

# Pulp Friction, Bestwood, Nottingham, England



## Description

**Pulp Friction** is a Community Interest Company (CIC) in Bestwood, Nottingham, an area with a young population and high family food support needs. Pulp Friction supports people with learning disabilities and/or autism living in the area to develop skills and gain confidence. Pulp Friction started in 2009 following the success of a smoothie bike trial, and a grant from the **Youth Opportunities Fund**. Pulp Friction has since expanded, now offering a day service for over 38 members, but food remains central to achieving the organisation's mission with a range of food related activities and programmes available.

Members take part in gardening and cooking activities and are supported to gain hospitality skills and a food hygiene qualification that they can put into practice through community catering which utilises surplus food. Catering includes a lunch club at a local church for 40 people each week, a travelling kitchen for festivals and **events**, a community café open to everyone at the Pulp Friction community centre, and breakfast and lunch catering at the local **police and firefighter headquarters**, with over 1,300 people being fed every day. Pulp Friction also manages a community garden, and a **"dig-in"** allotment, a composting scheme, and a wormery.

“ Food brings everyone together and is a great leveller. When people from the community see members of Pulp Friction preparing, cooking, and serving food, it helps them to see that everyone has something to contribute.”

– CEO of Pulp Friction

## Activities

Community composting space and wormery

Smoothie and ice cream bike at events and festivals

Community cafe

Food literacy and cooking skills development

Community meal in collaboration with the local church

Health and wellbeing support

Catering activities at local businesses

## Spotlight

By offering a range of cooking, gardening and creativity programmes, the members of Pulp Friction, all of whom have learning disabilities and/or autism, are supported to gain the skills needed to volunteer and/or work in hospitality and related fields, helping to break down barriers, reduce stigma and promote social cohesion. Pulp Friction utilises surplus food, donated by FareShare and local retailers, to produce all meals served in the community cafe, at events, and at the police and firefighter headquarters, helping to reduce food waste and ensure meals are affordable. To promote biodiversity and contribute to environmental ambitions, Pulp Friction also looks after a community garden, growing a range of produce that is used in meals and/or shared with the local community. Members took part in the Chelsea Flower Show 2024 to showcase their horticulture and food growing skills.

# Impacts



## Food security and economy

- Support people to access affordable, nutritious food by running community cafes and providing local catering services
- Develop catering partnerships with local businesses to generate revenue and support community cohesion
- Employ 12 members of staff, some of whom are also members of Pulp Friction



## Sustainability and resilience

- Utilise food surplus to prepare meals for the community café, catering events, and community lunches
- Run a community garden, growing fresh fruit, vegetables, and other edible plants
- Developed a composting programme and wormery to reduce food from entering landfill



## Health and wellbeing

- Run weekly gardening sessions from the community garden to support people to develop confidence and reduce isolation
- Offer cooking sessions to promote cooking skills and improve health and wellbeing literacy
- Over 30 volunteers are involved in preparing meals and organising events



## Access and demand for healthy, local food

- Utilise surplus food to cook and prepare meals, ensuring costs are kept to a minimum
- Share surplus food with the community after events and meals

# Takeaways



Members of Pulp Friction are provided with opportunities to train and work in hospitality, helping them to feel empowered, whilst also reducing unemployment and enhancing community connection.



Catering for events, and organisations such as the police and fire brigade, generates regular and sustainable revenue, helping Pulp Friction to plan, whilst also providing members with employment and skill development opportunities.



By offering a stable and supportive environment and being aware of abilities and transferable skills, Pulp Friction helps everyone to feel valued, promoting self-confidence and community development.

This research was conducted by the [University of Leeds](#) in collaboration with the [Consumer Data Research Centre](#), the [Food Foundation](#) and participating Food Hubs, funded by the Research England Policy Support Fund and supported by [Policy@Leeds](#). For more information visit the [project page](#), [Global Food and Environment Institute](#) or contact [Dr Effie Papargyropoulou](#) at [E.Papargyropoulou@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:E.Papargyropoulou@leeds.ac.uk).