

Community Food Hub, Foleshill, Coventry

May 2022

Evaluation Report

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A community cooked meal at Foleshill Community Centre



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Acknowledgements

The research team would like to thank all those who facilitated and participated in the research. In particular, we would like to extend our deep gratitude to the project staff and volunteers at Foleshill Community Centre, the members of Coventry Social Supermarket, and local community partners for generously sharing with us their time, experiences and insights over a period of two years! A special thanks to the Operations Manager of Foleshill Community Centre, Helen Needham, for facilitating and actively engaging with the evaluation exercise. Thanks also to Elliot Gowling, Spencer Smith, and Faye Spicer from the Foleshill Community Centre team for their additional help with extracting relevant data from the project records. We are grateful for the overall support extended by Feeding Coventry. We would also like to thank Mariana Simon for her help with translation and transcription, and Claire Lyons for her support. Credit for all the photos used in this report goes to the Foleshill Community Centre team, Adele M. Reed, Trustees of Feeding Coventry, and the research team. We would like to acknowledge Philip Riley at pipdesign.uk for the design and presentation of this report.

We also extend our sincere thanks to Benjamin Cook [@ the 1201 project & antitype films] for producing a short documentary about Foleshill Community Centre accompanying this report. Many thanks also to the Interim CEO of Foleshill Community Centre, Ellie House, for her support with the making of the film and her overall facilitation of the evaluation process.

About this report

Commissioned by Feeding Britain, this report presents the findings of an evaluation of the Community Food Hub (CFH) project in Foleshill, Coventry. An earlier interim evaluation was conducted covering the launch of the Foleshill Social Supermarket in March 2020 to the end of December 2020 (referred to as Year 1), resulting in an Interim Report. The report presented here focuses on data collected over Year 2 (January – December 2021) but summarises evaluation findings and recommendations across the two years.

This report and the interim evaluation report as well as a short video on the project are available online:

[Community Food Hub Project in Foleshill, Coventry \(Evaluation\)](#)

We hope that the report will be relevant to Feeding Britain and many other food alliances, funders, policymakers, community groups and organisations, and generally to all those interested in community food hubs or social supermarkets. Although it presents key learnings from the specific context of the CFH in Coventry, the report provides more broadly applicable insights into the tremendous potential as well as the huge challenges that community-led projects or initiatives like the Foleshill CFH face in the wider context of addressing food insecurity in the UK.

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Citation

Saxena, L.P., Fried, J., Owen, L. and Kneafsey, M. (2022) *Evaluation of the Community Food Hub, Foleshill, Coventry*. Final Report. Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience: Coventry University.

ISBN: 978-1-84600-110-9

e-ISBN: 978-1-84600-109-3

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Agroecology, Water
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List of Acronyms

CARAG	Coventry Asylum and Refugee Action Group
CAWR	Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience at Coventry University, Coventry
CFH	Community Food Hub
CIAS	Coventry Independent Advice Service
CSS	Coventry Social Supermarket
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FCC	Foleshill Community Centre
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HAF	Holiday Activities and Food
ReCC	Reclaiming the Coventry Canal

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the outcomes from the Community Food Hub (CFH) project in Foleshill, Coventry. The CFH project started operating in March 2020 as a pilot project delivered by Feeding Coventry in partnership with Feeding Britain and funded by The National Lottery Community Fund. An interim evaluation was conducted earlier covering the 'first year' of the project (March 2020-December 2020) while this report focuses on the second year of the project (January – December 2021) and also summarises the evaluation findings over the whole two-year evaluation period.

The aim of the CFH model is to provide food support to people experiencing food insecurity while – importantly – also enabling them to move beyond immediate food crises in ways that are dignified, empowering and community led. This could be, for example, by reducing social isolation and promoting good health and wellbeing, by supporting skills development and employment, by providing support and advice on personal debt or benefit problems, or by a combination of all the above.

With the above aim in mind, the CFH project in Foleshill has developed a unique approach that incorporates elements from several different models of social supermarkets (Saxena and Tornaghi, 2018) to achieve an approach appropriate for the local context. The project plan for the CHF included setting up Coventry Social Supermarket, a Community Café, and a Community Hub in the existing but long unused Foleshill Community Centre in Coventry.

This report draws on an evaluation matrix developed by the Evaluation Working Group set up by Feeding Britain in 2019 (Saxena, 2019). The evaluation matrix (see Appendix 1) included specific outcomes and indicators for the CFH project in Foleshill, Coventry, and it covers four areas:

- 1** Food Resilience (reduced need for emergency food provision)
- 2** Training and Reskilling (improvements in skills, knowledge, confidence)
- 3** Health and Wellbeing (physical, mental, social)
- 4** Regeneration of Foleshill Community Centre as a community asset (community engagement/social inclusion)

This evaluation follows the same methods as used for the interim evaluation. It draws on in-depth semi-structured interviews, survey questionnaires, social media feedback, project records, photo and video documentation, on-site observations, and informal conversations with project staff, volunteers, and members, carried out by the research team during on-site visits and online discussions. Data were collected from January 2021 - March 2022.

Background

After nearly a year of extensive renovation and restoration of the Foleshill Community Centre that had been lying unused and neglected since 2015, the building was opened to the public with the launch of Coventry Social Supermarket (CSS) on 13th March 2020 as the first 'social supermarket' in Coventry. Since then, a weekly CSS membership fee of £4 has provided members with access to once-a-week food shopping which includes a certain number of items from nutritionally diverse food groups (such as cereals, meat and dairy products, condiments and spices, fresh vegetables and fruits) in a retail-like environment.

Barely two weeks into its operation, and with eight registered members, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the imposition of the national lockdown posed a major challenge to the project. However, instead of buckling under the pressure, CSS remained open throughout, only closing for a week during Christmas of 2020, while many other community organisations in the city had to shut their doors. This included many food banks who needed to interrupt their operations since they did not have the capacity to operate under the COVID-19 restrictions. Thus, with an increasing number of people turning to the CSS for food support, the project team had to rapidly adapt, expand, and even modify its operations in line with the changing government regulations and restrictions over the entire period. The impact of the pandemic led to delays in implementing the wraparound support services programme for the members and the establishment of the other two key components in the project plan, i.e., the Community Café and the Community Hub in the first year.

However, since the gradual lifting of COVID-19 restrictions and the lockdowns in March 2021, the project has made remarkable progress in the four outcome areas.

Key findings

(1) Food Resilience

- 35% of survey respondents stated that they would have eaten less fresh food and 28% would have eaten fewer meals if they did not have access to CSS.
- 76% described their overall experience of using CSS as 'very good' and that they are 'satisfied' with the quantity, quality, and range of food to which they have access.
- 85% either agree or strongly agree that they have tried new food items. 74% agree or strongly agree that they have cooked new dishes (i.e., they have tried new recipes).
- Fresh fruit and vegetable consumption have increased, with 72% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they eat more fresh vegetables at home, and 74% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they eat more fresh fruit.
- 85% either agree or strongly agree that they 'worry less about food' since joining CSS
- When asked about the extent to which being involved with CSS has made them happier, nearly half gave a score of 10/10 and 72% scored at least 8/10.
- 15% reported that they would have resorted to using foodbanks if CSS was not there.



Although it is difficult to ascertain completely the project's direct impact on reducing the need for emergency food provision, the highlights (as shown above) from the 2021 Members Survey provide strong evidence of a positive impact on food resilience. These findings are reassuringly similar to those from the 2020 survey (as detailed in the interim evaluation report). The surveyed members have described the CSS as a 'lifeline' for providing access to food during extremely challenging times and for enabling them to use the money saved on food to meet other personal and familial needs such as heating and housing.

On average, between January and December 2021, CSS has provided 125 food bags per week, which translates to weekly food provision for roughly 380 people in those households. Considering the entire year, more than 500 registered members have been 'active' and frequented the CSS at least once every six weeks. Taking the average household size into account, the total number of people who have been benefiting from the service is estimated to be nearly 2000.

Food bag deliveries to households were not part of the original plan for the CSS, but the impacts of COVID-19, especially during the lockdowns of 2020, had led to the identification of a need and hence the addition of a delivery service run by volunteers. The demand for home deliveries declined in 2021, nonetheless it continues to remain critical for supporting the most vulnerable members (such as the elderly, and those with disabilities). From its peak during the first national lockdown in 2020,

when on average CSS delivered 70-80 food bags per week, it later reduced to around 40 per week, and in 2021 remained on average at 20-30 per week.

Foleshill Community Centre (FCC) continues to host one of the ten 'emergency food hubs' set up and coordinated by Coventry City Council to offer vital support to residents during the COVID-19 outbreak. FCC has also been delivering the Winter Food Parcels and the school holiday food programmes such as the Easter School Holiday Breakfast Club, summer and winter Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programmes, in partnership with Coventry City Council. Over the two years, the project's scope has thus rapidly expanded to successfully delivering these local food projects/initiatives in close collaboration with community partners. Beneficiaries of these programmes and the various community partners have provided overwhelmingly positive feedback.

(2) Training and Reskilling

- Creation of new employment
- New knowledge and skills for volunteers and member-volunteers
- Increased self-confidence and esteem among staff, volunteers, member-volunteers

Through the creation of paid employment positions for volunteers, the project has enabled the training and

reskilling of those recruited. Over the two years, three of the most experienced volunteers have moved on to paid roles within the organisation, in which they are supporting the delivery of the project. This includes roles as an Apprentice, a Volunteer Coordinator, and through the Kickstart programme (a government-funded job scheme to provide employment for 16- to 24-year-olds at risk of long-term unemployment).

In addition to the on-the-job training on specific tasks involved in running the social supermarket and other aspects of FCC, the staff and the core group of volunteers have also benefited from formal training. These included training in areas such as food hygiene, fire warden, TasteLife (a course on recovery from eating disorders), bias awareness, safeguarding, and GDPR training, hence providing them with skills also valuable outside the FCC setting.

All newly joining staff have and continue to receive training in the areas described above. However, since the middle of Year 2, the training and coordination of volunteers became more systematic and structured. For example, three volunteers who had been in the core group of volunteers since 2020 have been assigned the role of 'Volunteer Shift Leaders'. This is in recognition of their expertise and experience acquired while doing their own individual tasks, and also to support their professional development through additional new skills from running an entire shift.

Another highlight of Year 2 has been an increase in the number of members who started engaging in the project delivery as volunteers. At the time of writing this report (April 2022), the number of member-volunteers has increased to 18 who form part of the core group engaged in running the operational tasks at FCC. It is estimated that out of the average weekly total volunteer hours of 231, nearly 62% are member-volunteer hours. Further, many of the member-volunteers have taken up paid (short-term) employment opportunities in Year 2, when they supported as sessional workers the delivery of the various activities/events organised at FCC (such as during the HAF programmes over the summer and winter holidays).

From the member-volunteers, volunteers, and the staff, we heard remarkable testimonies about acquiring new work-based skills and knowledge, about making new connections, acquiring inter-personal and communication skills, and overcoming personal challenges. Many reported increasing levels of self-esteem and confidence.

(3) Health and Wellbeing

- 50% of the survey respondents felt it 'worthwhile' to use CSS
- Nearly half (48%) felt happier
- 39% reported a positive impact on their level of anxiety
- 39% agreed that CSS had influenced their satisfaction with life
- Majority (67%) felt better physically

- Majority (70%) felt better mentally
- 61% felt 'more connected with people'
- Nearly half (44%) strongly agreed that they had made new friends
- Majority (70%) felt 'part of a community'
- 58% felt 'more confident'
- Majority (63%) felt 'more in control of life'

The findings above closely mirror the findings of the members' survey from 2020. Echoing what we found during the interim evaluation, some of the members described their shopping at CSS as the 'highlight of their week'.

The interviewed volunteers reported an equally positive impact on their level of wellbeing. They described a 'family-like' environment at FCC, which they had also referred to during the interim evaluation and emphasised the feeling of being valued for who they are, which made their volunteering an uplifting and rewarding experience. They felt 'good' from helping those in need, especially during the unusually challenging times in the aftermath of COVID-19. In the process, volunteers have experienced a noticeably improved sense of wellbeing.

Volunteers described *new* relationships and *stronger* relationships with both members and staff as key to their wellbeing. This has been facilitated by onsite community gardening, and community cooking that takes place on specific days of the week. The regular sharing of meals and of diverse experiences of living in Coventry has become a 'unique feature' of the FCC.

A key milestone along FCC's development trajectory has been the setting up of wraparound support services onsite in November 2021, in partnership with Coventry Independent Advice Service (CIAS) under Feeding Britain's Pathways from Poverty programme. Until then, FCC's Support team was signposting members to various external support services. However, providing support directly onsite has helped FCC to systematically identify and understand the nature of support that the members need. This is an important development, which has been central to the project's aim of providing holistic support for wellbeing. By January 2022, there were 20 ongoing cases at the CIAS at FCC, and the Support team at FCC were supporting another 60 members. At the time of writing this report (April 2022), it is estimated that around 100 members had accessed the support services provided, benefiting 150 people in those households. Although it was too early for us to assess systematically the outcomes from these services, interviews with member-volunteers who had made use of the services strongly affirm the positive support they had received. Amongst the members in our survey, 28% had already accessed advice services through the FCC. They reported a very high level of satisfaction with the support and their overall experience of using the support services.

(4) Regeneration of Foleshill Community Centre (FCC)

- Expansion of community gardening
- Increased number of projects with community partners
- Increased links with council-led projects
- Increased number of community events organised
- Increased letting of rooms for community-led activities/programmes
- Planning for Community Café and kitchen underway

Within a short period of two years, the Foleshill Community Centre building, which had deteriorated from non-use over many years has transformed into a vibrant and thriving community centre, along many different fronts as highlighted in this report.

Since its establishment in 2020, the onsite community gardening has expanded, and it has become more established. This expansion has included a change to the layout of the garden, additional seating areas, the planting of wildflowers to increase biodiversity on the site, an increased range of fruit and vegetables harvested, and the additions of a greenhouse and a composting area. All of this has contributed to make the FCC community garden a more viable and self-contained growing space for the local community. Away from the FCC site, the community gardening group of volunteers have also engaged in a collaborative project with another community partner. This involved the setting up of a garden on the community partner's site. Our interviews with volunteers strongly support the positive impact of community gardening on their general health (physical and mental) and wellbeing, beyond the benefits emerging from the use of the fresh produce from the garden for the community meals prepared onsite. Volunteering in the garden has also served as an opportunity for relationship building and as a 'jumping board' for members for further involvement with the FCC.

The various partnerships with local community groups and organisations (e.g., Bare Necessities, Coventry City Council, Families for All Hub, Foleshill Creates, GoodGym, Groundwork West Midlands, GrowKids, Team Springboard), which had been established since Year 1 have now grown stronger, with expansion in their levels of engagement and services provided. Furthermore, many new partnerships have been established. FCC has continued to host cultural activities and workshops – some supported by Coventry City of Culture 2021 funding – and a range of community-led programmes and activities (e.g., English language classes, children's tuition, arts and crafts, Pilates, martial arts, yoga sessions).

Looking back to 2021, two types of events stand out. First, the two hugely successful Wellbeing Days organised by FCC, which included activities for both parents and their children. Secondly, FCC's engagement with a Coventry City of Culture initiative, called the 'Hungry Nation'. The latter initiative in collaboration with theatre company, Strike A Light, focused on people's lived experiences of "what it means to be hungry in the UK", advancing a social message to create change for

people in food poverty. The event included performances organised in two parts, the first part held at the FCC in December 2021 and, the second, a much bigger and widely advertised event at a major theatre in Coventry in April 2022. The focal point of the performance were life stories gathered in co-creative workshops, mainly from members, volunteers, and member-volunteers of FCC, who then also took part in the performance. This initiative attracted a diverse audience, including local and national media, local MPs, councillors, staff from local Council, researchers, family members and representatives of community organisations that FCC has engaged with on various projects. The positive feedback received has raised FCC's profile for their wide-ranging work (including engaging with creative avenues) for alleviation of food insecurity in the local community.

Planning by the project team to develop the Community Café and kitchen, the third key element of the CFH project, is under way. Important relationships have been built with contractors for the necessary infrastructural changes and with community partners for the setting up of the Café and kitchen. Our interviews with staff, volunteers, members, and with community partners reveal the excitement and interest with which they anticipate its launch with a strong conviction that it will add to FCC's social value as a community asset.

It is important to point out here that the CFH project is clearly on the right path to become increasingly community led. This is evidenced by the active involvement of a growing number of CSS members who are involved as volunteers in the running and everyday decision-making at the CSS, by the inclusive, co-creative management style within the CFH, and by FCC's active collaboration with various community organisations and groups.

Challenges

During the interim evaluation conducted at the end of Year 1, we identified key challenges in six areas – membership and support services, food-related concerns, data management, coordination with other hubs, financial sustainability, and project management and governance. Although progress has been made in all these six areas to varying degrees as highlighted in the sections above, some challenges remain.

The number of CSS members appears to have stabilised and is in 'balance' with the available quantity of food of a good range and quality, notwithstanding the numerous challenges faced (which we highlight below). Importantly, the staff have described the need to pay more attention to the diversity in membership and the complex needs of many members. One key challenge is the provision of sufficient engagement with members to support additional support service needs beyond the sole provision of food. Although there is a concerted effort on the part of the project staff and volunteers to engage with everyone, limited staff capacity and language barriers for example remain an obstacle, especially with the non-English speaking members in the local community of Foleshill.

Ensuring the availability of food surplus in sufficient quantity and of a good quality (in terms of nutritional content) from the main supplier and the logistics of sourcing and collection from numerous 'unpredictable' sources has become more challenging. Without the substantial grants funding which were available in Year 1 and with a substantial reduction in donations being received by CSS, food costs that have to be financed from within the operational budget have increased significantly. Providing a nutritionally balanced food offering each week has therefore become more costly and more challenging due to the need for intensive coordination by staff and for dedicating a substantial number of volunteer hours. The availability of food that meets specific dietary needs and cultural preferences has improved but continues to be limited in variety, although in our survey and interviews, this has not been described as a major challenge given the current demographics of the membership.

There has been progress in the systematic collection and organisation of data in relation to members' use of the social supermarket (e.g., membership profiles, patterns of food use and preferences, support needs). However, paying sufficient attention to data management when coping with the logistics and demands of running the daily operations remains a challenge.

The original project plan for a self-sustaining social enterprise model included revenue streams from membership fees, from the Community Café, and from the commercial letting of rooms and other spaces in the building. With major delays in establishing the café (e.g., the progress of capital works in the building has been affected by the pandemic), the opportunities for income generation have been limited to membership fees, grants and funds raised, and to a limited letting of rooms. Considering the unpredictability of access to these funding streams in the months ahead, managing a tight budget for meeting the operational costs will be a key challenge to the sustainability of the project and its outcomes.

Continuing with the project delivery over the two years has required an exceptionally high level of activity that needed to be coordinated and mobilised through timely, quick and nonetheless, rigorous responses to external factors like the pandemic and continuing increases in food poverty. This has put unusual pressure on the capacity of the project team and project management. For example, as described above, local partnerships and local connections with groups and organisations have been critical for outcomes in all the four outcome areas. However, keeping such connections strong and active has placed huge demands on FCC's capacity to deal with the necessary administration, organisation, and the amount of time required from staff and volunteers. Underlying many of the concerns over maintaining operational efficiency and the successful delivery of various activities are fundamental concerns about resources, particularly regarding the fixed costs for running FCC.

Recommendations

Our interim evaluation at the end of Year 1 had led to recommendations in five areas aligned with the challenges faced during that year. These related to diversifying food procurement; developing wraparound support services for members; increasing community outreach and engagement; securing long-term funding; and, aligning project management and governance. At the end of Year 2, while noting the specific changes put in place aligned with these recommendations, and the progress made in the four outcome areas as described above, we also noted that there remains further work to be done. Considering the tremendous expansion of FCC's activities in 2021 and the challenges faced as highlighted above, we have two additional recommendations linked to volunteer progression routes, and currently limited organisational capacity.

The main recommendations that emerge from our final evaluation are in seven areas as presented below.

(1) Diversify local food procurement for food resilience

Considering the unpredictability of food supply that has persisted and increased food costs in Year 2, it would be beneficial and highly encouraged to explore alternative approaches, focusing on a more diversified and stable local food supply (i.e., a move away from a heavy reliance on supermarket surplus). Options could include considering economies of scale via the establishment of independent relationships or working with other similarly interested community organisations or groups to create a 'food supply network' -- connecting with local farmers and producers, processors, distributors; bulk purchasing to reduce costs; connecting with community food growing sites and community food growing networks to get more locally grown food. We recommend a specific task to be undertaken that explores these various options, including working with Coventry Food Network around the emerging citywide food strategy, which aims at supporting the transition to healthy, affordable, and sustainable diets.

(2) Extend support for enabling effective support provision for members

The onsite provision of structured wraparound services to members has been a major step in the right direction. Specifically considering the level of support required by members with multiple vulnerabilities and the rate at which more such cases have been identified in Year 2, we recommend recruitment of additional staff to reduce the pressure on a small team coping with the increased demands of support provision. Training on the various methods and tools used in the charity sector for supporting members in their 'journeys of change' and effective monitoring and data capture for managing the support provision is also required. Given that support services are critical to the project's vision and priorities, we recommend allocating resources specifically for meeting these requirements, including a continuation of CIAS onsite support services at Foleshill Community Centre. Currently available financial and infrastructure resources, including a dedicated space for confidential

conversations of a sensitive nature (e.g., financial; family-related; domestic violence; issues related to immigration, and asylum seeking) are insufficient given the growing demand.

(3) Enable volunteer progression

Foleshill Community Centre's volunteers span a wide age group, have diverse backgrounds, and diverse motivations for volunteering. However, we found great interest amongst some volunteers who are keen to use their volunteering opportunity to get useful work experience and skills for future employment within FCC and beyond. This is particularly relevant considering that many members have become volunteers, and for some, the work experience and training gained through volunteering has indeed become a pathway to employment. It is important to build on this success, by supporting volunteers on their 'journey of change'. At the time of writing this report, a Volunteer Coordinator has been recruited who is responsible for addressing the needs of volunteers. This is a key step in the direction recommended, which needs to be supported by sustained funding for the role and dedicated resources for developing structured progression routes and training sessions for volunteers.

(4) Increase community outreach and engagement

We acknowledge and positively comment on the Wellbeing Days and the HAF programmes which have successfully extended the project's reach and community engagement. Nonetheless, our evaluation indicates that further efforts are necessary to achieve a membership and volunteer and staff composition that fully reflects the diversity of Foleshill community, and also to raise the level of awareness about the activities at FCC in the local community. This recommendation has two elements. First, there is a need for targeted engagement with non-English speaking communities to encourage their involvement as member-volunteers, volunteers and in the staff. Reaching out will require the continuation of further relationship and trust building with local community organisations and groups to further gain strong local insights and connections. This requires dedicating specific time and resources for this purpose. Secondly, more specific attention to using diverse communication methods is required for raising awareness about the range of services and the events/activities organised by and in FCC. Acknowledging the positive impact of 'word of mouth' and the already effective use of social media, we recommend a more prominent and multi-lingual display of information on billboards outside the centre and the regular holding of Open Days for the local community.

(5) Secure diverse streams of funding (including long-term) and income generation

The project staff have raised substantial funding in-house from numerous successful bids over the two years. However, in light of the challenges faced by staff and the critical nature of funds for sustaining the operations, securing diverse streams for funding requires particular attention. Raising large infrastructural

grants normally requires a specialist skill set and is time consuming. We recommend dedicated time by current staff to fundraising, or the recruitment of an experienced fundraiser, until operations become financially self-sustaining. Availability of longer-term funding would certainly help alleviate uncertainties over meeting the operational costs and capital costs. The availability of sufficient and timely funds is also critical for building on the numerous successes and outcomes already achieved. A key enabling factor for each of the four recommendations as described above is availability of sufficient and sustained financial resources. In addition to fund raising, as a related point, we recommend specific allocation of time and staff resources towards identifying the possibilities for income generating activities. More broadly, we recommend developing a strategic finance plan to include income generation targets alongside key risks and enabling resources.

(6) Strengthen project governance

Considering the massive expansion in the scope and scale of the project in Year 2, extensive engagement with diverse partners, and concerns over the gap in the operational budget and overall financial sustainability, we recommend that steps be taken to strengthen project governance to aid decision-making in managing and resolving strategic and operational issues. This is even more important as the project steadily moves away from the 'emergency-mode', which has dominated the first two years of its operation, to fulfilling its wider agenda in all the four outcome areas. These steps need to be aligned with the project's strategic vision and the values of Feeding Coventry as a charity centred on understanding the complex nature of poverty and the barriers faced by those needing to access their services. The strengthening of project governance requires the development of processes and policies that deal with responsibility and accountability surrounding the project, the outlining of specific roles, responsibility and relationships among the various project stakeholders, as well as the review and auditing functions for internal monitoring and tracking of project performance.

(7) Strengthen strategic and organisational capacity

For sustaining and building on the successful project outcomes, and for coordination between the large number of community partners that the project engages with, additional support with operational management as well as strengthening of strategic and organisational capacity will become critical. To manage the expectations, and progress further in its strategic vision towards alleviating food poverty through providing holistic support, it is important that the project team is supported with mentorship and training programmes, while their accumulated experience, expertise, skills and built (internal and external) relationships are retained. We recommend consideration be given to ensuring key staff retention and to succession planning. Moreover, enhancing organisational capacity affords more space for staff (and perhaps volunteers) to engage in networking opportunities with peer organisations and others engaged in the sector. This is critical for learning, ideation, forging collaborative projects, exchanging good practices, and building a wider community of practice



who operate at the sharp end of food insecurity and crisis intervention.

Conclusion

From being described as a 'lifeline' in Year 1 for dealing with the repercussions of the pandemic, the CFH project has become 'life-changing' in Year 2 for many who engage with it, including its staff, volunteers, and members. Over a two-year period (2020-22), this project has achieved substantial social impact in Foleshill, Coventry, which is both a remarkable testimony to the spirit of community resilience and to the possibilities of creating spaces of hope for communities facing the brunt of societal inequalities and disadvantage.

The concept behind the CFH and its implementation in Foleshill is a success story that has and can enable a multitude of positive outcomes for individuals and the wider local community. However, the practical realities of the costs of living crisis and rising utility bills in the months ahead will considerably affect the running costs of the building as well as the costs of food procurement, which together will invariably add enormously to the pressure that such community projects face. It is only through providing sustained support and resources at multiple levels – ranging from increased coordination and capacity of local partnerships, support from external organisations including city councils and national funders, to policy reforms -- that the necessary scaffolding can be constructed, which

enables such inspiring and innovative community projects to achieve their objectives.

The findings from our evaluation of the CFH project in Foleshill strongly support other studies from across the UK that point to the critical role that community initiatives and organisations can and are playing in alleviating food insecurity. Furthermore, we emphasise here that the Foleshill project stands out in its efforts at going beyond a somewhat simplistic narrative of food provisioning to acknowledging food poverty/insecurity as symptomatic of underlying, deeper individual and societal problems of poverty, poor mental and physical health, and social isolation. It has adopted a much-needed holistic perspective in addressing the individual, household, and community context of those who find themselves struggling to meet their needs. In practical terms, the project is demonstrating effectively how a community food hub can act as a bulwark against chronic food insecurity and the often-accompanying dependence on food banks. It is setting the bar high through its innovative combination of low-cost food (and other essentials), wraparound support to tackle underlying causes of food insecurity, school holiday provision for children and families, community gardening, and creative arts and crafts programmes for health and wellbeing.

We believe that the key learnings from this project can inspire community food initiatives more broadly to move beyond 'responding to change' to 'shaping change', not only seeking to alleviate but also to prevent chronic food insecurity and its insidious impacts, from a more transformative and socially just stance.

1. Introduction

1.1 Community Food Hubs

Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, the Community Food Hub (CFH) project piloted by Feeding Britain is an intervention to enable people experiencing food poverty to move beyond food crises in ways that are dignified, empowering and community led. As an intervention across the Feeding Britain network, CFHs aim to achieve:

- Reduced demand for transactional emergency food provision evidenced by lower demand for crisis food services.
- Greater plurality of approaches driven by local needs, with an emphasis on sustainable, longer-term support to increase resilience to food poverty.
- Effective use of existing community assets and empowering community members to take ownership of the community food hub.
- Increased integration of specialist services within the community food hub, to help people move beyond immediate food crises.
- Learning about different models in practice, and what can be most easily transferable.
- Learning about ways to increase the amount of quality surplus food that can be tapped locally to support food poverty projects and overcome some of the existing supply chain challenges.



1.2 Community Food Hub in Foleshill, Coventry

The Community Food Hub (CFH) in Foleshill, Coventry is one of the two pilot projects that secured funding from Feeding Britain for a duration of three years, starting in 2018-19. The other pilot project is based at Cheshire West and Chester.

CFH in Foleshill is delivered by [Feeding Coventry](#), an independent charity established in 2015 and committed to working with partners and local communities to tackle hunger and food poverty, to build food security and food sustainability, and to support people in crisis in Coventry. Its vision is to make Coventry a food resilient city where no one goes hungry, and the mission is to empower people and organisations in Coventry to design strategies and deliver activities to end food poverty, build resilience and influence change.

Feeding Coventry acquired 'Foleshill Community Centre' (which had fallen into disuse since 2015) in Foleshill, one of the most deprived wards in Coventry (see Section 1.4) through a community asset transfer from Coventry City Council in April 2019. By piloting the CFH project in Foleshill, the broader aim was to develop and rejuvenate the Foleshill Community Centre to benefit the local community.

In order to meet this aim, the CFH project in Foleshill set itself four objectives:

- 1 To provide access to affordable good quality food in Foleshill
- 2 To provide wraparound support services (including training and reskilling opportunities)
- 3 To improve health and well-being (physical, mental, social)
- 4 By doing the above three, to revitalise the Foleshill Community Centre

To deliver on the objectives as described above, the project plan for the CFH in Coventry includes the development of three interconnected components: Coventry Social Supermarket (CSS), Community Café, and Community Hub, co-located in the Foleshill Community Centre (Figure 1).

(1) Coventry Social Supermarket (CSS)

Coventry Social Supermarket (CSS) aimed at incorporating elements of existing models of 'social supermarkets' in Britain (see Saxena & Tornaghi, 2018) while also adapting them to be appropriate for the local context. At its core lies the provisioning of access to good quality, affordable food in a retail-like environment to people in the local community who meet vulnerability criteria. This is strengthened by a 'wraparound' support offer that includes, for example, debt and welfare advice, employment support, training and reskilling, and broader support for health and wellbeing. The aim of these additional offers is to support people in moving away from their need for CSS food services. Access to CSS is on a membership basis, reviewed at regular intervals.

(2) Community Café

The Community Café (as designed in the initial project plan) is the space to offer cold and hot food prepared onsite for sale, to members and non-members. The idea behind it being to generate a revenue stream for the project. The café would use surplus food stocked by the supermarket, other donated food, and food grown in the garden onsite to prepare healthy, nutritious and affordable meals. It would also be a space to host cooking programmes, for sharing and enhancing of cooking skills, and promoting healthy eating. Ultimately, it would be a shared community space for social interaction -- for members and non-members to come together, to meet, eat and connect.

(3) Community Hub

Along with the social supermarket, and community café, the CFH project plan also includes space for a 'community hub' – to host a range of local support services (e.g., benefits, finances/debt, employment) and activities leading to skills training, and programmes supporting health and wellbeing of members. Membership of CSS includes a requirement to engage with such support services/programmes as the project aims to enable members to manage better the hardship and disadvantages they face, and eventually move beyond food crises. The community hub is also at the heart of generating income for the project, such as through the commercial letting of additional spaces in the building to local community groups and organisations for activities, events, and programmes benefiting the local community.



Figure 1: Three components of Community Food Hub (CFH) project in Foleshill, Coventry

1.3 Foleshill Community Centre

The launching of the three components of CFH as described in the project plan above is considered fundamental to the revitalisation of the Foleshill Community Centre (FCC) for the benefit of the local community. Photos, documents, and other bric-a-brac found in the building when Feeding Coventry took it over in 2019 had revealed the history of the building as a vibrant and thriving community centre going back to the 1950s. However, the centre/building had lost its appeal and had gone out of use over the last couple of decades. Hence, the project's broader aim is to restore a valuable community asset and to transform it into a vibrant community resource for the local community.

The project plan for revitalising FCC in the first instance required allocating the bulk of the budget towards infrastructural improvements of the FCC building, and establishing the foundations for the CSS to operate from the building. Later considerations included running income-generating activities at FCC by setting up the community café and community hub. Designed as a social enterprise, the overall aim is to be self-sustaining in the longer term. Ultimately, the project plan also envisaged the community taking 'ownership' of the project – that is, being run by the community for the community.

1.4 Project Area: Foleshill ward in Coventry

The Foleshill neighbourhood in Coventry is known for its vibrant and diverse culture (multi-faith, multi-ethnic, multi-national) and a strong local business sector. Foleshill has approximately 6,939 households with a population of 19,939 (2011 census).* However, despite many successful existing community efforts, Foleshill also faces significant social and economic challenges. Based on the national index of multiple deprivation, Foleshill is one of the most deprived wards in Coventry. For example, data on foodbank use in 2017-18 suggests that while only about 6% of Coventry's residents live in Foleshill ward, around 15% of all people accessing Coventry Foodbank were from this area [Trussell Trust]. According to Coventry Citizens Advice Bureau, they receive more debt and benefit enquiries from the Foleshill ward than from almost any other ward in the city.

Other statistics on relative deprivation, health and wellbeing, available from Coventry City Council show that Foleshill ward has the highest level of deprivation and the lowest life expectancy in the city.



Figure 2: Map highlighting the location of the Foleshill ward in Coventry

* <https://www.doogal.co.uk/AdministrativeAreas.php?district=E08000026&ward=E05001222>



Source: Google Maps

Indicators	Foleshill	Coventry	England
% ward living in income deprived households	34	18	15
% ward children living in income deprived families	37	25	20
% ward older people living in income deprived households	51	22	16
% ward Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)	69	26	15
% ward cannot speak English well or at all	12	3	2
% ward reported to be Free School Meal Eligible (primary)*	21	16	NA
% ward reported to be Free School Meal Eligible (secondary)*	23	16	NA
Standardised Mortality Ratios - Under 65 and all causes of death	164.5	119.1	100
Standardised Mortality Ratios - Under 75 and all causes of death	157.2	117.6	100
Life expectancy at birth for males 2011 -2015 (years)	75.3	78.3	79.4
Life expectancy at birth for females 2011- 2015 (years)	80.8	82.2	83.1
Source: PHE Ward Profiles 2016, * Annual School Census 2017			

Table 1: Foleshill ward in comparison to Coventry and England as whole

As shown in Table 1, data for Foleshill ward reveals much higher levels of health- and other inequalities compared to Coventry's average or for the country in general.

2. Evaluation overview

The research team at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR) in Coventry University was commissioned in early 2020 to evaluate the project over a two-year period.

The purpose behind the evaluation was threefold:

1. To evaluate the key outcomes of the project
2. To identify the challenges/barriers faced in achieving the expected outcomes
3. To make recommendations

The evaluation was carried out in two phases. At the end of Year 1 (March - December 2020), an interim evaluation was conducted which focused on the progress in the expected outcome areas during that period. The final evaluation was carried out at the end of Year 2 (January - December 2021). We followed a similar process as in Year 1, reviewing and assessing the processes, outputs/activities, and the outcomes in relation to the four objectives (Figure 3).

2.1 Methodology

We used a mixed research methods approach for the purposes of the evaluation with the following specific objectives:

- To explore personal experiences of those engaging with the project – members, volunteers, staff, and community partners.
- To identify the benefits for members, their families, for volunteers, for community partners, and for the local community.
- To understand the processes by which the project is delivered.
- To identify challenges for members, volunteers, staff, and community partners, in terms of access, delivery and sustainability.
- To consider the support needs for continuing with the project.

Data was collected in various ways and from various sources between March 2020 and March 2022. For the interim evaluation (see Interim Evaluation Report), and the final evaluation, we used the same methods for data collection to enable drawing comparisons between Year 1 and Year 2 and be able to look at the changes over the two-year period. An overview of the data sources for both years is provided in Appendix 3.

The data sources for Year 2 include:

- Questionnaire (survey) for members (n 46)
- Semi-structured interviews (n 23)
 - volunteers (n 6)
 - member-volunteers (n 3)
- project staff (including Apprentice + Kickstarter) (n 7)
- community partner organisations (including local council) (n 7)
- Feedback on social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- Site visits and observations
- Project records from project staff
- Email and phone correspondence

In the case of members’ survey, it is to be noted that for Year 1, we had used hard copies of the questionnaire, which the members had filled in onsite at FCC, and some copies were sent out with the food bags to reach those members receiving home deliveries. This had resulted in 44 responses. For Year 2, in addition to a hard copy of the questionnaire, FCC facilitated sharing the link to an online version of the questionnaire with its members. In total, we received 46 responses to the survey.

The survey for Year 2 had closed and open-ended questions covering the different expected outcomes from the project. It contained the questions used for the interim evaluation and a few additional questions relevant to Year 2.

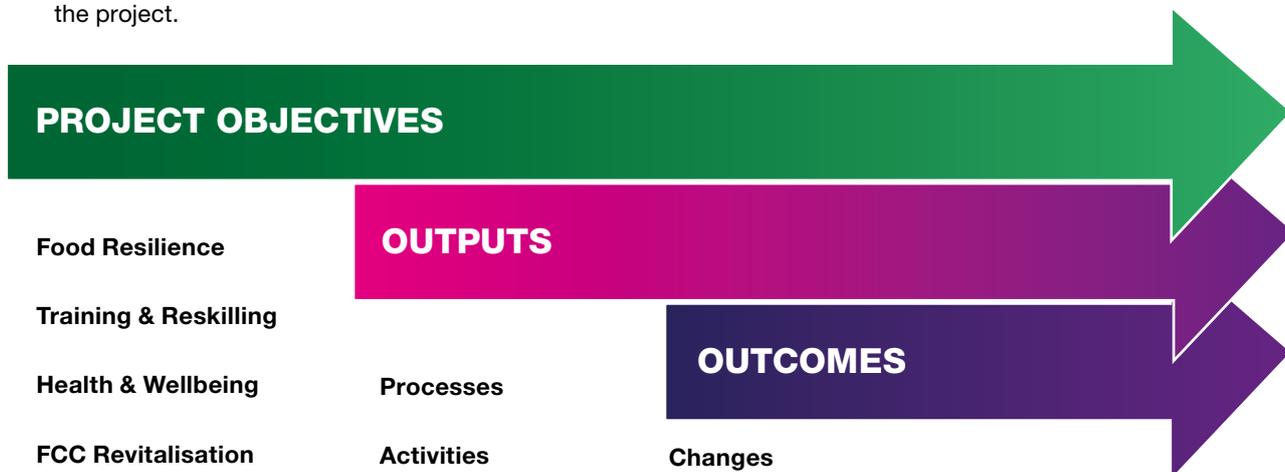


Figure 3: Overview of the research process



Figure 4: Four outcome areas explored in this evaluation

Between October 2021 and March 2022, we held 23 semi-structured interviews online and over the phone, a big increase from 14 interviews conducted in Year 1. These interviews were conducted with representatives from various groups - project staff, volunteers, member-volunteers, and community partner organisations (the number in each category as shown earlier) to gain an insight into their experiences of engagement with the project. Ten of those interviewed in Year 2 had previously participated in the interim evaluation; hence, they offered a longer-term perspective on the changes they had observed over the two years. Throughout the report, we have anonymised our research participants (by using job titles, participant numbers, and letters as appropriate in the context). For the two personal stories of change (Section 5.5), we have retained their real first names as requested by the interviewees.

We collected output data from project records. Other data sources include the social media accounts of FCC. The Facebook account, as the main social media platform for the community centre, provides a particularly useful visual narrative of the staff and volunteers' engagement with the community, along with feedback and comments on the various activities and events organised by CSS posted by the members and the wider community.

During the evaluation period, we made several day-long and shorter visits to FCC during which we had opportunities to meet and engage with staff, volunteers, and members. This helped us understand and validate the information we had collected from various sources and identify any 'unexpected' outcomes or challenges.

