

How to run a Community Fridge



Some key facts	3
Things to consider when setting up.....	3
Equipment	4
Supermarkets.....	5
Other food retailers	5
Food that can be accepted from retailers includes:.....	5
Food that cannot be accepted from retailers includes:.....	6
Roles	6
The role of food collectors.....	6
Driving	7
Food safety in the fridge	7
Personal hygiene	8
Costs may include:.....	8
Buying a fridge.....	8
Rental.....	8
Staff costs.....	8
Travel expenses	8
Printing	9
Electricity and maintenance	9
Insurance.....	9
Spread the word	9
To make sure that your fridge gets known about:	9
• Insurance.....	10
• Risk assessments.....	10
• Health & Safety policy and procedure.....	10
• Disclaimer	10
Reflect and evaluate.....	11

About Community Fridges

A Community Fridge is a space where surplus food, that would otherwise be wasted can be shared with the local community. Volunteers collect perfectly good food that local shops and businesses would otherwise have thrown away. The average Community Fridge shares one to six tonnes of food per month. Community Fridges bring people together, address social isolation, provide opportunities to access healthy food and helps save money.

Did you know...

The average community fridge shares between one and six tonnes of food per month!

Some key facts

A Community Fridge ...

- 🌈 Makes no charge for food items - but often donations are encouraged.
- 🌈 Stocks food that has been donated by local food businesses, growers and sometimes members of the public.
- 🌈 May have a freezer as well as a fridge, and a shelving area for food products / other non-perishable items.
- 🌈 Found in many places ranging from a community centre, church or a purpose built shed.
- 🌈 Has opening hours to suit the community and the volunteers (and/or staff) involved.
- 🌈 Often has criteria lists for the sorts of foods that can be donated. The types of food usually donated are those that are still perfectly good and safe to eat, however fresh food sometimes needs consuming within 24 hours.

Planning and set up

As well as providing the fridge, consideration needs to be given to volunteers, supplies of food for the fridge, health and safety, as well as how you will publicise your fridge to the community.

Things to consider when setting up

- 🌈 What times of the day will your fridge be open to the public?
- 🌈 Do you have enough volunteers, or do you need to recruit more?

- 🌈 Do you want a freezer as well as a fridge and how will you acquire these – e.g. bought new, bought second-hand, donated?
- 🌈 Is your fridge under cover? Your fridge and/or freezer will be at risk and difficult to insure if it's exposed to wind and rain. Make sure it is covered at the back and sides and protected from the weather.
- 🌈 How will you lock up your fridge and who will have access to the keys/codes needed to unlock it?
- 🌈 How will the area be supervised, and could you install lighting or CCTV if the area is not directly supervised?
- 🌈 Which businesses will you ask for surplus food?
- 🌈 Is the space you will use big enough for other activities. For example, if you have access to a kitchen, do you want to host cooking workshops on using leftover ingredients or run a Food Surplus Café.
- 🌈 Will you have any paid staff? Obviously, this is a big expense so many Community Fridges choose not to employ people. Venues such as community centres often have a member of staff there during opening hours who would be willing to keep an eye on things if your volunteers are off site.

Equipment

- 🌈 Basic equipment you will need includes:
- 🌈 Fridge or fridge/ freezer, additional shelving
- 🌈 Waste containers (general waste, recycling and food waste)
- 🌈 Cleaning materials: dustpan/brush, broom, cloths, paper towels, spray, deep cleaning materials etc
- 🌈 Laminated signs
- 🌈 Fridge thermometer
- 🌈 Storage bins (if storing non-perishables and where pests could be a problem)

Food donations

It helps to have a range of food suppliers; this helps keep the Community Fridge fully supplied.

When dealing with food retailers it is important to be consistent and reliable e.g. turning up within the time-window they give you and notifying them if you can't come.

Supermarkets

Most supermarkets are subscribed to a scheme so that they can donate surplus food to charities:

Tesco, Aldi, Waitrose: through **FareShare** This is one of the easiest ways to get food.

