



COMMUNITY FRIDGE

Network

Annual Impact Report 2024

Nourishing Communities, Reducing Waste



Registered charity no. 1158700



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Introduction

What is the Community Fridge Network?

A community fridge is a space that brings people together to share food, meet up, learn new skills and prevent fresh food from going to waste. They are open to all and anyone can share or take food, including surplus from supermarkets, local food businesses, producers, households and gardens. Fridges are run by community groups in shared spaces such as schools, community centres and shops. There are over 700 fridges across the UK (and counting).

The Community Fridge Network is coordinated by Hubbub. We make grant funding available to groups to cover setting up, running and establishing their community fridge. We provide training and support and host networking events for groups to share knowledge and grow their impact further. We monitor impact and work with groups to test new ideas in community settings.

2024

After a few years of rapid expansion, 2024 was about deepening the impact of the Community Fridge Network. Whilst we continued to help new fridges open where they were needed, we focused on supporting existing groups to become more established in their communities, more self-sufficient, and more impactful. We listened to groups telling us what they really needed to give their project longevity, anything from air conditioning to cardboard bailers and we provided funding and advice to make this happen. We continue to establish Hubbub as a trusted source of expertise and support for community groups all across the UK.

- ✓ **Partnership and collaboration:** We worked closely with partners like Co-op and Starbucks, alongside collaborations with Brewgooder, and The Modern Milkman.
- ✓ **Investment in our resources:** We enhanced our free guidance and improved our map to make it easier for fridges to find information and for people to find fridges.
- ✓ **Training and development:** We held webinars and workshops on important topics like food safety, volunteer management, and fundraising. These have helped build skills and confidence in running a successful fridge.
- ✓ **Networking:** We hosted virtual and in-person networking events to connect groups regionally and encourage them to share resources and advice.

Our reflections

“It’s been another impactful year for the Community Fridge Network, with more groups accessing funding, more visitors to fridges and more food shared. Hubbub is proud to coordinate the Community Fridge Network and be part of this community-led movement to reduce food waste.

This year community fridges received funding and support to deepen their impact and thousands of people took part in food hub activities like cooking classes, workshops and community cafés. This is all possible thanks to our partners.

Looking ahead to 2025 and beyond, we want to continue to partner with organisations looking to reduce food waste, promote healthy sustainable diets, drive social innovation and connect with communities.”

Ellen Rutherford, Head of Food, Hubbub

What did we do in 2024?

January

Marked one year since our second food hubs cohort started. We reported that in 2023 **21,352 people joined in** with community cafes and meals. Some organisations saw **over 500 participants in one month** through community meals.

Cooking classes funded by Co-op had **over 5,100 participants** and growing and gardening activities saw **1,400 participants**.

February

Hosted **11 Food Hubbles** to connect community fridges from all across the UK.

March

Over 100 groups received Investment Funding for everything from cardboard bailers to volunteer coordinators to help groups deepen their impact.

April

Brewgooder beer hit the Co-op shelves with their new beer FILLA, promoting the CFN and supporting 10 fridge groups.

May

June

We hosted **regular drop-in sessions** to connect community fridge groups.

July

50 Fridges received £9k each in Food Hub grants from Starbucks.

August

We hosted an **in-person networking event in Northern Ireland** connecting fridges, Local Authorities and community groups.

September

We launched **three different funding rounds** for new fridges, food hubs and for existing fridges with **over £900k available** to fridge groups in total.

October

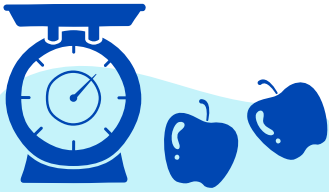
Groups held **211 pumpkin cooking events** as part of Hubbub's Eat Your Pumpkin campaign, **hosting nearly 10,000 people**.

November

Our new map went live, making it easy for people to find all the details they need to find their local fridge.