We have taken photos and small video clips over the two years to capture the transformation of FCC into a vibrant community space and some 'stories' of change/impact at various stages of the project from those engaging with the project. These form the basis for a short video for dissemination to complement this final evaluation report.

The findings presented in this report are thus drawn from a weaving together of data from different sources after crosschecking for validation.

2.2 Ethics

Ethical approval for the research was granted by Coventry University in February 2020. Prior to questionnaire- and interview-based data collection, all participants were provided with details of the research and written consent was obtained for the anonymous use of data for reporting purposes.

All participants were offered the opportunity to contact the lead of the research team if they had any concerns or for further information. Data was kept strictly confidential and stored in password protected computer files on Coventry University hard drive. All data was processed and stored in accordance with GDPR regulations.

3. Progress in Expected Outcomes

The expected key outcomes from the CFH project in Foleshill were analysed using the evaluation matrix (see Appendix 1) specifically designed to include output and outcome indicators in four outcome areas (Figure 4). These include assessing the changes in food resilience, training and reskilling, health and wellbeing, alongside the regeneration of Foleshill Community Centre that provides a home for all activities aiming to achieve the other three outcomes.

3.1 Outcome 1: Food Resilience

The first outcome relates to food resilience, which we examined using three key dimensions. The first dimension relates to the members of the CSS (how the members access food, and different aspects of their experience) and the second to food itself (its procurement, type and range) while the third reviews FCC's engagement with other citywide food programmes.

3.1.1 Membership of CSS

From a total number of eight people who had registered as members of CSS during the week of its launch in March 2020, by the end of Year 1, this number had increased to 296 'active' members (described as those who had been shopping at CSS at least once during the previous six weeks). Not surprisingly, the biggest increases in membership registration happened during the various national lockdowns. Towards the middle of Year 2 (with the third national lockdown having ended in March 2021 and a gradual lifting of restrictions), the **monthly membership registrations appear to have stabilised** with a small but noticeable increase after the end of the furlough scheme.

...at one point, you know, we're doing like... feeding like over 500 people a week, where now it's more like you know between 300 and 400 people a week that we're feeding, and we now have a consistent number of people come each week of around 130 a week. But we've never had a week where we haven't had a new member... we're still seeing, you know, three or four new members coming through each week at least, and possibly more than that [Operations Manager, October 2021]

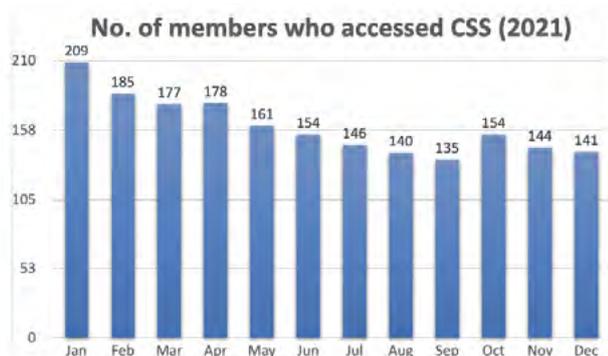


Figure 5: Number of members who accessed CSS by month in 2021

As the data on monthly trends (Figure 5) shows, the number of members who accessed the CSS were on the higher side in the earlier months and on average has declined as the COVID-19 restrictions were gradually lifted. Similar to what we found in our interim evaluation for Year 1, the biggest increases in members accessing the CSS during Year 2 coincided with lockdowns and restrictions. **The total number of members at the end of 2021 was 516**, up from around 300 as reported at the end of 2020. Since each membership represents a household, based on household size data, the estimated number of adults and children (under the age of 18 years) benefitting from access to the CSS is estimated to be 1936 at the end of 2021.

Although membership of CSS continues to remain open for residents in the local community (i.e., postcodes CV6 and CV1, which have a higher number of disadvantaged households) and it is not strictly means-tested, in Year 2, the registration process itself underwent changes. Given

the challenges linked to COVID-19 restrictions, in Year 1, this process included simply filling in an application form providing only basic information (name, address, family size, dietary requirements). This enabled staff to process registration and assess members' needs quickly. In Year 2, with the gradual return of a more 'normal' routine of operations, attention shifted to the provision of wraparound support services to the members. At the time of writing this report (April 2022), a full needs assessment process for new membership is in place, and the re-registration of all the existing members is under way. As the Operations Manager described,

...it was very much about moving towards a model of supporting people, along with food service, and not just about food... The main question that we ask now - it's quite an open question really - we ask 'what led you to come here today?' We give people an opportunity to tell us what their issues are. We explain that as part of the membership terms and conditions they're signing up to, they would be expected also to engage with support and volunteering opportunities. [Operations Manager, January 2022]

As in Year 1, the initial membership period remains at six months, and is extended if the need for support persists. To remain an 'active member', members have to have used the CSS at least once in the previous six weeks. If their membership lapses, they can potentially re-register if their personal circumstances change. However, moving members 'off' using the CSS when they no longer 'need' it (or indeed, might never have really needed it) and the overall capping of membership numbers has been challenging, amongst other reasons due to the delayed implementation of support services (see also Section 4.1).

...there is a six-month membership, but you know, depending on the needs, that can be extended. We want to work with people. Often, it takes us a year to work with people, and we know that. And we're not trying to rush people, you know, through the service. We are trying to provide complete support that people need to improve their situation. But we do explain that that's part of working with us. And we'll make an assessment of when, you know, somebody would need to move on from the service. And we'll have that conversation with people at the right time. [Operations Manager, April 2022]

In the summer of 2021, the FCC successfully delivered a Holiday and Food Activities (HAF) programme (see Section 3.1.9), which, as our interviewees pointed out, has increased the **diversity in the membership** by enabling FCC to reach out to more members from different local ethnic groups.

*...following on from the successful HAF programme, we reached out to a lot of people who are very, very local to the Community Centre. We reached out to a lot of Asian people, people from a variety of **different backgrounds**. We have Polish, Latvian,*

Ethiopian ... we reached out to a wide variety of people on the HAF programme. [Operations Manager, October 2021]

...I'm really pleased that a lot of the people are from ethnic minorities from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India... they are actually the people that are coming along to the wellbeing project and the HAF programme, so we really feel like a multi-cultural Centre at the moment, which is great. [Operations Manager, November 2021]

At the time of writing this report (April 2022), the systematic collection of data relating to ethnicity and nationality of members is under way. Estimates based on available data show that **British nationality** is the predominant category (see Figure 6), with majority self-describing themselves as being of **White British ethnicity**. The next big group comprised of those with Romanian nationality and ethnicity. This came across also in our sample data of members for both surveys. In 2021 survey, over half (53%) reported British nationality, and 18% had Romanian nationality. A similar pattern emerged for ethnicity, with 41% of survey respondents identifying themselves as of White ethnicity (English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British), followed by 26% belonging to 'any other White' ethnicity (the latter including the members of Romanian origin).

From the limited data available on the demographic characteristics of the membership base, we found that the **gender balance has remained even**, which matches the perception by staff and volunteers as revealed in the interviews. The members' survey, for both the years, however, included a high proportion of female respondents (78% in 2021 Survey), which indicates perhaps more inclination from women to participate in the evaluation exercise.

In terms of the profile of households who completed the survey in 2021, the vast majority of households, i.e., 91% (40 out of 44 who responded) were occupied by one or two adults (Figure 7). The remaining 9% (four households) said that three or more adults lived in the household. In terms of younger people, 21%

(nine households) reported that there was one child under the age of five living with them, with a further two households reporting two or more children under five living with them. 27% (12 households) reported that there were two children aged between 5-11 years living with them, and 18% (eight households) said that one child in this age bracket lives with them. This means that 20 households - **nearly half of the total number (46%) - who responded to the survey have a child or children between the ages of 5-11 years**. Similarly, 17 households - over a third of the dataset (39%) - reported having one or more children aged between 12-15 years, with one household reporting that five or more children of that age live with them. For older children aged 16-18 years, 18% (eight households) reported that one teenager lives with them.

These data on household profile indicate that a significant proportion of survey respondents (i.e., members) have young dependents living with them, further underlining the importance that CSS has as a source of food for low-income families who are experiencing or at risk of food insecurity.

3.1.2 Experience of CSS

In our member survey for 2021, 70% of the respondents (n=32) had used CSS every week and another 17% (n=8) every 2-3 weeks. In our sample of respondents, the **vast majority (87%) are therefore 'active' members**. Also, 80% of the respondents (n=40) picked up their food onsite from CSS, while five members had their food bags delivered home. Only one member used a combination of direct pickup and home delivery for food. Six respondents had also volunteered (three of them weekly) at FCC. Taken together, the survey data thus captures the experiences of 'active' members using CSS, which is significant for the purposes of evaluation.

The majority of the respondents (64%, n=29) reside in postcode CV6 (which includes the immediate vicinity of FCC). 41% (n=19) of them have been living at the same address for 4-10 years, 30% (n=4) for 1-3 years, and 20% (n=9) for 10 years+. Only three of them were at their address for less than a year. This shows that most of

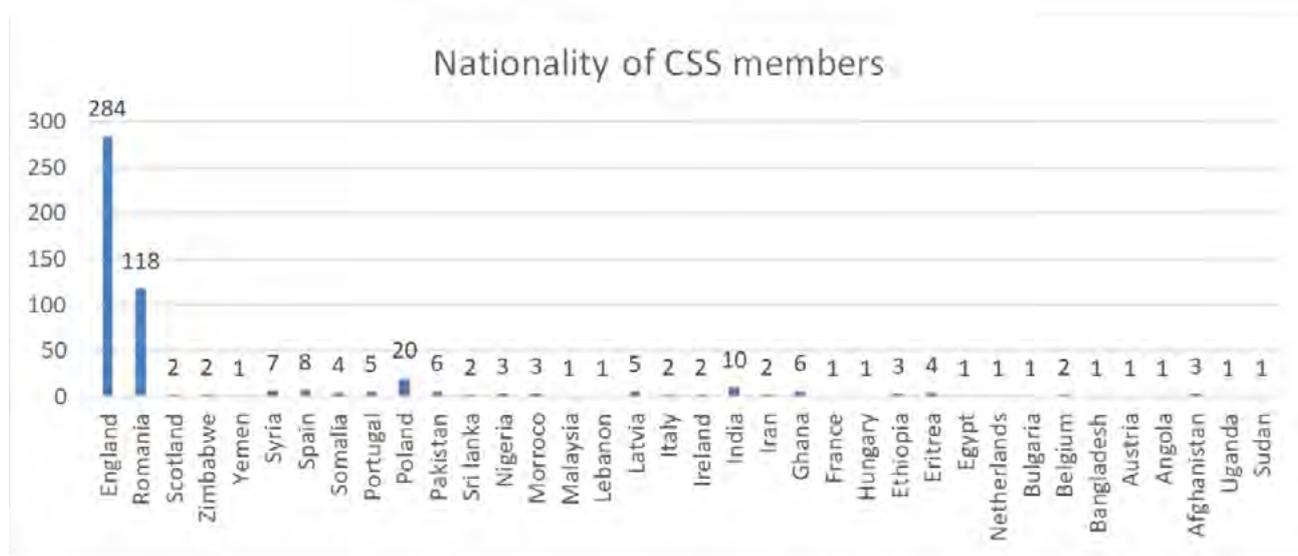


Figure 6: Nationality of CSS members [Source: CFH project records]

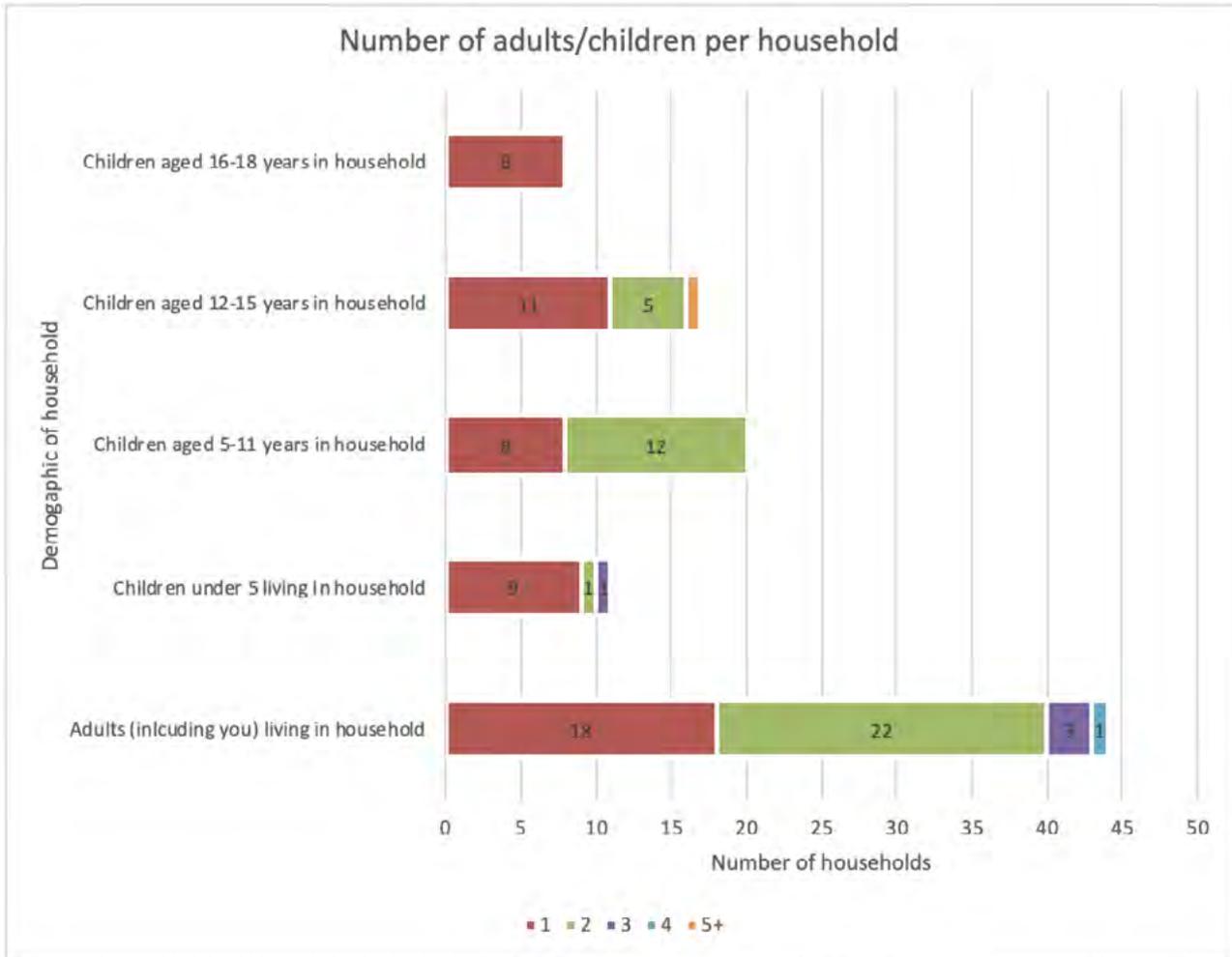


Figure 7: Profile of the number of adults and children in households

the surveyed members are well-settled in the area (i.e., they do not belong to a mobile population group nor are they new arrivals into the neighbourhood). This is of significance to note as it suggests that a programme that works on a long-term trajectory to move members away from dependency/reliance on charitable food organisations is well-placed here. Furthermore, half of the survey respondents (n=23) rent their housing from Housing Associations, followed by 35% (n=16) who are

renting from private landlords. Only three described their housing situation as owner-occupied, and one stated to have “no fixed abode”.

When asked to describe their **overall experience** of using the CSS, as shown in Figure 8, a very high proportion of the respondents (76%) described it as **very good**, ten (22%) found it **good** while only one respondent was not sure.

How would you describe your overall experience of using the social supermarket?

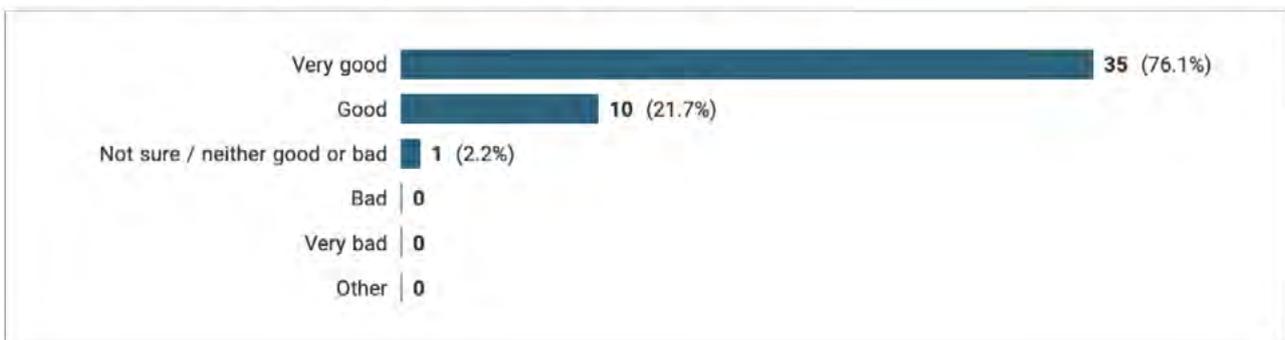


Figure 8: Overall experience of members using CSS

Probing further into what the respondents liked about using the CSS, the most cited response was the availability of **low-cost food** (78%) followed by **'volunteers helping with shopping'** (63%) and the **'freedom to choose food'** (46%), as shown in Figure 9.

What are the different things you like about using the social supermarket? (please select all that apply)

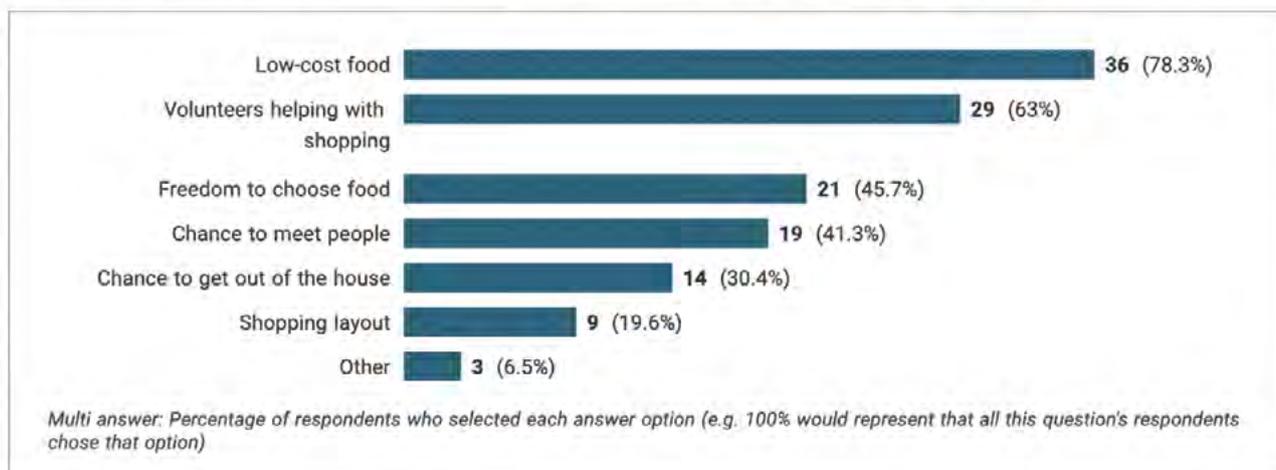


Figure 9: What members like about using CSS

While the decision to use CSS is clearly based primarily upon financial reasons, it is important to note the non-financial ones. As indicated by the high number of responses expressing an appreciation of 'volunteers helping with shopping', this specific, **personalised approach to a supported food-shopping experience** is highly valued by members. Explaining their first day at the CSS, a member-volunteer described how the **caring approach of volunteers** turned a daunting experience into a positive one.

...It was quite nerve wracking to be fair, because obviously, we've not really been put in such a position before. We've been to the food bank once or twice before, and I know that it [CSS] is not a food bank because you're contributing some money towards it. But obviously, it was still, still a bit worrying having to go there. Worrying that people might judge you. But when we got there, everyone was so nice! I couldn't, couldn't fault anyone. J was the first person I met. She was lovely. She is now my support worker. So yeah, I've just, yeah, I loved it there [Member-volunteer 3, January 2022]

The following statements by the respondents to an open question on what they liked about using CSS emphasise the **multifunctional and social aspects** of the CSS as important components of their experience.

...Of course, the food market helps a great deal. But the Centre being reopened and used for lots of activities, there's always someone there to listen. Nothing's too much. It's all about community coming together. I look forward to my visits there.

...Being helped via outside agency -- citizens advice.

...everyone makes you feel welcome and relaxed.

...They are very friendly.

Overall, the findings reiterate **affordability/cost-effectiveness, the support of volunteers, element of choice**, as well as the **social aspect** of meeting people at the CSS as key to the positive experience of members mirroring the findings described by members in the 2020 survey.

When members were asked in an open-ended question (which 32 out of the 46 respondents chose to complete) what they disliked about the CSS, 'nothing' was cited as the most common response. This clearly suggests a **high level of satisfaction**, which affirms the **very good** overall experience reported by the respondents as described earlier. This mirrors the responses from Year 1, which suggests that the CSS has sustained high levels of satisfaction among members over the two-year period.

Interviews with staff and volunteers, however, revealed instances of occasional dissatisfaction from those members who received food deliveries. The staff ascribed the dissatisfaction as stemming from those members not being able to exercise the same degree of choice over selecting food items as those who shopped onsite. The other reason ascribed by them was that not all members understand that the food at CSS is essentially 'food surplus' from FareShare and donations over which CSS has very little control.

The responses to the survey question on how the social supermarket could be improved reveal some of the **concerns and/or expectations** that the CSS did not fully meet. The main concerns relate to food -- in terms of essential items not available all the time; food that satisfies cultural-preferences not available; and food bought per food bag not enough for a larger household, as the following statements show.

...Even though we pay a small amount on those food items, it would be wonderful if they were [not] out of date.

...Everything is very good. As I am Asian, I would like to see some more Asian produce suitable for our cooking.

Among 'practical' suggestions to improve were those addressing congestion and delays, as articulated by the following two respondents:

...Allocated time per person instead of a range of people having the same time.

...Don't have so many people with the same appointment time.

These responses about 'congestion' need to also be understood in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as increased concern and anxiety about social distancing and interacting with people beyond one's immediate household was very much a part of public discourse and public health policy at the time of the survey being completed.

Other suggestions included the following:

...If possible, could an extra day be available?

...More halal options...

... would prefer fruit and veg displayed so we can take only what we need, and it would ensure we don't waste once we take home [This refers to the vegetables and fruits bag given out free]

...Allocate food fairly on family size.

...If we could get more choice to shop...

More pragmatically, two respondents stated:

...I think that at the moment everything is correct.

...They are doing their best for people who need.

98% of the respondents (n=44) reported that they would recommend the Foleshill social supermarket to a friend.

The other two percent were not sure, rather than a negative.




Coventry Social Supermarket

Get a bag of shopping for **£4.00**
(+£1.50 charge on first bag)

Opening Times

Thurs 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm - Fri 10:00 am - 1:00pm
Sat 10:00 am - 12:00pm

Please contact us or visit us at the Foleshill Community Centre during the opening hours.

Contact:
feedingcoventrycomms@gmail.com
Tel: 02 476 78 27 49

Address:
Foleshill Community Centre
757 Foleshill Road,
CV6 5HS

3.1.3 Access to affordable food

Members have continued to pay a membership **fee of £4**, which provides them access to shopping at CSS once a week. Emphasising the good value and his appreciation of the stability of the offer over time, a member-volunteer described the continuity since he first joined the CSS in 2020:

...Yeah, it was four pounds. It's still four pounds now two years later, and everything else has gone up, but it's still four pounds. [Member-volunteer 2, January 2022]

Since the launch in 2020, the opening hours of CSS have adapted in response to the changing pattern of demand to the current pattern: three hours on Friday mornings (10 am-1 pm), two hours on Saturday mornings (10 am -12 pm) and an additional two hours on Thursday evenings

(5-7 pm). Home food deliveries continue on Thursday afternoons (12-2 pm). In order to manage a steady flow of members into the CSS, the members arrive during **specific time slots** selected by them prior to their visits. Conversations with volunteers indicate that there are always a few drop-ins outside of the time slots, which they accommodate. On Thursdays, for example, FCC remains open during the daytime for members with social anxiety issues, so that they can drop in when it is quieter than compared to the regular evening hours. Commenting on the need for such quieter opening hours, a volunteer explained,

...I went around with somebody, and he sort of said about the loudness. Now, you've also got to think that some people come here with mental health issues. So, if it's nice and calm, rather than loud when he was here, but there was so many people around, you know... [Volunteer 6, January 2022]



As in 2020, CSS has continued to offer each member a selection of food across different categories to support a healthy, balanced diet for all age groups and limiting food high in sugar/salt/fat content. There are **eight different categories**, with members offered a degree of choice in picking up a certain number of items across them, as shown in Table 2.

Food Category	Description	Quantity/Portions
Category 1 Carbohydrates	Cereal (cornflakes, porridge oats) Pasta, rice, mash, noodle, (other cereals: millet, bulghur, wheat) Bread	1x kg Cereal 1 x 500g Pasta/ 500g rice/other 1 x Bread
Category 2 Cans	Fish/meat Beans/tomatoes/spaghetti/soup/veg/pulses	1 x fish/meat 2 x other
Category 3 Everyday essentials	Milk Tea/coffee/sugar/Squash Eggs	1 x Milk 1 x Tea/coffee/sugar/ Squash 1 x 6 eggs
Category 4 Non-food sundries	Sauce/spice/herbs/ jams/marmalades/pickles/ condiments	1 x any of these products
Category 5 Fresh Meat/Fish	Fresh or frozen chicken/beef/sausages/fish depending on availability	1 x portion chicken/beef/sausages/ fish depending on availability (e.g., 3 x chicken portions for a family or 2 x chicken portions for 2 people)
Category 6 Dairy	Cheese/yoghurt/butter	1 x portion cheese/yoghurt/butter AND 1x Other fridge item depending on availability
Category 7 Snacks/ Desserts	Desserts/Chocolate/Biscuit/Sweet/Savoury Snacks/oil	1 x portion depending on availability
Category 8 Veg & fruit	All fresh vegetables & fruits depending on availability	2 x portions of fruit AND 2 x portions of veg/potatoes

Table 2: Choice of items across food categories



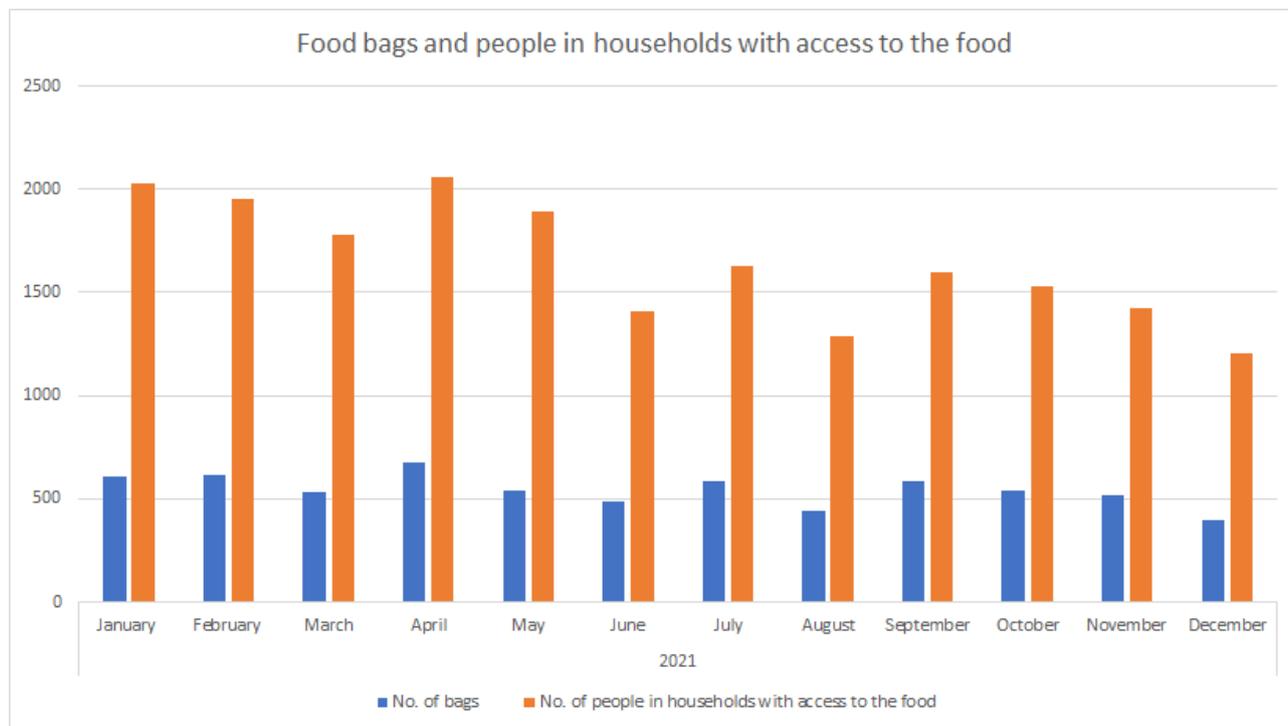


Figure 10: Number of food bags per month and people in households with access to the food

Figure 10 shows the monthly trend in the number of food bags over the period January – December 2021, and an estimate of the number of people with access to that food (i.e., based on the number of adults and children in the members' households).

The data shows that on average, between January and December 2021, CSS provided **125 food bags per week, which translates to food for roughly 380 people in those households**. Overall, the trend in the number of food bags shows an irregular pattern over the months.

According to estimates provided by the project staff, the value of the food that each member picks up is worth £20-25. Staff and volunteers described that they often exercised a degree of flexibility with the number of items

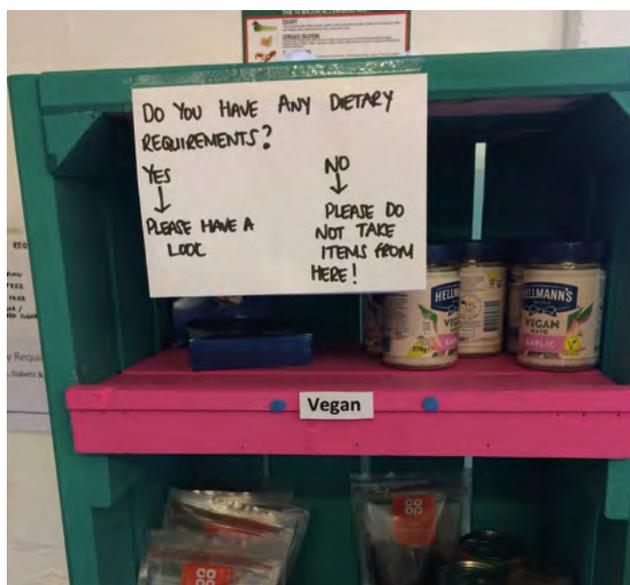
per category that members could take, which depended on their household size (i.e., large families allowed larger portions of meat, dairy or snacks for example) and also on the availability of excess stock. At the point of writing this report (April 2022), members with larger household sizes were being encouraged to opt for two bags of food to ensure a fairer access for everybody and the additional fee per bag to cover some of the costs of extra food.

A key aspect of CSS is their **Special Diet corner** where a selection of food for members who had registered their diet preferences (such as gluten-free, diabetic, celiac, or culture-specific) is available. This has expanded to some extent in Year 2 as a result of concerted efforts made by the staff and volunteers in their individual capacities by making donations to stock more of such food.

One member-volunteer of the CSS commented on the importance of the special diet corner for their specific family circumstances:

...Yeah, usually good. I mean, two of my youngest, one of them has got a cow's milk intolerance, and one of them has got wheat intolerance. And they've always got a lot of selection there... Yeah, I've been able to get soya milk, almond milk for my youngest. I have been able to get wheat free biscuits for the other, wheat free stuff, you know, like pudding, oat bars, breakfast cereals for her.

Obviously, it's what's there. You don't always get a lot there, but there's always still a little bit of a choice. [Member-volunteer 3, January 2022]



Staff and volunteers acknowledge that special diet items are usually in short supply. Although they did not find this to be a big challenge since only a few of their current members expressed a need for special diet items, they realise the importance of stocking more of such food for the benefit of their members in general.

A related aspect is the access to **culturally appropriate food**. The introduction of 'halal chicken' mid-way in 2021 has been welcomed by many of the members. It was after the success of the summer HAF programme that the project staff had taken the decision to stock halal food in response to preferences of a substantial number of new households who had become members. This offers a good illustration of CSS acting on the feedback from their members and responding to dietary needs.

...we're now engaging with the Asian community and other new communities; we have started stocking halal chicken and that's really popular. A good percentage of those families are very happy with the halal chicken as an option. [Operations Manager, November 2021]

Although the **home delivery service** was introduced in Year 1 in response to the pandemic lockdowns to meet the needs of those most vulnerable (i.e., those unable to physically come to CSS for health/disability reasons or if they were 'shielding'), it continued in Year 2, as shown in Figure 11.



Figure 11: Number of food deliveries made per month (2021)

On average, it is estimated that 20-30 food deliveries are made every week, compared to 70-80 during the first national lockdown when the delivery service was at its peak. **The staff and volunteers expect home delivery of food to remain an important service for a much longer time** since it may very well be the only way for some of their members to access food, whether for health, age-related, or other reasons.

3.1.4 Procurement of food

CSS procures most of its food from the regional branch of [FareShare](#), a leading UK food redistribution charity. Other sources include donations from local supermarkets (like Tesco, Asda, Co-op, Costco, etc.), local shops, schools, charities, local enterprises such as [Team Springboard and the Coventry Food Growing Network](#), local churches and also the general public. However, quite early on, it had become clear that neither FareShare nor donations reliably provided sufficient basic staples or essential items necessary for a nutritionally balanced offering every week. Therefore, CSS continues to purchase the items needed, some from high street retailers and some items in bulk from wholesalers. Staff reported that these invariably include items like UHT milk, cheese, fruit and vegetables, and at times tinned items (e.g., meat, vegetables), gravy, jam, squash, coffee. Fresh fruits and vegetables are purchased every week from a local retailer, [MyFreshCo](#), since Year 1.

Over the last two years, project reports indicate that the **amount of food ordered from FareShare has more than doubled**, increasing from an estimated 300 kg/week in 2020 to 680 kg/week in 2021, and equivalently a doubling of fees paid to FareShare. This cost is estimated to go higher for Year 3. In parallel, the quantity of **'top-up' purchases has also steadily increased**, in order to provide the store cupboard essentials in the food offer.

It should be noted that in Year 1, a large percentage of the food costs had been met by special COVID-19 funding for food (such as from Defra, Coventry City Council, and the Food Power Network) which was available to community organisations. Furthermore, no fees were charged by FareShare because of COVID-19 funding that it had received. Overall, food purchases were less also because of the massive food donations received that year. However, Year 2 saw a big change on all these fronts with a dwindling of food donations, increased costs for surplus from FareShare and lack of specific government funding for food.



Thus, **increased food costs, which we had anticipated in our interim evaluation to become a key challenge**, has led to increased allocation of budget towards buying the food needed to meet the growing demand, whether it is from FareShare for the surplus food or food purchases from other sources. We discuss this further under the challenges faced by CSS (see Section 4.2).

3.1.5 Reasons for using the CSS

Members have had various reasons to come and use the services offered at FCC. The main entry point, especially during the various lockdown periods, has been the CSS with its offer of affordable food.

...It was when the first big lockdown happened. And that's when I got furloughed from a job. It was good to get some food. I was very short of money. ... It was somebody who used to come here who told me about it. That I should come here. But I said, I'm not going. I'm not going there. I'm not hard up enough. I'm not going there. But someone that lived with me, well, she just told me I had to come here. So, I just started coming here. [Member-volunteer 2, January 2022]

...My partner was employed but when we went into lockdown, he lost his job. Well, he went on furlough at first. And then he was just never called back. So, he lost his job. ... Though at first, we were getting a food bag through another charity ... and they stopped doing it. And they said we would have to go ourselves [to pick up the food bags]. We obviously understood that. And they told us that it was coming from the community center. So that's how we found out about it. [Member-volunteer 3, January 2022]

In later months, different routes of 'first contact' have been established, especially the HAF programmes. However, while discussing the main reasons that bring people to the CSS, **financial problems** faced by them emerged as a broad category that underpinned the need to use the CSS. These include two types of issues, as described by the Support Worker at FCC - one relates to members not having enough money coming in, and another, often related one, sees members running up debts from overspending. In both cases though, it has led to members not having enough money left for food. The entanglement with debts was arising from both low income and from problems with managing money as from overspending.

...we have realised that a lot of our members actually have some income but it's just that their outgoings is too high. So, they have some support from universal credit... but outgoings are not balanced, so it can be sometimes an issue of overspending. We live in a capitalist society, you know, we are pushed to consume, consume, consume, even goes to debts to just... and then people are in a situation where they have debts piling up and they are not

able to meet what they are spending. [Support Worker, November 2021]

As the Advice Caseworker of [Coventry Independent Advice Services](#) (CIAS) established onsite for the provision of support services to members described, the main issue that the members who came to them related to "**debts and benefits**":

...the general factor for them is debts. So, whoever comes to the social supermarket will have some debts. It doesn't have to be their fault, but they do have some debts, credit card loans and commitments ... I think that's the main issue. People have a massive commitment in main monthly payments, you know, TV subscription, mobile phones, not just a credit card for a loan. But everything. And commitment is big and that's why they are struggling afterwards with essential things. When you do sign a contract, you stick with them for a year or sometimes two. And I think people find that difficult... definitely over commitment and not able to manage the money properly -- that's the main one. Obviously, they don't have a lot of money to spend on, so they don't have a lot of money to budget on and that's another thing... [Advice Caseworker, January 2022]

The other category of issues includes health (physical and mental), disability issues, domestic violence, and immigration issues. In many cases, the reasons were found to be interlinked, thus indicating multiple vulnerabilities faced by the members, for which a holistic approach to support is required as argued by the Support Worker.

...some people tick several boxes, so we will have our network of organisations and our network of support and our set of support that we can do here at the Centre... that's where we are starting to be. When new members come up, we will say -- we can support you with this here, we can refer you to this organisation, you can come here and volunteer and meet this and this person, you could come to the garden, ... you can take part in the wellbeing classes. So, it's quite a wide set of things and we can provide holistic support here. [Support Worker, November 2021]

Another broader concern raised relates to 'marginalisation' of food as a societal issue, arising in some cases from individual choices and in others from institutional/structural barriers to access affordable food, as described in the quote below.

*...In a way, I think it has become a **societal issue** now, food has not been made the priority. Some people will spend on cosmetic things... and all other things before food and then food comes at the end. At the end of the month, those people realise well, I don't have money in my account, and I can't buy food, so now it becomes essential. What do I do to*

fill in my fridge? I go to the food bank... we have come across such situations, but not the only type... there are also cases of asylum seekers that came to the Centre, they are simply not having the money to access food... and sometimes it can last years and years. [Support Worker, November 2021]

The findings from our survey confirm the above findings. We asked members about their reasons for joining the CSS, giving them the option to select more than one reason.

As the data indicates (see Figure 12) exactly half of the respondents (n=23, 50%) selected the reason 'to spend less on food', and nearly half (46%) selected 'to save money'. These were the most cited responses. This is not especially surprising given the core mandate of a social supermarket and the low-income groups that the members belong to. In the 2020 survey, the top four reasons given by the respondents were also financial – 'to spend less on food', 'to save money', 'change in economic circumstances', and 'a lack of stable/regular/sufficient income'.

The reason 'to stop food waste' was selected as a reason by 26% (n=12) of the respondents, which can be related to the financial aspect in that a reduction in waste means greater resourcefulness and thus more 'value for money' from food items. What cannot be determined from these data, however, is if those who selected 'to stop food waste' were driven by more environmental reasons associated with social-ecological costs of food

waste, or by more instrumental/ financial decision-making criteria.

It is also noteworthy that 22% of respondents (n=10) selected 'to make friends/meet people' as a reason for using CSS, indicating that the space and CSS community has a role in terms of **widening members' social networks and connections**.

