



Hale Community and Youth Centre

2026/27 Food Hygiene Policy

Keeping our community safe through good food handling and hygiene practice

1. Purpose of this Policy

Hale Community and Youth Centre is committed to ensuring that all food handled, stored, redistributed or consumed on our premises is safe and managed in accordance with Food Standards Agency (FSA) guidance and recognised best practice.

This policy applies to everyone involved in the Community Fridge and Community, food donations, food storage and food redistribution activities. Our aim is to protect the health of our community, prevent contamination, and ensure that all food is managed responsibly and safely.

2. Our Commitment

We will maintain high standards of food hygiene across all areas of our food projects. This includes ensuring that food is handled safely, stored at appropriate temperatures, and checked regularly for quality and suitability. We will provide staff and volunteers with the training and guidance they need to carry out their roles confidently, and we will act promptly if any food safety concerns arise.

Hale Community and Youth Centre will maintain clear procedures, accurate records where required, and a clean, safe environment for all food-related activities.

3. Responsibilities

The Centre Manager is responsible for overseeing the safe operation of the Fridge and Cupboard, ensuring staff and volunteers are trained, maintaining temperature logs and cleaning schedules, and responding to any food safety concerns or equipment issues. Staff and volunteers are responsible for following this policy, handling food safely, checking dates and packaging, maintaining cleanliness, recording temperature checks, and reporting concerns immediately.

Donors and partner organisations are expected to provide food that is safe, in good condition and within date, and to follow any donation guidelines issued by Hale Community and Youth Centre.

4. Accepting Food Donations

We accept sealed, in-date packaged foods, fresh produce in good condition, and surplus food from approved partners. Frozen food is only accepted from registered food businesses.

We do not accept food past its *use by* date, unlabelled or home-cooked food, damaged or leaking packaging, or high-risk foods requiring temperature control unless they come from an approved partner. Staff and volunteers must visually check all donations before placing them in the Fridge or Cupboard to ensure they are safe and suitable for redistribution.

5. Food Storage and Temperature Control

All fridges must be kept between 0–5°C and freezers at –18°C or below. Temperatures must be checked twice daily and recorded, and any issues must be reported immediately. Stock should be rotated using a First In, First Out (FIFO) approach to ensure older items are used first. Staff and volunteers should remove any items past their *use by* date and check *best before* dates and the general condition of food. Where necessary, staff and volunteers may add labels such as the date received, date frozen or allergen information if provided by the donor.

6. Food Handling and Hygiene

Everyone involved in handling food must follow good hygiene practices. This includes washing hands before handling food, using gloves where appropriate, keeping surfaces clean and sanitised, avoiding cross-contamination, and ensuring that utensils and equipment are clean.

Staff and volunteers must not handle food if they are unwell. Food should not be opened, repackaged or prepared on site unless part of an approved activity with appropriate controls in place.

7. Cleaning and Maintenance

Hale Community and Youth Centre will maintain a regular cleaning schedule for the Fridge and Cupboard, ensuring that shelves, handles, containers and surrounding areas are kept clean and sanitised. Spillages must be cleaned immediately, and waste must be disposed of promptly and appropriately. Equipment should be checked regularly to ensure it is functioning correctly, and any faults must be reported to the Centre Manager without delay.

8. Allergen Management

Because food is donated, we cannot guarantee that items are allergen-free. Clear signage will inform users that food may contain allergens and that they should check labels carefully. Staff and volunteers must not guess or add allergen information unless it is provided by the donor. If allergen information is missing or unclear, the item should be treated as containing potential allergens.

9. Waste Management

Food must be disposed of if it is past its *use by* date, shows signs of spoilage, has been stored at unsafe temperatures, or has damaged or leaking packaging. Waste should be bagged securely and placed in the designated bins.

Staff and volunteers should record any significant disposal issues or patterns so that the Centre Manager can monitor trends and adjust processes if needed.

10. Incident Reporting

Any concerns about food safety - including suspected contamination, temperature failures, unsafe donations, equipment faults or illness linked to food - must be reported to the Centre Manager immediately. The Centre Manager will take appropriate action, which may include disposing of food, contacting environmental health, or temporarily closing the Fridge or Cupboard until the issue is resolved.

11. Power Failure or Equipment Breakdown

If the fridge or freezer loses power, staff and volunteers should keep the doors closed, record the time of the failure, and notify the Centre Manager immediately. High-risk foods must be disposed of if temperatures rise above safe levels or if the duration of the power loss cannot be confirmed. The Centre Manager will assess whether food can be safely retained or must be discarded.

12. Training

All staff and volunteers involved in food handling will receive basic food hygiene training, allergen awareness guidance, and instruction on temperature checks and donation procedures. Training will be refreshed annually or whenever procedures change. No volunteer should handle food until they have completed the required training.

13. Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, environmental health guidance or operational needs.