<https://fareshare.org.uk/>

Coop: They discount very heavily so often they don't have much surplus food.

<https://www.coop.co.uk/environment/food-redistribution-caboodle>

Sainsburys donate through Neighbourly app: <https://www.neighbourly.com/>











Tesco, Asda and others use Olio app: <https://olioapp.com/en/>

Other food retailers

This includes fast food and bakery chains who can provide pre-prepared foods (e.g. sandwiches), but these are only likely to be available in the evening. They must be used on the same day and should be removed from the fridge before closing time.

You need to make sure any relevant allergy information is clearly displayed on items going into the fridge. This would include: gluten, crustaceans, eggs, fish, peanuts, soybeans, milk, nuts, celery, mustard, sesame seeds. Your Co-ordinator should compile a full list, keep it updated and make it known to all the volunteers. Any high-risk foods without a date should not be accepted. Bread and unprepared fruit and vegetables do not require labelling.

Food that can be accepted from retailers includes:

-  Sealed packaged foods
-  Cheeses
-  Fresh fruit
-  Fresh vegetables
-  Table sauces
-  Pastry
-  Unopened pasteurised milk and yogurt
-  Unopened fruit juices
-  Salads
-  Fresh eggs (traceable Lion stamped, with

Food that cannot be accepted from retailers includes:

- 🌈 Cooked food from homes or unregistered sources
- 🌈 Unpasteurised milk
- 🌈 Cooked rice
- 🌈 Raw milk cheeses
- 🌈 Pâtés
- 🌈 Bean sprouts
- 🌈 Products which could contain any of the above ingredients
- 🌈 Unlabelled multiple ingredient items
- 🌈 Alcohol and products that contain alcohol
- 🌈 Energy drinks

Volunteer roles

Fridges usually have one coordinator and up to a dozen volunteers to help with transporting food and/or keeping the fridge clean and tidy. The coordinator organises the rota of volunteers and keeps in touch with retailers. This person should complete Level 2 food hygiene certificate.

Roles

Whether you have a paid co-ordinator or not, you'll still want lots of volunteers to support the fridge. Volunteer roles could involve any number of the tasks but in particular:

- 🌈 Contacting business for food donations
- 🌈 Collection of food from donors and logging items into the fridge
- 🌈 Fridge monitoring and cleaning
- 🌈 Publicity and promotion, including social media
- 🌈 Organising promotional events
- 🌈 Fundraising and finances

The role of food collectors

Food collectors are responsible for collecting the food donated from the local businesses/suppliers which include supermarkets, independent shops and food wholesalers. This work usually requires

use of a vehicle. Once the donations are collected, the food should be weighed, logged in and checked before being put in the fridge.

Driving

If volunteers are transporting food using their own car, they should contact their insurance company to ensure they are covered to use it for volunteering and the coordinator, or paid staff member should hold a copy of this certificate (updated annually as insurance is renewed).




Food safety and hygiene

To comply with environmental health regulations, a Community Fridge must register as a food business with your local authority's environmental health officer.







Find out how to register a new or existing food business here:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/environment-and-food-safety/register-a-food-business/>

You are likely to have to share the following documentation with your Environmental Health Officer and your public liability insurer:

-  A short description of the project and Instructions on how it is used
-  Your Disclaimer
-  Your Risk Assessment

Food safety in the fridge

-  Community Fridges must not contain meat, fish, cooked rice or any foods past their 'Use By' date.
-  'Best Before' dates are listed on 'low risk' foods with a long shelf life (e.g. packets of biscuits, broccoli, eggs). These will make up the majority of the foods in the fridge.
-  'Use By' dates are on higher risk foods with a short shelf life (e.g. sandwiches from supermarkets or bakeries). These are thrown away by retailers at the end of the day and must be consumed that day. They should only be collected if your fridge is open in the evenings.
-  Separate food types to reduce the risk of cross contamination. Ready to eat foods at the top of the fridge. Unwashed salad, fruit and veg in the middle (or in crisper drawers).
-  Cooked foods must be labelled with allergen information and may only be donated by certified food businesses (not individuals). It is recommended that they have a food hygiene rating of 4 or above.
-  Only accept food items that are unopened.