Responding to a question if their reasons had changed since first joining CSS, a high proportion of respondents (65%, n=30) said that it had not changed. Amongst the eight respondents who described a change in their reasons, for three of them, it was in relation to getting employment and thereby earning a little bit more; for one, it was the opposite as they were struggling with Universal Credit. Another described, "after ongoing support with the food and meeting/getting to know everyone there, I'd like to get more involved".

Financial hardship, unstable income, and low income also came across as the 'main reason' for joining CSS in the open-ended question that we asked. The findings on the annual household income of the respondents throws further light on this, as shown in Figure 13. Amongst the respondents, the largest proportion (36%, n=16) were in the 'less than £10,000' income range. This group of people may thus include what the UK government terms as 'just about managing' who are trying to get by on very low incomes. 31% (n=14) were in the £10,000-19,999 income range, 22% (n=10) said they were not sure, or they didn't know. Three were in £20,000 -29,000-income range.

What were your reasons for joining the social supermarket? (please select all that apply)

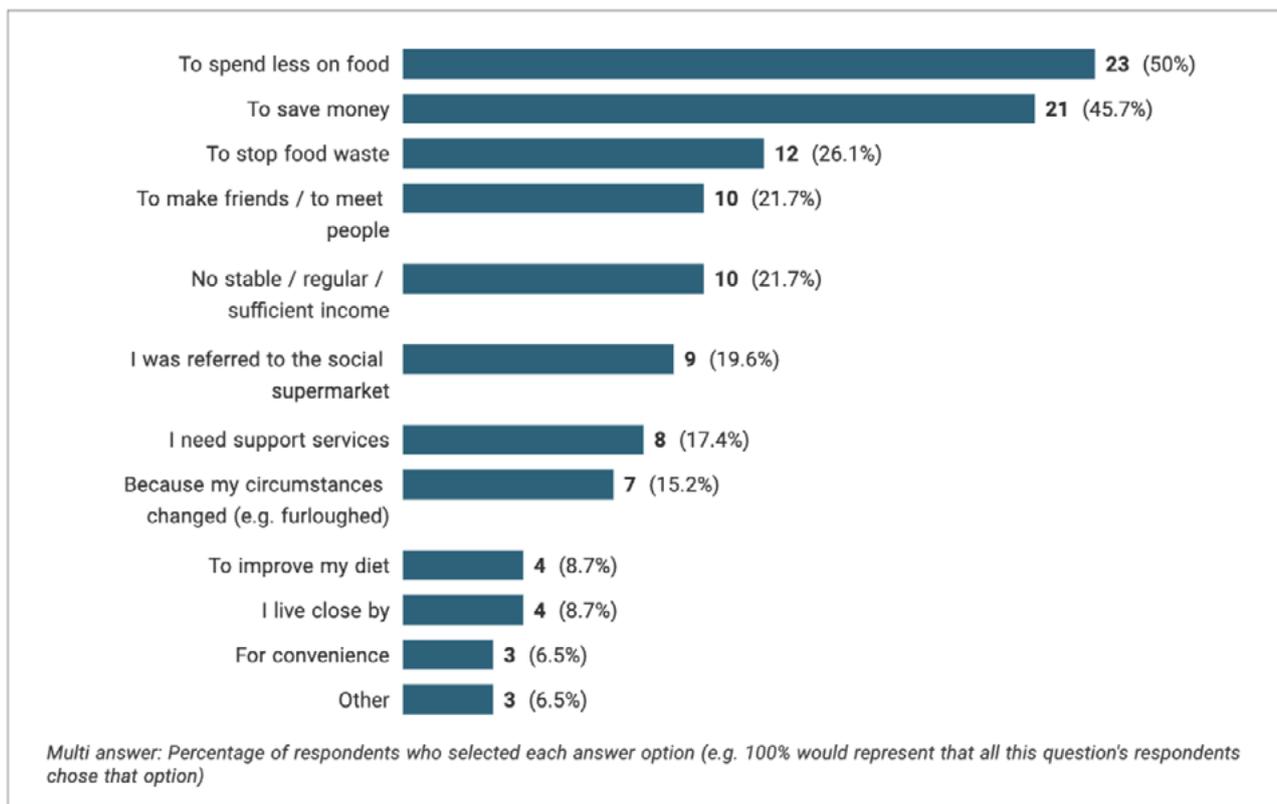


Figure 12: Reasons for joining CSS

Please estimate your annual household income (for 2021)

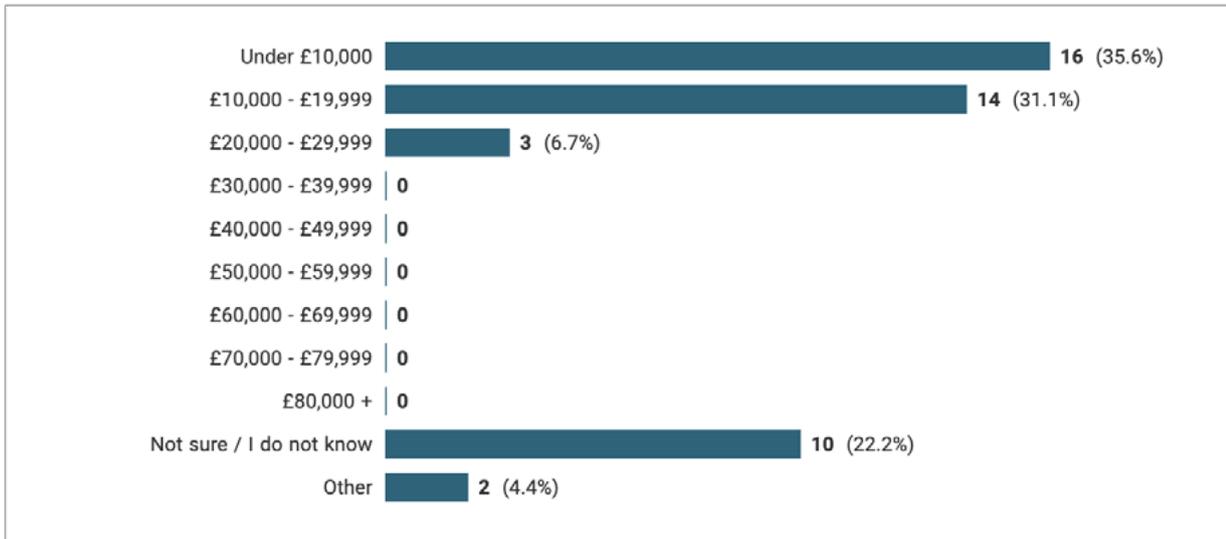


Figure 13: Estimated household income of respondents

Other indicators also show the dependence on low income. Among the respondents, 39% of them (n=18) use **free school meal vouchers** [and 57% (n=26) did not use school meal vouchers, because they did not have school-going children]. A high proportion of the respondents (65%, n=30) also indicated that they or a member of their household is in receipt of **state welfare/benefits** which include Universal Credit, Employment Support Allowance (ESA), pension credit, housing benefit, Job Seeker’s Allowance (JSA), Disability Allowance, Carer’s Allowance, child benefit, and PIP.

A more specific question on the work situation, as shown in Figure 14, reveals that 22% (n=10) of the respondents were homemakers followed by those unemployed and looking for work (15%, n=7). There were few who were working full-time (n=4), six members were part-time, five retired, seven doing unpaid/voluntary work, and one self-employed. Considering the reasons stated in the ‘other’ category, the number of homemakers becomes higher and health issues were described as reasons for lack of employment.

Please indicate your work / employment situation since January 2021 (i.e. in the last 12 months or so)

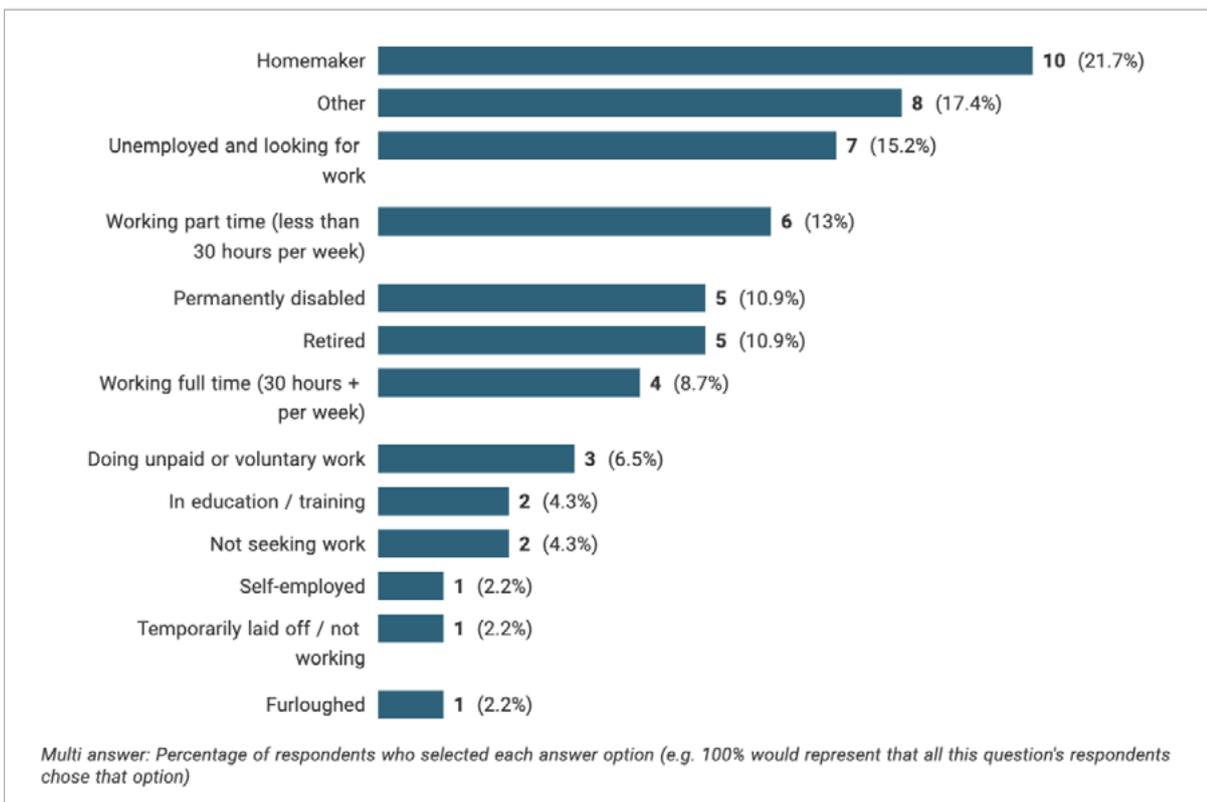


Figure 14: Breakdown of employment and/or professional status of respondents

The findings from the 2021 survey closely mirror the 2020 survey data in terms of employment status and household income, reinforcing financial hardship, unstable income, and low income as the ‘main reason’ for the large majority of the people turning to social supermarkets.

In order to understand the pattern in food strategies adopted by the members more broadly, we had asked them about the various sources they use to get food (see Figure 15).

Similar to findings from the 2020 survey, for a high proportion of the respondents (83%, n=38) the main source of food was buying food from supermarkets, closely followed by local shops. Three respondents also used **food banks**, while three used harvest from **allotments** and **kitchen garden**, and none reported produce from **community growing**. In the open-ended response to the same question, one respondent mentioned ‘growing own food’. These findings support other studies that show diversified coping strategies often adopted by people for food resilience.

In response to the question on observed changes in **household spending on food** since joining the CSS (see Figure 16), the total amount had decreased for a high proportion of respondents (n=28, 61%), while 35% felt it had not changed or were unsure, and 4% (n=2) reported that it had increased since joining CSS. It must be noted

that questions about what these data mean in practice require further probing. For example, expenditure may have decreased because household income has reduced (e.g., job loss, furlough through the pandemic, and transition to precarious work or ‘gig economy’). Expenditure may have increased because the baseline prior to joining CSS was already very low.

It is worthwhile highlighting that the impact on household spending on food is noted across different household types, as shown in Figure 17. The largest proportion of the households comprise of ‘couple with children under 18 years old (35%, n=16), followed by single parent families (26%, n=12), and single adults (17%, n=8).

When asked what respondents **would have done differently if they did not get food from CSS**, over half of respondents (52%, n=24), said they would have spent more money on food from elsewhere, 35% (n=16) said they would have eaten less fresh food and 28% (n=13) reported that they would have eaten fewer meals (see Figure 18).

The findings also show that 15% (n=7) reported that they would have turned to using **food banks** if they did not use the CSS. The responses from the 2020 Survey to the same question indicated 19% would have turned to food banks. Taken together, these findings suggests that at least potentially **CSS may have reduced the need for some people to turn to emergency food provision**

Apart from the social supermarket, what are the other places you/your household get your food from? (please select all that apply)

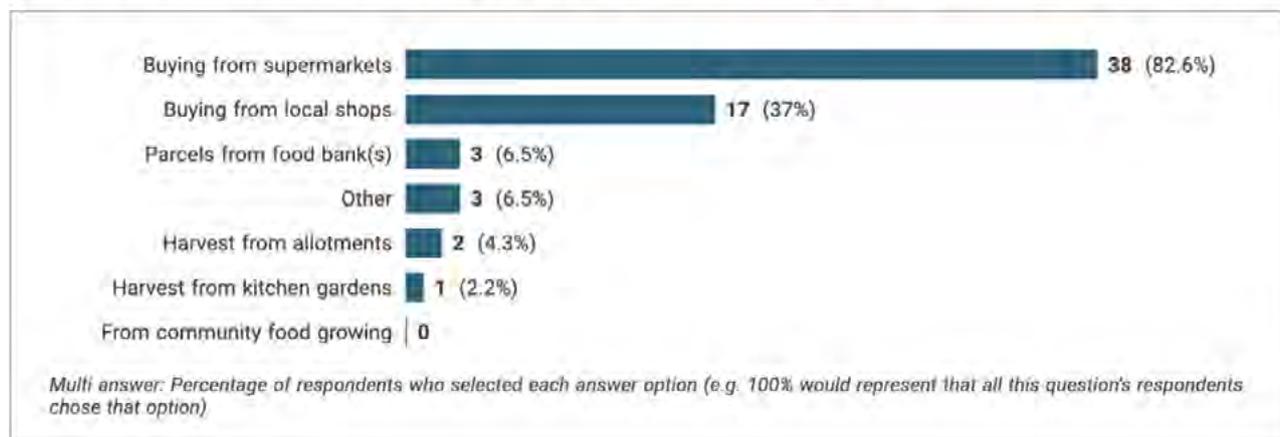


Figure 15: Where CSS members source food from (in addition to the CSS)

Since joining the social supermarket, would you say the total amount you/your household spend on food has changed?

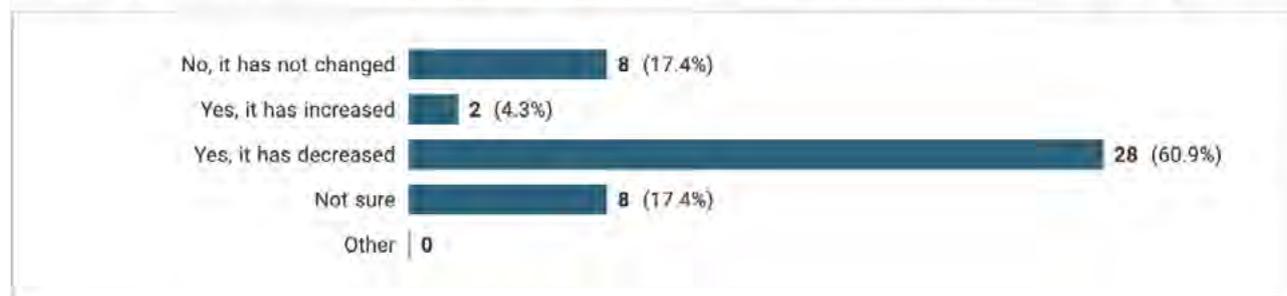


Figure 16: Indications on whether expenditure on food has changed since becoming a CSS member

Please indicate the nature of your household

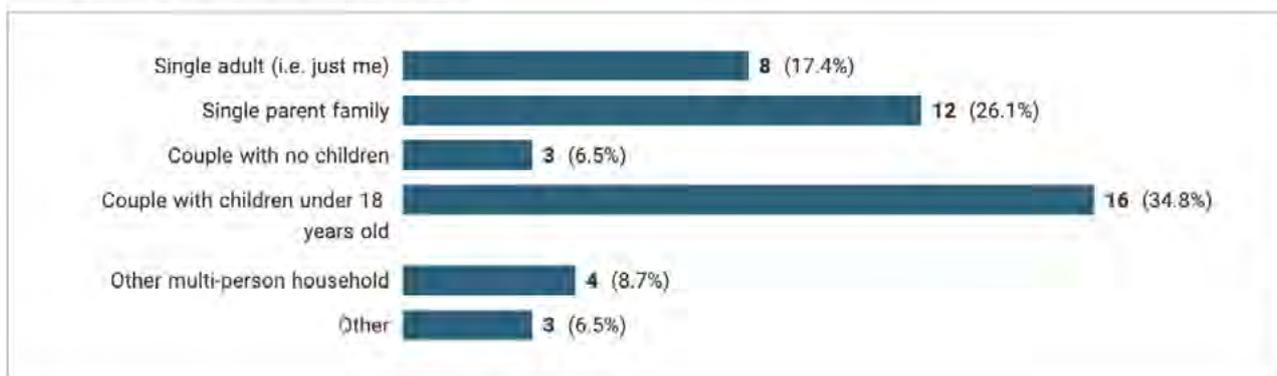


Figure 17: Profile of households of respondents to the survey (2021)

(i.e., food banks), a key indicator for the project’s positive impact on food resilience.

As described earlier (Figure 15), three respondents in the member survey had reported using food banks in addition to using CSS. Anecdotal reports from the staff and volunteers indicate that a high percentage of people who turn up at FCC to get their food parcel from the emergency food hub (i.e., the food bank) co-located in the FCC building (described later in Section 3.1.9) continue to use the food bank and the CSS for a while before moving on completely to the CSS. We discuss the **intersection between the food bank and CSS** further in Section 3.1.9 to understand how this has unexpectedly led the project to develop a structured pathway to reducing food vulnerability.

Figure 18 also shows that only two respondents considered the **growing of food** as an option. This raises questions on how it may be related to the lack of growing spaces at home or in the community, or to a lack of time. On the other hand, it may also be associated with the high level of satisfaction respondents have reported over

the ready availability, affordability, and convenience of getting fresh produce at CSS. Further work is needed to qualify and answer these questions in relation to growing food practices.

3.1.6 Satisfaction with food

As indicated by responses to the six statements to determine their level of satisfaction with the food from CSS (see Figure 19), the respondents are largely satisfied. Most of the respondents (n=37, 80%) were ‘very satisfied’ with what is provided for £4. This shows that CSS members feel they are getting good value for money. The only category where ‘very satisfied’ was not the most reported relates to the amount of fresh fruit included in the purchase, with 19 respondents ‘very satisfied’ and 20 respondents ‘satisfied’. No respondents selected ‘very dissatisfied’ with any statement, though the highest level of dissatisfaction relates to the cultural appropriateness of food and familiarity with cooking and eating it (n=5, 11%).

What would you/your household have done differently regarding food if you did not buy from the social supermarket?

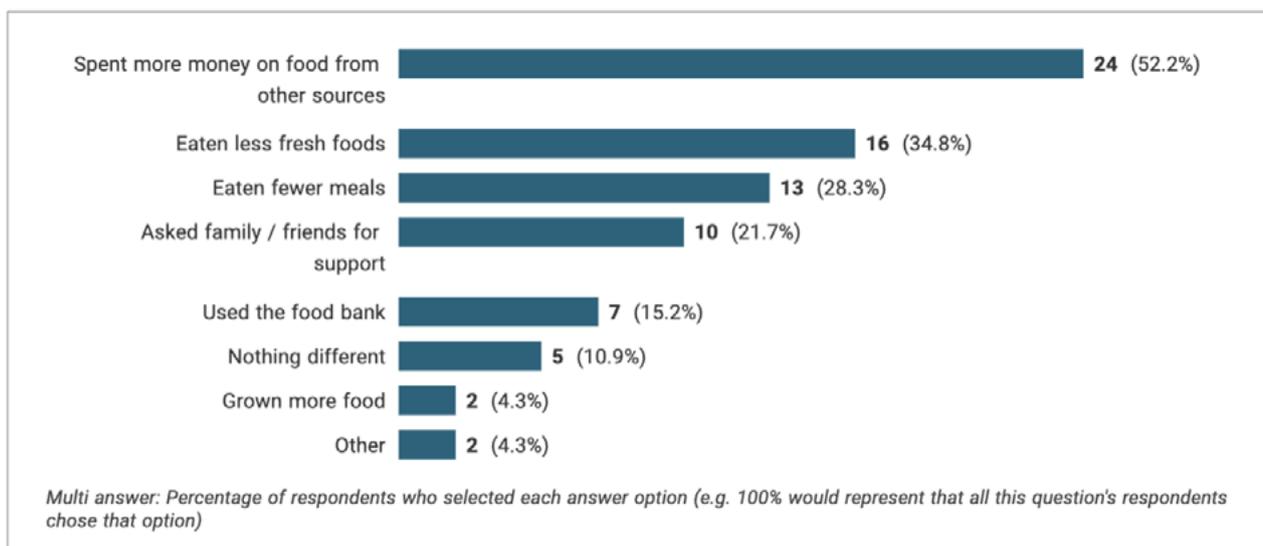


Figure 18: What households would have done if they did not use CSS

In general, how satisfied are you with the food you buy from the social supermarket?



Figure 19: Levels of satisfaction about the quantity and quality of food sourced from CSS

The responses to the open-ended question on how they would describe the food available at CSS point to similar conclusions, as shown in Box 1.

Absolutely brilliant, staff are incredible. Couldn't praise it more.

More food specific to the culture of the shoppers.

Operations Manager, the staff and volunteers are fantastic, thank you for your help when I virtually had no income coming in.

To not be close to expiry date.

Too many cans for me, but they are useful sometimes.

There is always a good wide selection.

I would prefer more fresh fruits & vegetables.

They are doing their best for people.

It's all very good.

A little of everything for all individual needs, even some for pets. It's all in date, healthy, filling.

There are very good food items.

Box 1: Qualitative responses to the food available at CSS

3.1.7 Consumption of fresh produce

As described earlier (Section 3.1.6), the level of satisfaction with the quantity of fresh vegetables and fruits included in the £4 worth of food that the membership fee provided access to was very high, with more than 85% of the respondents **satisfied** with the amount of both.

The level of agreement with increased consumption of fresh fruit and fresh vegetables since joining the CSS are shown in Figures 20 and 21 respectively.

I / we eat more fresh fruit at home - Level of agreement / disagreement



Figure 20: Levels of agreement/disagreement with increased consumption of fresh fruit since becoming a CSS member

I / we eat more fresh vegetables at home - Level of agreement / disagreement

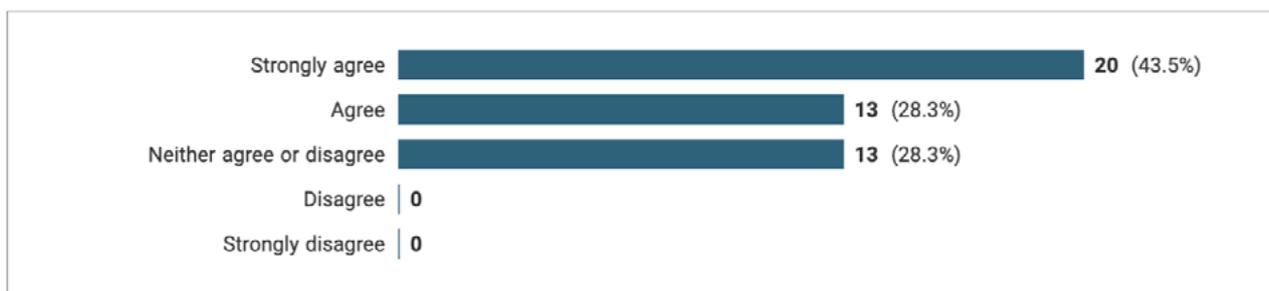


Figure 21: Levels of agreement/disagreement with increased consumption of fresh vegetables since becoming a CSS member

As the data indicate, a very high proportion of respondents agree that their consumption of fresh produce (fruits and vegetables) has increased since joining CSS. It should be noted here that at CSS, additional fresh produce comprising of a mixed selection of fruits and vegetables that are in excess on the day are put in separate bags for members to take them free of cost if they wanted to.

The responses on the uptake of this free assorted fresh produce among the respondents are shown in Figure 22.

Have you taken the additional fresh fruits/vegetables sometimes given away free when you do your shopping?

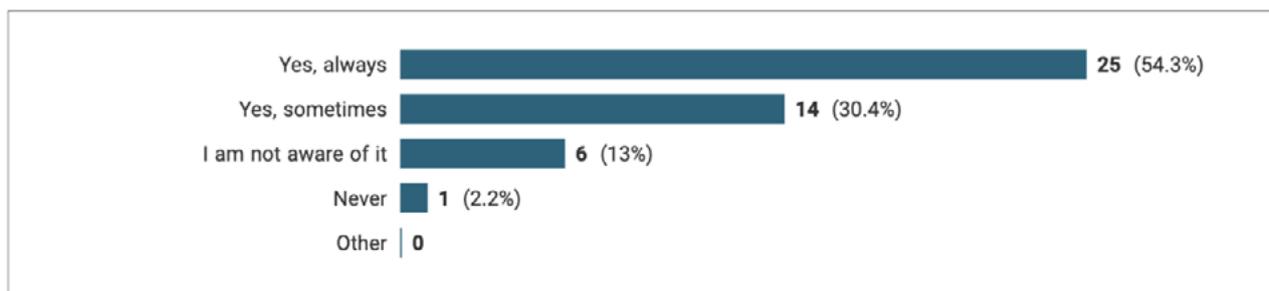


Figure 22: Uptake of additional free bag of fresh fruit and vegetables by CSS members

Additional fresh fruit and vegetables bags (free) for CSS members



The results indicate that over half (54%, n=25) have always taken the additional fresh produce when they do their shopping, while 30% (n=14) did that sometimes, and only 1 respondent never did, the latter relatively a 'new' member who had joined in September 2021. However, 13% of respondents (n=6) were also not aware of this offer. Half of this group picked up their food bag onsite but described themselves as rarely using CSS. The other half received food deliveries at home, and we learnt from conversations with project staff that additional free fruits and vegetables were "automatically" added to home deliveries which could explain the lack of specific awareness of this offer on its own.

When these data were cross tabulated, it revealed that of the six respondents who were not aware of the additional fresh produce available, three of them neither agreed or disagreed that they consume more fresh fruit at home, and four of them neither agreed nor disagreed that they consume more vegetables at home (since becoming a member of CSS). This suggests that a lack of awareness of what is available at CSS correlates to some extent with an ambivalent response about an increase in consuming fresh produce at home.

Overall, in addition to the increased availability, the **increased consumption of fresh produce** is evident, and it is a significant outcome along with positive changes more broadly in food habits, which we describe next.

3.1.8 Changing food habits

We asked members if joining the CSS had an impact on household food habits. The responses are shown in Figure 23.

The data suggests that overall there have been clear positive changes in terms of the **variety of food** that people choose and consume. For example, 85% of respondents (n=39) either strongly agree or agree that they have tried new food items. A similar number (n=34, 74%) strongly agree or agree that they have **cooked new dishes** (i.e., tried new recipes).

It must be noted that 33% of respondents (n=15) neither agree nor disagree that they cook more meals at home, with a similar proportion (28%, n=13) reporting that they neither agree nor disagree with consuming more fresh vegetables at home. A similar proportion (26%, n=12) neither agree nor disagree with increased fresh fruit consumption at home. There is, however, still a strong indication that **fresh fruit and vegetable consumption has increased**, with 72% and 74% strongly agreeing or agreeing that they eat more fresh vegetables and more fresh fruit respectively. An important point here is that nobody gave a 'negative' response (disagreed or strongly disagreed) to consumption of more fresh fruit or vegetables, thus indicating that the CSS food offer does not adversely impact the intake of fresh produce, instead it largely enhances it.

Since joining the social supermarket, please indicate the extent to which you agree / disagree with the following statements about changes in your / your household's diet and cooking

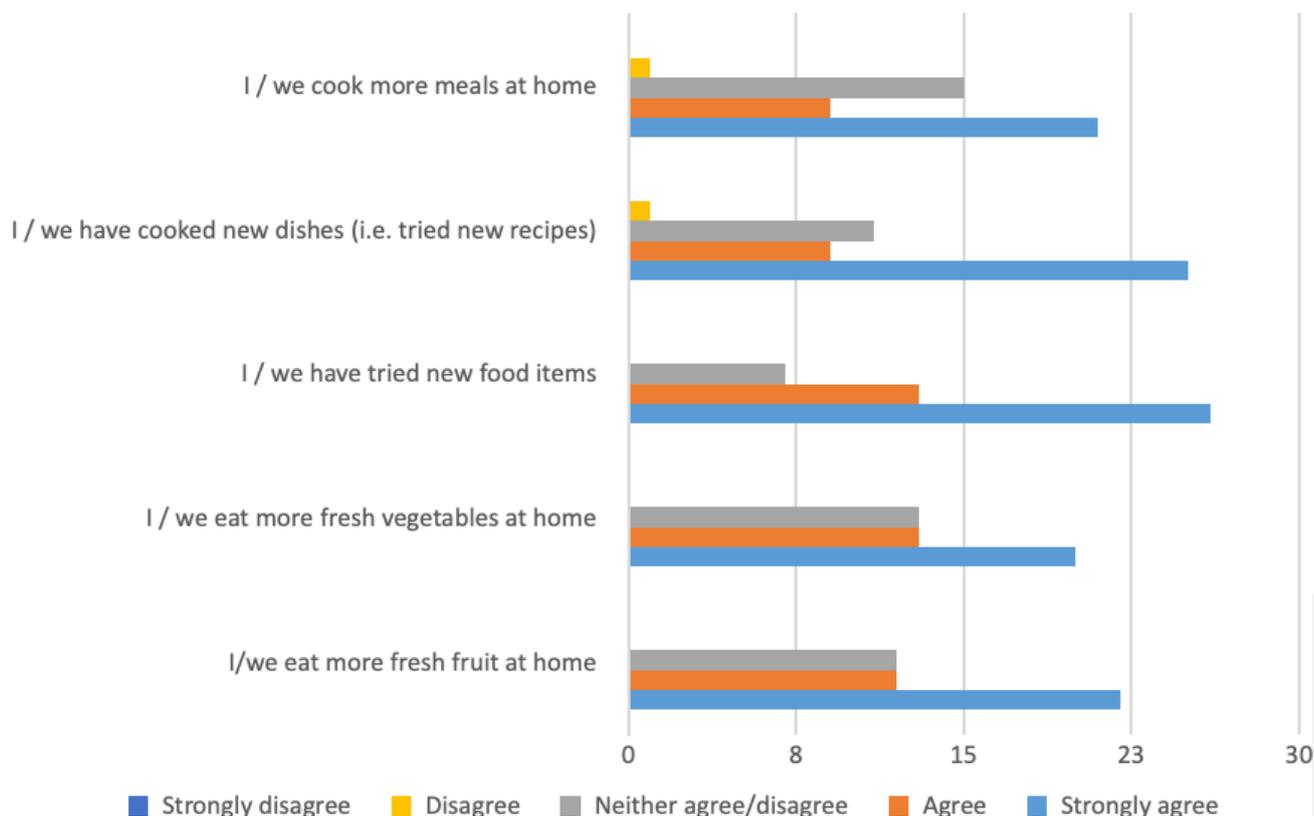


Figure 23: Extent to which respondents agree/disagree with changes to their household's diet and cooking habits

Follow up qualitative responses to an open-ended question on other changes in food habits that the members may have observed since joining CSS reinforce some of the positive impacts that have occurred in terms of their diets and cooking (see Box 2).

These responses reinforce the positive impact of CSS food offer in terms of variety, and the introduction to new foods that the members would not normally have purchased or consumed. This also came up in the interviews with staff and volunteers when they described the feedback on food that they received from their members.

Two respondents in the members' survey, as seen in Box 2, stated that they had become more **conscious of food waste** and had started wasting less food. This finding was also reflected in the interviews with volunteers, which indicates a positive impact of engagement with CSS on increasing both motivation and awareness leading to actions preventing wastage of food in the households of members and volunteers (see Section 3.2.2).

In Year 1, as an additional feature to promote cooking and healthy eating, CSS had introduced the '**Recipe Bags**' priced at £1 each, which was offered as an add-on to the food offer. These contained the instructions and all the ingredients necessary to prepare a particular recipe, usually based on food items that are in excess stock (e.g., chickpeas-based meal). The recipes were provided by [Groundwork West Midlands](#) and the CSS staff and volunteers put together the recipes and ingredients into bags. As described by Groundwork's Lead Coordinator:

...We've worked with [FCC] before, during the first lockdown. We worked with [them] to provide recipes for the social supermarket and for food bank... [They] would sort of come to us and say, we've just been donated fifty pineapples, we need a recipe that we can use pineapples in. We would then put a recipe together, send it over ... So, we would provide them with regular recipes dependent on the food that came to them from FareShare or the

supermarkets or wherever they managed to get the food from. The idea behind this was they found that if they just give people a bag of food, then they might... they would be really grateful for that bag of food, but they wouldn't know what to do with that bag of food. So, by us including recipes, that then sort of allowed the families to actually make a meal out of that food rather than just, you know, if someone has a tin of chickpeas, but doesn't know what to do with the tin of chickpeas, they're just going to sit in a cupboard. So, it was all about sort of making sure that those families that were receiving the food parcels were able to actually use the food rather than it just sitting there doing nothing. [Lead Coordinator, Groundwork, January 2022]

On an average, it was estimated that 10 bags were purchased each week by the members. By mid-2021, however, this offer had been discontinued because of a perceived lack of interest and lack of time expressed by CSS members for learning new recipes and doing the cooking. The other reason was the overall lack of excess surplus, and the enormous amount of volunteer hours required to put together enough recipe bags for all members. Taken together, this draws our attention to the links between constraints of time and the assumed uptake of certain time-intensive interventions for changing of food habits, which need further examination.

I cook more.

We have become more conscious about food waste and feel more healthy.

I waste less.

Children have joined in cooking, and we have explored new recipes which have been healthier.

I have tried some ready meals especially from Tesco & they are good.

I tried vegetarian meal & we love it.

I use more food from cans.

I tried new foods & fruits.

I'm eating better.

With my health, I have to eat little and often. I've been helped with soups and lovely meal. Making burgers fresh from extra mince been given for freezer.

Box 2: Qualitative responses to changes in food habits

3.1.9 Engagement with other food projects

Another aspect of the project’s impact on food resilience that we looked at was in relation to FCC’s engagement with other food projects and initiatives in Coventry.

Emergency Food Hub/food bank

Since the first lockdown in March 2020, FCC continues to run one of the [10 emergency food hubs](#) that were set up and coordinated by Coventry City Council for vulnerable residents across Coventry that year. At these hubs, prepacked food parcels (ambient and long dated food) obtained from Coventry Foodbank are handed out to people who are in receipt of food bank vouchers. Although it was primarily designed to be a home delivery service targeted at supporting people who found it difficult to access food during the pandemic, it had soon become a collection service onsite.

The uptake of food parcels from the hub at FCC during 2021 (see Figure 24) indicates on average around **36 bags per month** benefiting an estimated number of 90 people based on household size.

From an initial hesitation by the project team to house a food bank beyond the lockdown period within the same building that has a social supermarket, FCC has quite unexpectedly and steadily accepted the food bank as part of its **“progression route of support”** as reflected in the following quote.

...I’ve gone from really disliking food bank... it’s not just liking, I wasn’t really committed to it, I wasn’t that involved in it, and now I feel completely different, I see the value of it... We’re seeing a lot of people coming through the food bank that are in desperate need of support. And obviously, if we’re not offering that service, they’re not going to come here and we’re not going to see those people. So, I think there’s an opportunity for us to help them at that very emergency stage with their food bank parcels also, and sign post them to the rest of our services. Some people have come in and they’re absolutely... completely destitute and need a lot far more than just a food bank parcel... [Operations Manager, October 2021]

Interviews with staff and volunteers further reveal their support to “keeping permanently” the food bank in FCC as it allows them to support those who need emergency food assistance, while at the same time offering them the opportunity to benefit from support services and food from CSS with the aim of supporting their transition out of the crises facing them. As described by the Operations Manager,

...I’m fully committed to keep it... because that is the first point of contact with people who are experiencing severe hardship. They are in an emergency situation, and I feel personally that we’re best placed to deal with that situation with the staff and volunteers that we’ve got onsite here and support services...

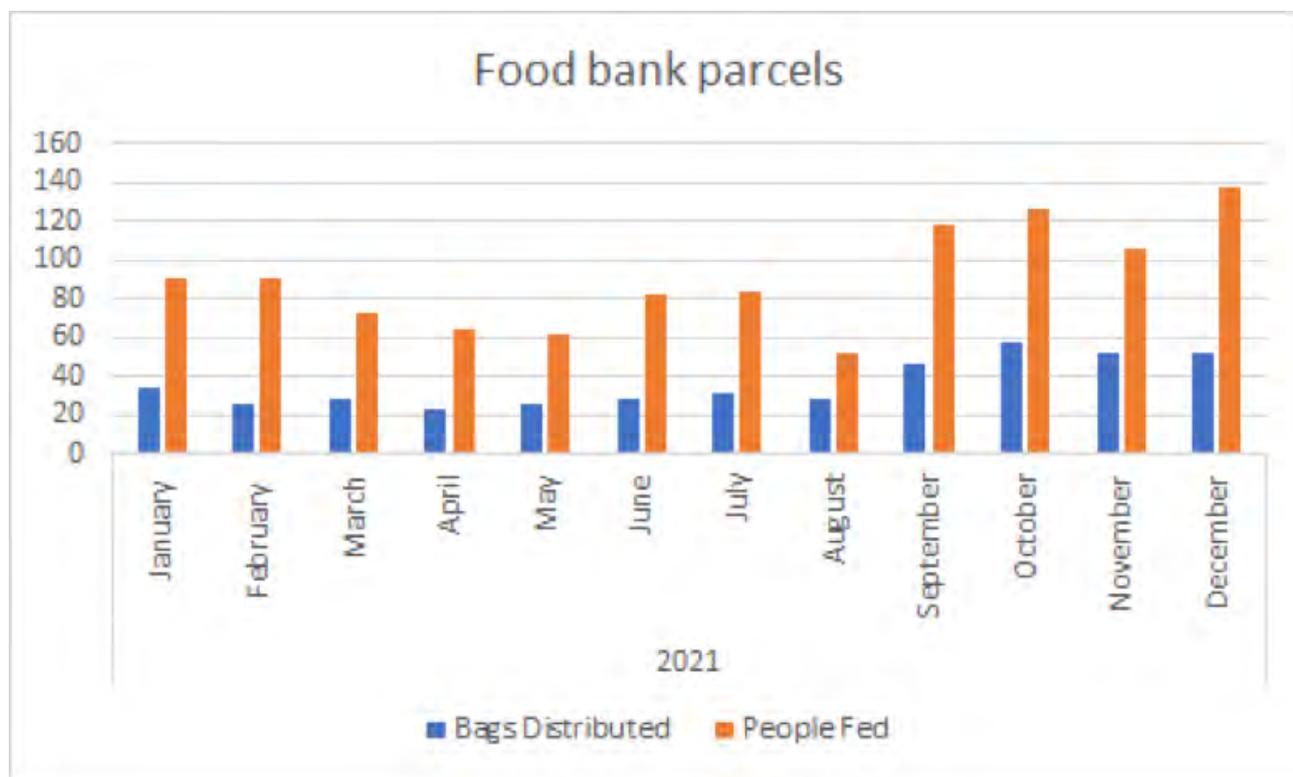


Figure 24: Food bank parcels distributed, and number of people fed throughout 2021

...I've made it really clear to the staff and volunteers here that no one is to leave here without having been told about the full range of support that they can get here. So, the idea is to move people from the food bank to, you know, to the social supermarket through the wellbeing activities, through the volunteering... [Operations Manager, November 2021]

At the point of writing this report, the staff had received training from Coventry Food Bank on how to issue food bank parcels themselves to streamline the process further.

