

SEPTEMBER 2025

Community Food Hubs

Application Handbook

**COMMUNITY
FRIDGE**
Network



Registered charity no. 1158700

Welcome

This is your comprehensive handbook to guide you through the Community Food Hub Grant Fund.

The fund is for UK-based community fridges to develop a food hub activity and has been developed in partnership with Starbucks UK.

What are food hubs?

Food hubs are community fridges where people take part in activities that **connect them with others, community** and good food.

Over **230 community fridges** have become food hubs. Read on to hear their stories and get inspired to apply for your community fridge!





Key information

Who is eligible?

Who **can** apply?

- All community fridges who are part of the Community Fridge Network.
- Groups who sign up to the Community Fridge Network after the fund launches on 1st September will not be considered.

Who **cannot** apply?

- Community fridges that received funding in the May 2025 Community Food Hubs funding round.
- **Individuals** or sole traders.
- Groups based **outside** the UK.
- Anyone applying on behalf of **another group**.
- Companies aimed at generating **profits** for private distribution.
- Faith-based organisations aiming to actively promote **particular beliefs**.
- Groups that register for the Community Fridge Network after the fund launches on 1st September.

What if I have received **other funding** from Hubbub?

- Community fridges **can** apply even if they have applied for or received other funding from Hubbub.



Project themes

Funding is available for groups to deliver activities that fit within one or more of the following themes:



Learning new skills

Provide access to training and knowledge-building activities

To upskill your community and raise awareness of how people can eat better for their pockets and the planet.

This could include:
Training and workshops on cooking or budgeting, or even how to set up a food surplus enterprise.



Sharing locally

Encourage neighbours to share rather than buy new

To create opportunities and build knowledge around ways to make the most of what people already own.

This could include:
Shared libraries of tools, cooking equipment, bikes, baby items etc., repair café events and intergenerational mend and sew lessons.



Connecting communities

Support community cohesion and resilience

To provide opportunities for their community to come together around food.

This could include:
Community meals, chatty cafés and cook and recipe sharing.



Give it a grow

Increase the amount of food grown locally

To support community growing and increase the amount of edible food grown and shared locally.

This could include:
Community gardens, edible greening, neighbourhood 'grow and watch' schemes, workshops, skill and seed shares.

“Many of our visitors used to hesitate to take some food on offer as they don’t know how to prepare it. After the course, people are more confident and adventurous with their food choices.”

Kendal Food Hub

Kendal Food Hub in the Lake District found that certain food items were always left behind in the fridge. They wanted to explore ways to empower visitors to try new food and equip them with the skills to make a delicious, nutritious meal at home.

Their Community Food Hub grant funding went towards cooking demonstrations which sit alongside the community larder, showcasing more ‘adventurous’ ingredients such as beetroot, especially when they received a glut from a local farm.

They have also run family cookalongs and created a library of recipes focusing on health and wellbeing. This range of options appeals to different types of learners and confidence levels but across the board, Kendal have seen visitors inspired to try their new skills out for themselves at home.

They also tailored kitchen prep sessions specifically for vulnerable individuals or those with additional needs, and their cooking sessions have evolved into work experience opportunities for their local college and the organisation, Right2Work.

Kendal Food Hub first received funding in 2021 and have since been successful in a 2023 round to deliver more community cooking sessions for groups of 30 people.

Rutland Food Hub

Rutland Community Fridge in the East Midlands received funding from the Community Food Hub grant fund in 2022 to develop a community garden.

They have transformed an unused field into a calm oasis and as one visitor puts it, 'you'd never know the main road was over the other side of the fence'. The garden welcomes 30 volunteers every Wednesday to come, sit and take a breather or get stuck into gardening jobs. The team have made impressive progress over the past two years with the creation of a number of beds from repurposed materials, polytunnels, a sheltered seating area, custom built bicycle rack, compost toilet and play area.

Gardeners Claire and Alex set out the vision for the space; what grows well together and aim for a balance of food and plants, but welcome ideas from visitors, for example, a volunteer wants to have a Chinese patch growing pak choi.

Rutland supports people with mental health conditions and the garden has had a therapeutic effect for many. There are retired visitors through to young kids during the holidays. They've also carved a flat plain towards the back to host yoga sessions.



“Joe* has been facing some mental health challenges and you’d never know. He’s been coming here for months and knows the name of every single plant across the whole garden.”

What is the funding for?

The funding must:

- Support a **specific and discrete project**.
- Be additional to **existing expenditure** plans.
- Show in the organisation's accounting as a **restricted fund**.

