



# A Guide to Setting up a Community Meal

*A quick look at reasons, requirements and risks*

*Presentation for Good Food Lewisham Network, March 2024*

[www.lewishamlocal.com/foodcycle-lewisham](http://www.lewishamlocal.com/foodcycle-lewisham)





## Why create a community meal?

Community meals are shared meals, giving people a chance to be around others in a social setting. Research shows that social isolation and loneliness are viewed as contributing to poorer general health and are closely linked to food insecurity.

Food is often the first place where people will make savings when finances are reduced. Being food secure extends to people's ability to participate in activities associated with food, such as their ability to have family or friends over for food and drink or participate in religious rituals.

Social exclusion through lack of access to food can be addressed through the community meal.

*69% of FoodCycle Lewisham guests say they feel less lonely.*

*73% of guests say that they can save more money for bills by eating the community meal.*





## Increasing access to affordable, nutritious meals

One in four households in Lewisham is affected by food and fuel poverty, and a high number of the population experiences diet-related ill health.

Community meals enable people to access cooked meals at the point of contact, addressing high living costs. Cooking to scale reduces energy use and food waste.

They also increase food literacy by introducing guests to ingredients and food preparations that they may not have experienced before.

*65% of FoodCycle Lewisham guests say they eat more fruits and vegetables.*

*54% of our guests say that have tried food that they haven't eaten before.*





## Stakeholders

*Guests* – Who is your target audience? Are you aiming for specific groups of people? Do you have eligibility criteria?

*Venue operator* – Do you have access to a kitchen and space to seat guests? Does the venue have equipment, or do you need to provide your own? Will the venue be part of your core costs?

*Funders and donors* – Do you need funding? Have you created a budget? Will you access donated food or does your model include set menus in need of funding?

*The Environmental Health Office* – They will check the premises and your processes to keep the guests safe. Food Safety Level 2.

*Volunteers* – Will specific roles be paid, or do you need a supply of volunteers? Can you access volunteers, or do you need to advertise?

*Training platforms* – Will help to train your staff/volunteers in food safety, conflict management, fire safety, and safeguarding?

*Partnerships* – Will you work with other organisations such as food providers, advice services, places of worship?





# Resources















- For your project to function you will need:
  - A venue that contains a kitchen, a dining hall, and storage facilities.
  - Cooking equipment, dining equipment, and storage space.
  - Cleaning materials, aprons, hairnets, disposable gloves, a first aid kit, food safety and allergen procedure records.
  - To contact the Environmental Health Office. They can provide methods of documentation.
  - A team of volunteers/staff for food collection/purchasing, cooking/washing up, hosting/serving, including a project lead.
  - Access to training platforms, Food Safety Level 2 for project coordinators and a mini-induction process for volunteers.
  - Food providers.
  - Communication channels for volunteers/staff and guests.
  - Project agreements between volunteers/staff and guests, and between partnerships.
  - Risk assessment and kitchen handbook – to outline risks, how to mitigate risks and document that all required kitchen processes are being followed.

For information only - do not display to guests

Dish Name BANANA BREAD + CUSTARD + ORANGES

**Starter // Main // Dessert // Side // Bakery**

Please circle which course

 Celery <input type="checkbox"/>	 Cereals containing gluten** <input type="checkbox"/>	 Crustaceans <input type="checkbox"/>	 Eggs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	 Fish <input type="checkbox"/>
 Lupin <input type="checkbox"/>	 Milk <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	 Molluscs <input type="checkbox"/>	 Mustard <input type="checkbox"/>	 Nuts* <input type="checkbox"/>
 Peanuts <input type="checkbox"/>	 Sesame seeds <input type="checkbox"/>	 Soya <input type="checkbox"/>	 Sulphur dioxide <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>TICK THE ALLERGENS WHICH ARE IN THE DISH</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Ingredients

BANANAS  
ORANGES  
CUSTARD  
PLAIN FLOUR  
BAKING POWDER  
CINNAMON  
SUNFLOWER OIL  
BROWN SUGAR  
EGGS

Date: 2/3/24

Project Leader: Mel Indrapone

## Roles and responsibilities

Project coordinators are responsible for delivery, ensuring that the project has all it needs to function.

Training platforms, whether professional bodies or in-house are responsible for ensuring all volunteers/staff are legally compliant.

Staff/volunteers are responsible for safe practice, following procedures, and completion of assigned tasks.

The venue is responsible for ensuring risk assessment of the premises and provision of a safe and clean environment.

Partners are responsible for the delivery of agreed-upon objectives.



## Risks and Mitigations

The venue is no longer available – can the project be postponed until an alternative solution is found?

The venue does not appear to provide a safe environment – issues can be reported to the venue manager, or inspections can be made by Environmental Health Officers to ensure safety. The meal can be cancelled.

There are not enough volunteers or staff – advertising can be done well in advance through various channels, or a smaller meal can be provided by a limited team. Prompts can be done in advance to remind staff/volunteers of the impending date and the importance of their role.

Food suppliers may not have enough food to meet demand, demand outstrips supply – create a budget for emergency food provision. Seek provision early and confirm with the suppliers their commitment to provision.

People are not aware of the meal – allow for plenty of advertising in advance of the meal. However, treat the first meal as a dry run, keep plenty of takeaway containers available, and have an option for delivery to local residents.



## Outcomes and monitoring

What would you like to achieve and how do you want to monitor the project? Collect data, case studies and feedback.

## Funding and Budgets

Use the data to help with the funding as well as your budgets. Monitor your budgets throughout the year to track changes.

## Advertising the meal

Use traditional media (leaflets, posters), social media, and platforms such as Lewisham Local.

*Andrew (right) is a guest who has become a volunteer with the right support – an unexpected outcome.*





# Impact

17) we have any other comments

I've been alone all my life  
grew up I care at 13 was on  
streets of westend did  
26 years on street and  
I find I don't fit in  
47 now and have no one  
when I come here I  
feel so welcome and  
accepted this place is so  
Awesome Thankyou don't  
change anything.

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Collecting data such as numbers of guests, how much food is saved, case studies and feedback can help to demonstrate impact as well as be a form of encouragement to those involved.

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An annual survey gives important results: the FoodCycle Lewisham project saved **5420** kgs of food from going to waste and the project served **3440** meals in 2023.

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Feedback from the guests included comments such as 'I really thank God for FoodCycle, and also thank you FoodCycle for your kindness, and support, and most importantly for feeding me.'