...we are one of the only centres that's open on a Saturday and on Friday afternoons as well. So, if someone's in an emergency situation on a Friday afternoon or a Saturday, it's nice to be able to say: 'Right, well, we can issue a food bank parcel for now and this is your progression route through support, but for today, we've got a food bank parcel for you'. Obviously, it'd be nice to issue everyone with a social supermarket food bag but obviously you've got to think also about your costs, you know. It's awkward, isn't it. I wouldn't ever see anyone leave here without food, you know. Obviously, if there was no food bank parcel option available, of course they'll be getting a social supermarket food bag. But you know, for me it's great to have that option. I can actually give them an emergency food bank parcel that day, along with any extras that we're able to provide like bread, etc. [Operations Manager, November 2021]

Winter Food Parcels

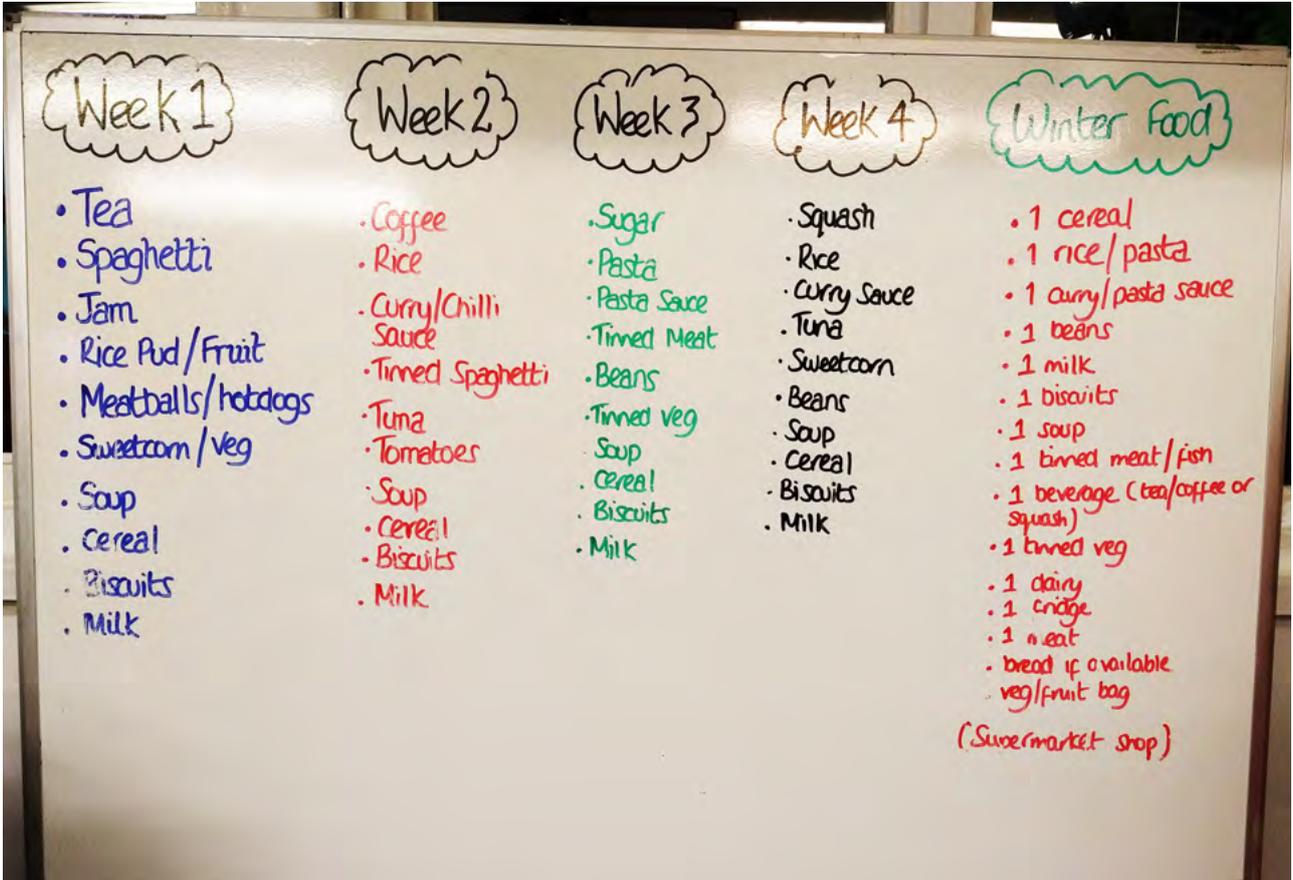
FCC has continued to deliver 'winter food parcels' since December 2020 as part of the [Covid Winter Grant programme](#) funded by Coventry City Council,

for supporting individuals and families in Coventry with food during the winter period. This involves giving out a bag of prepacked food (selected from the different food categories as in CSS offer) to those people who come to them through referrals from the local Council. As in the case of CSS food bags, the food offer in the parcel varies by week depending on the food available.

Over a span of two years, FCC has thus become a conduit for **food provisioning of three types**: the CSS offer for members, emergency food provision (the food bank parcel), and the winter food parcels. Instead of being seen as disparate or disconnected, these are seen as linked to the project's aim to alleviate food insecurity/poverty in Coventry. As described by staff,

...if somebody turned up for food bank ... if they've got a food bank voucher, they just get immediately a very, very staple bag of food, but no fresh, no dairy... So, at that point, if they're in our catchment, we talk about the social supermarket ... We would encourage them if they were struggling that much to think about becoming a member and getting the support that can help them long term. And if they don't want to become a member, because they can't for whatever reason financially, then we'd suggest ... the winter food scheme. If they register with the Council, the Council will then email us a code and then with that code they then can access a whole bag of food with dairy, vegetables and everything else, so basically, it's what our members would get for £4 a week, but then we can invoice the Council for that bag of food... If it was someone that was really desperate, we would do it two or three weeks, I suppose, it's for the short term. Or, you know we would allocate them to their local food hub in the catchment area they are in. [Volunteer Coordinator, December 2021]





The uptake of the winter food scheme during 2021 shows a wide fluctuation, as shown in Figure 25.

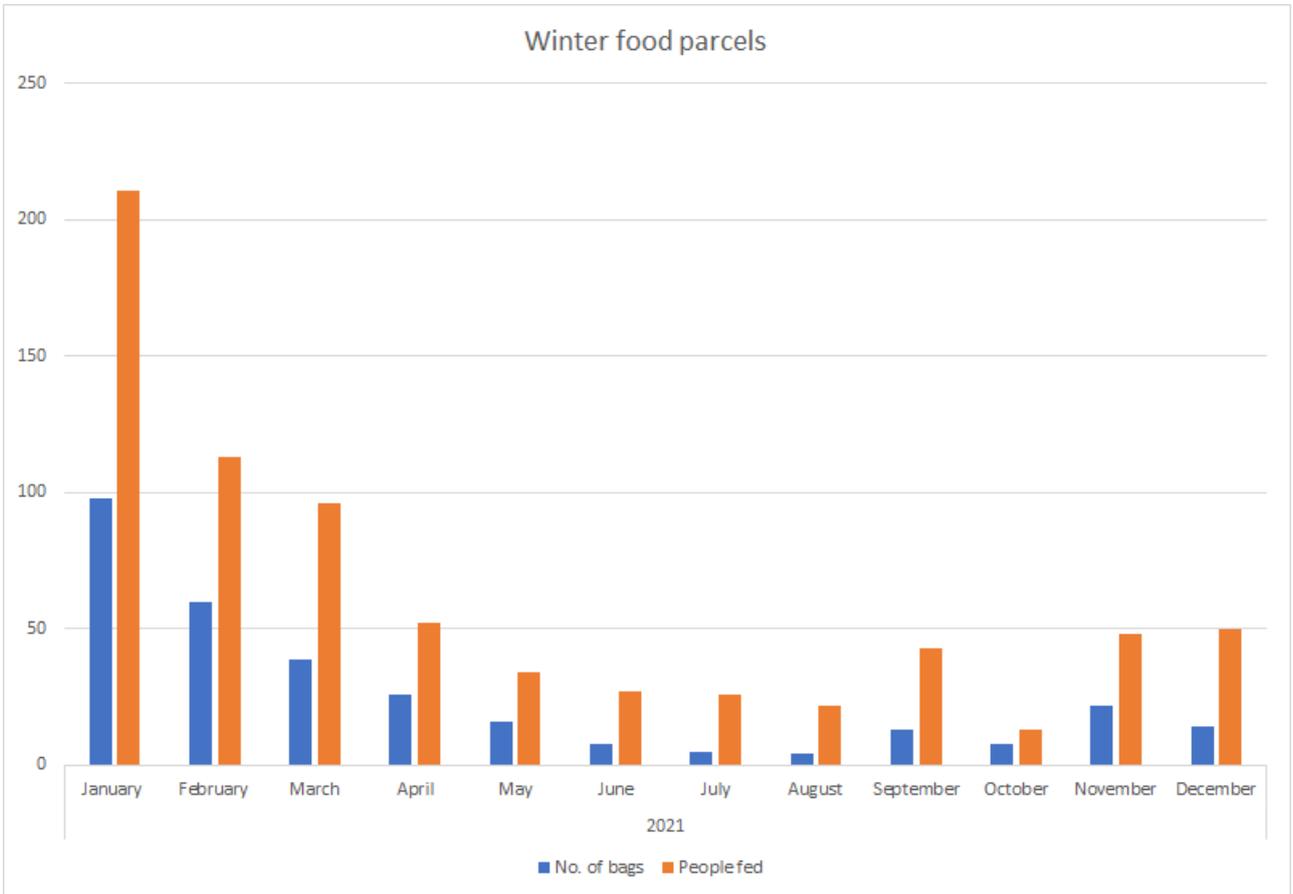


Figure 25: Number of winter food parcels distributed and number of people fed

The data shows that the number of winter food parcels given out ranged from as high as 98 in January to as low as four in August. A plausible reason for this wide variation in uptake during the year, despite the prevalence of food insecurity/poverty in the city, was ascribed by project staff to administrative difficulties in the handling and management of the application process at the local Council level. It would be interesting to explore this in future research especially from the perspective of reducing institutional barriers and/or improving access to food.

School holiday food and activity programmes

Following their successful engagement in Year 1 with school holiday programmes, FCC continued with organising those programmes in 2021. During Easter, when lockdown was still on, they participated in a Council run programme to distribute breakfast and activity packs to school children. These packs were distributed to children from families of those who were members of CSS, and from families from the local community eligible for Free School Meals. During the October half term, FCC organised, on its own initiative, a programme for school children described as “a day full of fun, games and healthy eating” in the feedback received.

In 2021, FCC was also successful in applying for the first ever [Holiday Activities and Food programme](#) (HAF) rolled out in England, which led to them receiving funding from Coventry City Council to run activities to engage children and young people in the holidays. The summer programme turned out to be hugely successful for FCC in two ways -- first, the fun filled activities they organised in collaboration with community partners and nutritious meals for children provided by local food businesses were highly appreciated by the members; second, they reached out to ‘new’ families in the local community with whom they had not engaged previously.

As described by project staff,

*...it was quite a significant project where every day throughout the school holidays we were running activities and providing food to children that are experiencing food poverty. Actually, you know it was a **really successful programme** and it also brought a lot of families into the Centre that needed support... We did do something previously, but this was very, very different. This was a much more intensive programme with children here onsite every day doing things like gardening, cooking, gymnastics, games, sports and also receiving lunch. [Operations Manager, October 2021]*

*...it gave us the opportunity not only to provide food for children on free school meals, but also provide them with **enrichment activity** that involves... everything really from kind of sports and creativity to gardening and cooking and eating together as families. So, **we really have upped the ante on the activities around food** that are happening in the Centre. [Interim CEO, November 2021]*



In order to keep the programme family-centred, FCC had taken the initiative to include siblings of children in the activities organised, even if they may not have been entitled to Free School Meals based on eligible age criteria. Overall, project records show that the summer HAF programme **benefited 181 children**, and over 300 beneficiaries in total, taking into account the siblings and accompanying adults.

The summer HAF programme also created another opportunity for FCC to collaborate with community partner [Groundwork West Midlands](#), with whom they had established connections in Year 1 (see Section 3.1.8). They delivered interactive sessions each week for the children, which included them and their families.

...Each session had a theme. The theme may have been fat, salt, sugar, five a day, eat well plate, breakfast ... Also, at the beginning of each session, we did a theory part where we talked to them about the specific theme. And we then went on to the cooking -- they would cook three or four recipes. We provided all the equipment, all the food, all the recipes. And then once all the food was cooked, we all sat down together and ate the food and shared the food between the families [Lead Coordinator, Groundwork, January 2022].

Talking about community engagement that the event generated ('I will give it a good nine out of ten.') and the diversity of people participating, as the lead coordinator for Groundwork described,

*...Each session had a good level of participation. You know, the Centre did very well in getting the families booked in. We had nothing to do with it... that was all done by the community centre ... We had four or five families per session, and that could vary from two people per family to five people per family. So, there was a good variety of families, lots of **different backgrounds and ethnicities**, lots of different cultures, which was great... You know, lots of **different age groups** ... there were families with young children, families with teenagers. So, the Centre did very, very well in getting a good range of people to come to the sessions [Lead Coordinator, Groundwork, January 2022].*

The inclusion of ‘new’ families in summer HAF, as we noted earlier, was an unexpectedly positive outcome for the project. As one of the project staff described,

...that was the first time, I think we had a really positive impact and a massive influx of new members that turned up through the HAF programme which was really good. So, we could register new members, I’m doing full assessment, so that’s good ... Because we’re doing more work like the summer HAF also during Christmas, and the free hampers that they will get as well, it’s just thriving, it’s [Winter HAF] really fully booked and so it’s going to be very busy... [Volunteer Coordinator, December 2021]

The HAF programme during the winter, named Festive HAF, also turned out to be hugely successful with many of the families who had participated earlier in the summer HAF participating in it, and many of the earlier community partners continuing to deliver a range of activities for the children.

The successful hosting of the Festive HAF received an enormous amount of **positive feedback**, as seen in the following posts on FCC’s Facebook, and the ‘thank you cards’ received by the project staff and volunteers.

...Such a lovely morning. Thoroughly enjoyed it. Was so lovely to see people smiling and the kiddies enjoying themselves. Thank you to everyone from the community centre who made this day special for us all to enjoy.

...I wasn’t sure what to expect as we have never been to anything like this before, we’ve had a great time and been made to feel really special.

...I can’t remember the last time someone gave me a gift and we feel so welcome here and have had such a great day.

At the time of writing this report, FCC had successfully delivered Easter HAF 2022 and it had also been very well received.

Another instance of positive engagement with food activities during school holidays, as during the half-term in February 2021, included the in-house organisation of **cooking lessons** for members. It had the theme ‘Do play with your food’, which involved making a simple, healthy delicious meal from fresh ingredients followed by a shared lunch amongst all those attending and present. The intention behind the event, as described by staff was “Celebrating **food as a culture** and finding ways to make cooking and sharing food together beautiful and easy” [FCC, Facebook, 17 February 2021]. This reveals FCC’s approach towards using **food as a socio-cultural resource** to bring people/communities together.

The members survey for 2021 shows that 26% (n=12) of respondents had participated in HAF. The main reasons for participation as shown in Figure 26 are oriented around family activity and providing children with activities/entertainment. The data suggests some motivation to participate is also informed by feeling part of a community (25%). Interestingly, only two out of the 12 respondents (17%) selected ‘because the children get a meal provided’, which suggests that at least for some, participation in HAF is not underpinned by needs associated with Holiday Hunger, but rather more because CSS provided a space for activities benefiting children and the families. This is a key finding that could provide insights into how this may vary with the demographics of the participants.

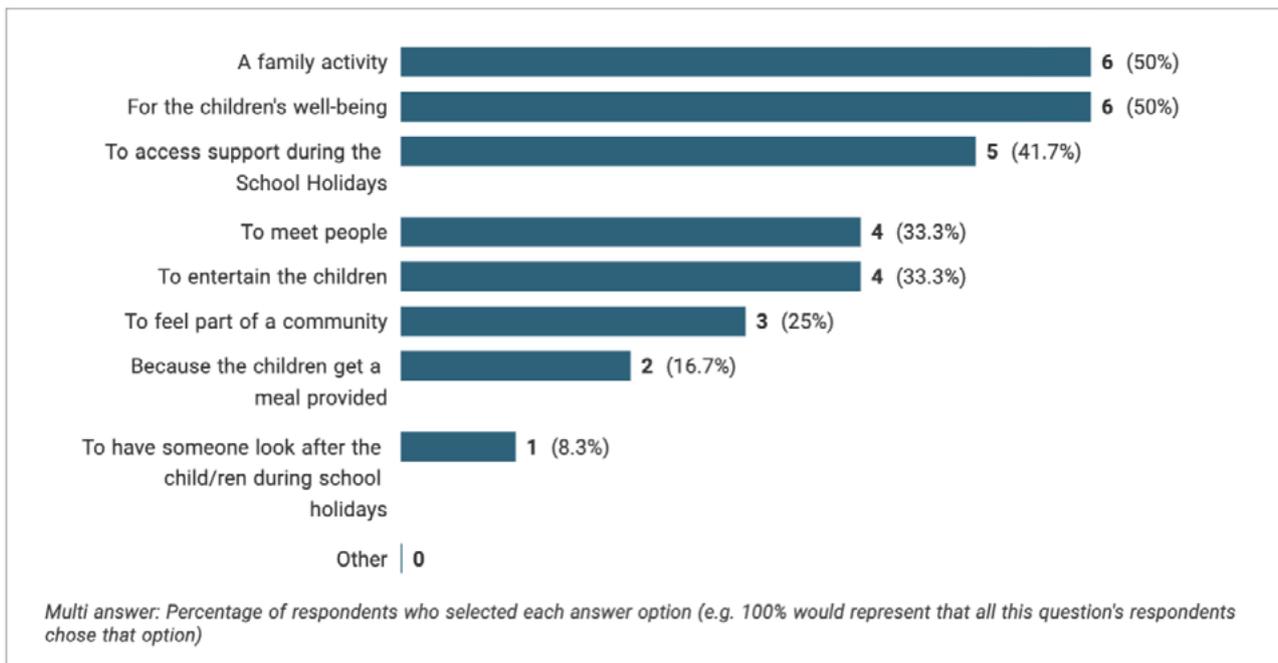
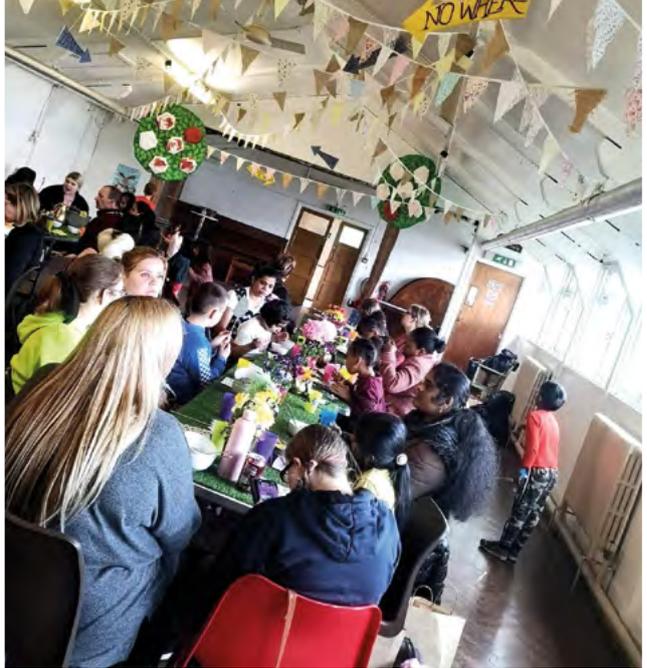


Figure 26: Motivations to participate in the HAF programme



The responses to an open-ended question in the members survey on describing their overall experience of participating in HAF emphasises further the ‘social’ aspect of family activity and enjoyment of the activities during HAF (see Box 3).

Very good

Very beneficial for family as a whole, loved participating in different activities.

Son only did one activity, but he enjoyed it.

It’s been all positive.

Excellent, lots of fun for all the family.

It was really good, kids enjoyed it.

My kids enjoy Summer HAF. They love to come to the community centre.

Box 3: Qualitative responses to members’ experience of HAF programme

The most cited reason for non-participation by 32% (n=10) of respondents include not being aware of the programme and an equal number who did not have school-aged children (see Figure 27). Related to lack of awareness is the reason given by one of the members about not being sure whether the HAF activities were open to their families. This indicates the need for FCC to do more towards making the relevant information available amongst the local community. The timing of the events and the lack of time are the other cited reasons. An example of this became evident from our conversations with staff and volunteers who pointed out that the timing of Easter HAF 2022 had coincided with the celebration of Ramadan in the city, thereby affecting the turnout of families to some extent. They acknowledged the need to consider the timings of these activities better for enabling diversity in participation.

If no, please indicate why (select all that apply)

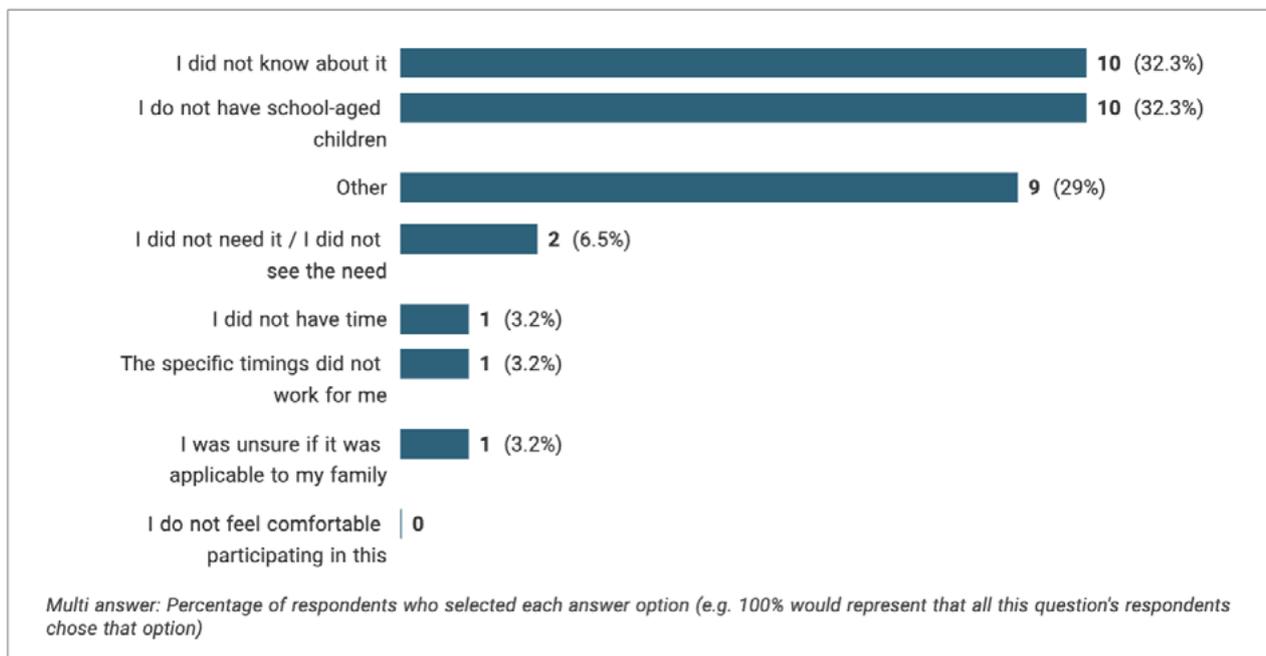


Figure 27: Reasons why members did not participate in the HAF programme

Among the ‘other’ reasons cited for non-participation, it is important to highlight one that relates to a degree of difficulty with the booking process for HAF activities faced by members. Interviews with project staff and volunteers affirmed that the booking process set up in collaboration with the local Council could have been managed better. Similar to what we noted earlier in the case of winter food parcels, this further emphasises the need for simplifying institutional mechanisms (e.g., booking processes) and allocating specific resources and time towards reducing these types of barriers to enable a higher level of participation.

Goodie bags for children (summer HAF 2021)



Meal prepared at a community cooking lesson

3.1.10 Summary of key findings

- Average number of food bags per week (January - December 2021) estimated at 125, feeding on average 380 people per week.
- Financial hardship is the 'main reason' cited for joining CSS.
- Successful engagement with local food projects -- emergency food hubs, Winter Food Parcels, School Holiday programme (Summer holiday breakfast club, Summer and Winter HAF).

	2020	2021
average number of food bags per week	(Mar – Dec 2020) → 135	(Jan-Dec 2021) → 125
overall experience of CSS (very good)	88%	76%
worried less about food	more than 80%	85%
household spending on food had decreased (those who said yes)	80%	61%
resort to using food banks without CSS	19%	15%
satisfied with quantity of food for £4	97%	100%
satisfied with quality of food	97%	89%
satisfied with range of food	92%	83%
satisfied with fresh fruits	97%	85%
satisfied with fresh vegetables	97%	87%
satisfied with culture specific food	90%	74%
eat more fresh fruits at home	63%	74%
eat more fresh vegetables at home	61%	72%
tried new food items	76%	85%
cooked new dishes (or tried new recipes)	63%	74%
cooked more meals at home	58%	65%

Table 3: Summary of key findings (Outcome 1: Food Resilience)*



* To note that a strict comparison of data between the two years cannot be made because the respondents for the two member surveys are not the exact same set of members.





Fresh vegetables and fruits to choose from in Coventry Social Supermarket

3.2 Outcome 2: Training and Reskilling

After food resilience, the second area for evaluation of outcomes from the CFH project in Foleshill relates to training and reskilling opportunities for members as a key pathway for supporting them in moving out of hardship and crisis. However, the unusual circumstances created by the pandemic (including the restrictions on social interactions and the necessary focus on stabilising the daily operations of CSS in Year 1 and most of Year 2 amidst widespread constraints) did not allow the quick implementation of many of the initiatives that were originally anticipated. Nonetheless, some key developments throughout the review period have taken place that indicate progress on this outcome. Training and reskilling of members who have become volunteers, and of volunteers who have become staff, over the two-year period emerged as a strongly positive outcome of the project, which we highlight in this section.

3.2.1 New employment

Since the launch of CSS in March 2020, the Operations Manager, the Support Worker, an Apprentice, and a Finance Coordinator have been central to the day-to-day operations of CSS as paid staff. However, as an acknowledgement of the project's growth since Year 1 and of its success in receiving external funding (although, of a short-term nature), the project has created additional new employment. This has resulted in a better distribution of workload and of responsibilities, while at the same time expanding the number of staff engaged with different elements of project management and delivery. What stands out here is the recruitment of these new staff from among the volunteers. This is significant in two respects: first, it indicates a supportive work environment, which identifies and acknowledges individuals' strengths; secondly, it actively supports individuals' growth trajectories where new responsibilities contribute to their professional development and personal growth.

*...the organisation is starting to mature. You know, we've been able to offer employment opportunities to lots of people and a lot of people thrive here, like on apprenticeships, on Kickstarter schemes... Volunteers have become embedded in the operation and getting good experiences of being here. So, for me, I feel like this is a place that you can really feel **being part of something important**. [Operations Manager, November 2021]*

Recruitment on Kickstart programme

As part of an initiative to supplement their existing funding and create new employment, FCC successfully applied to the [Kickstart](#) scheme towards the end of Year 2. This scheme enables organisations to create jobs for 16- to 24-year-olds on Universal Credit for six months at 25 hours per week. FCC recruited a young man who qualified for the Kickstart position and who had also

been volunteering at FCC since Year 1, thus creating an additional paid position at FCC. This opportunity gave the new 'Kickstart' employee a range of new learning opportunities which he described:

*...**project management is the job title**. So, I've been involved in helping manage certain projects, like I was involved a little bit in the Christmas Hampers project. Also, the Strike a Light project ...so we did a performance. I was a part of that performance also. I was in charge of ordering food, for example, for each of the events, and I was doing the financial summaries and keeping track of the budget, receipts, any payments that were done... I've been helping out with operations, of course, as well with the social supermarket that we run on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday. I'm at the desk or taking customers around. Yeah, a lot of things really... also a little bit of support in signing customers up, new members, things like that... [Kickstarter, November 2021]*

After the completion of Kickstart scheme, the progression plan for the Kickstarter includes him moving on to an Apprentice position at FCC to continue developing skills and getting work experience on project management. The current apprentice (recruited in Year 1) is line managing the Kickstarter employee, thus passing on the skills that he has already learned during his Apprenticeship at FCC.

Recruitment of Volunteer Coordinator

Towards the end of Year 2, the position for a Volunteer Coordinator was created. The need for such a role was recognised to enable a systematic approach to progression routes for volunteers, which focuses on improving volunteers' level of skills by adopting a much more personalised approach where each volunteer gets the training or additional skills that they would like to acquire while at FCC. "In recognition of the organisation's changing nature from a new, experimental and organically organised institution to a bigger and more mature organisation", the Operations Manager described further the need for this change:

...The Volunteer Coordinator will coordinate all the volunteers and move them through progression routes and onto formalised job descriptors because although the volunteers are completely amazing and I love them all to bits, sometimes it takes a lot to manage all of them and it needs a bit more structure around it... Although we don't want to lose the family environment, I think we do need to move to being slightly more structured... Volunteers, for all the amount of time that they're giving, they deserve a progression route if they want it. It'll just be brilliant for them to be able to maybe get a formalised qualification, some kind of achievement from... you know, the time that they give in here at the centre. I'm really looking forward to working with the Volunteer Coordinator to implement a structured

programme. [Operations Manager, October 2021]

By the end of the year, one of the most experienced volunteers, who had been with FCC since the beginning in March 2020, had been recruited to the Volunteer Coordinator position. In addition to the imparting of work-related training and skills to volunteers, a focus on their wellbeing and support needs was also emphasised.

*...it's just knowing when they need a break, are they doing the right job, you know. Just **nurturing** them to make sure they're happy, they're enjoying what they're doing. Because at the end of the day, it's voluntary. It's like keeping that line of communication open always [Volunteer Coordinator, December 2021]*

*...we're supporting people to come in and volunteer at the Centre who perhaps have a lot of other things going on and in ordinary circumstances may not be able to apply and fulfil a role in that way. They are being supported to do particular tasks, but it needs to be managed on the ground. So, you know, if you are working with someone who has additional learning needs, for example, and they're doing a stocktake, they might need someone else to help do that as well. So, that requires actually again time and management expertise. So, although the volunteers are like one of our major assets, there is sort of like a layering to the knowledge and just the sort of leadership that needs to happen on the ground as well. That's one of the primary reasons why we employed a Volunteer Coordinator so that we can have more of a **mentoring approach** to volunteer roles so that people can do kind of small activities, or they can do something that's more structured and long term, and we can elevate their responsibilities and they're **learning as they go...** [Interim CEO, November 2021]*

Recruitment of sessional workers for specific events/ activities at Centre

Amongst the total number of 50-70 volunteers, those who are also members had increased to around 20 by the end of Year 2. Some of these volunteers and member-volunteers have been offered short-term employment opportunities in Year 2 where they have worked as paid sessional employees to help support the numerous activities organised by FCC.

... we took the opportunity during HAF and also in other projects that we've run to pay some of our longer-term volunteers who also started as members, that is, member-volunteers, to pay them for their skills that they are bringing to the table. So, whether that is like a basic kind of administrative functioning of welcoming people, signing them in, following particular processes to make

sure that we've got safety or, whether it's kind of supporting the activity provider... [Interim CEO, November 2021]

*... Member-volunteers have been brilliant. So, we employed A on the HAF programme to be the coordinator in the sports hall... (they) have got such an amazing way with children and people warmed to them so easily. And then B, who did not have any work experience in the UK, but (they) turned out to be completely amazing... absolutely lovely as a sessional worker for the HAF programme... And then C who was a volunteer and (they) have got lots of marketing communications experience and a variety of different skills, I employed (them) as the programme coordinator for the HAF programme so that (they) could coordinate a lot of the back-office stuff – (they) did a really great job. These are only like **short-term employment**, but they really enjoyed working here. D has done quite a lot of paid work running Wellbeing days and we've got a new project with Strike A Light and City of Culture and actually many of our volunteers and member-volunteers are doing some more paid work. [Operations Manager, October 2021]**

These opportunities for sessional work have thus not only led volunteers and member-volunteers to get experience of carrying out specific tasks in a work environment, but also, as self-described by them, led to increased self-confidence and skills, which we describe further in the next section. The importance of learning new skills through unpaid volunteering and/or through paid short-term employment for individuals cannot be overstated and is highlighted by the fact that some volunteers who had gained some work experience at FCC then went on to get jobs outside of FCC.

...They got some work experience here and I supported them with their job application and their interview questions ... They did really well, and you know, they are a member, an excellent volunteer, got great people skills and they have gone on to full time employment, you know, into a really good role as a support worker, a really good job. [Operations Manager, October 2021]

This example emphasises again the relevance of structured and skills-oriented volunteering and short-term employment opportunities that are supported by a Volunteer Coordinator in contributing to Outcome Objective 2 – Training and Reskilling, which focuses on strengthening members and volunteers' opportunities for long-term paid employment and for their health and well-being.

* Please note that we have anonymised names and gender here.

3.2.2 New knowledge/new skills

Over the two-year evaluation period, we observed another area of positive change at the FCC: the noticeable increase in opportunities that have been created for FCC staff and volunteers to develop their own knowledge and skills. While all new staff joining FCC continue to receive training on safeguarding, fire warden, food hygiene certificate, and GDPR training, since Year 2, the training of volunteers in a systematic and structured way has received greater priority and more organisational attention. In this context, the recruitment of a Volunteer Coordinator towards the end of Year 2 (as we noted earlier, Section 3.2.1) has enabled such a process for further supporting volunteers to develop their skill set in alignment with their own individual aspirations.

...so, she [Volunteer Coordinator] has sat down with most of the volunteers and said to them, would you be interested in doing various different training courses. So, she has looked at fire warden training, safeguarding, and food hygiene. That's really good that we're offering these out to volunteers, for example. I feel like it'd be a really good extra skill for them to have these qualifications; they're not massive but that's something that will be appreciated and used ... [Volunteer 3, January 2022]

...what I'm doing at the moment, I'm having a one-to-one informal chat with all our volunteers, which I've started... Asking them just how they are doing, what they like about Feeding Coventry, how they enjoy their role, have they got any problems, you know just an input. They all seem to chat with me, and I feel I can talk to most of them, and it's comfortable. But also, we will try to encourage a lot of them to do training like food hygiene or asking them if they're willing to take on any training and then obviously Feeding Coventry will pay for that... Also, when we get new volunteers come in, I'd be registering them, making sure we've got the right references, take them through the volunteer handbook and then obviously training them on different jobs within what we do on the operational side of it. [Volunteer Coordinator, December 2021]

On- the-job training

Volunteers have described the useful 'on-the-job training' they have had from working along with the more experienced volunteers or staff on all the different tasks and from the engagement on specific programmes/activities organised by FCC.

A particular instance relates to the delivery of the summer HAF programme in 2021, where member-volunteers were recruited as temporary staff (i.e., sessional workers) to help run the programme and they were hence provided with the necessary training, e.g., on safeguarding, health and safety, administration and

organisational skills to support effectively the delivery of all the activities as planned.

Another instance relates to the start of support services onsite by Coventry Independent Advice Service (CIAS), which led to training on support work extended to interested volunteers. Volunteers described taking part in a training session (an "informal workshop") held by the Advice Caseworker (from CIAS), where they learnt how to recognise early on what's likely to become a critical case, how they can engage with people in need of support over phone and triage them through the week, and what steps to take in urgent cases. Around 15-20 volunteers had participated in the session.

A related area of attention to note has been the relevance of training (formal and informal) in the context of increasing the awareness and sensitivity of volunteers to signs of distress in members quite early on.

...that's one thing we've done ... we've talked to our volunteers about the conversations that you can have with people as you're taking them round the supermarket to find out what support they might need. And we're going to do more on that... conversation starters are another thing we're going to do some more training on. Because we've got that one to one taking someone round the supermarket, it gives people that chance to have a conversation. The number of times during that trip round the supermarket, it's come out that they're not in a good place, got no gas or electricity, you know, various different things... is amazing. Then obviously they can come for the support then. [Operations Manager, October 2021]

...volunteers are the one who know our members the most. They talk to them on a weekly basis, they have this conversation with them that I don't have because I stay here in the office. I know them but if there is an issue developing, let's say a member comes to the Centre tomorrow with a very sad face, says "Oh, you know, I lost my work, something happened to my family, I had this accident..." If the volunteers hear that, they're thinking, well, maybe we can provide the member with some support, and I can do a referral. We have done a kind of referral form, which is very quick to fill in. If there is anything that a volunteer has identified, they can do a very quick referral form and send it to me and I will know there is this issue, I will pick it up, and we can give an appointment with the Advice Caseworker and we can talk about the case. [Support Worker, November 2021]

In the related context of trained volunteers doing the home food deliveries (which number on average 20-30 every week), we found another layer of support provided by the volunteers, especially for those members who are housebound and/or face multiple vulnerabilities.

...this came from volunteers delivering to our members at their homes and seeing the situation in the home. It's like, "Oh, I went to their home, and I saw what the situation is there, a lack of furniture, a lack of heating, a lack of this and that ..." We don't always have this perspective and it's good because for lots of members that are receiving home deliveries, we don't see them, so, there is a bit of disconnect there... [Support Worker, November 2021]

The usefulness of training courses on bridging the 'disconnect' was emphasised by volunteers. In particular, training on increasing sensitivity and awareness about inclusivity, diversity and food poverty.

...we have been offered various different courses. One of the courses... I found it most useful, was one a few months ago. They did a food poverty presentation, and we were sort of put in a scenario -- this is happening, how would you react to this ... I can't remember who ran the course, but it was absolutely fascinating ... And we were shown various short videos, then asked to say what went wrong in that particular scenario? How should this person have reacted etc., etc. ... I took more from that particular day than almost any other course I've done; in fact, more than any other course I've done. ... It was basically to deal with preconceived ideas ... I learned a lot from it, the fact that I don't pick up on things like that, when perhaps I should be more aware of why something is hurtful ... I found it a very, very interesting presentation. [Volunteer 1, January 2022]

Peer-to-peer learning, Co-learning and Co-creation

Our interviews revealed purposeful learning taking place between staff, volunteers, member-volunteers, which can be described in different ways, as peer-to-peer learning, co-learning, and co-creation. This was supporting the updating of skills, sharing and acquiring of new knowledge, and increasing levels of awareness on food poverty and food waste, as shown in the following quotes.

*...in the overall context, one area where perhaps I've been a bit sloppy over the years is food hygiene and food handling. But yeah, I've been on a journey **updating my skills and knowledge** in that area through the Centre. It's been a lot of peer-to-peer learning so far, but I know that the Centre is looking to put something more formal in place. [Volunteer 4, January 2022]*

*...there's cooking... a lot of cooking that happens in the kitchen as well, which is, you know, a shared responsibility and there's definitely **learning taking place** there as well. So, it's quite, I wouldn't say, ad hoc, because it's actually in the fabric of how we*

*do things. But it's not, you know, measured, or you know we're not heading towards any kind of qualifications but there's undoubtedly like a **knowledge sharing** going on in the Centre at all levels. [Interim CEO, November 2021]*

*...I have only been here really just a few months... I think for me, everything is still in the process, we have introduced a new system, so we started **training each other**, we are still explaining each other our roles and you know, how the things should be looked at. So, there's still things that we are building, and it is only with time and experience I think we will have a full picture of the situation, what other training is needed, but at the moment we are still **learning a lot from each other**. [Advice Caseworker, January 2022]*

*...I've learned a lot in general; I've learned a lot. I think the main thing is just that it's really opened my eyes to food hunger and poverty in general... and the **difference that places this [the Centre] can make** ...I suppose when you're not around people that are hungry, in that sense, you kind of don't really think about it too much sometimes. [Kickstarter, November 2021]*

The staff and volunteers invariably brought their existing skills to their work at FCC but they also acquired new knowledge and skills.

