

Lambeth GP Food Co-op Members Guide

Lambeth GP Food Co-op is a trading name of Lambeth GP Food Network Limited, which is a Community Benefit Society, registration number 32149R.

It has been created so people can work together to grow food which will be sold to NHS hospitals. It makes good use of space in GP surgeries across Lambeth for food production. It provides opportunities for people to get together, enjoy, learn and share gardening skills.

Its formal objects include:

- Engaging patients in productive activity focusing on food production, preparation and distribution, to public sector NHS partners.
- Establishing a model of social co-production for the benefit of Lambeth patients, service users and residents
- Developing, supporting and encouraging cooperative processes, relationships and activities congruent with general practice and primary care
- Operating according to the Co-operative Values and Principles (see below)
- Applying 6 co-production principles in its work (see below)

What does membership mean?

You can

- Have a say in how the Co-op functions
- Stand for election to the Board of Directors and have a say in the management of the Co-op
- Vote in elections for the Board and choose who manages the Co-op
- Receive reports from the Directors about the performance of the Co-op
- Vote on Secondary Rules or Policies to guide the Directors and Members

You are expected to

- Attend General Meetings (A meeting to which all members are invited)
- Participate in the activities of the Co-op in some way
- Help us by sharing your skills and experience
- Respect the confidential nature of the Co-op's business
- Abide by the Registered Rules (you can see a full copy if you like)
- Ensure the Co-op has your up to date name and address, so we can keep in touch

How do I become a member?

Any person or organisation who supports the objects of Lambeth GP Food Co-op and is willing to take on the responsibilities of membership can complete an application form.

All applications are considered by the Board of Directors.

Every member must buy a £1 share.

What does the share mean?

The £1 share in Lambeth GP Food Co-op is known as a “nominal” share and is not the same as a share in a company on the stock market:

- The value of the share does not change
- The share cannot be sold or transferred to anyone else
- If a member leaves or the Co-op is wound up, the value of the share is not refunded
- The share is a mechanism that entitles every member to one vote so it is democratically controlled by its members for the good of the community
- There is no right to a dividend – the Co-op does not share profits with members but reinvests them and spends them on meeting its objects
- If the Co-op is wound up and owes money you cannot be pursued for its debts

The Board of Directors

- The Board manage the business of the Co-op on behalf of the Members. They can delegate to sub-committees of Members who agree to take on the responsibility.
- One third of the Board stand down each year and are replaced by election from the Members. This ensures that there is continuity on the Board but allows new Members to stand for a place. Retiring Board members can stand for re-election.
- 2 independent Directors can be co-opted. This can be useful if particular skills or expertise are required. They do not need to be Members.
- Board meetings can only take place if 50% of Directors are taking part (or 3 if there are less than 6 Directors in total).

Special resolutions: Any proposal to wind up the Co-op, to amend the Rules or to expel a Member requires at least 75% of the votes at a General Meeting. This is why attendance at General Meetings is important – it puts you as Members in a position to protect the Co-op people or organisations with an ulterior motive.

Asset Lock: The assets and money of the Co-op cannot be passed on to any individual in the event that the organisation is wound up. They would have to be passed to another organisation with similar aims and a similar protection against “asset stripping”. This protects the reserves that members build up so they are used to benefit the community.

Co-operative Principles

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Co-operation among Co-operatives
7. Concern for Community

Co-production principles

1. Recognising people as assets
2. Building on people’s capabilities
3. Promoting mutuality and reciprocity
4. Developing peer support networks
5. Breaking down barriers between professionals and users
6. Facilitating rather than delivering