Personal hygiene

When handling food that is going to be taken by others, the following hygiene procedures are important. Volunteers should:

- 🌈 Wear clean clothes.
- 🌈 Have hair tied back or up
- 🌈 Wash and dry hands before visiting the fridge.
- 🌈 Repeat hand washing after touching raw food /vegetables or fruit, after cleaning, or after handling food waste or general waste
- 🌈 Avoid touching their face or hair, and should not smoke, spit, sneeze, eat or chew gum whilst handling food
- 🌈 Not touch food if they have infected wounds, skin, infections, or sores
- 🌈 Not touch food if they have diarrhoea or have been vomiting (within last 48 hours).

Finances

The costs of running your fridge will vary from place to place. It will depend on the space and existing staffing, volunteer support and resources you already have in place.

Costs may include:

Buying a fridge - If you decide not to use a donated or second-hand fridge, there are various sources of finance available that you could apply for to help with your purchase. These include local trusts, individuals and companies.

Rental - Depending on what space you find, there may be costs associated with the place where you will house your Community Fridge. This might be refurbishment of a publicly accessible space, installation of a shed or lock-up, rent on a community space etc.

Staff costs - You may choose to apply for funding for paid staff such as a Project Co-ordinator role.

Travel expenses - Volunteers will probably need to claim mileage for the trips to collect donated food, so you will need to work out how they will get reimbursed. Will it just be from donations that members of the public make or will you fundraise separately for this?

Printing - There will be small costs associated with printing of day-to-day record sheets and forms as well as printing of publicity materials.

Electricity and maintenance - Factor in ongoing electricity costs and possibly installation of electrics/lighting/CCTV. You will also need to have some contingency to cover any maintenance work, including replacement of parts and repairing any damage that may occur to fridge or premises.

Insurance - See insurance information in section in 8 on Health and safety.

Top Tip

If you encourage a pay-as-you-feel donation scheme, it helps users to consider the value of the food they are taking and to donate what they can to ensure the project is sustainable. These donations can help to cover things like travel expenses, printing costs and electricity costs for your Community Fridge.

Publicity and promotion

Active promotion is needed to inform the community about the Community Fridge. A big Launch is a good idea to kick things off but be sure you have plenty of food lined up for the launch! All the planning and careful set up will have gone to waste if you don't get people coming to use the Community Fridge regularly. Strong social media engagement is essential these days so it's helpful if some of the volunteers have skills in this area.

Spread the word

- 🌈 Open days, flyers, school assemblies and word of mouth are all useful avenues to spread the word. To ensure this message gets across make sure you keep language:
- 🌈 Simple and clear.
- 🌈 Inclusive, conversational and friendly.
- 🌈 Positive, upbeat and light-hearted

To make sure that your fridge gets known about:

- 🌈 Promote the fridge via social media channels using the hashtag #CommunityFridge. You can make several of your volunteers administrators for your Facebook and Instagram accounts.
- 🌈 Circulate promotional materials locally, such as flyers and posters.
- 🌈 Put your fridge on the food sharing app OLIO to publicise food in the fridge.
- 🌈 Attend relevant networking events to bring new support to the fridge and help replicate the successes of the initiative in other areas.
- 🌈 Find outlets for occasions when there are large amounts of surplus which your fridge can't accommodate e.g. local groups that provide community meals.