*...before I joined, I knew this accounting package called Quickbooks. But one of the Trustees introduced Xero to me and I learned with him; he was the one who taught me everything in the 2-3 months we worked together. He showed me how it works and yeah, I was able to pick it up and I started doing all the reconciliations and all the transactions and everything. Now I'm so much more confident using the software... Yeah, it has helped me in terms of **upgrading my accounting skills** like computerized accounting... I used to work for a bank initially, and I have worked on various banking software, but I never had a chance to work with accounting software package. So yes, this helped me a lot [Finance Coordinator, January 2022]*

Another area where new skills were acquired by those involved (both volunteers and staff) working together included the **writing of funding bids**, leading to successful fundraising outcomes (e.g. for the Wellbeing Days, polytunnel and barbeque unit in community gardening onsite).

...I was involved in the conception of it [Wellbeing Days] and going back to about January this year, involved in making a bid... a couple of bids to get funding for it. It was almost like they were my project, but obviously it was actually me and Operations Manager that made it happen and yeah it evolved into

quite a big thing actually ...We had realised that we wanted to offer children's activities that was inclusive of everyone even if they didn't have, you know, child support. So, they became really big big events, became sort of almost an all-day thing. [Volunteer 2, December 2021]

...to be honest with you, I didn't know anything about bid writing... The Project Manager taught me how to do that and I'm really grateful for the knowledge that she shared with me ...I've learned so much since I've been doing this job ...She showed me how to do the budget breakdown first, work out what you are putting in, you know, work out what your story is with the finances first and then put the words in afterwards ...The work that she and I have done already on fundraising is you know really great work and I don't know the exact figure, but it must be like about thousands of pounds between all of the projects that we have raised... it's quite a lot of money. [Operations Manager, November 2021]

Another good illustration of **co-learning** nurtured at FCC relates to the apprenticeship position at FCC that has continued over the two years, as shown in the following quote:

...I think he [the Apprentice] makes me a bit better than I am...He is doing this apprenticeship and quite a lot of the coursework involves like having to do risk registers, project plans and different things... all of the work that he does on the apprenticeships is very relevant and you know, we're following a lot of that methodology and it works, fits in nicely. He is always getting things done for his coursework that he can use ... for some of the projects that we're doing here. So, yeah, I feel like we're getting more professional [Operations Manager, October 2021]

The benefits from doing the apprenticeship at FCC has been described by the Apprentice as follows:

*...Doing this apprenticeship has given me opportunities I didn't think I would ever get. Being able to gain hands-on experience whilst studying has been invaluable and an ideal way for me to get to where I am now... it was much more accessible to me than going down the traditional qualification route of studying A Levels. This apprenticeship has given me **confidence** to go on to do things I previously didn't think I would be able to do, such as a degree apprenticeship, and look at opening the door for university as an option. [FCC Facebook, 10 February 2022]*

The direct involvement by many of the volunteers, members and member-volunteers with the 'Hungry Nation' performances (which we describe later in 3.4.4) offers another powerful instance of them acquiring new skills and confidence. This ensued from the co-creative nature of engagement between the creative arts company and the team from FCC.

New roles/new tasks/changed practices

Towards the end of Year 2, three experienced volunteers (who had been in the core group of volunteers since Year 1) were made 'Volunteer Shift Leaders'. The aim was not only to distribute the responsibility for overseeing the operations on all the three days that CSS is open, but it was also a recognition of the expertise and accumulated experience of those volunteers and building of their skills to a higher level to that of running an entire shift.

...I feel like that's really beneficial because a lot of our volunteers are strong volunteers, and their skills and attributes could be used in other ways as such, and I feel like them [Volunteer Shift Leaders] having the opportunity to be in charge of all the volunteers has been really good for them... This started a few weeks ago... it's to take the pressure off management as such... the staff... so that they can be doing other things, yeah, those aspects like the support. [Volunteer 3, January 2022]

At the time of writing this report, the project staff shared their aim to develop also a core group of five volunteers to oversee and organise the entire process of supporting the members of FCC in a systematic and structured way. As described by the Support Worker,

...we want to have five volunteers that are more specialised. More specialised so they know how to do the registration and the assessment, they know how to fill in the referral form, and they will maybe in the long run also take part in the appointments that we are doing with the Advice Caseworker, so that they kind of know the whole process of support work... [Support Worker, November 2021]

A key point to note here is that these developments indicate the project taking gradual steps and positive action towards enabling community ownership of the project.

Echoing findings from our interim evaluation, some of the staff and volunteers also described changes to their own practices, such as in food budgeting, trying out new food, and reducing food waste, as well as in increasing awareness of food poverty more broadly.

3.2.3 Increased confidence and self-esteem

A key finding from our interviews is the increased levels of confidence and self-esteem experienced by staff and volunteers from their overall engagement with the project, their on-the-job training, and new skills and knowledge they acquired (as described in earlier section). The following quote is a reflection on the volunteers' experience:

... their self-confidence has just shot up in the last year... Now, they just come in and get on with jobs, for them it's a real self-esteem, motivational, and a confidence thing ...
[Volunteer Coordinator, December 2021]

The volunteers come from wide-ranging backgrounds and from across all age groups, but they invariably described their volunteering experience as having two key aspects: one, it was about 'doing something for the community' or 'giving something back'; and two, it was also 'getting something out of it' for themselves. In the latter case, this ranged from overcoming personal issues over anxiety or confidence, simply seeking a fulfilling and enjoyable experience in their spare time, to supporting people overcome some of the same challenges that they had faced in their lives.

... I'm not going out and saying I'm going to make a difference. What I'll say is...if people want to chat to me, they'll find out I've been where they've been ... [Volunteer 1, January 2022]

While describing the impact on their personal lives from working or volunteering at FCC, the focus on what made their experience 'meaningful' can be quite varied as the following quotes show.

*...It forces you **out of your shell** for a start... I've learned a lot generally; I've learned a lot. It's opened my eyes a lot as well to food hunger and poverty in general I think and the number of people that struggle and the **difference that places like this can make...*** [Kickstarter, November 2021]

*... it's made me understand **how to deal with my money** quite a lot. It's been quite an eye-opening thing knowing what other people are living on compared to like what I receive from my job, and how I budget it, and that I can budget my money a little bit better... Especially in the last year because of getting my car and things, I've had to like spend less in other areas to be able to afford my car, and my petrol, my insurance, and things like that, and I feel like having my experiences here, it's made me understand that budgeting money is really hard.* [Volunteer 3, January 2022]

...I had no expectation; I just went in there [in March 2020] just totally to help. And I never thought in a million years, I'd end up with a

*job ... and the number of people I've met! ... I feel **part of a community**, met so many nice people and **made friends** along the way. I **just feel so happy to be part of it** really.*
[Volunteer Coordinator, December 2021]

At the time of writing this report, the **volunteer base** has nearly 50-60 people, comprising a mix of age groups (from 16 to 69) and an even gender balance. Regular volunteers also include some from local community groups like [GoodGym](#) and [TeamSpringboard](#) who have engaged with the project from the beginning when the Centre's building was getting renovated prior to the launch of CSS, preparing food bags during the lockdowns, stocktaking, restocking shelves, building beds for community growing area, and other tasks over the entire period. We discuss this further under partnerships (Section 5.2). Further reflections on the strong motivation and the significant contribution by volunteers to the project's successful outcomes are presented in Section 5.3.

3.2.4 Summary of key findings

By the end of Year 2:

- **More paid staff (employment created) including a Volunteer Coordinator, and on Kickstart programme**
- **Training on courses such as food hygiene, fire warden, bias awareness, GDPR for staff and volunteers**
- **Volunteers on-the-job training leading to increased knowledge and skills, increased level of confidence and self-esteem**
- **Member-volunteers acquiring work-based skills**

Table 4: Summary of key findings (Outcome 2: Training & Reskilling)

3.3 Outcome 3: Health and Wellbeing

The third outcome expected from the CFH project includes improvement in health and wellbeing of members. Our interviews with staff and volunteers, and the members' survey reveal some key findings as described below.

3.3.1 Wraparound support services

During a pilot study in the early part of Year 2, in partnership with [Coventry Independent Advice Services](#) (CIAS), FCC provided 12 members with support advice on benefits and debts. This was part of a CIAS project providing advice services to all the food hubs

in Coventry. Following the successful outcomes from the pilot study, wraparound support services was extended to all FCC members in partnership with CIAS under Feeding Britain’s Pathways from Poverty programme. This allowed for an Advice Caseworker to be present onsite every Friday for face-to-face support sessions. Members are provided access to pre-booked appointments and drop-ins at FCC and given advice also over telephone and by email. This ‘new’ engagement by FCC with CIAS works on a partnership model as the following quote shows.

...CIAS was happy to work with our food hub in particular because there was quite a lot of referrals made and we worked on cases together; we didn’t just refer them, but we were doing follow ups. It is really about working in partnership... [FCC Support Worker, November 2021]

By January 2022, there were 20 ongoing cases, which include members from diverse backgrounds (age, ethnicity, and socio-economic). This often required the Advice Caseworker to work closely also with other local support organisations (e.g., Coventry Haven, Roma project). We noted that the support provision process was gradually evolving to become more structured and formalised.

... we are working towards having a more and more formal support service at the Centre. At the moment we are taking up every opportunity to learn because we have such diverse cases, you know, but they are all connected by food poverty really. That is the common denominator, they are all coming here because they struggle to purchase food, but it can be for so many different reasons and with all cases, we have learned about different ways to support the members, different charities or organisations to partner with, so that’s quite interesting... [FCC Support Worker, November 2021]

... it now feels like we kind of do the hand-holding of the person who is suffering ... [Interim CEO, November 2021]. [Interim CEO, November 2021]

To start with, the Support Worker or a trained volunteer at FCC makes a primary needs assessment at the time of registering members. This includes asking basic

questions on their reasons for using the CSS and assessing the urgency of their needs, following which they are booked in for appointments with the Advice Caseworker for an in-depth chat to help find the support for them.

...if it is you know financial crisis or poor health, etc. we can then just kind of book some time in and have a more private in-depth chat with them about how we can support them. ... we kind of do the hand holding of the person who is suffering, and while for the other services... we give them time to kind of come forward with what’s available [Interim CEO, November 2021]

Interviews with the support team at FCC indicate that the registration form has been revised since its very basic format during the pandemic. It has become more structured which allows them to have a better understanding of every member’s support requirement right from the start, which in turn enables regular appointments to be set with them and to ensure that potentially they would not need the support beyond the initial target of six months. At the time of writing this report, the support team had started reaching out to all those already registered to provide them with support in the areas that they needed help with. The Advice Caseworker has also provided training (through an informal workshop) to those volunteers interested in doing the support work – which included learning how to check about benefits, about budget, how to understand/ assess the situation of members and to identify the support needs quickly while also recognising that every member’s situation is different. FCC’s support team has thus used the opportunity of having the Advice Caseworker onsite to become strategic about their own support work.

Data from the members survey shows that 28% (n= 13) respondents had asked for advice or support from the staff and/or volunteers at FCC and had found it helpful (see Figure 28). A higher proportion (44%, n=20) had not approached FCC for advice/support and 15% (n=7) indicated they might do so in the future. It is interesting to note that 11% (n=5) preferred not to say or didn’t give an answer despite choosing ‘other’, raising questions whether there is a sense of stigma or shame attached to asking for support or whether they did not really have any issues that they need help with.

Have you asked about advice or support on personal issues from staff or volunteers at the Foleshill Community Centre? If so, was it helpful?

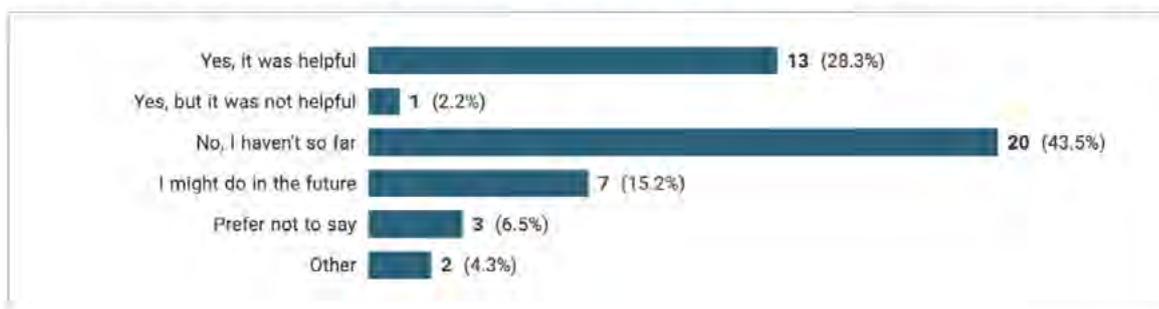


Figure 28: Responses to whether advice/support on personal issues from staff/volunteers had been sought at FCC

In describing their overall experience of accessing support services at FCC, eight respondents chose to provide answers to our open-ended question on it, as shown in Box 4. Their responses indicate a high level of satisfaction with the support they received.

Excellent support and help

Fantastic and my problem was resolved very quickly.

I was introduced to the CIAS at the centre, who have been helping me.

...saving money & problems with my stolen car

It was very satisfying

Very good

Very good, trying their best

They were very helpful

Box 4: Qualitative comments on the overall experience of accessing support services at CSS

3.3.2 Level of wellbeing

In the survey, we asked members about changes to their level of wellbeing since joining the CSS, using four adapted questions from the Wellbeing Survey used by the UK government to track the wellbeing of the nation. Members were asked to give a score between 0-10 in response to the wellbeing questions, where 0 = 'not at all' and 10 = 'completely'

Data shows that in terms of life satisfaction, positive impacts on anxiety, sense of worthwhileness and feeling of happiness, most respondents have given the highest score of 10. This is a very strong indication of **positive impact on their level of wellbeing**, which we examine further.

When asked about the extent to which involvement with CSS influences satisfaction with their life, 61% of respondents scored 8 or above (out of 10) and 39% of them scored the maximum of 10/10. The mean score for this question was 8.13 (i.e., the average score out of 10).

A near identical pattern is seen in relation to impact on anxiety. 63% of respondents scored 8 or more (out of 10) in response to involvement with CSS reducing their level of anxiety. The mean score for this question was 7.7. It must also be noted that a number of respondents (22%, n=10) scored '0 not at all'. It is unclear whether this is because these respondents did not have an underlying sense of anxiety in the first instance, if they have misinterpreted the question, or if the CSS is just not alleviating any anxieties they had before becoming members.

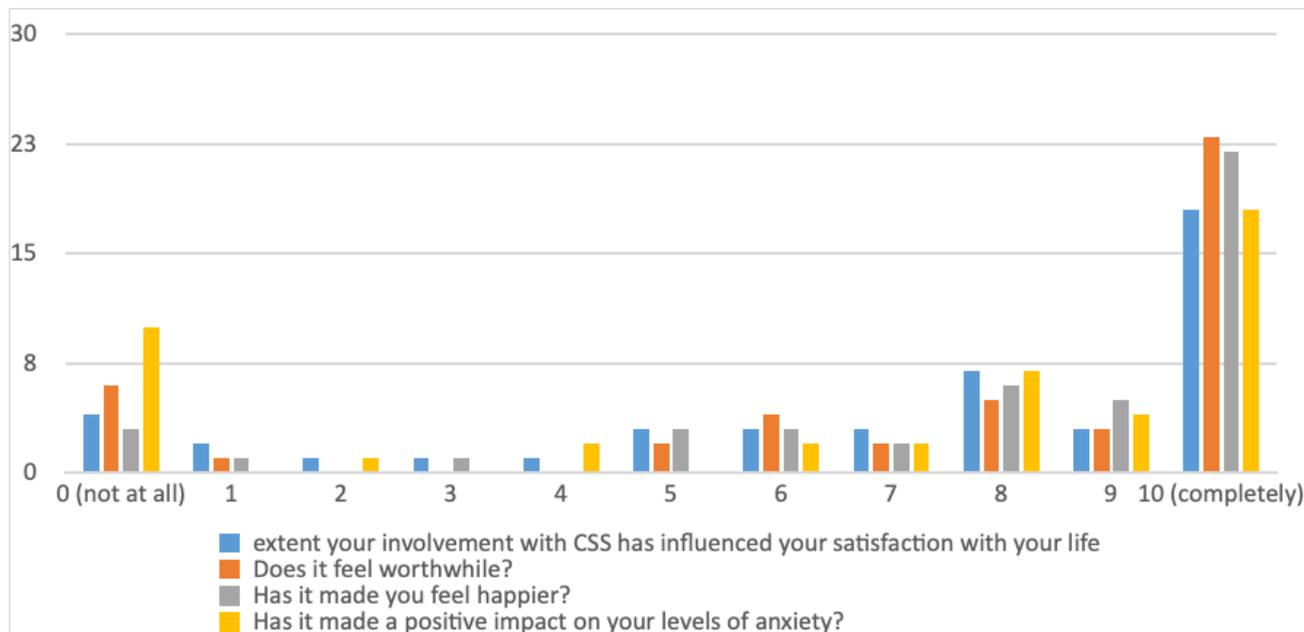


Figure 29: Responses to level of wellbeing

* This scoring format is the same as used for the Wellbeing Survey conducted by the UK government.

In response to the question on the extent to which being involved with CSS has made them happier, nearly half (48%, n=22) scored 10, 72% scored 8 or more, with only 7% scoring 0 (which is not an indication it has made them unhappy or less happy). The mean score for this question about happiness was 8.91.

Finally, when asked ‘does it feel worthwhile’ being involved with CSS, half of respondents (n=23) scored 10. This was the highest proportion of any category/score across all four aspects of wellbeing assessed in the question, suggesting that there is a strong sense amongst respondents that CSS is meaningful and important in some capacity to them. However, six respondents (13%) scored ‘0/10’ and one scored 1/10. This means 15% scored between 0-1/10, which is comparatively high and suggests that responses to this question are somewhat polarised given the high number of responses that scored 10/10. Further questioning is required to fully understand why these seven respondents scored 0-1/10. Nonetheless, the mean score for this question about worthwhileness was 8.52.

Juxtaposing the findings here from those in relation to participation in the two **Wellbeing Days** organised at FCC (described later in Section 3.4.4), yields some key insights. Only six respondents (13%) had participated in the Wellbeing Days. We will examine the reasons for the high level of non-participation later (Section 3.4.4), but here, we look at the reasons behind participation (see Figure 30). For the six respondents who participated in at least one Wellbeing Day, the top reason was ‘to learn new knowledge and skills’, followed by ‘to meet people’. The other reasons include ‘to feel part of a community’, ‘to share a meal’, and ‘to have fun’.

These responses emphasise the nature of **FCC also as a social and communal space** for members and not simply as a collection point for getting food from the social supermarket.

We have described the positive impact of acquiring new knowledge and skills, increased confidence and self-esteem for the volunteers earlier (Section 3.2). Our interviews with volunteers also reveal more specifically a positive impact of their volunteering experience on their wellbeing. Some of them emphasised a sense of wellbeing arising in multiple ways, and which also acts as a source of motivation for volunteering at FCC. As described by one of the core volunteers:

...What it's [volunteering] meant for me is... I retired two years ago from full time work and then events unfolded... For me it operates on different levels. It gives me a discipline... There's no rolling over, on a Wednesday going back to bed, you know, it's so easy for someone of my age living on his own, I could quite easily get into that bad habit. So, there's a discipline of 'get up and do things.' Then, there's the interaction with a different group of people. After 40 years in two communities, work community and rugby community, it's been nice to branch out and do something different with different people... and yeah, it's something that I believe in, and I think that's the motivation. [Volunteer 4, January 2022]

If so, what are/were your main reasons? (please select all that apply)

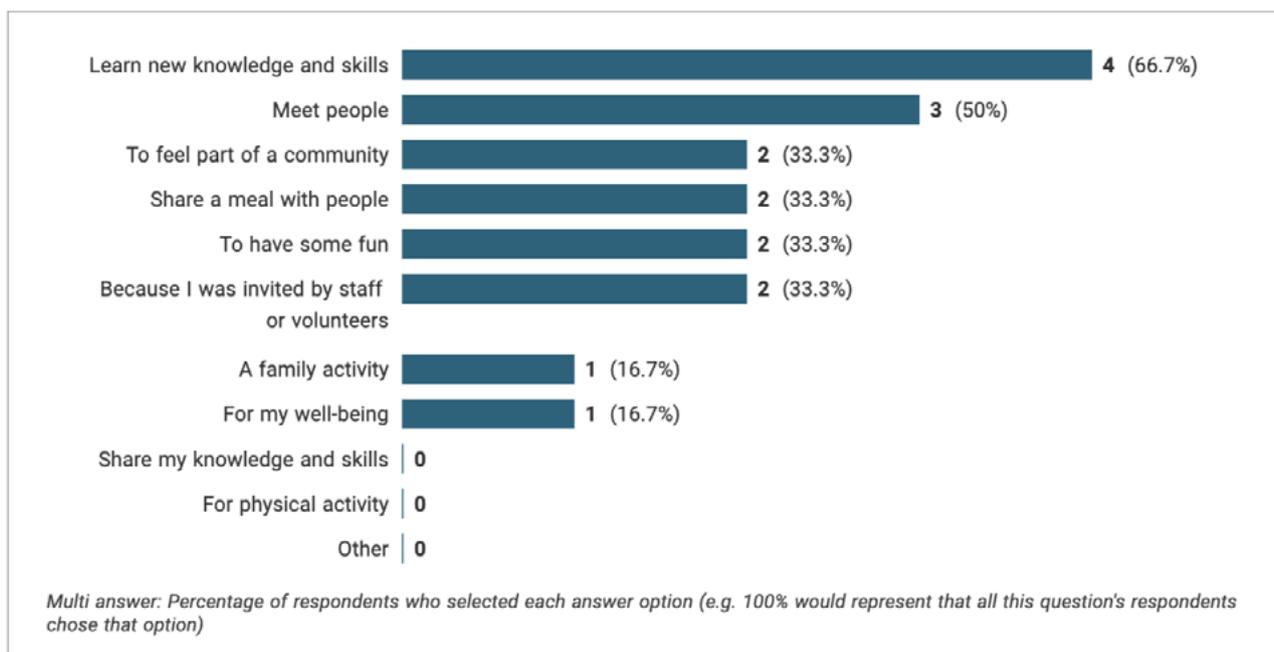


Figure 30: Motivations and factors for participation in the Wellbeing Day(s)

3.3.3 Physical, mental and social health

To assess impact on physical, mental, and social health since joining CSS, the members survey included a series of eight statements to which members had to indicate their level of agreement (see Figure 31).

Please indicate how you have felt since joining the social supermarket.

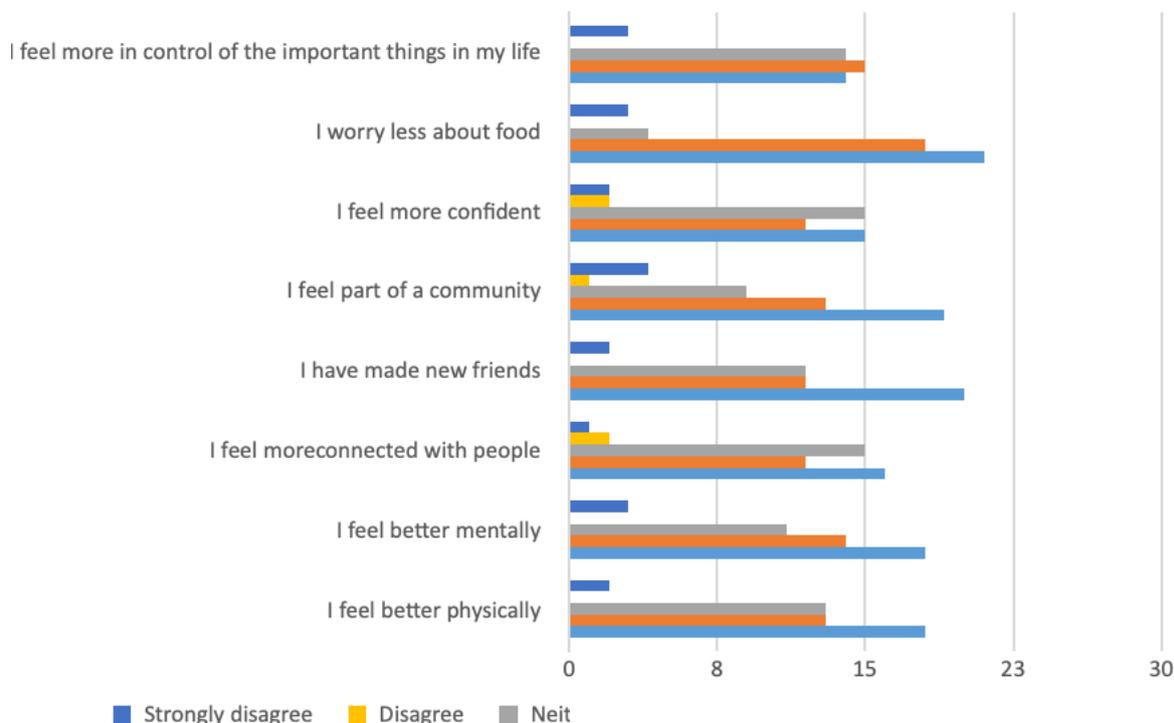


Figure 31: Responses to how members have felt about various aspects of their lives since joining CSS

The results indicate that 85% of respondents (n= 39) either *strongly agree* or *agree* that they **'worry less about food'** since joining CSS. However, 7% (n=3) strongly disagreed with this statement, and therefore it can be inferred they remain anxious or worried about food. Of the three respondents who strongly disagree that they worry less about food, the same three respondents answered they strongly disagree that they feel part of a community, and strongly disagree that they feel more in control of the important things in their life. Two of these three respondents also answered they strongly disagree that they feel better mentally. This suggests possible links between the various facets of life which impact on how food insecurity is experienced.

While 39% of the respondents (n=18) *strongly agreed* with **feeling better physically**, another 28% (n=13) *agreed*. Put together, 67% of the respondents felt better physically. In the case of response to statement **'mentally feeling better'**, it is a similar overall response: 69% felt better mentally (39% *strongly agreed* and 30% *agreed*).

In relation to making **social connections**, 61% of respondents felt 'more connected with people' (35% *strongly agreed*, and 26% *agreed*) and 33% (n=15) neither agreed nor disagreed. In relation to **making new friends**, 70% agreed (44% *strongly agreed* and 26% *agreed*) and 26% (n=12) chose to remain neutral. In response to feeling **'part of a community'** 69% of the respondents gave an affirmative response (41% *strongly agreed* and 28% *agreed*).

Nearly 60% of the respondents agreed that they felt **'more confident'** (33% *strongly agreed* and 26% *agreed*). However, 33% (n=15) remained neutral. In relation to feeling **'more in control of life'**, 63% respondents felt more in control (30% *strongly agreed* and 33% *agreed*), while 30% chose to remain neutral.

A closer look at the findings from the above set of statements indicate that a high proportion of respondents chose to remain neutral (i.e., ‘neither agreed nor disagreed’), but not so, in the case of their response to the statement on ‘worrying about food’. This suggests that except for the food related change, the other changes may not have been easily perceived or experienced in the short time period.

Another plausible reason could be a degree of difficulty in answering such questions, as attributing causality between changes in feelings and membership of CSS is not straightforward. However, these findings coupled with the positive responses to level of wellbeing (Section 3.3.2) strongly suggest that CSS is having significant impact on peoples’ physical, mental and social health.

These findings are remarkably similar to the findings from Year 1 survey. A key point to note, however, is a higher proportion of members in Year 2 survey who positively responded to having made new friends. An explanation for this can be the gradual lifting of pandemic-related restrictions in the middle of Year 2 and the resuming of social interactions later in the year.

Interviews with staff and volunteers also reveal the positive impact of working and/or volunteering at FCC on their health, which echoes findings from the interim evaluation.

*...I think it's helped a lot with mental health and things like that, being able to have a different feeling, a lot safer, and less stressed out by things because I've been able to talk about things with people here. And it's ... kind of turned into my safety bubble. I really got used to be in here. And it was a **really safe environment** for me where I didn't feel like I have to be like someone I'm not because I get really panicked by things...And so being here really calms me down. [Volunteer 3, February 2021]*

3.3.4 Relationship-building

The positive impact of building relationships and social interactions at FCC on members, volunteers and staff came across in the interviews. The emphasis was both on new relationships and stronger relationships as important to one’s wellbeing.

...I've definitely made a lot of friends here... The thing is, when it comes to volunteers, everyone's so friendly... everyone is kind-natured. So, it's easy to make friends, it's nice to make new bonds and things like that, so yeah... I've met a lot of new people and you know, we have the social drink night sometimes. We go out, some of the volunteers and the staff, every now and then. So, yeah, it's been great in that aspect, people making new friends and everything. [Kickstarter, November 2021]

Data from the members survey show that 33% of the respondents (n=15) felt **very connected** to other members of the social supermarket. The same number reported feeling ‘somewhat connected’ (see Figure 32).

Only one respondent selected feeling ‘not connected at all’ and 11% (n=5) said ‘not very connected’. We did a cross-tabulation of these findings with these particular members’ responses to other questions. The results show that none of them had volunteered at FCC; none of them (except one) had attended the Wellbeing Days; and none (except one) had joined the HAF programmes. In contrast, other members’ positive response to feelings of connectedness shows a higher level of participation in the community-centred activities organised by FCC.

This suggests that the feeling of connection may simply not arise from doing food shopping at CSS. Instead, **connections between members are fostered by creating opportunities for social interactions outside of CSS** through organisation of community-centred activities at FCC.

How connected do you feel with other members of the social supermarket?

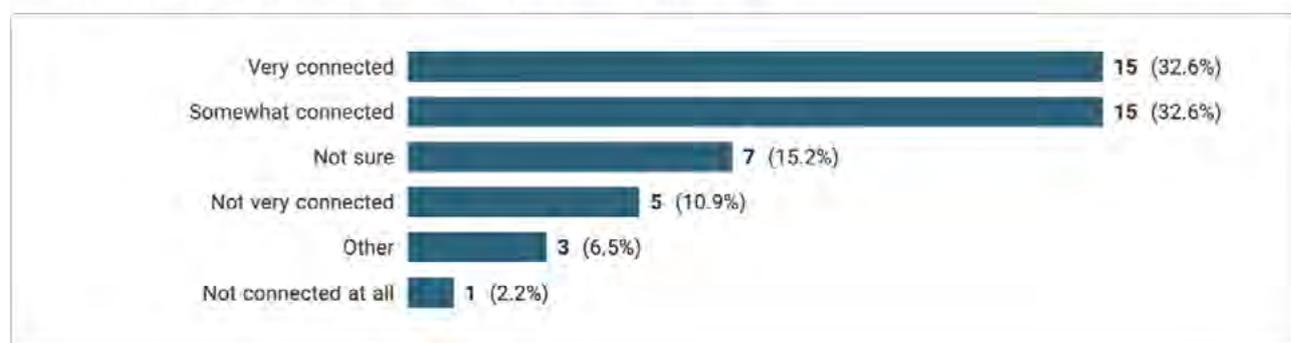


Figure 32: Extent to which CSS members felt connected to other members of CSS

In the case of staff and volunteers, they emphasised a ‘**family environment**’ in the FCC, which we had also noted during the interim evaluation as a key aspect of the project’s success. FCC has continued to offer what’s been described as a ‘safe space’ for everyone’s personal growth and development. The aspect of an inclusive environment is highlighted in the following quote:

*... we’ve talked about this before, the family type environment, but that’s kind of become more reinforced as time has gone by ... We all went for a night out, you know, a few weeks ago. It felt like there’s just such a diverse range of people here, but everybody kind of feels comfortable together and you know everybody is included and it’s like an **all-inclusive type of environment** [Operations Manager, October 2021]*

Another key social aspect of FCC has been **community cooking and shared meals**, which have continued over the two years, almost every Friday afternoon. This practice of volunteers and members getting together for cooking and eating meals was described by volunteers as “wholesome”, which enabled them, staff, and members to not only enjoy the food but also to learn about new recipes from each other in the process.

... whoever is cooking tries to base the recipe around you know anything that we have an excess of. You know, we had a load of aubergines in last week and they were really like quite close to not being usable, so we made sure we included them in the curry that were making... [Operations Manager, November 2021]

Another finding from our analysis shows that having the CIAS support services co-located in FCC building was also fostering relationships and trust between staff, volunteers, and members. The following quote illustrates this.

... because I’m there physically, not just over the phone, people do seem to always come and say hello, or just give me the updates, or just say hello, really. So, that is nice - it’s the part that I really like at the social supermarket, keeps me connected with the people. So, even though they may not be my client because we may have sorted the debts, they are still attending the social supermarket, but you keep in touch with them, you know, and if there’s something coming up again, they will catch you, ‘oh, by the way. I want to ask you something’... That’s why it’s so good to be able to come to the Centre rather than do everything on the phone like we were doing during the pandemic, because you are kind of losing clients, you don’t know what’s going on with them and the only contact you have is not when everything is fine. [Advice Caseworker, January 2022]

It is important to note here that the Advice Caseworker by virtue of their position is available at FCC to provide

advice support to members who have been assessed to have reached a crisis point, on an appointment basis. However, outside of those appointments, their presence and informal interactions with members at FCC allows for a sharing of updates and feedback informally as well. Thus, going beyond building of trust and fostering of relationships, we could assume such regular interactions with CIAS and FCC support team to also have a **preventative** element where members’ concerns are being dealt with before their escalation to the crisis stage.

With more members joining as volunteers, and recruitment of volunteers with prior lived experiences of food poverty, our conversations with the project team show that their level of sensitivity and understanding of adverse situations that members and/or volunteers may be in has increased. This has happened alongside the building of trust and relationships through the **regular interactions** that volunteers and members have during every shopping day at CSS.

As described earlier, the **Wellbeing days and HAF** programmes at FCC have been important also in terms of reaching out to groups in the local community who had not known about FCC earlier. We mention here some specific instances which demonstrate this. The organisation of day trips to places of interest for families and children (such as [Conkers](#) and the [Riverside Hub](#)) and to a panto at the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry as part of the HAF programmes in Year 2 have led to building and strengthening of relationships with the local community, as amply reflected in the feedback received by FCC.

In another instance, as part of a programme organised by [Herbert Art Gallery and Museum](#) in the City Centre in Coventry, FCC had taken a small group of members and volunteers for a tour of the **Turner Prize exhibition**. The group from FCC learnt about the socially engaged work of five collectives. In our follow-up conversations with that group, we found in them an increased interest in the use of expressive arts and activism for wellbeing, and also an appreciation of the **values of co-operation and collective action for community wellbeing**.

FCC’s engagement with the ‘**Hungry Nation**’ **performances** (which we describe later, Section 3.4.4) was another milestone in building new connections and relationships between staff, volunteers, and members.

Similar to our findings in the interim evaluation, when volunteers were asked in Year 2 to describe their **overall experience**, they used terms such as -- rewarding, enjoyable, most valuable, great, amazing, satisfying, boosting confidence, becoming more confident, feeling part of a ‘family’, a strong team. All these expressions reflect positive emotions and in most cases, they described their engagement with FCC as having brought out their potential for ‘doing’ things that they had not realised earlier. In this context, all the interviewees emphasised the key role of project **leadership** and management in successfully creating a friendly and welcoming environment at FCC. We noted a high degree of satisfaction with the effective leadership of the Operations Manager, her problem-solving approach,

pragmatism in dealing with issues and concerns, and specific attention to collective empowerment and wellbeing. A strong emphasis on **inter-personal skills** is also seen as driving the strong relationships and connections they have established with local community partners (described further in Section 5).

It is important to highlight here that the increased confidence and skills acquired by volunteers and staff from the strong relationships that they have established has led to immediate benefits for the project. This is demonstrated by volunteers who have increasingly become more adept at running the daily operations and in taking prompt action to address operational problems on their own initiative. This has positively influenced the members' experience of shopping at CSS, as the findings from the members survey show (see Section 3.1.8), where respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with the connection that they felt with the volunteers and staff at FCC.

3.3.5 Summary of key findings

	2020 Survey (n=44) (%)	2021 Survey (n=46) (%)
felt worthwhile to be involved with CSS (score 10/10)	51	50
felt happier (score 10/10)	46	48
a positive impact on level of anxiety (score 10/10)	36	39
CSS had influenced their satisfaction with life (score 10/10)	24	39
felt better physically	62	67
felt better mentally	67	69
felt 'more connected with people'	62	61
made new friends	39	70
felt 'part of a community'	73	70
felt 'more confident'	59	59
felt 'more in control of life'	65	63

Table 5: Summary of key findings (Outcome 3: Health & Wellbeing)*



* To note that a strict comparison of data between the two years cannot be made because the respondents for the two member surveys are not the exact same set of members.

3.4 Outcome 4: Regeneration of community asset



The fourth outcome from the CFH project relates to the regeneration of FCC as a community asset for the local community. We examine the key developments below.

3.4.1 Community Gardening

In the spring of 2020, a self-organised small group of volunteers (around 8-10) from local community groups, [ReCC](#) and [CARAG](#), and a few members from CSS had started the community gardening at the back of the car parking area in the premises of FCC. As they described it, they wanted to not only grow vegetables but also socialise for both physical and mental wellbeing in order to counter the social isolation that had arisen because of the lockdowns. A local social enterprise, [Team Springboard](#) helped build the raised beds for growing vegetables, planted medicinal herbs and other plants, and contributed to designing and developing the growing area.

Although the members of community gardening group had dwindled to fewer members with many from the earlier group having left Coventry in 2021, the group has continued to meet every Friday afternoon and newer members have started joining.

By the end of 2021, the garden had become more established. This included a change in the layout of the garden and the addition of a seating area. The latter was done in **partnership with several local organisations**, including volunteers from Tesco who painted the sitting area, volunteers from Coventry Building Society who painted the wall next to it, and plants donated by Foleshill Allotments. To increase the biodiversity on the site, wildflowers were planted.

A major new addition in Year 2 was a **greenhouse**, situated outside the main community gardening area in a vacant space lying unused at the back of FCC building, to grow a greater diversity of fruit and vegetables.

This was funded by a Coventry City of Culture grant, successfully bid for by one of the key volunteers, who had applied to be a 'community connector'. Continuing also here with their collaborative approach to community activities, FCC took advice from Team Springboard on the different factors that needed to be kept in mind when running a community garden, indicating the importance given to valuing **expertise from community partner organisations**.

... now we have this big growing area covered by the polytunnel and we started growing this year -- chillies, tomatoes, aubergines. We had our first aubergines, courgettes, cucumbers - that's really nice, it's really hopeful for next year. We had it late this year, this is also how grants work - that they are not necessarily adapted to the season, but at least it is there now and next year we can really plan ahead and have all this connected... [Support Worker, November 2021]

By the end of the growing season in August-September of 2021, the community garden had produced assorted vegetables like tomatoes, cabbage, onions, kale, squash, and beans, amongst others. The greenhouse provided them with tomatoes, chillies, courgettes, leafy greens. As in 2020, the harvest was mainly used by the gardening group for making meals which they shared; and some of the produce was given to CSS members as free 'extra' vegetables.

The community garden has increasingly become a space for those interested to connect over growing and sharing of food, especially during the summer. The social aspect is paramount with almost every session ending with a shared **community meal**, with food cooked by the volunteers, using surplus from the CSS and produce from the garden.

The **social aspect of the gardening** and its role in building relationships needs to be highlighted. A noticeable number of those CSS members who have become volunteer-members have actually had their first experience of volunteering at the FCC in its community garden. The relaxed and supportive atmosphere outdoors and the gardening activities themselves were highlighted as the reasons for joining the gardening group, especially so for those who struggle with anxiety and mental health issues.

