

Organisations Offering Guidance and Support in setting up a Community Pantry or Community Fridge/Larder

1. Food Standards Agency <https://www.food.gov.uk/>

All community food projects, regardless of size, must register with The Food Standards Agency (FSA). The FSA ensures community food projects run legally, safely, and responsibly, protecting both recipients and volunteers from harm while maintaining public confidence. It sets and enforces the food safety standards that ensure that food being distributed is safe for consumption.

✓ a) Legal Compliance

Any organisation handling, storing, or redistributing food must comply with UK food law. The FSA provides the regulatory framework for registration, hygiene requirements, and enforcement. Community pantries and fridges often operate under charitable status, but they are still legally responsible for food safety.

✓ b) Hygiene & Safety Standards

The FSA sets out best practices for:

- Safe food storage temperatures (e.g., chilled food below 8°C)
- Cross-contamination prevention (e.g., separate storage for allergens)
- Date labelling rules (difference between use by and best before)

Following these standards helps prevent foodborne illnesses and protects vulnerable community members.

✓ c) Allergen Management

Community fridges and pantries often deal with donated food, which may lack full labelling. FSA guidance ensures operators provide clear allergen information to users, which is a legal requirement under UK law (e.g., Natasha's Law).

✓ d) Risk Assessment & Training

The FSA offers Safer Food, Better Business (SFBB) resources, templates, and guidance tailored for small organisations and community projects. They also provide food safety training materials that volunteers can use to understand hygiene basics, helping ensure volunteers know their responsibilities and minimise liability.

✓ e) Public Trust & Credibility

Operating under FSA guidelines builds trust with donors, partners, and the community. Many funders and local authorities require proof of FSA compliance before granting funds or approving projects.

✔ f) Registration with Local Authority

Any pantry, fridge or other organisation distributing food **must** register as a food business with the local council (free of charge), as advised by the FSA.

Local councils use FSA standards to inspect and rate hygiene compliance.

2. Church Action on Poverty / Your Local Pantry <https://www.yourlocalpantry.co.uk>

“Your Local Pantry” is a social franchise managed by Church Action on Poverty (CAP), offering comprehensive support to groups that want to set up a pantry. This includes:

- Pantry Handbook, templates, software, marketing materials
- One-to-one support from a Development Officer
- Training, shadowing opportunities, and networking events

Your Local Pantry operates with a franchise model (initial fee £2,500 + annual membership £900–£1,250) but delivers a fully supported setup process.

The network spans over 120 communities across the UK and is embedded in sectors like churches, schools, local authorities, and charities.

3. Feeding Britain <https://feedingbritain.org/>

Feeding Britain is a charity that works with partners across the UK to prevent hunger and food insecurity. It supports a national network of over 350 community pantries, affordable food clubs and social supermarkets plus advice services, school holiday programmes and more.

Offers include free membership, toolkits, webinars, working groups, and assistance sourcing food and funding. Feeding Britain also helps integrate wraparound services into pantry models.

4. Hubbub <https://www.hubbub.org.uk/community-fridge-network>

Since launch, the network has grown to over 700 community fridges across the UK.

In 2024 alone, they helped save 10,438 tonnes of food, equating to about 24 million meals, with over 787,000 visits to these fridges.

Offers for Community Fridge Setups:

✔ a) Comprehensive Guidance & Resource Packs

Hubbub provides free, practical guidance on how to establish and manage a community fridge. This includes a detailed “How-To” guide (or “Resource Pack”) covering everything from site selection, health and safety protocols, volunteer engagement, to marketing, budgeting, and impact measurement

✔ b) Design & Promotional Materials

Members of the network gain access to branded posters, signage, logos, recipe cards, and other promotional materials to help make the fridge welcoming and easy to use Better Health

✔ c) Practical Setup Advice

Guidance on physical and logistical considerations—such as choosing and locating fridges, shelving, scales, insurance, accessibility, lighting, safety, operating hours, and promoting your fridge.

✔ d) Peer Networking & Mentoring

By joining Hubbub's Community Fridge Network (CFN), you connect with a growing movement of UK-based groups running community fridges. This network fosters peer support, knowledge exchange, and collaboration

✔ e) Health, Safety & Legal Support

Templates and advice for food safety, public liability insurance, risk assessments, and local authority registration—helping ensure your fridge operates safely and legally.

✔ f) Funding & Fridge Discounts

Depending on timing, Hubbub offers grants and funding opportunities, such as the Eat It Up Fund, and access to discounted fridges and freezers for their members.

5. The Alliance for Dignified Food Support

A coalition of community food organisers, local food partnerships, academics, and activists committed to integrating dignity into food support provision. They have co-produced a set of Dignity Principles and Recommendations, a Dignity Charter and a toolkit is under development, useful to any organisation offering food support.

Case Studies and helpful resources

- **Pathway to Pantry toolkit** produced by Bury Food Partnership <https://bury.senses-dev.co.uk/a-path-to-pantry>
- **Building a Community Food Retail Project** guidance document. <https://foodcardiff.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Building-a-Community-Food-Retail-Project.pdf> Produced by Food Cardiff, together with Cardiff University, Cardiff Business School and the Economic and Social Research Council based on their experience in Wales to help others set up community-based retail projects with social values.
- **Cooperation Town's Food Cooperatives** starter pack https://cooperation.town/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Cooperation-Town-Pack_FinalDigital-1.pdf Information on setting up a food cooperative neighbourhood buying group.
- **Sustain's Food Coops Toolkit** <https://www.sustainweb.org/foodcoopstoolkit/> Information on different types of food coops and how to set these up.
- **The School for Social Entrepreneurs** <https://www.the-sse.org/> Resources and courses to empower and equip people with entrepreneurial skills in order to sustain a successful business as well as a social impact.
- **Scaling up place-based food initiatives** <https://environment.leeds.ac.uk/sustainability-research-institute/dir-record/research-projects/1888/scaling-up-place-based-food-initiatives> A research project, exploring how to scale up (i.e. increase the size) or out (i.e. replicate in more places) place-based, community-led food initiatives to increase their positive impact to communities, environment, and local economies across the UK.