The funding can be used for:

- **Materials** relating to the food hub activity e.g., cooking or food growing equipment.
- **Utilities** relating to the delivery of the project activity e.g., power or water.
- **Staffing** costs to cover the time spent planning and delivering the activity.
- **Display** materials, signage and information.
- **Training** for the activity delivery team e.g., food hygiene and safeguarding.
- **Reasonable** other expenses that enable you to get the activity off the ground

The project can be:

- An **existing and successful food hub activity** you'd like to continue, grow or expand.
- A **new food hub activity** you'd like to bring to your community.



Is this funding for me?

Not all community fridges will be ready to start a food hub activity. It's important to consider if you have the team resources, the right permissions and the setup at your location to run this type of activity, especially for outdoor growing activities.

Carefully consider the following before applying:

- Do you currently have enough **volunteers** to run the community fridge?
- Can you get the activity up and running within **six months**?
- Do you need **planning** permission?
- Have you sought **permission** from the landlord or local authorities?
- Have you spoken to someone with the **expertise** and interest in delivering the activities e.g., gardeners or chefs?

This funding is **not** for:

- **Core costs** not related to the activity.
- **Building renovations** with no activity involved.
- **Equipment** e.g., a fridge or new technology.
- **Buying food** for the community fridge, becoming a food bank or delivering emergency food parcels (see [Trussell Trust for more info](#)).



What's included?

Successful applicants will receive:

- **£3,000 in grant funding** in November/December 2025.
- Opportunities to **connect, learn from and share ideas with** other food hubs.
- Collaboration with Hubbub on **future funding** opportunities e.g., partnered funding bids.
- **A newsletter** with opportunities and news from the network.
- Option for professional **photography** (like the beautiful snaps in this handbook!)



Timeline

Timings	Detail
September-October 25	• 1st September - Applications open on the funding webpage here. • 1st October - Applications close at midnight.
October-November 25	• Applications are assessed against the eligibility criteria (see page 15). • The panel will create a shortlist of applicants who may be asked to supply further information. • The final projects will then be selected. • There are 55 grants available.
November 25	• Hubbub will email all applicants with the outcome of their application before the 3rd November. • Successful groups will be asked to submit their onboarding documents (see page 20). Please make sure the contact listed in the application is available during this time. • Once complete, successful groups will receive £3,000 in funding in November or December 2025.
June 26	• Food hubs must complete their 6-month survey.
December 26	• Food hubs must complete their 12-month survey.



Applications

Our principles

Hubbub is signed up to **IVAR's Flexible Funding** commitments. That means we fund in an open and trusting way, to make life easier for people who apply for and receive our grants. Everything we do should be accessible, transparent and collaborative. [Read more here.](#)

Hubbub are committed to **diversity and inclusion**. We offer funding equally across all areas and will assess all applications on an individual basis, with each being reviewed on **merit and suitability only**. We will make sure that no applicant receives less favourable treatment (either directly or indirectly) on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender or gender reassignment
- Marriage/Civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex or sexual orientation

If you'd like to ask for any **reasonable adjustments** to remove any barriers to your application, then please get in touch at [**foodhubs@hubbub.org.uk**](mailto:foodhubs@hubbub.org.uk).



How to apply

Step 1 – Write your answers

- Read the application questions beforehand.
- We strongly recommend you write up your answers first in your own document before submitting them to the JotForm.
- Note the word count and guidance on what we are looking for in each of your responses.
- Unfortunately, the 'save your progress as you go' function on JotForm is not reliable so we'd recommend not using this.

Step 2 - Review your answers

- Please ensure your answers are brief and clearly expressed.
- Check for accuracy and typos, especially the email address.

Step 3 - Submit your answers

- When you're happy, copy over your answers to the JotForm application form.

Step 4 - Keep a record

- A copy of your answers will be sent to the email address supplied in the form.



Application questions

- **Briefly tell us about your organisation.** What are your aims? What gets you out of bed in the morning?
- Is your food hub activity a) a **continuation of existing activities** or b) a **new activity**?
- **If select a)** Why have you chosen to **continue/expand/grow** this activity?
- **If select b)** **Tell us about your food hub idea.** What activity/activities would you like to run with this funding?
- Please break down **how the £3,000 will be spent** in an estimated budget.
- **Who will take part** in this activity?
- How do you know your audience **wants to take part** in the activity?
- **How many people** do you anticipate will take part in your activity in total?
- When will your project **start and end?** (Date format)
- **Who will you work with** to make your food hub activity possible?
- Please **upload a photo** of your community fridge and where your food hub activity will take place.