December

Our impact in 2024



Collectively, the network saved over **10,438 tonnes** of food from going to waste, the equivalent of **24 million** meals



787,251 individuals visited their local fridge, totalling **3,149,003** visits to the network

100 new food hubs have been funded



20 new fridges funded, bringing our total to over **700** nationwide

Saved a total **4,173** tonnes of CO₂



Over **£1 million** in grants given to **270** groups

A note on our data

Hubbub sends a regular data questionnaire to all groups in the network to understand their site activities. We ask for the average amount of food they've shared that month and the number of visitors they've had to the fridge. Unfunded fridges report data voluntarily, while funded fridges have an agreement to report food and visitor data. We calculate the estimated impact of the network once a year, based on the survey data we receive.

We calculate 'average food shared' by the average tonnage reported and multiply this by the number of fridges open that month. This helps us estimate monthly and annual food distribution. We use 420g as a typical meal size to estimate meals shared. The same methodology is applied to visitors, averaging reported figures and multiplying by the number of fridges open in that period. CO₂ is calculated in line with WRAP, 2020

Ongoing support

In 2024 we implemented a range of initiatives to enhance support for the Community Fridge Network, ensuring fridges are well-connected, well-resourced, and thriving.



Webinars

Webinars received excellent feedback:

▶ Volunteer Management with Volunteer Now

“Excellent reminders on how to recruit, retain and thank volunteers!”

▶ Bid-writing with NCVO

“One of the best courses I have been on - clear, engaging and informative. I have come away feeling excited about doing funding applications!”

▶ Grant applications webinar with Hubbub

“We have already seen the benefit of this activity in the improved quality of grant applications.”

In-person networking

Event hosted in Belfast, Northern Ireland

This event had attendees from 21 different community fridge groups across Northern Ireland. It featured Ed Powell from Co-op and Cllr Paul Doherty speaking about the work they have been doing to support the network.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive:

“It was a great opportunity to meet other community fridges and invite them to our organisation to build future, positive relationships.”

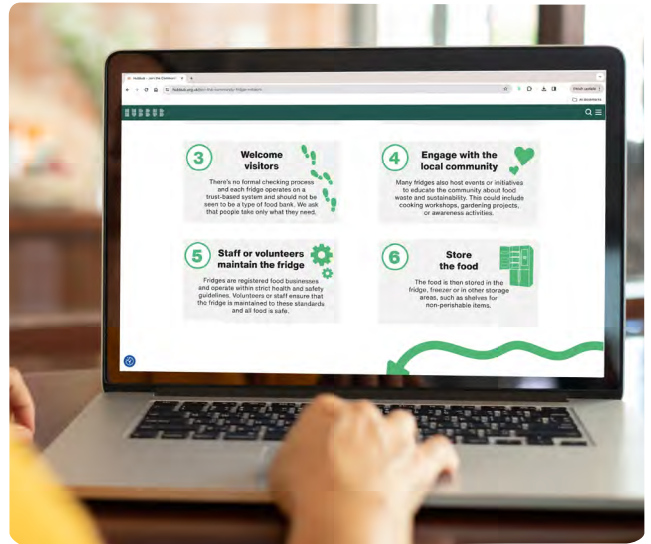
“It was helpful as it allowed everyone to share ideas and gain new ones while also making connections to other fridges in the country. It was helpful to know that everyone is experiencing the same problems and we can brainstorm ideas of how to combat the issues we are facing.”



Drop-in sessions

We hosted drop-in sessions to give an informal space for all community fridges to connect, ask questions, and seek advice from both the Hubbub team and fellow fridge groups.

12 sessions took place between March and August 2024 with 40 community fridge co-ordinators joining in.



New digital hub and map

As the Community Fridge Network has grown, we have continually adapted and improved the support behind it. The **CFN digital hub** is a one-stop online space where fridge groups can find updates, case studies, and insights from across the network, all in one place.

This year, we've **made it even simpler for groups to manage their fridge details** by linking the hub with the **brand-new CFN map**. Now, fridge groups can easily update information like location, opening times, and volunteer opportunities, making it easier for communities to find and use their local fridge. A simple change, but one that keeps fridges visible, accessible, and **better connected** to the people who visit them.

