. Most people might not be aware they're doing something wrong. A friendly chat usually helps. If issues persist, consider holding community meetings to discuss guidelines and address concerns.

Launch day and beyond

Launch day

What should we do if we do not get any food ahead of our launch day?

Consider a Plan B. While a community fridge is all about reducing surplus food, it's important to recognise that there's no guarantee that there will be surplus food available. So, you might want to speak with a store manager or local organisation to see whether they can guarantee food just for your launch – after all, you want to showcase how a community fridge looks when your visitors arrive!

How early should I start preparing for the launch?

Ideally, begin preparations 3-4 weeks in advance. This should give you enough time for promotion and coordination.

What if the weather forecast for launch day is bad?

If outdoors, consider setting up tents or marquees. Alternatively, have a backup indoor venue or reschedule the launch date.

How can I get the local press interested?

Draft a compelling press release, highlighting the community benefits and any unique aspects of your fridge project. Check out these **top tips for writing a good press release.**

COMMUNITY FRIDGE Network

Registered charity no. 1158700