In May last year, they sent out a form about garden volunteers. So, that's how I started volunteering at first, at the garden. That's how I started my volunteering. And in the last couple of weeks, I have been volunteering actually inside the Centre -- stocktaking, sorting the fridges, you know, just rearranging the food. [Member-volunteer 3, January 2022]

Referring to the support they received at FCC while being in an abusive relationship from the past, one member-volunteer described how they had been encouraged to get out of the house and join the volunteering community:

Well, one of the volunteers was talking to me about things. I was having problems at home ... She [a volunteer at FCC] was talking to me... and one of the things she said, "You should do some volunteering; you should come here"... that's how it all started. I think at first I was mostly in the garden - that was during the first big lockdown. [Member-volunteer 2, January 2022]

Another instance of how the community garden and gardening activities can become a springboard into other activities at FCC is described in the quote below:

And then sometimes I would do things in the shop to stock. I've cleaned the shelves and things. Now I sort of clean the shelves or restock it. And I take customers round now as well, sometimes I didn't do that before. [Member-volunteer 2, January 2022]

The above illustrations provide examples where volunteering in the community garden created an important opportunity for building stronger relationships beyond the conversations that members have with volunteers during their CSS shopping visits, and for building confidence and trust in members that helped them personally in numerous ways. The outdoor nature of the gardening activities was particularly important during the lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 when other social activities at FCC were restricted.

The positive impact of community gardening on health (physical and mental) is well recognised. At the time of writing this report (April 2022), the Support Worker was compiling case studies on those members who had benefited from the community gardening at FCC. A snippet from one such case is described below:

*... he has turned 21-22 now and he is doing so much in the Centre but it all started really with the garden. I could see this year his **confidence growing**, he is really involved seriously, and he has now an entrepreneurial vision of the garden. He wants to progress, you know. He is there every Friday, he wants things to happen, he wants to get on with them... Rather than having a large community garden group, it is good to have people coming and going and using the garden in their own way. I appreciate that, but I think that next year I would really like to have a group of maybe 5-10 people that are there for gardening, but also as a way to have a **support journey**... [Support Worker, November 2021]*

Another case reveals how the community garden at FCC is perceived as a positive, healing space:

*One of our volunteers was in touch with a person who used to be homeless. They got a home this year, but still needed quite a lot of support for mental health and they were coming here every Friday with their support worker, and they were sitting an hour in the garden in the sitting area, they were doing their meetings there for the whole summer. One day I asked them just why they choose this place and they said because **it's open but also intimate**, they **feel good** there, they **feel relaxed**. You know, the garden has this potential ... it has this very interesting **connection to the support work that we do**... [Support Worker, November 2021]*

Interviews with staff and volunteers revealed a relative decline in new members turning up for community gardening in 2021. A possible reason was the numerous other activities happening at FCC and elsewhere in the city, as the following quote describes.

... the garden last year [2020] had a big role in providing an opportunity for social interactions because everything was closed, and people were looking forward to meeting together and have some things to do. This year it isn't the case so much, as over the summer there were so many things to be done in the city. There wasn't this strong need to have something to do outdoors... Last year, I didn't have to do anything in terms of recruiting volunteers, people were just coming, it was so easy... it was naturally busy. [Support Worker, November 2021]

Amongst the respondents in the members' survey, only 13% (n=6) had participated in community gardening onsite, and the most cited reason was "to feel part of a community" (see Figure 33). The other reasons included: to learn new knowledge and skills, meet people, get outdoors, for physical activity, a family activity, and for wellbeing.



If so, what are/were your reasons? (please select all that apply)

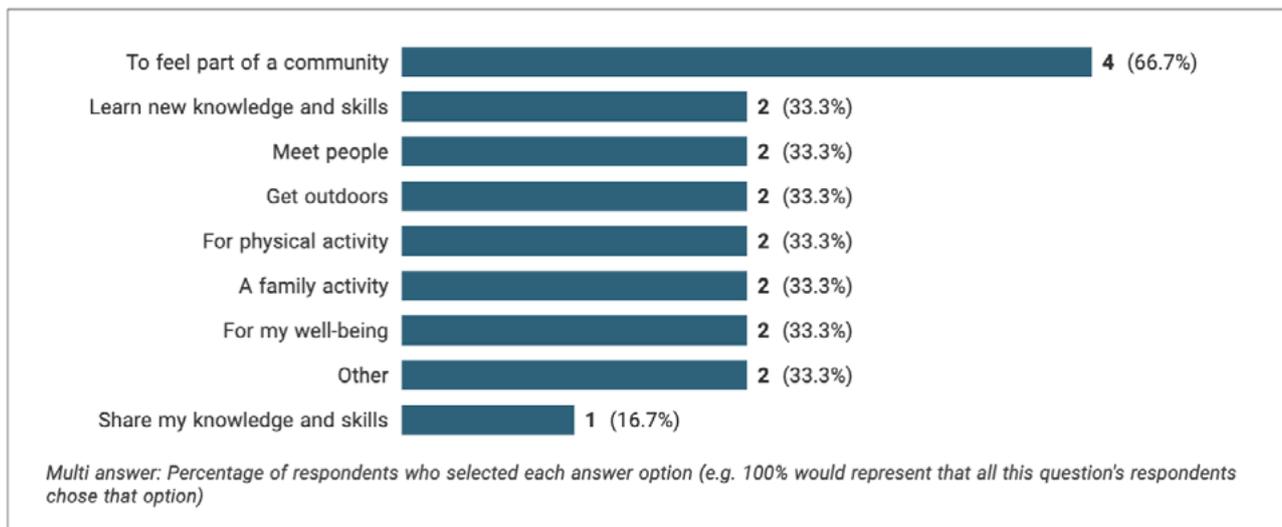


Figure 33: Reasons for participation in community gardening at FCC

If no, please indicate why (select all that apply)

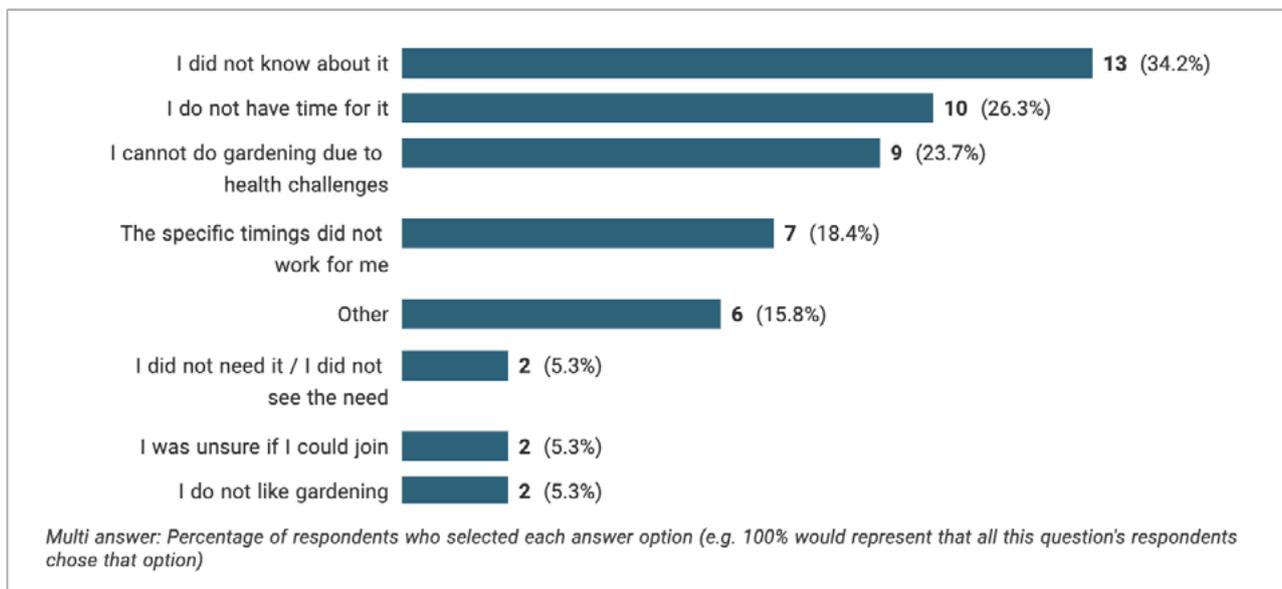


Figure 34: Reasons for non-participation in community gardening at FCC

For the 87% (n=40) who did not join community gardening, the different reasons cited by the respondents are presented in Figure 34.

Clearly, the most reported barrier was ‘not knowing about it’ which suggests insufficient awareness about it amongst the local community. Other barriers to participation include a lack of time, health issues, and specific timings.

However, despite a small group of people engaging regularly in the garden, new developments on the infrastructural side of gardening have taken place in 2021. For example, another addition to the garden was a **composting area** at the far end of the FCC car park, and at the time of writing this report, FCC had become self-

sufficient in having enough compost for the next growing season.

Interviews with staff and volunteers revealed that they valued tremendously what they learnt about composting and how the food waste (fruits and vegetables that could not be used in CSS or in cooking the community meals) turned into a useful resource for the gardening onsite. While learning about the do’s and don’t’s of composting brought up some challenges, it equally provided an opportunity for new learning amongst the project team as the following quote reveals:

... what happened is that we want to use all the food waste at the Centre to create compost, which is a great idea and can work on paper.

However, this year, we had a lot of volunteers, they don't necessarily know about composting, so they take all the food waste, sometimes still in plastic packaging, and they throw everything into the compost area. And then we had rats coming... and so we had to really try to manage that, and we had to give some training to the volunteers. I spoke to them about how to do composting correctly and what we can and can't do... That said, there is really some positive aspect -- we have this really nice compost... a big pile of compost that is ready to be used for the next year. [Support Worker, November 2021]

In addition to expanding the gardening onsite, the community gardening group of volunteers were also engaged in **collaborative projects** with community partners and other local community organisations. Among the highlights, two are described below.

As part of a Severn Trent grant funded project, the community gardening group helped set up a **new garden** at the [Families for All Hub](#) in Foleshill, in partnership with [Team Springboard](#). Some of the volunteers at FCC and members of the community gardening group, over several sessions prepared the ground, built raised beds, filled the beds with compost and topsoil, and planted seedlings.

...we worked with a carpenter to do some wooden beds that were placed in the garden area of the Family Hub so that they could have, you know, growing beds and raised beds, also suitable for children to be able to see and take part, like play a little bit with them... The Family Hub members are taking part in running gardening sessions there and they are looking after the vegetables now... They have grown actually quite a lot of vegetables, like pumpkins, some tomato, some chard, some beans. They have grown quite a lot of vegetables considering the space that they have, and they distribute them to families. [Support Worker, November 2021]

...I had some of my volunteers come as well. But we also had a lot of their volunteers come. In a way, it not only is great because you have few sets of hands and you need a lot of that but it's also great because it makes people own it, so if you can get people to take part in it, it makes them own it [Team Springboard]

...It is brilliant to be able to take part, to have volunteers from both TeamSpringboard and Foleshill work together, to see our ideas and plans and organisation turn it all into a happy, green place, and see all those lovely, healthy veggie plants grown in the Zen (the TeamSpringboard CIC's Community Garden) be planted in yet another place to help even more people - parents/carers and children - learn about gardening and healthy foods [Team Springboard, FCC Facebook, 19 June 2021]

As a spin-off from the connections established by the community gardening group members' trip to the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum (described earlier, Section 3.3.3), interviews with FCC staff revealed plans being explored by the gallery in partnership with FCC to develop a community garden on the gallery's grounds, which would specialise on growing **herbal and medicinal plants**. Staff at FCC described a similar vision they have to create a medicinal and herbal garden at FCC, as described below.

...this will have two dimensions. Basically, developing the knowledge of those plants for the members to use them for their own benefit because we have so many chronic diseases here and so many people that are suffering ... and also at community level, everyone has different knowledge about plants which we can draw on. Second, if we have the time, we could try to do some workshops to do some creams, soaps, etc. This is a project I would like to work on. So, either the garden will be done at our Centre, and we do our own medicine garden, or we could do it, with a partnership with Herbert Art Gallery because they want to involve communities ... members who are interested [Support Worker, November 2021]

In another instance of encouraging community food growing among the local communities, during the summer HAF programme of activities at FCC, Team Springboard was actively engaged in delivering gardening sessions for children. At those sessions, 'ready, steady, grow' boxes (containing seedlings, pot, soil, etc.) were distributed to the children to increase awareness about growing plants, and for learning about food and nutrition.

Acknowledging the range of benefits that community gardening onsite has provided for community engagement, and for combating social isolation, and for general health and wellbeing, staff and volunteers expressed their vision for further expansion on the gardening front.

...I look forward to the day when we can turn around, it might only be for a couple of weeks, but we can turn around to our visitors, our members, and say, all of the vegetables in the CSS ... we're growing them ourselves. That would be a wonderful thing...[Volunteer 4, January 2022]

Staff and volunteers are enthusiastic about further positive outcomes expected from the launch of the Community kitchen and the Café in Year 3. They described the potential for strengthening of connections between community food growing and cooking by demonstrating "what can be grown and how cooking from scratch can be done" (Volunteer 2, December 2021), two key aspects of increasing community food resilience.

3.4.2 Bare Necessities project

Bare Necessities was originally intended to be a three-months-long COVID-19 project in 2020, which was delivered by Feeding Coventry in collaboration with Coventry Foodbank during the first national lockdown. It started as a grant-funded initiative run by a small volunteering group, which has been continuing its activities across Coventry since then. The initiative is now largely dependent on donations to respond to the demand for non-food essentials. Having expanded across several sites, FCC remains one of the sites where the initiative is offering assorted products at substantially reduced prices.

The demand for these products is high, and their availability helps members meet needs for non-food essentials (i.e., “the bare necessities of cleaning, toiletry and sanitary and baby items”). One of the volunteers described the positive effect that this offer can have as follows:

...This is anything from feminine hygiene products, shaving cream for guys, razors, all the absolute basics that we need to have, you know. If you've got a job interview, if you've been struggling, you're gonna have a shave. You've got to look the part. You've got to make sure your hair is shampooed, etc., etc. You're going to do all these things now... little things like that. A lot of it isn't charged for... a lot of it is given as 'just take that, you'll be fine'. Yeah... if you're taking a pound off them for shaving cream and razor, that's a pound, they can, you know, get a bus instead of walking into town, for instance. It's a small thing but that's what a pound means to somebody who hasn't got access to funds. [Volunteer 1, January 2022]

In the members' survey, we also asked about the uptake of the Bare Necessities offer. As shown in Figure 35, a very high proportion of respondents (84%) reported

purchasing the toiletries, the frequency varying from once in a while, once a month, every 2-3 weeks to every week. 15% of the respondents (n=7) stated that they have 'always' bought the toiletries pack.

For the 13% (n=6) of respondents who did not buy the toiletries, the most cited reason was 'not needed/required'. The data shows that two members had not been aware of this initiative, and this can be explained by the fact that they receive food bags at home.

The 'low price' of toiletries was clearly the most attractive feature of this offer, as it was the most cited reason for their purchase (see Figure 36). Other reasons included their 'availability' at CSS, their quality, the 'convenience' of buying them at the same time as doing their food shopping, and the very nature of regular use of toiletries.

The following responses to the open-ended question in the survey corroborate further an appreciation of the Bare Necessities offer:

...Sanitary products and washing powder is expensive when you have a few children.

...I live alone, so buying a mixed bag of things you need, instead of one big item for ages you don't always use. Buying different toiletries, washing, etc. very handy!

In relation to 2020 survey data on the uptake of toiletries, the findings for 2021 are very similar in terms of regularity of purchase and the types of reasons. The difference in 2021 is a much higher proportion of members buying the packs. This suggests **increasing awareness and interest among the members** in buying the toiletries when they do their weekly food shopping at CSS. It would be interesting to explore further the intersections of food with non-food support within the CFH project in the future.

In addition to food shopping, have you purchased the toiletries pack (i.e., from the Bare Necessities project)?

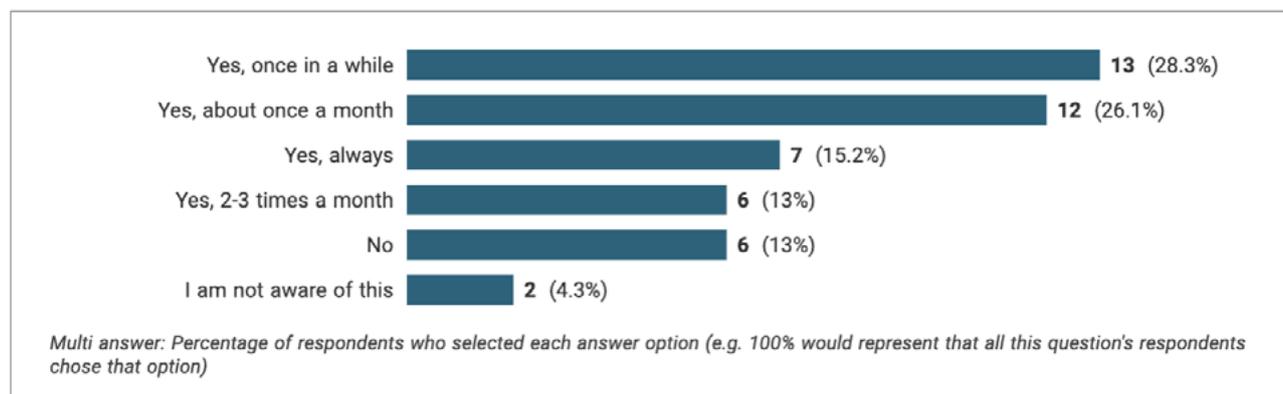


Figure 35: Frequency of toiletries pack purchases from the Bare Necessities Project by CSS members

'Bare Necessities' offer of non-food essentials



SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

- VEGAN
- VEGETARIAN
- DAIRY FREE
- GLUTEN FREE
- NO SUGAR / NO ADDED SUGAR

Special Dietary Requirements
(Vegan, Gluten Free, Diabetic & Dairy Free)

DAZ
WHITES & COLOURS
THE REAL DEAL
BRILLIANT CLEANING SINCE '53

KIRKLAND
Triple Satin
Bath Tissue
soft and absorbent

DUCK
Disinfectant

Cleaning Pack £4

SOOP
Soft and absorbent

KIRKLAND
Triple Satin
Bath Tissue
soft and absorbent

Handy Pack

HEALTHY BEAN

If yes, what are the reasons? (please select all that apply)

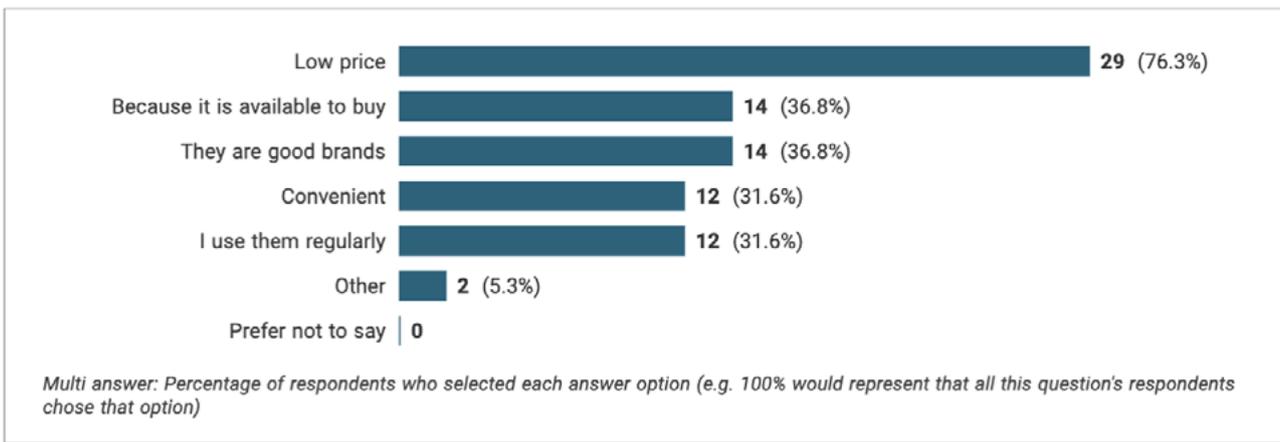


Figure 36: Reasons for purchasing toiletries packs amongst CSS members



3.4.3 GrowKids project

Adding another type of essential service, a Coventry-based church group has been regularly using the Sports Hall at FCC to offer free clothing, toys and essential equipment for babies and children under 11 years old. The original 'Growbaby' project started operating at FCC towards the end of 2020 and it has since further expanded its operations to become the GrowKids project in 2021. GrowKids runs its services every Friday morning (when the CSS is open) and includes the recycling of good quality items to help families in need with young children. Their services are open to members of the public who collect the items free of charge. They also receive donations onsite. As described by the Coordinator of GrowKids Coventry:

*... At GrowKids, we collect children's clothes, toys, books, some baby equipment and we give them out to people who need them. But the whole idea around GrowKids is **building a community and engaging with people, like, we don't want it to be just about stuff.** So, when I met with the Operations Manager before we moved over, we found **our visions were very kind of close** actually - it's all about community engagement, coming alongside people. She was really excited about GrowKids and I was really excited about going to Foleshill to be running alongside a community that already exists, the social supermarket already had people coming... [Coordinator, GrowKids Coventry, January 2022]*

In 2021, they also started a 'stay & play' group, on Friday mornings, which our conversations show has been well received for providing a welcoming space for parents with young children and for them to connect with each other.

*... people can come and play and have a hot drink and have a biscuit... they can come, whether they need stuff or not. It's just a **safe place for them to come with their children**, and if they need stuff, we will give it to them. We are having some people come just for the 'stay & play' now and not for the stuff which is just what we kind of wanted... More than the stuff, it's like come and see us, **get involved in the community**, we will help you when you need it, but you don't need it all the time, it's more than that. So, that's been really good, we've got busier... [Coordinator, GrowKids Coventry, January 2022]*

They described their partnership with FCC as having evolved into a **stronger relationship**, which also led them to help run the HAF programme in the summer of 2021.

... the GrowKids team has grown, our relationship with the Centre is good... they are really helpful... one of the guys, he always gets hot water and milk for the teas and coffees. So, we work with them a lot better.

*Then they asked us to **help out with the HAF Christmas club** as well... They sorted all the admin and food, and we just set the activities. Again, that works really well. It's really nice to feel that we were a part of that. [Coordinator, GrowKids Coventry, January 2022]*

*... we were really excited about having the opportunity to really just spend time with people, run activities for children... everything that we had been doing for a while. So, we got involved in that. We ran one day a week, 4 weeks of the holiday club. So, our **relationship with Foleshill really improved** during that time when we were working with them to do that. [Coordinator, GrowKids Coventry, January 2022]*

Being co-located in the same building had benefited both the organisations (FCC and GrowKids) as shown in the quote below:

...we are open to the community... They don't have to be members of the Centre. We have had people come to GrowKids not knowing about the supermarket, and we've then referred... some of them on to the supermarket and then they've become members. So, yeah, they then do the same, like people that come to the supermarket who are in need, they will bring them over to us. [Coordinator, GrowKids Coventry, January 2022]

3.4.4 Community events

In contrast to Year 1, when FCC, despite severe constraints, could manage to hold only a few socially distanced cultural events and activities for the benefit of its members and the wider local community, there was a significant increase in the number of social activities and events organised at or by FCC in Year 2. Below, we describe three types of events which stand out.

Wellbeing Days

Two days of wellbeing-centred activities for both children and adults, described as 'Wellbeing Days' were organised by FCC in October and November 2021 respectively. They were hugely successful in terms of the level of engagement it generated with people from the local community. It is estimated that around twenty families participated on each of the two days.



Pumpkin carving day at Foleshill Community Centre (October 2021)



Reflecting on the experience of those two days and the feedback they received from the participants, staff and volunteers involved described the days as “amazing”, “popular”, and “emotional” as seen in the quotes below:

*... what we did was, we ran the children’s activities in the main Hall, with one activity provider who did games and wellbeing activities with the children. And then we ran in the sports hall the adults’ activities. First, they did crafts and then afterwards yoga. And then we all came together at the end for a meal... And you know, **the children loved it, the adults loved it.** It’s the first time that a lot of the adults had a break, they didn’t have anybody at all to help them with the children; they’re single parents, they literally just don’t get a break from the children, let alone time to do a craft for themselves or do a bit of yoga for themselves. It was **quite emotional** actually, the first event that we did... I found myself very emotional during the afternoon because of the feedback that we were getting, people that were there who had no time to themselves, or they couldn’t remember the last time that they’ve had time to themselves... [Operations Manager, November 2021]*

*... it was an **amazing project** because of its direct impact -- families being so happy to take part, people getting together, yeah, all those connections between volunteers and families. It has had so many positive impacts from the activities themselves, yeah, but also in terms of the **legacy of those activities...** being able to know about the situation of families... knowing the type of support families need... so that was a really really positive project also in terms of support work we do [Support Worker, November 2021]*

*I remember... we just really felt like we’ve done **something good** and provided something people might not always have access to and the atmosphere was really wonderful... That’s sort of like **an example of how things are different this year...** that we’re able to start doing things like that which actually take quite a long time to plan and come together as well. [Volunteer 2, December 2021]*

The Wellbeing Days were funded by a community grant (from Coventry Building Society), successfully bid for by a team that comprised of project staff and volunteers. This, as described earlier (Section 3.2.2) offers a good example of project leadership, which makes use of various opportunities for development of different types of skills and interests amongst the project team in addition to getting much-needed funds to organise activities at FCC. The following quote from a volunteer involved with writing the bid as well as with the successful organisation of the two wellbeing days illustrates a powerful reflection on how meaningful it was for them:

The Wellbeing Days, they meant an awful lot to me because I’ve always wanted the Centre to

*offer these things to people. To me, the **idea of a wellbeing day** with activities that can help people with their wellbeing, even just in a limited way of some really important time out to relax and do other activities on that day... that’s the kind of thing I’ve always wanted to happen at the Centre and be involved in. I’m a very passionate believer in things like yoga being able to help with health for a lot of people, for mindfulness you know and mental health. And I’m also a passionate believer in the **power of sharing food together**, but also very high quality, nutritious foods and I always observed that to have a very profound effect on people and everyone involved, usually. And yeah, to me, any chance to do crafts and arts in a relaxed way... I always find that very, very healthy as well. So, it was just a way to bring hopefully a really relaxed nice day to people and it’s just **hopefully to me it’s just the start.** It’s something we did that I felt we did, really, really, really well and we had some really **lovely feedback** from them... just to hear from people that it was a really nice day for them... yeah that was what meant the most. [Volunteer 2, December 2021]*

The staff and volunteers felt the significance of the Wellbeing Days in three other ways also. First, it was the first time that freshly cooked food made onsite at FCC was offered to members and their families (which therefore included cooking food for both adults and children), and for a significantly higher number of people than they had catered to on earlier occasions. Secondly, for the second Wellbeing Day, a substantial part of the stew provided as part of the main meal came from fresh produce (i.e., butternut squash) grown onsite in the community garden. Third, as our interviews revealed, the meals had generated a lot of conversation around food, such as quality of food, what could be cooked in FCC in future events, the recipes used, and how healthy food might be made on a low budget. The following quote describes this further:

*They [conversations] happened naturally - started with people sort of ... thanking us for it, and then the people would sort of like start talking about what they normally ate and ask what was in the recipes, what were the flavours that they didn’t recognise. We have **identified an interest** there, I think. I have found it since day one of cooking there, even when it was just for volunteers, that **food always sparks conversations** and interest in food, and I think that’s a wonderful thing that we can plan more structured things around ... [Volunteer 2, December 2021]*

The various activities on those two days were organised in collaboration with FCC’s existing and new local community partners (e.g., Foleshill Creates, Moksha Healing). This offers yet another illustration of successful **networking and partnerships** (which we discuss further in Section 5.2) as key to successful outcomes from the project.

Amongst those members who responded to the survey, six had participated in one of the Wellbeing Days. However, a high proportion (76%, n=35) had not participated and five did not know about them. For those who participated, the most cited reason (see Figure 37) was to ‘learn new knowledge and skills’ followed by ‘to meet people’. In response to the open-ended question on their overall experience, they described it as ‘very good’, ‘very nice and enjoyed it’, and that ‘It was good to meet people, and learn something’.

If so, what are/were your main reasons? (please select all that apply)

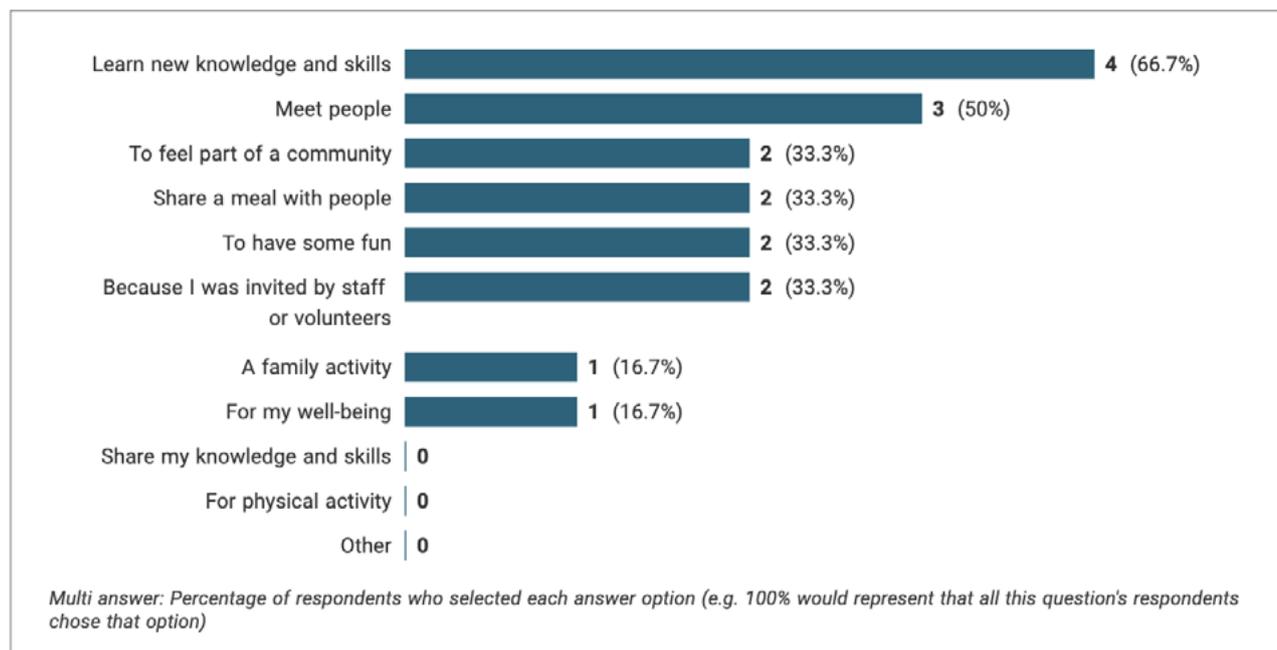


Figure 37: Reasons why CSS members participated in the Wellbeing Day(s)

Amongst the reasons for non-participation in the Wellbeing Days (see Figure 38), the most cited reason was the **lack of awareness or information** about those days being organised. Other reasons were not elaborated upon. However, putting the other responses together indicate that a lack of time, the specific timings of the two days, and also ‘uncertainty’ over whether they could participate or not (which can be related to lack of sufficient communication around these community events) were the other barriers.

If no, please indicate why (select all that apply)

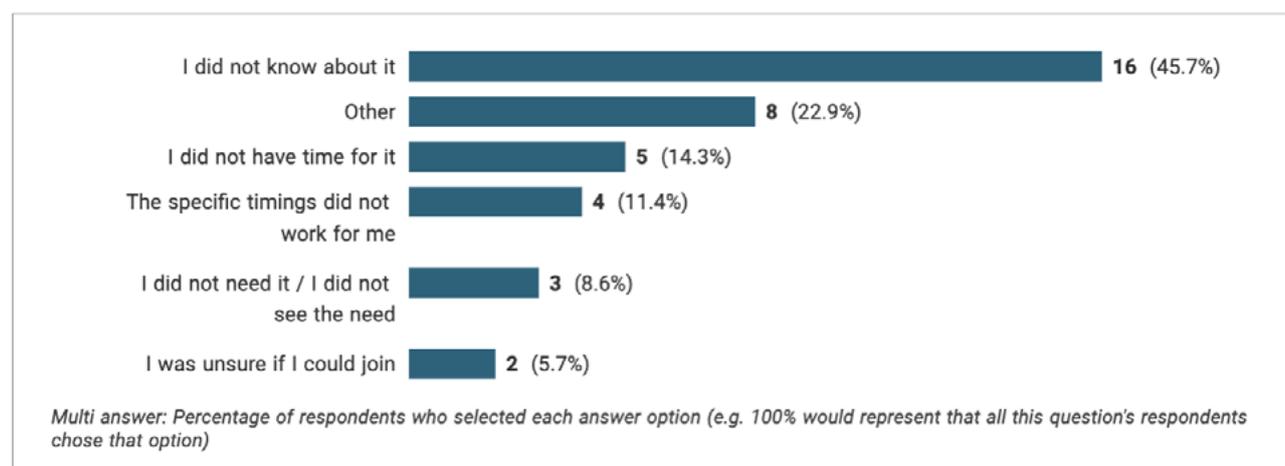


Figure 38: Reasons for non-participation in the Wellbeing Day(s)

Cultural Workshops

With the gradual lifting of COVID-19 related restrictions in Year 2, FCC hosted a number of cultural workshops in collaboration with local community partners for the benefit of their members.

With [Foleshill Creates](#), FCC hosted workshops at FCC which brought members together over different kinds of arts and craft activities, offering members opportunities to bring out their own creativity. Those organised in October 2021 were funded by the Arts Council, and included a Hanging Designs Workshop, Unity Umbrella Workshop, and a Box Lantern Workshop. Other workshops centred on community gardening onsite included 'Leaf Printing' and 'Exciting photography on phones', which drew good participation and positive feedback from the members.

Other workshops and activities held at FCC focused on creative wellbeing, which include for example, pottery workshops in the garden, and yoga sessions. Some of these free workshops offered opportunities to everyone associated with FCC (i.e., staff, volunteers, members) and they were open to the wider Foleshill community, such that the latter group could also contribute to the development of FCC. To give an example of the latter, a free creative mural workshop led by a local artist was organised by FCC in November 2021, which was open to all so that the people could collectively come up with ideas for designing a mural for the community garden. Reflecting on their experience of the mural workshop day, one of the volunteers who participated in it found it to be a "positive" session as described in the quote below:

... that session we had with the artist ... The artist was actually going to design and paint a mural. A few weeks ago, in the run up to Christmas, she came in for a session on a Friday just to canvas ideas... It was a mixture of volunteers, members, the public who got to hear about it probably through the Family Hub and word of mouth. And the task was, 'give me your vision of what Foleshill is and what Foleshill is all about. I went into it not knowing what to expect and came away thinking that's been a positive session ... I just found myself throwing ideas down on a sheet of paper and talking to other people and bouncing ideas off other people. How many of those ideas, make it to the final product, well, that will be a lesson in itself [Volunteer 4, January 2022]

Furthermore, most of these workshops/events organised at FCC included community meals prepared onsite (by FCC volunteers) using surplus from CSS and produce from the garden, to which the participants/ attendees, volunteers and staff on the day were invited to. In our conversations and interviews with volunteers and members, this '**social eating**' aspect of events organised at FCC was described as "special" and "exciting".



FREE CREATIVE MURAL WORKSHOP WITH ARTIST KATIE O

The amazing Coventry based artist Katie O will be creating a brand new mural for us, which we hope will inspire members of our social supermarket and visitors of the centre for the years to come.

Would you like to share your ideas on how it should look? Come and join us the the workshops with Katie:

Foleshill Community Centre

FRIDAY 19TH NOVEMBER

11:30AM - 12:30PM OR 1PM-2PM

Please call us on 02476 682749 or send us a mail at feedingcoventrycomms@gmail.com to book your place



'Hungry Nation' performances

The ['Hungry Nation' performance](#) in December 2021, which was a co-created event produced by Coventry City of Culture Trust and [Strike A Light](#), a creative arts company, and supported by many other organisations, was centred on FCC. The aim was to address social issues through theatre, and this particular theatre performance addressed what it means to be hungry in the UK, and to spread a social message about creating change for people in food poverty. FCC hosted theatre workshops (on creating music together, on poetry and the spoken word) which focused on using creative methods as an avenue for expressing and sharing with others personal lived experiences of food insecurity/poverty.

These theatre workshops then led to two performances, one at Foleshill Community Centre in early December 2021 called 'Reform the Norm: Hungry Nation Part 1', and a 'grand finale' public performance for a wider audience at The Albany Theatre in Coventry in April 2022, called 'Reform the Norm: Hungry Nation Part 2'.

The stories, which formed the main part of 'Hungry Nation' were all based on personal experiences, gathered mainly from members, volunteers and member-volunteers and some other people associated with the members or volunteers at FCC. The cast for the performance included a mix of members and volunteers. Music direction and music performance was also by volunteers and staff.

... there was no fixed script or idea about what the performance would look like, but that it's being created with the participants and with a sort of secondary aim of trying to drill down into what policy changes could potentially be made around food insecurity and food poverty. [Interim CEO, November 2021]

... I actually did the editing to create four different audio tracks with sections of people's stories, you know put together in a cohesive way... So, that was quite a large part of the performance and then it was interspersed with what people wanted to say... So, there were poems and songs and things like that and with some guidance as well on some of the songs. So, you know, it might be a sort of a bit of a protest song, where it was actually asking a lot of questions... why things are so, and what can we do to fix them, that kind of thing for example. They [the creative director] might have suggested that as a useful way to present the questions and then all the cast would come up and give their ideas ... we would co-create what the questions could be about, you know, or what they wanted to be in it. [Volunteer 2, December 2021]

In our interviews, many of the staff, volunteers and members described this event as a **highlight of the year** for the rich connections that it forged between the entire team involved, the team spirit that came through, and the personal meaning that 'doing' the performance had for them.



...You know, we had like a week to bring a show together. And the people who were performing were not performers, they were literally just people that we had interviewed really, they were just customers [members] from our supermarket. It was just really nice to see these people kind of face a lot of fears, get up in front of others... put themselves out there in front of a crowd, speaking their own poetry, singing songs. It was really, really great to see that actually happen and everyone coming together... that was the highlight for me. [Kickstarter, November 2021]

*... it's a big change to have something, you know, performance and drama based and have something within the arts sector running from Foleshill Community Centre. I mean to me it's very significant because it's also a form of **activism**... involving people directly who are affected, so I think that's a huge change... It was a massive journey, I mean, I realised that I had actually lived in a time of food poverty myself so that was quite a process to go through. It was quite emotional to conduct the interviews and hear the stories and then sort of have my own. But it became very quickly something that felt very important to me. And also, it seemed like quite an important thing in terms of some of the people, the members that came in and got involved -- it seemed to become quite meaningful to them quite quickly as well... At the same time being quite tricky because it's a vulnerable phase for people to be in, so it was a big **mix of emotions**, and ups and downs... [Volunteer 2, December 2021]*

The event attracted a diverse audience including a local MP, Councillors, researchers, and received positive feedback.

... it has been a very positive experience, where we've actually seen, you know, a local

MP come to the performance and engage with it and people have a chance to tell their stories in a way that they might not have... may not have come to be without this project and hopefully in a really healthy way. [Volunteer 2, December 2021]

At the time of writing this report, the second part of the performance #The Hungry Nation Part 2 had taken place at The Albany Theatre in Coventry. It received [national news coverage](#) and in the process, it has raised FCC's profile for their wide-ranging work for alleviation of food insecurity in the local community.

Christmas Hampers event

Following the success of the Christmas Hampers event in Year 1, FCC organised the same in Year 2 for members and volunteers in the week before they closed for Christmas. CSS members collected their special hampers at the FCC, and those members who could not be physically present had the hampers delivered to their homes. This event received very positive feedback from the volunteers and members. Describing the process of organising the Christmas Hamper events, one staff member shared:

... we gave about 250 hampers in the end. The members pay a contribution towards it. But it's just a contribution, the contents of the hampers is worth a lot more than the contribution that they pay... And in that you get meats, you get nice snacks, you get a bag of fruit and vegetables you get cheese, biscuits, and all the essentials that you need really to have a great Christmas day... There was also a halal option as well because obviously we have a lot of customers who wanted it ... [Staff, January 2022]

Unlike in 2020, much less food was received as donations in 2021, and therefore more food was purchased using funds left over from the previous year, cash donations, and HAF funding.

Another free family event organised during Halloween was 'pumpkin carving' and face-painting activities for children. As in the case of community events organised at FCC, sharing of a community meal cooked onsite was part of the day.