Curious to see it in action? Check out the new map and find a fridge near you:

communityfridgemap.org.uk

“We have found the training, promotional material and templates as well as being matched with a superstar fridge invaluable. This has made the set-up process a lot less daunting and has saved us a lot of time went setting up the fridge. I would highly recommend Hubbub to any organisation looking to open a community fridge.”

Dorothy Parkes Centre



Investment fund

Thanks to support from the Coop, in 2024 we funded 200 community groups with flexible amounts to support them to not just survive but thrive! We were able to award grants up to £7,000 covering projects across a whole spectrum.

Groups are already reporting how this funding has improved their resilience and allowed them to develop links in their community.

- 77% of groups collaborated with other organisations** in their area - these were predominantly other groups working in the food space and support initiatives.
- 75% of groups felt that their projects were more self-sufficient** thanks to the funding and **90% of groups agreed that the funding had made them better at dealing with challenges.**
- 96% of groups said they were on track to deliver** what they set out to deliver.
- 96% of groups felt like this funding had supported them with their long-term goals.**
- 97% of groups said they feel able to withstand shocks** that might occur, vs **78% who reported feeling this prior to funding.**
- Groups estimated that they had **impacted 43,500 people** collectively through projects supported by the Investment Fund.

“With your generous funding, we have made significant improvements that have greatly enhanced our operations and community impact. The creation of new toilet facilities has been a game changer, allowing us to keep our fridge open for extended hours, seven days a week. This improvement means that our services are now available to the community much more consistently and reliably.”

Waddeston Hall, Aylesbury

The funding has been allocated to a variety of different projects from all across the UK:



Food hubs

Thanks to support from Starbucks UK, the Community Food Hub Fund has run for another successful year and brought a further 100 food hub projects to life.

Community fridges have always been so much more than a fridge. The Food Hub Fund enables them to evolve into social spaces where visitors come to learn more about food, sustainable eating, growing your own and eating on a budget. These activities provide an opportunity to connect with others, with community and with good food.

What is a food hub?

Food hubs are community fridges where people take part in activities that connect them with others, with their community and with good food. Grant funding makes this possible.



“I have MS and I didn’t realise that using a slow cooker means that I can get the ingredients ready in the morning when I am at my best and then in the afternoon I have a hot meal.”

Food hub participant

“I used to come to the community meal and bring my knitting with me. People watched me and were interested in learning and the co-ordinator got me some extra wool and needles so that I could show others. We are now making a community quilt together, one square at a time.”

Food hub participant



Cooking, growing and community meals remain the most popular, but after introducing a new ‘sharing’ category this year, groups have also been experimenting with activities such as repair cafes, library of things, mending and sewing clubs.

✔ Since January 2024, **13,785 people** have taken part in food hub activities.

✔ **1,703 people** reported that the activities have had a **transformative effect on their lives**. This is where a coordinator has identified changes in volunteer or participant’s long-term behaviour or distinct new skills they’ve acquired as a result of being involved in food hub activities. For example, being willing and able to cook vegetarian recipes at home, gaining work experience from working in a community café, or growing food at home after picking up tips in the community garden.

Set-up grant fund

Thanks to support from Co-op, we ran another successful set-up grant fund for new community fridges focusing on locations without existing fridges. Out of 70 strong applications we selected 20 new community groups, who each received £4,500 to establish a community fridge in their community.

Of the newly selected groups:

12 are in areas with no existing community fridges:

📍 Belford, Eigg, Brigg, Fermanagh, Newton Poppleford, Pentrecagal, Derby, St Albans, Tonypany, Mansfield, Newtownabbey and North Cornelly

Five are in cities with existing fridges, but none in close proximity:

📍 Brighton, Smethwick, Dundee, Leicester, Plymouth

Three are in areas with just one fridge but are otherwise remote:

📍 Dinbigh, Flint, Great Yarmouth

“We are really grateful to have received a grant to support our Community Share Shed and will allow us to purchase a fridge. We receive great donations currently through Fare Share and our Local Co-op stores. Our community is rural and access to supermarkets and affordable food is limited for some, with local amenities and transport limited also. Our share shed and soon our fridge, will allow our clients and members of our communities the opportunity to collect fruit, vegetables, ingredients and cupboard items to allow those in need to benefit from nutritious meals at home.”