Top Tip

Clear publicity and messaging will help to overcome any misconceptions about who the fridge is for. People may be disinclined to use the fridge if they feel as though it's only for people 'in need'. Instead it should feel like a place that is open to all, and a common sense way of stopping good food going to waste

- 🌈 Consider which of the following publicity and advertising methods are most appropriate to your event:
- 🌈 Make use of free software like Canva to easily create eye-catching publicity images for all social media and posters.
- 🌈 Design a logo that will make your Fridge memorable
- 🌈 Create a Facebook page
- 🌈 Make some short video clips on a smart phone to recruit volunteers and post it on as many social channels as you can
- 🌈 Send a press release to local media.
- 🌈 Make a banner to hang outside before your Fridge launches to attract passers-by.
- 🌈 Share success stories
- 🌈 Use photos and video to capture a flavour of people using the Fridge. Ask peoples permission, particularly if you are doing close-up photos rather than long distance shots. These photos can help you to publicise your Community Fridge on social media or in the local paper if you have a particularly interesting story to tell – such as how the Fridge has helped particularly large amounts of food that have been saved from going to waste.

Health and safety

This section will tell you what you need to know about - and the things you must do - to keep volunteers and members of the public safe.

- 🌈 **Insurance** Please see our insurance guidance document for more information. In some cases CAG Somerset can offer financial support for a projects first year insurance so get in touch if you are struggling to afford insurance.
- 🌈 **Risk assessments** It is essential to have an up-to-date risk assessment for your event, prepared in advance. For a risk assessment template, contact CAG Somerset. On the day your Community Fridge launches, be sure to revisit your pre-completed risk assessment updating it as appropriate. Make sure all volunteers have read a copy. It is a good idea to get volunteers to sign to say they have read and understood it.
- 🌈 **Health & Safety policy and procedure** As well as the risk assessment, you may want to have a set of clear guidelines for volunteers to be aware of how to keep themselves and others safe. Ideally you should print out the guidelines and have volunteers sign them to show they've read and understood them. It is possible you may run into some issues that you need to address. For example, what to do if someone comes to the Community Fridge intoxicated or causing trouble? It is important to have a policy in place and make sure coordinators know what to do if something like this occurs, to keep your volunteers and other members of the public safe.
- 🌈 **Disclaimer** CAG Somerset is not liable for any claims, costs or damage incurred by you and your stakeholders using any materials provided in this How to Guide. We cannot guarantee that the information provided and the processes we use will enable you to run a safe and legal Community Fridge. In law 'disclaimers' used in the Community Fridge have no legal weight and so will not act as a protection in case of legal problems. Therefore, it is vital that you get approval from your insurance provider and local Environmental Health Officer.

Monitoring and evaluation

Measuring your impact is an important part of making sure your Community Fridge is effective at reducing waste. Data collection is a fundamental part of the project. Measuring the impact of the fridge is important because it will:

- 🌍 Help you to assess the performance of the fridge and make ongoing improvements.
- 🌍 Help secure support locally.
- 🌍 Help you secure funding for the fridge and related activities.
- 🌍 Give you lots to celebrate, providing momentum for the team and things to shout about in the media.
- 🌍 Help you determine the future direction of your Community Fridge.

CAG Somerset provides impact monitoring and evaluation support to members. Join the network to benefit from this free support.

Reflect and evaluate

Periodically take time with your volunteers to reflect on what is going well and what could be improved. Share any anecdotal feedback with each other so it doesn't get lost.

Community Fridge set up checklist

1. Completed a risk assessment
2. Completed HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point)
3. Secured Public Liability Insurance
4. Registered the fridge with the Local Authority
5. Acquired space and fridge
6. Recruited volunteers
7. Staff and volunteer training including food hygiene training and measurement
8. Have got copies of signed training checklist for staff and volunteers
9. Secured food surplus donations
10. Read the Community Fridge Network crisis protocols
11. Installed the fridge (and possibly freezer)
12. Installed the necessary communications around the fridge (instructions for use, disclaimer, logging forms, comments book)
13. Decorated the space to make it feel warm and welcoming
14. Circulated promotional materials and advertised to local community
15. Notified local press, if relevant