These cultural events hosted/organised by FCC mark the **revitalisation of an important community space** for fostering community engagement and community cohesion.

The members' survey data revealed that 17% of respondents (n=8) had participated in the cultural events, such as arts and crafts, and the 'pumpkin carving' activities. Amongst those who did not participate, 60% of the respondents (n=22) reported an interest in participating in such events/activities at CSS in the future. This suggests there is an appetite and latent **'demand' for community-oriented activities** and wider participation in them, and more needs to be explored to understand potential barriers that prevent engagement.



3.4.5 Community-led group activities/programmes

The income generation plan for the project includes the commercial letting of space in FCC for community-run programmes and activities that support the development of new skills and knowledge, and health and well-being of their members and the local community. In 2020, this did not happen to the extent planned because of the restrictions and regulations of COVID-19.

In Year 2, however, FCC was successful in letting space for community organisations to run various activities and programmes. This includes, for example, children's tuition groups, English language classes (ESOL), martial arts, Pilates, yoga, Learn to Ride sessions delivered by local community organisations.

Supported by local partnerships, links and connections established with community groups and organisations across the city, including the local Council, as described in this section, FCC has made massive progress as a **vital community space**.

FREE Learn to Ride Sessions

Wednesday 1st September
Foleshill Community Centre





3.4.6 Community Café and kitchen in Year 3

Notwithstanding the unprecedented challenges brought on by the pandemic, particularly in Year 1, and the third national lockdown in Year 2 from January - March 2021, planning is under way to develop the Community Café. Important relationships have been built with organisations for setting up of the Café. This is expected to make FCC into a significant social and communal space for the local community.

*... we're hoping that it will start in January at some point. We will be building a new lobby area and a cafe area at the front of the building and a commercial kitchen. We will have better access; for people with pushchairs, it's not great at the moment. ... You know it'll be a much nicer place, much more aesthetically pleasing, somewhere where you want to go, somewhere where you want to sit, somewhere where you want to spend time. And we envisage all sorts of group activity taking place in the cafe area that we're creating... we'll have a commercial kitchen that's going to give us the opportunity to far extend the current cooking that we've been able to do onsite and encourage different community groups into the building. And it will just give us so many opportunities to provide that wonderful **food sharing experience** that's always been part of the main aims of what we're trying to do here. [Operations Manager, November. 2021]*

While discussing the plans for the Community Café and the kitchen in Year 3 we found an overwhelming level of

support, enthusiasm and excitement among the staff and volunteers. Ideas for using the space ranged from how it could effectively become a place to bring people together over healthy and nutritious meals to having conversations around food and for setting up micro-enterprises around the selling of food products (e.g., jams, pickles, cakes, etc.). Plans specifically in relation to improving cooking skills include providing training in cooking skills, cooking healthy meals on a low budget, cooking meals from scratch, and targeted sessions for specific groups among the members, such as the single men (both young and old), and single mums with young children.

*... there's a lot of single males who use the service, who, if they are given half a chance will benefit from it... because these are the guys... probably the limit of their aspiration is to put some sausages under a grill and open a tin. There are others who I'm sure, with the variety and the different things that we can offer them, have **changed their diets**. I'm thinking of a couple of people who have said how much they love to see different things in the bags each week and the challenge that it gives them ... it's a chance for them to experiment. But these are probably slightly more knowledgeable about cooking skills. So, if we could, say, target some of the young, single men, they might find it improves their life. [Volunteer 4, January 2022]*

Clearly, the cafe and kitchen offer the potential to be used as **multi-functional spaces** to build further a sense of community, for development of cooking skills, as well as for generating entrepreneurship opportunities to add a self-sustaining model of the income generation from FCC.

3.4.7 Summary of key findings

By the end of Year 2:

- Expansion of community gardening
- Increased number of projects with community partners
- Increased links with council-led projects
- Increased number of community events organised
- Increased letting of space for community-led activities/programmes

Table 6: Summary of key findings (Outcome 4: Regeneration of community asset)



4. Challenges

During the interim evaluation carried out at the end of Year 1, we had identified key challenges in six areas – membership and support services, food-related, data management, coordination with other hubs, financial sustainability, and project management and governance. We reviewed these same key areas for the final evaluation to understand how, and to what extent, they had been addressed during Year 2. Organisational capacity has come to the fore as an additional area of concern, arising from the expansion of activities organised at FCC and, the expectations placed on it as a vital community space and neighbourhood asset.

4.1 Membership and support services

In contrast to Year 1 during which the project was primarily geared towards food provisioning for its members, by the beginning of Year 2, attention had started shifting towards going beyond food support to actively supporting members cope with hardship and disadvantage that they were facing, which is central to the CFH model. The number of CSS members appears to have stabilised and is in ‘balance’ with the available quantity of food of a good range and quality, notwithstanding the numerous challenges faced (which we discuss in section 4.2).

Though most of the CSS members were found to be clearly in need of the food and support services, some volunteers and staff raised the issue about some existing members who may not fall into that category.

...I sometimes think that some of the users may be just using CSS for the cheap food, and they don't need any support... We ideally need to remove these members, because they are not using the service correctly. [Volunteer 3, January 2022]

However, it was also acknowledged that the number of members who didn't really ‘need’ to use the CSS is a minority.

...the people who don't need the Centre are a small minority, but I think the vast majority of the people who walk through the door are genuinely in need of our services. Whether it's just the food or whether it's the more social and parochial care that they need, as well. I think there's a spectrum... [Volunteer 4, January 2022]

Against this context, the **capping of CSS membership** was described as a challenging issue. Broadly, we found a consensus among staff and volunteers for capping the membership numbers for two reasons. First, to enable them to continue to deliver a food offer of sufficient quantity and quality, which the members have become accustomed to (on the demand side), and the need for balancing this with their dependence on a limited stock of food surplus and the loss per food bag borne by

CSS (on the supply side). Second, to ensure that every member gets the level of wraparound support that they need to make the transition out of the crisis that they are in, and have the opportunity to engage with ‘wellbeing activities’, as described in the quote below:

*...there is a limit to how many people we can supply with food from one venue. So, in order to make Foleshill Community Centre a successful Community Hub and have all the other activities going on as well, I see the maximum sort of limit of our social supermarket probably between 100 and 150 shopping bags per week. That's based on our current capacity and current floor plate that we have available, but the primary reason for the limitation is because of course I believe so strongly that all of the other things are so so important. They are as important as the food... I definitely see all of the **wellbeing activities**, including the things that we're doing like cooking together gardening, yoga, and creative activities as like completely integral. But the theme **will always be food**... we will always feed people when they come in and do these things, and so I feel like it's a balance of the two. [Interim CEO, November 2021]*

The establishment of Coventry Independent Advice Service (CIAS) onsite in November 2021 was a critical step towards providing support services to CSS members. At the time of writing this report, FCC had already started a process wherein they triaged with CIAS those members that had urgent needs and those not quite so urgent, before adding them as new members. A drive for **re-registration of existing members** by issuing a new membership form has also started to ensure that there is enough information from all members to address their support needs, and to a certain extent help identify those who do not need any support from them, and who therefore could be excluded from membership of CSS.

...it won't be just a membership form, it will also be the referral form to Coventry Independent Advice Service, because there's been a lot of duplication of work at the moment and similar details going into a couple of different kinds of forms. So, we're going to get that process up and running with them, triaging the new members every week, getting the appointment system in place, so that we can get everyone booked in for appointments... Now, they have to come for some support or yeah, they can't continue to use this service... [Operations Manager, October 2021]

However, our conversations reveal a degree of tension over excluding people from using CSS, while also acknowledging the need for managing expectations for the project as the following quote shows:

...I would be... reluctant to do that, but... with the uncertainty of the food supply chain, do we want to promise things and then have to turn

around on the day and say sorry? A part of me says no, we shouldn't, but the hard-headed realism is that with the uncertainty in the supply chain, I think we have no option... There are times where we've had to turn around to people and say, "I'm sorry, we don't have XYZ items, we've run out. And by the way, also the alternative is not available." So, there has to be a certain amount of expectation management. [Volunteer 4, January 2022]

Thus, finding the **right balance between expanding the project's membership while ensuring sufficient engagement with members** has become more of a challenge in Year 2.

It is important to note that the successful HAF programmes at FCC in Year 2 has led to increased reach into communities in Foleshill who did not know about FCC earlier. This has led to increased diversity in CSS's membership, as described earlier in Section 3.1.1. Nevertheless, the project team also acknowledge that there are quite a lot of people in Foleshill whom they haven't reached out to yet who could benefit from the support services and the food at FCC. There is a concerted effort on their part to engage with the local community, however, limited staff capacity and language barriers remain an obstacle.

The staff and volunteers have continued to do their best to engage with non-English speaking members, for example by using Google Translate, and occasionally with the help of translators, and in specific situations with the help of coordinators of the [Roma Project Coventry](#) for the Romanian members. Some staff and volunteers have found the engagement process challenging. The following quotes describe some of the difficulties.

*...it is a bit difficult because there's a large percentage of people that come every week and I don't understand what their circumstances are and it's so difficult due to **language barriers** to be able to get that. There is a piece of work that needs to be done with the Roma project -- to kind of refer people to the Roma project -- and say you know they've got to be actively engaging with us for support and to continue coming in to shop at the social supermarket. [Operations Manager, November 2021]*

...there was a lady that came the other day. She saw the hall full of Christmas Hampers and we were getting ready to get them out. And, she just had no idea that the Christmas Hampers project was even a thing because she couldn't speak English or read English [Kickstarter, November 2021].

...language is a bit of a barrier, and some customers can come across quite rude... but I don't think it's intentional, I think it's just a language barrier... [Volunteer Coordinator, December 2021]

The language barriers will potentially pose a bigger obstacle as FCC moves beyond the food offer to engaging with members for a 'holistic' range of support that can be provided to them. **Transcending language (and socio-cultural) barriers will be key to social inclusion** of diverse communities that especially characterise Foleshill.

The experienced volunteers at FCC and specifically the Support Worker amongst the project staff have been providing one-to-one support since Year 1, getting to know their members well and signposting them to the right support, which has accounted for a good number of successful cases. However, given the increased demands of support work in Year 2, the project staff acutely feel the need for another support worker.

*...the support work is really, really **time consuming**. So, with some of the successes that we've had, you know, it's taken hours and hours and hours' worth of support. We really actually need **another support worker** to cope with the level of work that we've got. We've been really lucky until recently as we've had a volunteer who has been really acting as a support worker, but she is leaving us ... I'm so pleased for her though, she's got a job now... [Operations Manager, October 2021]*

*...we need a **case support worker** because obviously the support work is quite involved now, and we need more help there to support the team really... It'd be going out with customers to appointments and just getting them through the whole process of getting to the right support, benefits, whatever, with the help of CIAS... But you know... just to get one person through can take months to get through and out the other side... to get into the place where they don't need our support... Ideally, we would love to have funding to get another key support worker, probably a **female support worker** ... [to support the male support worker already there]. That would be absolutely fantastic because we have a lot of ladies that are members. [Volunteer Coordinator, December 2021]*

In addition to improving operational efficiency in support provisioning through the recruitment of an additional support worker, it would also be important to draw on the experiences of the members who have already made use of the advice and support services to better understand the barriers and challenges they might have faced.

4.2 Food-related

Similar to Year 1, procuring food for members that is healthy, nutritious and affordable while keeping food costs for the CSS low remains a challenging issue in Year 2. We anticipate this also to be a key challenge to providing affordable and nutritious community meals in the Community Café next year.

Interviews with the staff and volunteers indicate the unpredictability and unreliability of food surplus delivery from FareShare, with a glut of some items and shortages of basic staples, which varied from week to week. There were weeks when the food available was inadequate, because of either a lack of variety or a much smaller range of products that did not meet the expectations of members, or included much larger proportions of processed food (e.g., snacks, ready meals) and quite short-dated food.

*...now our **food supply** is so erratic, we can't guarantee we are going to have X, Y or Z. I mean, sometimes I'll turn up on a Saturday at nine o'clock and we've got literally no milk whatsoever. Now milk is an absolute staple and a requirement every single visitor gets, be it oat milk, or all of the different sorts of milk. So, if we haven't got it, somebody does a very quick trip across the road or to Aldi around the corner and buy, say, I don't know, 35, 40 cartons of milk or cereal. So, our supply lines do seem to be struggling to keep us up. We do get a lot of occasions where we literally run out of bread ... We do struggle to get a constant supply of the absolute basics. We're okay with stuff like beans, spaghetti ... we do have a lot of donations from churches, from the local community leaders and things like that, but it's the fresh stuff that we do, we never know whether there's going to be anything in the fridge. [Volunteer 1, January 2022]*

*...one week we had this absolutely massive quantity of just pasta salad that were going out of date the next day, and you know it felt like you were trying to give a pasta salad to anybody who came near you -- 'have two, have three.' And then I looked at the other things that were in the fridge... I was just like this isn't what we set out to do, this isn't offering people healthy, nutritious diet. So, I had a conversation with them... and they seem to have resolved the issues. But some weeks are still better than others and we understand that this is because of **supply chain issues**. [Operations Manager, November 2021]*

*...with FareShare I've noticed in the last month, particularly that we get a variety... we get a variety of breads, we get staple foods like tinned foods. We do get a lot of fresh... we could have a lot of, like, yogurts, it's all different things. But I do feel up to about six weeks ago, a lot of the dates on the food was like **really short dated** as it came in on the Wednesday and had to be all used by Thursday. We've got no say over this... and that's a problem then, because if it's something we cannot freeze, we have to get rid of it because it says 'use by'... of course with best before, it is different [Volunteer Coordinator, December 2021]*

...some weeks it is fantastic, we get so much like you know biscuits, cakes, there's tinned

stuff, there's rice. It is a variety of stuff across the whole supermarket sector, I think. But then there's some weeks, it's just like yogurt, yogurt, yogurt or you know sausage rolls... it's like hundreds of them and then you think, oh my god, use by tomorrow! [Volunteer Coordinator, December 2021]

*...FareShare, they look after us well, but that's dependent... I look at what they deliver sometimes. Some of it very good, some of it may **not be the most appropriate** for the membership demographic. And it's at that stage where I think we're having to look to straight purchases...One of our strengths is that we are **very conscious of use by dates**. Best before date, well, you can argue those, but a use by date on, say, a bag of salad, you know, we're into a dangerous area, I think. [Volunteer 4, January 2022]*

While acknowledging the erratic nature of sourcing food for the CSS, the staff and volunteers recognised the challenges faced by FareShare itself, which affected the food deliveries.

*...I don't think they're intentionally not fairly giving out the food between the different people that they supply but I think they've got **staff shortages** as well. They had some serious problems around staffing for one reason or another. So, I think... maybe it was just that they weren't considering at their end what was a good thing to give... **they were just thinking about the weight**, they weren't about the quality, and the picking of the food wasn't actually there. [Operations Manager, November 2021]*

*...It is this **supply and demand issue**... I mean FareShare said a few weeks ago that they couldn't actually tell us how much we would get because of all the problems with the lorry drivers... you know, it's hit and miss. It is a challenge, but you just have to get around it... But certainly, we had earlier a lot more variety ... our fridges were fuller than they are now... [Volunteer Coordinator, December 2021]*

A related concern has been over the availability of food that meets **specific dietary needs**, like vegan, gluten-free, or sugar-free, and is **specific to cultural preferences**. Although the introduction of 'halal chicken' has been a success, proving to be popular amongst the members (as described earlier, Section 3.1.3), the availability of diet-specific food more broadly remains limited.

... we have been getting a lot more people coming through who want diabetic or gluten-free food, some vegan as well, so we're trying to get them food... We're actually hunting around when the deliveries come. So, if I find things that are vegan, I try and keep a stash away for the next week because we just find it is hard sometimes to get this food, you know. [Volunteer Coordinator, December 2021]

Overall, we noted a good progress on tapping into food surplus in sufficient quantity and of a good quality (in nutritional content); however, the bigger challenge arising from a heavy reliance on food surplus is evident, as the following quotes show.

... we understand that there's surplus of some items and rather than go to waste, that's great if we can give them out. If you've got like 200 pork pies, you know we're happy to give them out, but I don't want that to be like the main offering we're giving to people. [Operations Manager, November 2021]

*... we went through a phase where supply from FareShare was particularly difficult, and we were really struggling to actually have a decent offer to give to the customers. It's very difficult, I think, to complain, because you understand that there are **supply chain issues** and there isn't as much food about as there was previously because of those supply chain issues [Operations Manager, November 2021]*

*... the type of food that we are getting is probably not as good as it used to be...it's more like ready meals... and yeah so, we're also kind of having to be a little bit more almost stingy with what we can give because we haven't got a lot. You kind of have like the luxuries for a while and they kind of disappear so that's kind of how it is at the moment, the food is not quite as good as it used to be and **some customers have complained**, but of course there's nothing we can do about it... **it is about what we receive...** [Volunteer 3, January 2022]*

*...I'd say the quality is not quite as good... we get a lot of **snacky things**, what a lot of children would like but adults not so much. We have a lot of it, which is processed and probably wouldn't be suitable for adults ... But we have to think about the adults and the children. There used to be a lot of variety, but now it's a lot of the same things every week. It can get boring for a lot of the customers like same things every week [Volunteer 3, January 2022]*

A significant change in Year 2, which has added to the food-related challenges, has been the massive **decline in food donations** and the **discontinuation of specific COVID-19 grants** from the government towards food purchases. In Year 1, the donations and grants had made it easier for CSS to meet the entire demand for food, including the buying in of fresh fruit and vegetables. In Year 2, however, food costs that had to be financed from within the operational budget have increased significantly.

... donations have decreased massively, and I think that's probably something to do with the increase in like other bills... gas and electric has gone up, the water bills and things like

that. People that were donating before might not necessarily have the facilities or money to donate as much as they used to, which is unfortunate for us... donations are small, often a lot of the time. [Volunteer 3, January 2022]

... with COVID-19 funding drastically reduced, we're having to buy a lot more to put the basic food in ourselves, so what I've noticed is quite a big shift in the amount of money we needed to spend as opposed to the amount of money income we are getting from the social supermarket. [Operations Manager, October 2021]

The significant **increase in costs of procuring food** poses a key challenge for this project.

... the cost of food has been increasing. It has evened out a little bit now, but certainly 3-4 months ago it had gone up. We were getting things like pork pies and readymade salads, kind of lunchtime items, which need to be eaten on the day and not the range of food groups that we need for our members. So, we were having to, you know, purchase a lot of backup from the wholesalers in order to kind of meet the quality of what we wanted to be able to provide... I'm not sure how it is going to start to pan out in the immediate future in terms of food bulk buying... it also seems like it was more accessible to get bulk donations and bulk buying at discounted rates during COVID [Interim Operations Manager, November 2021]

As described earlier (Section 3.1.5), although the feedback from respondents about the food has been overwhelmingly positive, a few respondents were unhappy with the food being close to its 'best before' date or 'use by' date. The staff and volunteers had encountered this dissatisfaction on a few occasions in their interactions with members while they did their shopping. They ascribed two reasons behind this – a lack of awareness on the part of some members about the short-dated nature of 'food surplus' in general (despite them being informed about it in the T&Cs at the time of registration) and/or that they did not have freezers at home.

... we put freezing instructions on anything that we pack ourselves that was split up, and then obviously, there are freezer instructions on pre-packaged items. If I was getting one of the bags of shopping, I'd automatically like freeze most of the stuff that is close to its 'use by' date. And saying that, it would be absolutely fine and it's not a problem. But if you've got members that haven't got freezers, then I can see that would be more of an issue for them. [Staff, November 2020 interview]

This points to the importance of suitable freezing and cooking facilities at homes as also key to dealing with food insecurity/~poverty, as they can influence greatly the extent to which the challenges of using food surplus can be overcome or mitigated at household level.

Consistently over the two years of its existence, CSS has made a determined effort to strike a good balance between variety, quality, and quantity of food offering that they provide to the members. However, the logistics of sourcing and collection from numerous 'unpredictable' sources remains a key challenge. Despite this, CSS has never run out of food nor has it had a shortage of volunteers to help with procuring food during the last two years. This speaks volumes about the project team's management and people skills, but it masks the extra workload for a core group that the project relies on, allocating a substantial number of volunteer hours, and intensive coordination by staff.

4.3 Data management

Maintaining an accurate database through a systematic collection and organisation of data (related to the members' use of CSS and the other services at FCC) remains a complex process. Nonetheless, since Year 1 which had seen considerable difficulties in prioritising data collection and organisation when coping with the logistics and demands of running the daily operations during a national crisis, there has been progress in improving the data management system and the necessary training of volunteers to use the system.

The re-registration process, which started at the beginning of Year 2, has set into motion a systematic process of collecting and recording comprehensive information on members. However, the staff and volunteers described many challenges, as the following quotes reveal.

*... in terms of data management, we've got a lot better data in terms of the information about people's registration, who came, who attended -- we've got accurate data on how many bags of shopping that we did but it's still all in spreadsheets. I'd say there's probably still some data cleansing that needs to be done. **We need a database**, but we haven't progressed with that project at the moment... we did make a little bit of progress, we are working on it... not just for the social supermarket data but also for the support work [Operations Manager, November 2021]*

...it's so difficult to keep up with the day to day running of the operation and all of the staff, and you know all of the volunteers and the maintenance of the building and make time for system improvements like databases. Which is why I think, we need to try and slowdown in terms of the operation and the number of people that come through the operation and really kind of concentrate on improvements in the New Year. [Operations Manager, November 2021]

...I really do think that if we had some system improvements, some databases, it would save like quite a lot of manual effort that's being put in the operation. And it would really help

improve the amount of time needed to spend capturing data. [Apprentice, December 2021]

In the absence of a systematic database, a key concern expressed was over keeping track of changes in members' attendance, as highlighted in the following quotes.

*...a certain customer might not come in for like six weeks and we don't know why they've left. We also don't always know why the customers come either, I think, because some people don't need the service, I think, they kind of take advantage of us I suppose when a lot of people do really need it. That doesn't bother me too much really because you know even if nine people use the service and don't need it and one person uses it who really does need it, at least you start helping someone at the end of the day. **But I think what's more important is knowing why people leave.** Because some people sometimes might not come to the supermarket because something's happened and we wouldn't know. Say, they've hurt themselves and they don't know that we do deliveries, for example. So, they just kind of stay at home and go hungry when we could just deliver the food to them. So yeah, I think tracking the reasons that customers come and go is important. [Kickstarter, November 2021]*

...People who are struggling don't suddenly stop struggling short of a lottery win and lottery wins don't happen to those that are desperate. So, it's nice to know if someone has dropped off the radar, something should come up on the computer to let us know we haven't seen X, Y or Z for three weeks or four weeks or whatever. That's one thing I'd be really keen to see pushed a bit harder as well... Somebody who is above me ... they will then do a check just to make sure that everything's okay and they're not in trouble basically. [Volunteer 1, January 2022]

Towards the end of Year 1, CSS had started issuing membership cards to its members, which had the member's name, photo, membership number and expiry date. This was expected to streamline the process of data capture on how the members use the CSS, which would then be used to improve the services offered, but it remains a challenging process in terms of the time and resources required to monitor the data collected.

At the time of writing this report, an iCloud system has already been put in place in order to streamline the process of data capture and sharing.

The project team acknowledges maintaining an accurate database as a key challenge that needs greater attention. Its importance is not only for operational efficiency of CSS and effective provision of wraparound support to members but also for the purposes of applying for funding bids and grants, and for successfully designing community-centred activities at FCC.

4.4 Coordination with other food projects in the city

The pandemic in 2020 had seen a number of food hubs come up across Coventry, forming an alliance supported by the Community Resilience team at Coventry City Council. CSS had joined the alliance, and benefited from joint bidding of grants funding, for example from DEFRA, towards food provision. However, coordination amongst these different food projects had been a challenge initially, as they all varied from each other in terms of how and when they started operating. Since then, the Community Resilience team has engaged in discussions with all the food hubs, including FCC, on standardisation of processes (e.g., the membership review process; criteria for membership, etc.) with the aim of supporting a more effective **citywide approach** to food insecurity in Coventry.

... [In 2020] they were just responding to the need of the community, but actually moving forward, they really need to be working as one model and even though they've all got the same model in some respects, the criteria when people should be reviewed perhaps... should it be a set time? All these things need to be answered and they all need to make those decisions together ... that's for them to decide. And the reasoning I've sort of said to them that they need to think about this is because when we're looking at city wide or outside funding, we want to be able to give one offer. So, no matter where you are in Coventry, there's one offer. The food might vary depending on the cultures that are living there in those areas, and that's fine, but actually it needs to be one total model. [Community Resilience Team Lead, Coventry City Council]

Nonetheless, with different food hubs organised based on their access to specific resources, infrastructure and networks, the different scales of operation, and the different communities that they serve, the coordination of processes amongst all of them has not been without challenges, as indicated in the quotes below.

... there's a certain amount of interest in collaboration and information sharing, but I still think people are like, well I don't want to do it that way, I want to do it this way, so I'm going to do it this way... It's like the Bare Necessities offering, you know, I think it's a really good offering and obviously we offer it here and it's part of our charity, but I know that some people are like, 'No, I'm not doing that, I'm just giving toiletries away for free, I don't want to be charging for them'. [Operations Manager, November 2021]

... the essence of what we've got going on at Community Centre doesn't really allow us to share our knowledge with the rest of the food hubs in the network... ours is so wide-ranging... Also, the other thing is that for sharing knowledge, expertise, and staff, we

need extra resources which we don't have. [Interim CEO, November 2021]

It is generally perceived by the staff and volunteers that their limited resources were being 'stretched' over having to coordinate across food projects in the city. This raises the issue of acknowledging and addressing tensions between meeting local community needs and a citywide strategy for food insecurity, and the related aspect of short-term interventions vis-à-vis long-term holistic strategies.

... some of the other food hubs are not in the situation yet where they have stabilised their food provision, let alone any other activities that can take place. We know how some of the food hubs are not quite meeting their food hygiene regulations and struggling with keeping volunteers on side and all that kind of stuff. The way that we developed did have totally the advantage of major structure and major funding in place as well for the first few years, so that's huge. I definitely see it not so much as an opportunity or anything but like a responsibility of Feeding Coventry to share its knowledge and expertise with other food hubs. But I don't see it as our responsibility to enforce or in any way try and make people do what we're doing. I don't see that as our role but definitely see that there should be citywide conversations taking place. [Interim CEO, November 2021]

In addition to being a member of the alliance of food hubs across Coventry, FCC has also become a member of the newly formed **Community Centre consortium**, which consists of 14 community centres across Coventry. This is another food alliance with which FCC has started engaging and it would be interesting in future research to track this development and its outcomes.

4.5 Financial Sustainability

In comparison to Year 1, staff and volunteers have expressed heightened concerns over the project's financial sustainability in Year 2.

Among the significant financial concerns is the **increasing costs of procuring food**, and hence the running of the social supermarket.

*...I've noticed a big shift in the amount of money we needed to spend on food as opposed to the amount of income we're getting from the social supermarket, yeah, we're actually **getting less income in and we're spending more**. We are actually managing to still stay within the budget that was originally set for me by the Trustees ... but it's still a big concern of mine, about how much it's actually costing us to run the social supermarket. [Operations Manager, November 2021]*

The estimated loss on every food bag have been to a great extent offset by increased income from the hiring of rooms after the easing of lockdown restrictions mid-way in Year 2. However, managing a tight budget for meeting the operational costs of CSS poses a key challenge to the sustainability of the project and its future outcomes.

*...In terms of profit and loss of the Community Centre, we're still making a **loss on every food bag** ... however, we have been able to subsidise that somewhat with the **hires of the hall and space**, which has become more and more popular, so we've got some good long term hires taking place now providing some income for us... [Interim CEO, November 2021]*

*...Hiring out the rooms has been really helpful towards **bridging that gap in the operational budget** and the more and more we can rent out space, the more that will help us to bridge that gap in the actual food costs, you know, the food costs versus the income from food. Last year we actually broke even... with pretty much spending what we made, but I think that's going to be quite different this year. [Operations Manager, November 2021]*

At the time of writing this report, a decision to increase membership fee to £5 was under consideration by CSS, which follows discussions held across the network of food hubs in Coventry, which are subject to similar financial pressures.

...I think it [increased membership fee] will help combat some of the issues we've got around the lower income and the increased food costs [Operations Manager, November 2021]

Whereas an assured steady stream of income generation has come from membership fees, as Year 2 progressed, the letting of space/rooms by FCC has improved with a number of long-term hires being established (e.g., GrowKids, ESOL classes). However, with the capital works for setting up of the Community Café and kitchen now scheduled for Year 3, and the overall disruption in the daily operations at FCC, the project team consider these changes, although necessary, to adversely affect the flow of hiring income.

...We'll have to turn down hiring requests... because I know we're going to have building work done... it's a little bit frustrating just as we are getting into the pattern of hiring the building out really well. But two of the hires are very lucrative for us... I'm prioritising those at the minute... We're trying to create a plan around how we can get the building work done and prioritise our main hires and also run our social supermarket. [Operations Manager, November 2021]

Another area of increased costs in Year 2 relates to some staff contracts that were made permanent and the recruitment of additional staff. It is anticipated that these costs will go higher when additional staff will need to be recruited for the operation of Community Café and the kitchen next year.

*...we will obviously need to employ a chef on a regular basis and we're probably going to need at least one or two sort of support staff within that kitchen as well for serving and sort of managing the overall operation of a kitchen. That obviously needs to be hygiene rated by the Council ... and we'll have a lot of regulatory requirements around that than we've ever had before, if we're going to open to the public. That definitely is going to **need additional resources**... (Interim CEO, November 2021)*

...now that I'm really involved with the budgeting and everything, I really feel that stress is always there ... behind the mind. We need to keep the place going, you know, all the activities to organise and people to be employed... they have to get paid every month, so we need to know from where we pay them for these kinds of activities. Suddenly HAF comes up, yeah, you've got to start pulling up people, bring more volunteers to do the activities, you need more people, so they have to be paid to do the job... [Finance Coordinator, January 2022]

In relation to raising funds, over the two years, the project team at FCC have become better at applying successfully for grants, in particular the small community grants. However, a **lack of dedicated time, resources, and specific skillsets**, especially for applying for large infrastructural grants, pose a key challenge. The logistics of meeting the day-to-day operations does not leave the small team with sufficient time to think strategically and systematically about securing diverse streams of funding (including long-term) and income generation.

*...I quite enjoy doing those funding bids and seeing the successes when you're successful as they come through, but I think it's quite difficult to try and manage that alongside everything else that I'm doing. So, it will be great to have a **fundraiser** on board, obviously, myself and the Project Manager will be supporting the fundraiser [Operations Manager, November 2021]*

*...now it's like you have HAF, you get HAF funding, you have some other activity, you have that funding, so there are different pots of funding which come, and we are regulated within that money... But if there is a **regular funding** coming in, then this place can be much, much better. We can do more, we can have more people on board and do much bigger things, that's what I feel... [Finance Coordinator, January 2022]*

*... we need to prioritise getting some big pots of money from somewhere if we're going to be sustainable, so it's always there in the back of my mind... we definitely need to concentrate on those **big wins** with regards to big pots of salary and big pots of core costs being covered... If I had a magic wand, I would just say to get **secure funding** to do all of the things that we want to do... another big*

lottery grant would be wonderful. [Operations Manager, November 2021]

The need for an experienced **fund-raising officer** and a well-designed **fundraising strategy** is acute, as the following quote describes:

*... we're desperate really to get a fundraising officer on board because what we need to do is also to start engaging with the public for public donations. You know, long term regular giving; and making use of our success stories (getting them available to people online in the media) so that we raise our profile really, and start to get that kind of support. So, yeah, regular donations are really important, and then we need to have a fundraising strategy where we have sort of annual targets throughout the year for both grants and small trusts as well. I think that's something that we can do really, really effectively but we just don't have the resources at the moment ... we are sort of struggling to complete things as they come up, and we need **dedicated resources** to do that. [Interim CEO, November 2021]*

Operating a social supermarket at its current scale in an old building that had not been maintained well prior to its takeover by Feeding Coventry has required extensive renovation throughout, and it still requires further work. Furthermore, the practical realities of the unfolding costs of living crisis and rising utility bills in the months ahead will considerably affect the running costs of the building. This, together with meeting the costs of food procurement and securing the salaries of staff for the long term, will invariably add enormously to the financial pressures that this project will face. This raises bigger questions around how do we provide sustained support and resources to community projects and how do we engage with key stakeholders to enable such inspiring and innovative community projects to achieve their objectives.

4.6 Project management and governance

In Year 1, ensuring the smooth running of daily operations had required an exceptionally high level of activity to be coordinated and mobilised through timely, quick but nonetheless rigorous responses to the pandemic and the increased need for food support in the local community. This had put unusual pressure on the capacity of the project team and project management. For example, operations shifted from an onsite pantry-style shopping model to a dual model of onsite collection and delivery; opening times for CSS changed from two days per week to three, and some of the Operations staff employed on a part-time basis were made full-time. In addition, operations stretched over additional food projects in response to the changing situation brought on by the pandemic (such as the emergency food hub).

The rapid expansion of the project also meant that Feeding Coventry and the Board of Trustees had to respond fast to uncertain and new developments.

However, as the 'emergency' mode of operation in Year 1 started to shift to a relatively 'normal' mode in the later part of Year 2, key staff and volunteers became accustomed to using project management approach for different sub-projects that they were working on and overall project management became streamlined, as the following quote shows.

*We do plan everything that we do in Excel and everybody follows the **project planning methodology and reporting methodology**, and weekly update meetings. So, although we don't necessarily use specific project management tools, we use the methodology within project management. Probably that's one of the things that was lacking last year, I think. I was doing it for myself, but all staff are managing all of their projects like that now... so everyone is really clear on **what their targets are**. And we've got **project plans** in place, you know, task lists, everyone quite clear on what needs to be done and they can report to me on where they're at with their projects. [Operations Manager, October 2021]*

Steps have been taken to widen the knowledge and skills base of all staff and volunteers, for example, through appointing volunteer shift leaders (from amongst the most experienced volunteers) who are given the responsibility to run the shifts on the different days that the CSS is open. Nevertheless, in the context of the increasing complexity of operations and the range and number of activities organised in and by FCC, the **management of risks** from key staff stepping away and/or volunteers in the core group dropping out poses a key challenge to the viability of the project.

The vision for Feeding Coventry includes, as its mission statement shows, a citywide strategic mission of making Coventry a food resilient city. It is through the CFH project at FCC that the sharing of knowledge, resources, and good practices for supporting the development of other food projects/initiatives across the city was expected to take place. However, two unexpected developments -- the emergence of food hubs across Coventry coordinated by the local council in response to the demands of the pandemic, and the formation of Coventry Food Network with its separate identity with a citywide mandate -- calls for a rethinking of Feeding Coventry's role and its **strategic framework** in a citywide context. Developing this strategic framework, as our conversations with the project team showed, is a key issue, which needs attention going forward.

4.7 Organisational capacity

The local partnerships and local connections with groups and organisations, as described earlier (Section 3.4), have been critical for outcomes in all the four outcome areas. However, keeping such connections strong and active has placed huge demands on FCC's capacity to deal with the necessary administration, organisation, and the amount of time required from staff and volunteers.

The organisation of programmes, like HAF, which were a phenomenal success, requires an exceptionally high level of organisational capacity and coordination for delivery of the various activities during the programme, as the following quotes show.

... there was so much administration around HAF... so much organisation to keep it all on track. It was a really short time from when we found out we were successful with the bid to when we delivered it. We had five weeks to get it up and running, so it was really difficult and also it was because we've never done anything like this before. The safeguarding policy was insufficient and the level of training that people had was insufficient, and even the health and safety policy was like I felt was insufficient for, you know, having children onsite. There were so many, you know, so many policies, so much training and all the recruitment... We somehow did it all and I'm really glad that we did because actually it gave a lot of joy to a lot of member-volunteers who you know got involved in the programme and also a lot of families. [Operations Manager, October 2021]

... We spent so much time organising the booking, making sure that each of the activities wasn't oversubscribed and the right age of children was on the right activity and communicating this out to the parents, what time they've got to be here and when, and actually a lot to start with... [Operations Manager, November 2021]

... I need operational management support. We've got an apprentice at the moment but that's only for 18 months and without some operational management support, you know, I won't be able to run all the projects and the operation and the site maintenance. So yeah, so we definitely need that... [Operations Manager, November 2021]

Underlying many of the concerns over maintaining operational efficiency and the successful delivery of various activities are fundamental concerns arising from what has been described as 'a small team and a growing Centre'. The number of new developments in Year 2, as described in sections above, include the addition of support services, the engagement of volunteers in support work, the HAF programmes, Wellbeing Days, and other socio-cultural activities. Doing all that the FCC are doing in a sustainable way (which is good for them and for the beneficiaries/members) will require additional resources and support.

Staff and volunteers described for example how they could have benefited from additional support with the booking process for HAF programme.

... if the Council had taken on the booking process, the whole thing would have been so much less stressful. That was the one thing that you know we really struggled to manage it with everything else that we were having to do... I think it would have taken away a lot of confusion faced by the parents... parents were pretty confused about what is going on where, because each activity provider was doing its own advertisement. And you get people coming up here then saying, 'I want to go on this trip to the beach' and I'm like 'well we don't do it...'. You know, I'm trying to explain to people, and we spent actually quite a lot of time on that... [Operations Manager, October 2021]

As we also noted earlier (Section 4.4), the tensions over the 'overstretching' of limited resources, a lack of clarity over the 'core' group of activities, and specific roles and responsibilities for the project team, are key challenges on organisational front.

*The thing that worries me sometimes is... **Are we overstretching ourselves?** I think we need to make sure that ... when we take on a new initiative, we can resource it properly. But also, to make sure that we keep the existing processes and activities in place because I think some volunteers have been tired and grumpy, including myself... Especially during the summer, I think there was a lot of very tired people by the time the children went back to school in September. I think people were mentally tired. Yeah, we were trying to run two very **high-profile activities** at the same time – the summer HAF activity, while still maintaining service to the members. I think the message I'm trying to bring out is going forward if we were to take on additional projects, we got to make sure that we strike a **balance between the resource allocation**... that there are enough volunteers and staff in place to do both. [Volunteer 4, January 2022]*

... we need more staff or more people on Operations... There are a lot of things going on, especially with a food hub here; and the social supermarket days are also increasing... I heard they are going to open on Wednesdays also... So yeah, it's getting busier and busier. So, maybe we need to make it into more organised departments. Roles and responsibilities need to be clearly mentioned, who has to do what, you know. Maybe that's the big challenge... [Finance Coordinator, January 2022]

... given the amount of support that is given to the members, we need more staff who can offer that support, I think. Because what I've

*observed is that an awful lot of emotional support is given to people and by staff who already have full jobs to do, and they always do it, and they do it amazingly. But I think I'd really love to see that **grow sustainably in a healthy way for everyone** involved. [Volunteer 2, December 2021]*

It is important to note, as the last quote shows, that the project team describe their engagement with FCC not simply in terms of food provision and supporting services to enable members get out of crisis situations, but also about the **wellbeing of all those involved**, whether it is staff, volunteers, or members. Hence, organisational capacity development as an intentional, collaborative effort to strengthen the processes, knowledge, relationships and behaviours is a key challenge that needs to be addressed for the project to achieve its objectives.

5. Final Reflections

*... it is like a complete approach to what people need in the community to connections in the community... and just to really create change for people in a complete way... create change and support people in a concrete way. This is something that I think is incredibly hard to measure, but I really do believe that will be **changing people's lives** who are involved in it and that's for members and volunteers, including myself. Being involved in these activities, I think, is really like a life changing experience, creating lots of meaningful connections, and I hope increasingly will change for people who are in bad situations with food poverty financially. [Volunteer 2, December 2021]*

... it's gone beyond helping to provide food for people to help them to change their situations and get what they need, and now it's going towards collectively asking why we're in the situation and what we can do to change it. I think that is really powerful. [Volunteer 2, December 2021]

...I think we're going in the right direction, you know, getting these roles in place and getting the support for our members is a key point. Obviously, also getting new volunteers... engaging with them to come through ... and the wellbeing of our volunteers and training. I think it's exciting. I think lots of nice things are happening, and you know, with all the Wellbeing programs as well, I think it's quite a busy dynamic environment, really, and it's quite a busy dynamic environment really, and you know, just helping people is what we're trying to do really. [Volunteer Coordinator, December 2021]

Always extremely happy with my food bag each week. It was also a God send during COVID lockdown. Delivering it to me each week as I was high risk. They really helped so much.