Bell View, Belford

“A community fridge is something we have always wanted to have in our community centre. With funding, support and guidance from Hubbub, this dream has now become a reality. We opened our fridge in January 2025 and in just one month we have redistributed 183.5kg of surplus food. Reducing food waste and tackling food insecurity within our local community and surrounding areas. We are open two days a week and serve 50 people each week. We are now looking to extend this offer further with additional opening hours.”

Dorothy Parkes Centre



New community fridges funded in 2024

Working in partnership

A huge thank you to our 2024 partners

The Community Fridge Network (CFN) wouldn't be what it is today without the backing of brilliant partners who've helped fund, promote, and strengthen the initiative. Their support has helped fridges open and thrive, sparked innovative projects, and raised awareness of the power of food sharing in communities across the UK.

Co-op x CFN



Since 2021, Co-op has been at the heart of the CFN's expansion, funding **415 community fridges** and **40 food hubs**. Their investment has gone further through the **CFN Investment Fund**, helping **300 groups grow their impact** between 2023 and 2025 through funding projects that enable fridges to offer skills training, new initiatives, and deeper community engagement. They have also backed one-off investments, testing new ideas to see how fridges can continue to evolve.

Beyond funding, **Co-op's in-store promotions, the UK's first live Christmas ad featuring a community fridge, and their network of Member Pioneers** have helped spread the word, meaning more communities can join the initiative.



“Reducing food waste and supporting access to food in communities continue to be key priorities for Co-op. Working with the Community Fridge Network enables us to do both in a long-lasting and sustainable way. We are proud to have helped double the network, bringing people together to support fair access to food for all members of the community and providing places to learn new skills and address local issues. We know that now community fridges have become a national movement, the network will continue to achieve fantastic outcomes into the future.”

David Luckin, Head of Community Partnerships, Funding and Impact at Co-op

STARBUCKS®

Starbucks x CFN

Since 2023, Starbucks has **donated £1.6m** to help fund the creation of **200 community food hubs** in the UK, allowing fridges expand their role beyond redistribution. Their support has helped groups introduce **cooking classes, food-growing projects, and sharing libraries**, ensuring fridges continue to be a valuable community resource.



Brewgooder

Brewgooder

Brewgooder partnered with the CFN to support **10 community fridges** through their Filla beer collaboration with **Camden Town Brewery**. This initiative not only provided direct funding but also spread awareness of the CFN's work through Co-op stores, getting more people talking about food waste and community action.



“Teaming up with Hubbub has shown the incredible power of coming together to make a real difference. Through the Brewgooder Foundation, we are proud to support Hubbub’s community fridge network across the UK helping to cut food waste and bring communities closer.”

Alan Mahon CEO of Brewgooder

The Modern Milkman

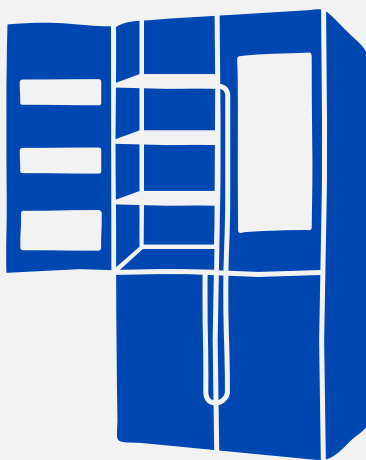


This year, we partnered with The Modern Milkman, a sustainable grocery delivery service, to give their customers a simple way to support community fridges. Through a referral scheme and 'virtual pint' donations, **shoppers could contribute to the network** while doing their weekly shop—showing how small, everyday actions can add up to something bigger.

Want to be part of something bigger?

The Community Fridge Network has flourished thanks to partners who see the power of food to bring people together. Whether it's funding community fridges, supporting innovation, or spreading the word, there are countless ways to get involved.

Is your organisation looking to drive real impact—helping communities to share food, reduce waste, innovate and connect?



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