Application Guidance

What we're looking for

How we assess each application

- A **clearly defined activity** that sits under one of the themes and that you're passionate about running in your community.
- Evidence that you've thought through or taken some steps to understand **who will take part**.
- Evidence that this activity is something **your community wants to see**.
- Demonstration that you've taken some time to map out **how you will get your activity off the ground** and **who you will work with** to make it happen.
- A project with a **clear social element** e.g., not just a new kitchen but the cooking skills or community meals alongside it.
- A project with clear **environmental aims or ambitions**.
- A project which doesn't **discriminate or exclude** people.
- Willingness to **capture and share the impact** of the activity.
- Desirable: interesting, creative, unique, innovative **ideas** that make applications stand out.

How we assess the whole pool of applications

- **Geographical** spread, ensuring areas lacking in projects are represented.
- A fair proportion of projects under each **theme**.
- A variety of types of **projects and audiences**.
- A balance of **older and newer** community fridges.
- Whether or not the community fridge has **previously received funding**.

A few watch-outs

These are the most common reasons applications lose marks:

- The activity proposed **doesn't meet the criteria** for this funding.
- It is **not clear enough what the activity is** and how it would be delivered e.g., mentioning a number of activities meaning it's unclear what the funding would go towards.
- There is an **inconsistency in answers** e.g., costs allocated in the budget don't match the food hub activity.
- Budget **does not include costings**, is significantly less than the grant or does not use the funding in the most cost-effective or impactful way.
- It is not clear that **the community needed or asked for** the specifically chosen project.
- It is not clear how the project will work alongside and/or appears to replace the **existing community fridge**.
- **Failure to meet impact reporting requirements from past funding rounds**, such as missing reports, inadequate data, or lack of evidence showing outcomes and learnings.
- **A note on AI:** We welcome smart use of AI tools to help create your application, but we value your authentic voice most & want to hear from you! Your voice, your perspective and your reasons for needing funding matter to us. Check out our tips for using AI to [support your application here](#).



How to have the most impact

What we eat has a big impact on the planet: 20-30% of carbon emissions come from food and agriculture.

But it can be confusing to know how to eat sustainably, and what we eat is ingrained in our identity, culture and habits.

Not to mention it can be seen as expensive, when in fact it's a way to save. Simple actions like cutting food waste and cooking efficiently play an important role.

We're looking for ideas that inspire simple, tasty, and planet-friendly eating habits. Strong applications will:

- **Showcase delicious, budget-friendly meals** packed with fruits and vegetables.
- **Highlight the power of beans** – healthy, protein-rich, and great for the planet.
- **Make meat-free meals the norm** without compromising on flavour.
- **Turn food waste into a thing of the past** by repurposing leftovers.
- **Promote energy-efficient cooking** to save money and reduce emissions.





**What happens if you're
successful?**

Successful applicants

Hubbub will contact all applicants with the final decision before the **3rd November**.

If successful, groups will be asked to complete a **Letter of Agreement** which includes:

- **Commitment** from your organisation to deliver the project set out in the application.
- **Details and signatures** of the main contact(s) for the project and the finance lead
- **Food hygiene** rating and food safety training certificate
- **Bank details** of the organisation

Once complete, successful groups will receive **£3,000** in funding to run their food hub activity.

An applicant will be deemed ineligible if they refuse to provide further requested information and/or are uncontactable for a period of more than 14 days.



Impact reporting

Food hubs must complete two simple impact reports:

1. 6-month survey
2. 12-month survey

You will be notified when these are due.

For both surveys, the key questions will be:

- What has **gone well**?
- What has **not gone as expected**?
- How many **people attended** the activities (approx. total)
- What **difference has this activity made** to your community and the people attending?
- Space to share **case studies**
- Space to upload **photos**



Recap

Key timings	Detail
1st September 2025	Applications open on the funding webpage here .
1st October 2025	Applications close at 23:59.
3rd November 2025	Hubbub will email everyone with the outcome of their application by this date.
November/December 2025	Winners receive funding on completion of documents.
December 2025 – December 2026	• Projects get underway! • 6-month and 12-month survey. • 'Food hubble' peer groups, newsletter and bespoke support.

The background is a solid orange color with a repeating pattern of white line-art icons. These icons include various food items like carrots, onions, broccoli, bread, and vegetables, as well as kitchen tools like a grater, whisk, fork, and bowl.

Thank you

FOODHUBS@HUBBUB.ORG.UK

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