Lovely fresh food. Very kind people. Never feel like I am begging xx

The volunteers are excellent and friendly. They always make you feel welcome...

There are a lot of people within the vicinity with serious health problems who are unaware of the social supermarket and therefore are unable to access your service due to a lack of knowledge. It would be good if there were some literature to provide to such people.

Volunteers are extremely friendly and helpful. They are doing great job.

It's a very good community, with regards to food and money it's more beneficial.

It's a very pleasant and beautiful experience.

Box 5: Qualitative responses from members about their views on CSS and FCC (2021)

The responses to the question on overall experience by members in the survey (see Box 5) and the interviewee quotes at the start of this section, taken together are strong endorsements of the experiences, hopes and expectations from the project. These have expanded from food provision to 'changes' in people's lives from a combination of different things which nourish the people through food, through support, connections, and relationships. While during Year 1, the food provision and social connections facilitated by FCC had become a **lifeline**, by the end of Year 2, FCC was enabling **life-changing** experiences for members, volunteers and staff alike.

Four aspects make the project stand out in its efforts at going beyond a simplistic narrative of food provisioning to acknowledging food poverty/insecurity as symptomatic of underlying deeper individual and societal problems of poverty, poor mental and physical health, and social isolation. We reflect on these aspects next.

5.1 Beyond food: Nurturing of social connections

Since its launch in March 2020, a key aspect of FCC's growth has been the **nurturing of social connections** -- between volunteers, between members, between volunteers, members, staff, and the wider community. Through supporting regular interactions, whether it is at the CSS, community gardening, volunteering, shared community meals, support services, or the cultural activities organised at the centre, it is remarkable how FCC has become a vital community space for fostering relationships and connections. The following instances corroborate this point.

Volunteers helping members do the food shopping was described by volunteers not only as a way of getting to know their members more but as also giving the members an opportunity to share their feedback informally on the food or talk about any other concerns they may be facing over casual conversations. As described earlier (Section 3.1.2), the members survey respondents also described this 'social' aspect of CSS as important components of their overall experience that had a positive impact on their wellbeing.

The successful organisation of community-centred events/activities, such as the HAF programmes has led to FCC developing into a '**Community Hub**' for the local communities, the third key component of the CFH model (see Section 1.2). As described by the Operations Manager, this fits with the mission of Feeding Coventry to provide healthy, nutritious and affordable food, wellbeing experiences, while also generating incomes.

...the reason that I wanted to get involved with HAF programme is with regards to our strategy. This is the way our Centre should be going... we should be running these types of programmes. Obviously, it generated quite a lot of revenue for us ... and you know it also meets the aims of feeding people and running family activities, creating this... a real Community Hub where people can come along. I feel like it's the right direction that we should be going in. [Operations Manager, October 2021]

Furthermore, the expectations from the Community Café and kitchen, when launched in Year 3, centre around building a stronger sense of community and fostering conversations around food, as the following quotes show.

...What seems to happen, I think, even when cooking is happening in the small kitchen that we have at the moment, it very quickly becomes the heart of the Centre like everyone who is passing by starts by asking about it, sort of gathering around talking there, want to know what's being made, start talking about themselves, you know. When we have the proper kitchen facilities, I think it will add a lot to the Centre ... No matter what else is going on, it will become, I think anyway,

like a heart of the Centre, bringing people together in a real sense of community, so I think that's really exciting ... Also, it will help create conversations about the quality of food that people have... you know, demonstrating that healthy fresh food can be made very cost effectively and still be very high quality... offering more cooking lessons, that kind of thing, and sharing a standard of food that can be achieved for people. And that will hopefully filter out and influence all of the food related activities of the Centre and elsewhere and show what can be done, I think. [Volunteer 2, December 2021]

The successful **performance of 'Hungry Nation'** by the members of FCC (see Section 3.4.4) provides yet another illustration of the community spirit and social inclusion that FCC is enabling through such creative avenues.

...I do strongly believe that involving the arts in something like the Community Centre is a really powerful way and cathartic way for people to express, you know, express things that they've been through on whatever level of complexity. So, I think I do believe in the arts being a powerful way to sort of bring communities together and help people as well. [Volunteer 2, December 2021]

Building trust and social connections/relationships has therefore gone hand in hand with the practical aspects of alleviating food insecurity. This goes beyond the simplistic narrative of food provisioning to acknowledging food poverty/insecurity as associated with a host of complex life challenges that very often include mental or physical ill health, or social isolation or exclusion because of different types of barriers faced and vulnerabilities arising from wider systemic inequities.

5.2 Partnerships and networking

The successful outcomes in the four key areas over the two years have undoubtedly been founded on strong partnerships, extensive networking and building of relationships that the staff and volunteers at FCC have incorporated as an essential element of their operations. The list of partners has grown manifold since Year 1 and relationships have become stronger. We highlight some of the partnerships below.

The successful delivery of summer HAF 2021 provides an excellent illustration of the pre-existing relationships with the local Council and local community groups and organisations that have developed since March 2020. It has also led to new partnerships that have emerged, in turn leading to potential ideas for further collaboration on new initiatives.

On each day, during HAF, for example, activities provided were co-organised with different community partners and local groups. This included the local church, Families for All Hub, Team Springboard, Groundworks West Midlands, GrowKids, Positive Youth Foundation (PYF), amongst others.

...there were so many people involved in delivery of HAF. You know, the local church did a day, where they did an afternoon tea for the children, and they built a fruit rainbow. And the **Families for All Hub** came along and supported us with referrals. **GrowKids** were a massive part of it - they delivered one day a week of the programme of activities for us, and they are excellent with children and really really engaging, they really do know what they're doing with children, they are a very experienced team of people... **Positive Youth Foundation** now... they work specifically with teenagers, so they would take the teenagers over to Edgwick Park and then do sports with them. [Operations Manager, October 2021]

... we actually were what was termed as a **'strategic partner'** with the Council over the summer. We were a strategic partner because we were coordinating, you know, a large number of ... 60 spaces a day that we provided for the children over the summer holidays, and we were coordinating all the activity providers and the food... everything to come together. So, we were classed as a strategic partner and because the programme was very successful, we've now got that relationship with the HAF team in the Council... we've got like the reputation to continue to provide that service, so we have put in a bid for the Christmas HAF activities... [Operations Manager, October 2021]

Following the success of Summer HAF 2021, FCC has been approached by Positive Youth Foundation to start a Youth Club at FCC, in partnership with another local organisation, [Sky Blues in the Community](#) who have offered to provide food at the club. Groundwork West Midlands has offered to run cooking classes,

thus indicating the **expanding web of networks and partnerships** forged by FCC. Sky Blues in the Community had also been supporting them during the lockdowns in 2020-2021 by doing the deliveries of food bags to their vulnerable members.

Furthermore, interviews conducted with some of the community partners show their satisfaction with the nature of engagement with FCC and their expectations for future collaboration on different activities. The following quote is from Team Springboard describing their engagement with FCC:

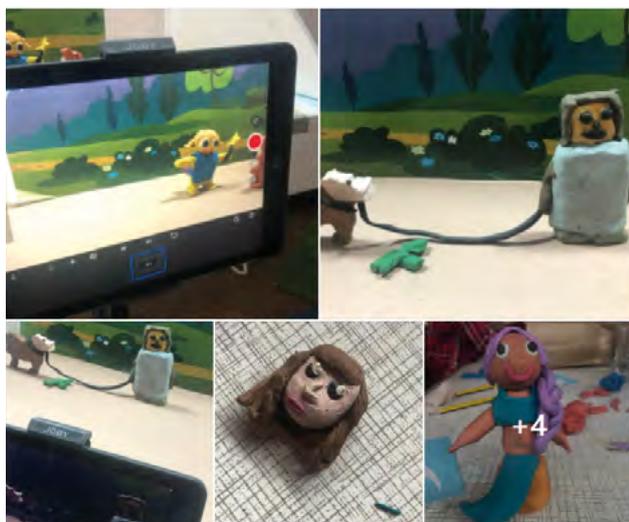
I would like to do more stuff with them ... the summer HAF programme, I think, went really well and I think there are more possibilities, so it would be great.... [Horticultural Manager, Team Springboard, January 2022]

The feedback left by another community partner, [Let's Animate](#), from Easter HAF 2022:

This Easter holiday, Let's Animate was invited for the first time to Foleshill Community Centre. What this Centre does for Coventry communities is awesome, a food bank, activities, and a community garden! It was a great pleasure to create some fantastic films with their young people for the Coventry HAF programme. [Facebook, Let's Animate]

For Families for All Hub, a few yards down the same Foleshill road where FCC is located, and who have been a key community partner right from the start, the connections have got stronger, with both organisations committed to working together to support local families in need. In Year 1, before CIAS was onsite, FCC was sending over people to the Hub for consultations if they needed family support; and equally the Hub was directing people who came to them and who were struggling with meeting their food needs to the CSS. In Year 2, they have supported each other's events aimed at community engagement. For example, FCC supported the Hub's 'On your Doorstep' events, in which all the partners in the local area came together to reach out to the local community. For the event in July 2021, FCC organised free arts and crafts activities, and had volunteers in place to direct people to FCC, show them around the social supermarket and talk to them about the range of activities that they did. A local community enterprise, [Urban Goodies CIC](#), had been engaged to provide hot meals on the day. The positive feedback that the enterprise received on the day from the local people has, since then, led the enterprise to provide food on different occasions at FCC, thus resulting in a new partnership, which also benefits the local economy.

For the first one [On your Doorstep event] we had on in the summer, which was at Churchill Avenue, we did like a makeshift bus stop. If nobody who has heard about the social supermarket would stand at the bus stop, we got a volunteer to walk them down to the community centre to see what's happening, to have some food, and do some activities. Now, those families use the Centre naturally. And



Let's Animate is at Foleshill Community Centre.

19 April at 14:59 · Coventry · 🌐

This Easter holiday Let's Animate was invited for the first time to Foleshill Community Centre

What this centre does for Coventry Communities is awesome, a food bank, activities and a community garden!

It was a great pleasure to create some fantastic films with their young people for the #coventry #haf program

*we did it again... where we had the Christmas funfair... **We don't duplicate our services** because if you duplicate that... you know, sort of 250 yards down Foleshill Rd... it's not good use of anybody's time or money, so **we always try and work together**. Even if it's the same event, we offer different things... that works really well. [Team Leader, Families for All Hub, Foleshill]*

For the second 'On your Doorstep' event in December 2021, FCC organised in collaboration with community partners a range of different activities, including with [Christ the King](#) to provide food, hot chocolate and gifts for the children and play Christmas songs, and also arranged for a circus performance in partnership with [Albany Theatre](#) and the City of Culture.

Another aspect of partnership has been in relation to fundraising. Together with Families for All Hub, FCC have been successful in **joint funding bids** for organising events and activities. As the Team Leader at the Families for All Hub described,

... if there is anything we can work together on, we do it. So, for example, she [the Operations Manager] applied for Severn Trent Water funding. We did that jointly. I did a little bit, she did a little bit and we got £10,000. The Centre has supported us with building the garden and now we're trying to get volunteers to build... and it was amazing some of the plants that were grown. Children were fascinated about pumpkins and things like that... We also had GoodGym and Team Springboard. Yeah, ... they were great, and really, really sort of passionate about the job they do and made families passionate. Children were really excited. So, in the summer it worked really well... clearing the garden and everything. [Families For All Hub, Foleshill]

Collaboration between FCC and Families for All Hub also extends to sourcing and sharing of food, as the following quote shows.



*... **We also share food**, so if we get a little bit more delivery of something or we've got too much surplus, we will sort of say to them, 'since you have a supermarket every week, can you use this up?' They will send their volunteers with their shopping trolley, and they fill it, and they go. And if I needed anything, I can say to them, 'you know, we're really desperate... have you got this?' and they'll say 'yeah'. So, it **works on relationships**. [Team Leader, Families for All Hub, Foleshill]*

Another key partner is [GoodGym](#), who were involved right from the very beginning, even prior to the launch of CSS in March 2020. Their volunteers had helped in getting the FCC building ready for the social supermarket (e.g., by painting the walls, putting up shelves, assembling the shelves, etc.), and they did stocktaking of the food donations, which has continued through 2021. Their engagement has further extended to helping out with the food shopping on Thursday evenings, with their volunteers taking members around the CSS. As they described, their volunteers turn up at FCC whenever some tasks need to be done as their motto was 'doing good and getting fit'.

*This year [2021], we've helped with lots of different things as well... moving the social supermarket when it needed to be moved from the small room into the large room. And we moved it around when there was an election voting that was going on in the building. Then we also did quite a nice activity just before Christmas where we helped finish off compiling the Christmas hampers that were going out ... And that was lovely as well, just seeing the scope... **just how many families are being helped at social market was amazing**. Yeah, we're back now doing regular stocktakes. And we also helped... quite a lot with the garden, along with Team Springboard's group that were helping build the garden. Quite a lot of our volunteers over the summer helped with the building and the making of the garden. We helped them with putting up a **new greenhouse** out at the far back and ... oh yeah, in preparation for the summer camp we helped **clear the access ramp** to get to the sports hall, so lots of weeds and things on the way there. We kind of did that one evening or two in the last year. [Coventry area activator, GoodGym, February 2022]*

The volunteers from GoodGym not only enjoyed the opportunity for social interactions within their own team and the fun of doing an activity together, but they also valued doing something for their local community. Their engagement was described as "mutually beneficial". The feedback on their experience was most positive, as the following quotes illustrate.

...they [volunteers] really enjoy it... for example, when we went through the first lockdown, some of my volunteers were either made redundant or had a change in working

*practices and actually for them, helping at the social supermarket was a way of finding their place, helping and doing something at the time that was quite tricky for people. I know that really helped a lot of people over that first lockdown and... they really enjoy the fact that they are **giving things back to their community**... [Coventry area activator, GoodGym, February 2022]*

*...I've got quite a good relationship also with the Family Hub, sometimes we swap tasks... we've worked over at the Family Hub and had some people over, so, **the communication side is always brilliant** because we get sorted quite quickly. It is always **very efficient** and always really **well organised**, and you know, they obviously know us, they trust our volunteers, that's quite nice... they are happy with us to get everything done, and done well...[Coventry area activator, GoodGym, February 2022]*

With [Cogs of Coventry](#), a local independent zero-waste business selling unpackaged wholefoods/foods, FCC's engagement is being trialled by one of the volunteers, as a pathway for developing entrepreneurial opportunities for members. As described by him,

...Cogs asked me to make some chilli jams from locally grown organic chillies they had sourced. So, right now, you could go into Cogs and buy three types of chilly jams made from locally grown organic chillies that were made at the Foleshill Community Centre by me...

*So, they provide all the ingredients, I just gave my time. Now for every jam that is sold, a pound goes to the Centre... It's not significant in terms of money, but they're not making profit on it, **it was the concept, it was to show what could be done when working together** [Volunteer 2, December 2021]*

Last but not the least, the partnership with CIAS, under [Feeding Britain's Pathways from Poverty programme](#) for the provision of wraparound support services for members has been a highlight of FCC's development trajectory in Year 2. The significance of this partnership is recognised by the project team, and equally by CIAS. The feedback posted by CIAS on FCC's Facebook illustrates this.

...As Vice Chair of CIAS, I'm delighted with this partnership, putting the support right where people need it back into communities. (FCC Facebook, 11 February 2021)

Clearly, through a wide range of partnerships with community organisations and groups, FCC has been able to go beyond food provisioning to a more 'complete' approach to food insecurity in numerous creative ways. The **social value** created by FCC is thus not only from the project's direct outcomes in the key four areas that we have evaluated, but also indirectly from the positive outcomes achieved by the community partners through the many collaborations and partnerships, thus achieving much more together than each one on their own.



5.3 Volunteering

Volunteers have been key to the project delivery and successful outcomes since the launch of CSS in March 2020. Starting with 3-5 volunteers, it had increased to nearly 70-80 by the end of Year 1, including many who had been furloughed from work and had spare time to volunteer. After the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns, many of the furloughed employees who had become volunteers went back to work. Nonetheless, by the end of Year 2, a core group of 15-16 core volunteers had formed who came in regularly every week. At the time of writing this report, three from this core group had become Volunteer Shift Leaders (see Section 3.2.2) to oversee the operations in their particular shift, and to whom the other volunteers could come to when they had queries, thus freeing up the time for staff to undertake other operational tasks.

The interviews with volunteers reveals a wide-ranging impact that volunteering has had on them (see also Section 3.2.2), ranging from a “belief” in the work that they do at FCC for changing people’s lives for the better to personal journeys of exploration and change (see Section 5.5).

*I believe in it... **I believe in what we’re doing**, I believe that we have the potential to be a force to help the members... Well, we’ve come out of COVID into a very different world... there’s a lot of very damaged people out there. We do need to help some of them. You can’t help everybody, I’m sorry about that, but there are people we can help so let’s see what we can do... I can see the value that it adds to the city of Coventry and, in particular, to our local community... [Volunteer 4, January 2022]*

*...it is not very humane out there at the moment and it’s important for me, in general, when you have **interaction** with someone, whether it’s a friend, stranger, that it’s a nice interaction. And that’s it really for me... that when they finish, they feel comfortable with me, they’re happy with me... They don’t really experience that a lot nowadays. So, it’s for them to feel okay, you know, that there’s someone that really cares, and you can feel that you do care... It’s just that really, nothing more, and obviously at the end, it makes me **feel good**. Yes. Because it’s a nice interaction. [Volunteer 1, January 2022]*

*...it’s been a **journey of exploration** for me, and I think for everyone involved in the Centre. I don’t think ... anybody quite knew how the supermarket was going to take off. We’ve developed the management of the supermarket in terms of throughput of members and Covid measures. I think we’ve kept it fairly consistent and fairly safe environment for people to come to... [Volunteer 4, January 2022]*

Interviews with staff, volunteers, and member-volunteers revealed the pride they have in working together as a team and the good communication they have between themselves. Notwithstanding difficult/challenging situations, which they acknowledged having faced on few occasions, sometimes arising from unconscious biases, likes, dislikes, and even prejudices, they have noticed changes in perceptions and awareness.

*...What works really well is that we’re all together. And I think it’s important to trust the people you have working here. I must admit I think it’s just a case of conditioning for some people that they don’t treat all the customers the same, in my eyes. It’s not that it happens regularly but I see it. I don’t really think it’s something that’s vindictive. I just think, a lot of people, you know, get conditioned in the world today. So, I think it works really well that **we work together, and we have the right people here**. I think we’re 98% there. The 2% is the conditioning bit... because of a mix of people here from different backgrounds, and that’s just it really. And I think as we go along, I’ve seen changes to certain people... I can see that they’re prepared to listen and understand. I think that’s very important... we have a lot of people here, including members that have been through a lot in different circumstances, different traumas, you know, and all those sorts of things. [Member-volunteer 1, January 2022]*

A key point to note here is that FCC has continued to attract volunteers across different age groups and from diverse backgrounds. One reason for this being the variety of tasks and work experiences that FCC offers across a wide range of activities. As described by the Operations Manager, “there is never any lack of opportunity to get involved in interesting things, which is great, you know, as they are always able to find something which is of interest to them.”

FCC’s celebration of International Volunteers Day in December 2021 was aimed at expressing gratitude to all the individuals and groups that volunteer with them and support them. This is another illustration of its ‘**ethics of care**’, which values interpersonal relationships and care as critical to their work.

A significantly positive development in the above context relates to CSS members being offered the opportunity for volunteering at FCC since Year 1. At the time of writing this report (April 2022), 18 members of CSS were volunteering at FCC, including some who volunteered occasionally and some who are there on a regular basis. Furthermore, these member-volunteers have slowly and steadily been supporting daily operations at FCC, estimated at the time to be around 60% of the average weekly total volunteer hours. This suggests immense potential for positive impact on members through training and reskilling, as well as on health and wellbeing, as we noted earlier (Sections 3.2 and 3.3) in our analysis of findings on the overall experience of volunteering at FCC.

Among the respondents for the online survey, however, a high proportion (87%, n=40) had not volunteered. Only six (13%) reported that they either volunteer or had volunteered in the past at CSS (see Figure 39). Out of the six, three volunteer weekly. The two respondents who said 'other' elaborated that this was 'usually more than once a week' and the other had 'not started yet'. Another member was volunteering usually more than once a week. The motivations for volunteering at the CSS are variable, as indicated by the responses to this question from the respondents (see Figure 40).

It is noteworthy that to 'meet new people / interact with others' and 'to feel part of a local community' and 'support a local initiative' are the highest scoring categories in terms of motivations for volunteering. The perhaps more individual and 'instrumental' reasons such as 'to improve job prospects' and 'work experience' ranked considerably lower than the more 'community-oriented' categories. Moreover, when asked about their experience, volunteers cited the convivial and positive 'feel' of the CSS as important factors for why they continue to volunteer, as shown in the statements next from two different volunteers:

How often do you volunteer?

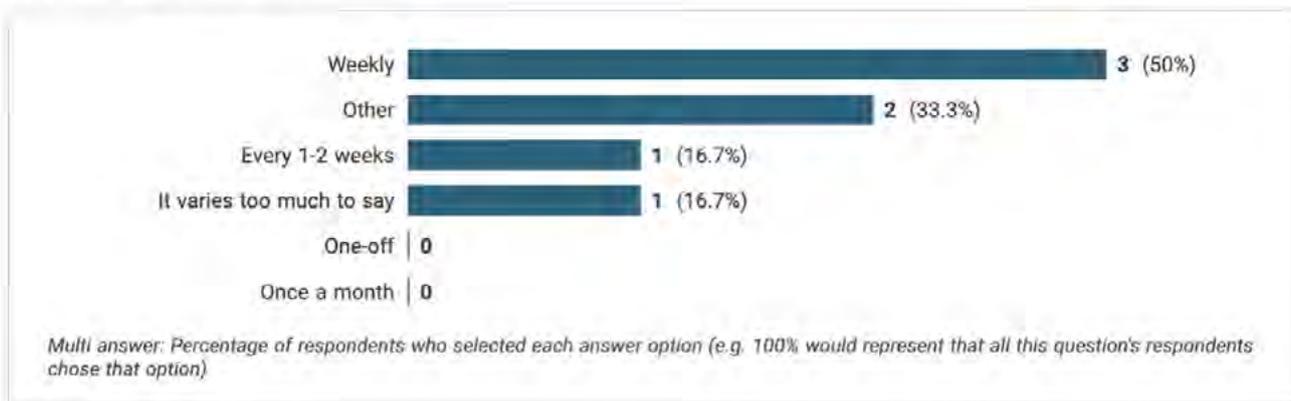


Figure 39: Frequency of volunteering at CSS

What are your reasons and/or motivations for volunteering? (please select all that apply)

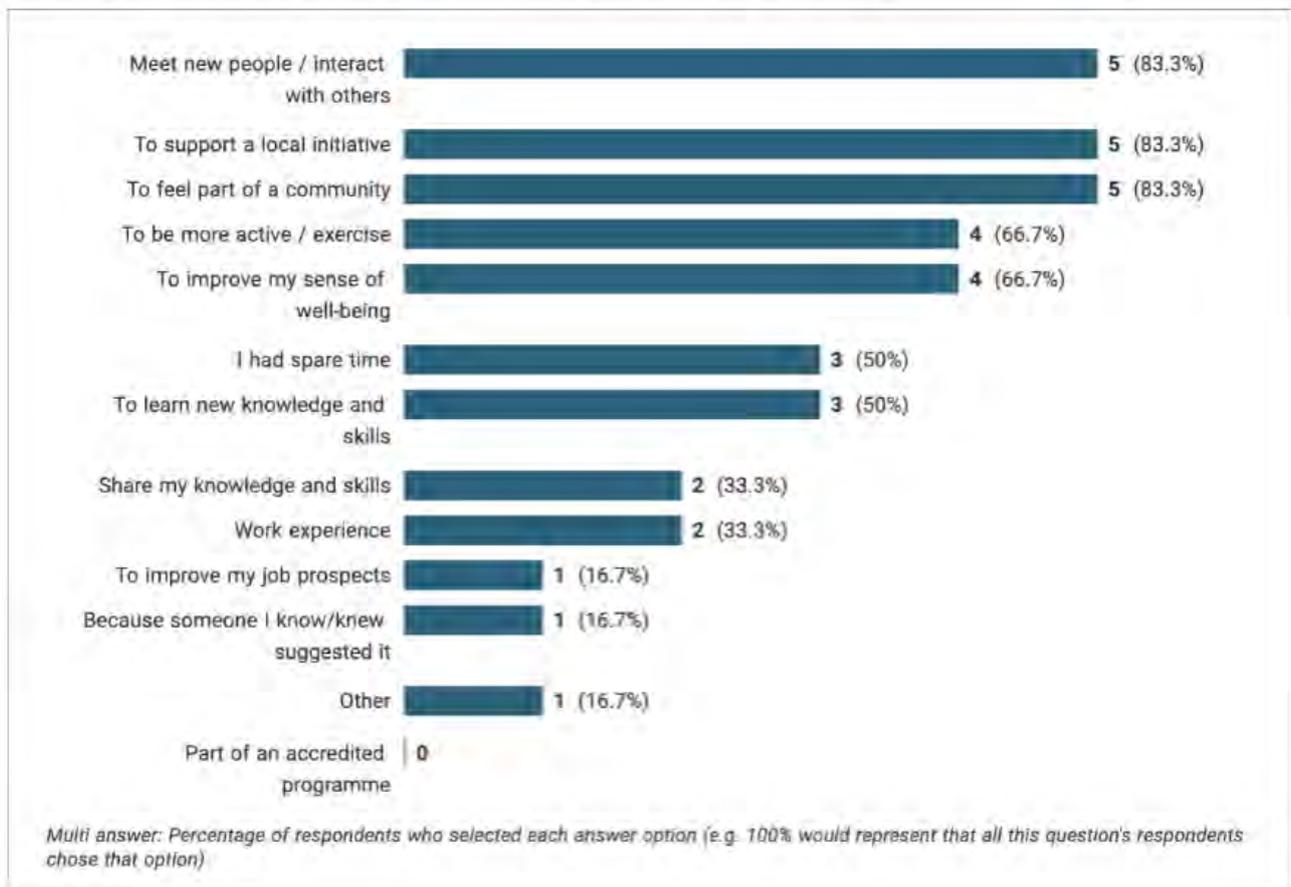


Figure 40: Reasons and motivations for volunteering at CSS

*...It has been a **positive experience** as it is a very **welcoming place**. It has improved my confidence as well as other skills, including the inter-personal.*

*...When you are a person that spends a lot of time on your own at home, they [staff at FCC] have always got time for you, to talk, to advise, offer a coffee/cake. **Everyone helps everyone**; it makes me feel like I've **achieved something** by helping people. I'm just starting to get more & more involved.*

In an associated question, when respondents in the members survey (2021) who did *not* volunteer were asked if they would be interested in doing so in the future, 27% (n=10) said 'yes', 19% said 'no', while a high proportion of respondents said, 'unsure at this stage' (46%). This indicates that there is some appetite to volunteer, although more information from respondents who are unsure would be required to determine their specific reasons and actual likelihood to volunteer.

5.4 Co-construction with stakeholders

Co-construction with stakeholders is a key project objective with a two-fold aim: first, to eventually enable community 'ownership' over the project; and secondly, working together with stakeholders to influence local and national policy reforms which address key drivers of food insecurity.

We found multiple channels by which information and ideas flow between the different stakeholders. The planning under way for the new Community Café and kitchen, for example, provides a good illustration of **collaborative working** where volunteers and member-volunteers are actively participating in putting forward their ideas. As described by the Operations Manager:

...we always work collaboratively... When we were coming together with plans for the Community Café, we had an evening where all the volunteers came along, and gave their ideas about how it could work. You know if we hadn't done that, we wouldn't have got what we have now, I think it was A (a volunteer)'s idea to extend the Café out into some of the main hall space... To be honest, whenever I am making a decision day to day, I always

include the volunteers, because they are the people that are doing it, aren't they? You know, I call for a little briefing, a little meeting -- this is what we're thinking to do, what does everybody think if we're going to change your process. I would never just change a process without engaging everyone in that process. [Operations Manager, November 2021]

When talking about their experience of engaging with the staff, all volunteers utilised words such as 'fantastic', 'feeling valued', which we had also found in the interim evaluation. The element of trust placed on the Operations Manager (and other staff) to listen and implement actions that benefit FCC was implicit in all the interviews.

Ultimately, the project's aim is that the members would take ownership of FCC and the CSS. We asked in our members' survey if they were aware of the social supermarket's structure (i.e., type of organisation) and how it is governed.

As the data shows (see Figure 41), 30% (n=14) of the respondents knew "a little", 22% (n=10) knew "quite a lot", whereas 35% (n=16) did not know about it, and 7% (n=3) did not think it mattered to them. But when asked if they would like to get involved (see Figure 42), nearly half (45%, n=18) of the respondents confirmed their interest and stated that they would like to learn more about the decision-making processes.

It is important to note here that the increasing number of members who are engaging in project delivery is a significant step towards co-construction, positively influencing operational running of CSS, food provisioning, and the support services.

Another illustration of co-production can be seen in the successful delivery of the Wellbeing Days. The first Wellbeing Day had been planned in September 2021, designed for adults to come along to FCC for arts and crafts activities and yoga sessions, ending with a meal afterwards. To the surprise of the staff and volunteers, the sign up for it had turned out to be very low, and the event was cancelled.

...we weren't getting much sign up for it and the overwhelming feedback was that, actually, no one has any childcare. No one could really come along. So, what we decided was to cancel the event and replan it with the option of childcare... [Operations Manager, November 2021]

Are you aware of the social supermarket as an organisation and how it is run (e.g., its structure, who makes the decisions, how decisions are taken, how it is governed?)

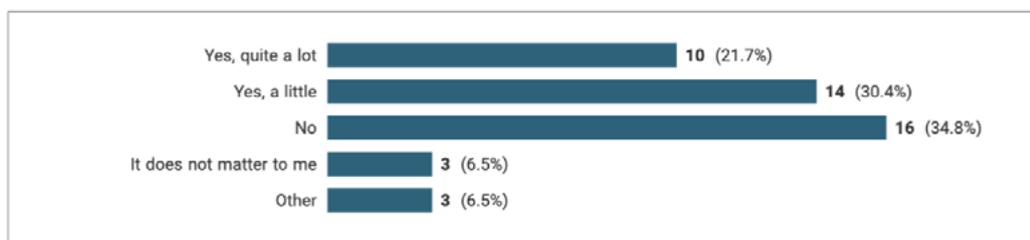


Figure 41: Awareness of CSS members about how the organisation is structured and governed

The Operations Manager and volunteers contacted the people who had participated in the successful summer HAF programme and based on consultations and feedback adapted their plans and organised the Wellbeing Days successfully in October and November.

Similarly, in the running of the HAF programme, the staff and volunteers proactively engaged with stakeholders in order to **co-design and co-deliver** the activities (as described earlier in Section 3.4.4 and Section 5.2).

The involvement and participation of members, volunteers and staff in the ‘Hungry Nation’ performance provides another remarkable illustration of **co-creation**, in this case between the theatre company and FCC. As described earlier (Section 3.4.4), the process included performing, music direction, writing of songs, musical recital, poems recital, etc. FCC was involved with organising the event and also with the presentation of the performances onsite in December 2021 and at a Coventry-based theatre in April 2022.

In relation to project governance, the regular meetings between the Operations Manager, the **Project Manager**, and the **Board of Trustees**, have ensured a structured approach to project management. At the time of writing this report, in order to ensure a more collective approach to supporting, assessing, or reviewing issues encountered in project delivery, staff and volunteers were being invited to share updates on their work at the Board meetings. Plans are under way to set up a mechanism by which the members’ voices could also be represented at the Board meetings. Also, increasing diversity in the project team to reflect diversity in local community has been reflected upon as an area for paying attention in Year 3.

The project has engaged with the local council on various projects (as briefly outlined in Section 3.1.9). This has widened the nature, scope and reach of the project, making FCC a community base for extending support. The project team participate in regular meetings organised by the **Support for Foleshill** group, including hosting them when it is their turn. The Support for Foleshill group is an initiative led by Coventry City

Council and includes individuals, community groups, and organisations across different sectors, including the local police, housing providers, debt/benefits advice agencies, and other local services located in the Foleshill neighbourhood. The meetings, described as **‘Cuppa with the Community’** offer a space for these various groups to come together, update each other on new developments, and discuss problems faced in the local community and collectively seek solutions to them. These meetings have also enabled FCC to establish new connections with local groups. One such new connections developed with Foleshill Library, which subsequently has donated books to FCC; now, FCC is offering a selection of books (for children and adults) which can be picked up at the community centre.

What’s brewing in your community?

Anti-Social Behaviour?
Concerns for a neighbour?
Problems with housing?
Want to talk about money? Feeling down?
... Or simply fancy a chat?



Cuppa with the Community!

Thursday 31st March 2022

5:00pm- 7:00pm

Foleshill Community Centre,
Foleshill Road
CV6 5HS



Would you be interested to learn more about it and/or get more involved? For example, would you want to participate in some of the strategic decisions of the social supermarket (e.g. type of food to be sold, the opening times, the support services to be provided)?

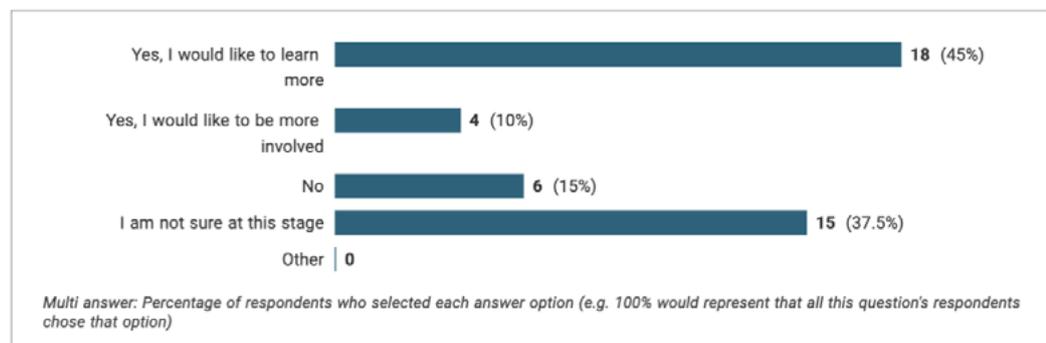


Figure 42: Extent to which CSS members would like to become more involved in the strategic decisions of CSS, or to learn more about how CSS is governed



By engaging with [Coventry Food Network](#) - which has evolved out of Feeding Coventry, and is a partnership of statutory, voluntary and private organisations across the city - the project is benefitting from making new connections and partnerships with local community groups/organisations.

Along with the expansion of partnerships and networking (as described earlier in Section 5.2), the project's engagement with stakeholders has thus deepened over the period and shows a gradually growing embedment in the local community.

At the time of writing this report, the Operations Manager had created a **forum** including a mix of project staff, volunteers and members (totaling 30 in number) and they had identified and developed the **key values and principles** that underpin the work that they do at Foleshill Community Centre (Box 6).

- **Community and family at the heart of everything we do**
- **Caring and non-judgemental**
- **Integrity and trust - we do what we say we are going to do**
- **Diversity - we develop strategies to meet the needs of all members of our local community**
- **Adaptable - we are not so rigid that we can't adapt to changing situations. We are more interested in the person than the process.**

Box 6: Values of Foleshill Community Centre

This is a key step towards **co-creation of values** that are 'meaningful' for the project team and the local community, and an important step towards community taking ownership of the project. As described by the Operations Manager,

... everything that we're doing, here, I want our members and volunteers to help shape that. We have started to hold forums... just discussions, really, with volunteers and members, and capture the things that they tell me. And what I did was I took them through some values of some similar organisations to give them a flavour for what sorts of things,

you know, they might want to think about... would be the values of Feeding Coventry. And then we started to talk about what we do... our service, what values are most important to us. We captured the feedback from the volunteers and the members, and, I've translated them into these values. But there's a second part of it... I think the next stage is to take this to the Trustees... and ensure that the Trustees are signed off on what our values are. And then I want to formally take those back to members and volunteers and say, 'this is our values that you contributed towards' and communicate it to them in that way. So, it's a bit of a process, it's not complete... (April 2022)

5.5 From lifeline to life changing experiences

I would really like to move past talking about ourselves in terms of how many bags we've delivered and how many people we've supported... to the actual journey that someone has been on and the significance of the change in the real important bits of their life and how that feels. Then from there, I almost would kind of like seeing us go back to our values ... I would really like to readdress those, and say this is what we've learned, these are the important things, ... I think it's something about expressing the importance of person-centred support. [Interim CEO, November 2021]

The concept behind the CFH project and its implementation in Foleshill is a success story that has and can enable a multitude of positive outcomes for individuals and the wider local community, as we have described in detail in the sections above. It has adopted a much-needed holistic perspective in addressing the individual, household, and community context of those who find themselves struggling to meet their needs.

In this section, we bring to life two **personal stories of change**, which serve to illustrate the transformations that are possible when community food initiatives go beyond the provisioning of emergency food to addressing some of the underlying challenges linked to food poverty and focus on supporting members' journeys of change.

Roxie's journey



During the first nation-wide lockdown in Spring 2020, Roxie and her partner came for the first time to FCC. She had heard about the Coventry Social Supermarket (CSS) from a family-friendly café for parents with young children, who had - for a little while - delivered food bags to Roxie and her family. Not having been to the CSS previously, she was concerned about the possible negative judgement she and her partner might receive. However, the friendliness of volunteers and staff at FCC helped Roxie to overcome this concern, and soon visits to CSS became part of her weekly food shopping routine.

Roxie is a young woman living in Foleshill who lost her job in retail due to health issues. She lives with her partner, three daughters, and one stepdaughter who stays with them at weekends. During the first lockdown, Roxie's partner was furloughed, but then was never called back and lost his job. Losing their family's only source of income drastically affected their household budget. For Roxie and her family, CSS became a lifeline.

When describing her experience of shopping at CSS, Roxie explained that the offer might not always be perfect but that it was much better than other options – especially when it became more like a shop after the easing of lockdown restrictions, where they could choose the food they wanted. She emphasised the benefits of being able to make choices, including about specific foods:

...Before, we just were given a cereal... I had loads of the same cereal in my cupboard, and my kids don't eat the same cereal all the time. So, I always pick a different mixture, if they've got any there. So, they've got choice of different things. In the mornings, my kids are quite fussy. And obviously, when you're going around choosing, you get to actually choose what you want, instead of ... I mean, I'm grateful for what I get. Can't complain with what I get. But it's nice to have a choice.

Roxie adopted a specific shopping strategy where she uses one day per week to shop at the CSS and then complements what she might still need through additional purchases elsewhere. By

focusing on selecting items that could become main ingredients in their home-cooked meals (e.g. meat) and on items that fulfil her daughters' special dietary needs, Roxie is able to provide her family with a healthy and varied diet despite their dependence on CSS. It also means she does not have to cut back completely on some enjoyable aspects of food for her children:

...Two of my youngest -- one of them has got cow's milk intolerance, one of them has got wheat intolerance – so, they've always got a little selection there. So obviously, my wheat intolerant child, she can have a certain amount, but she can't have loads. So obviously, when she has treats, I've got to avoid other things in the mornings or during the day... And if they [CSS] have got wheat free treats, I always pick them up because that way ... I don't need to worry about her then. And she can eat whatever she wants during the day and her treat in the evening could be that. And they've always got biscuits and stuff... it's amazing.

Going beyond the food itself, Roxie also benefitted mentally from becoming a member and engaging with FCC. She described her mental health struggles, especially during the first lockdown:

...I was so scared... my mental health was really bad, I wanted to quit. But I know I needed to get out. I wouldn't leave my house for months on end. Because it was a lockdown, I didn't have to leave, so I wouldn't leave.

Gardening helped her to overcome some of her anxiety, first in her own back garden where her partner used some old pallets to build a raised bed, and then at FCC when she was invited by staff and volunteers to join the gardening group:

...When they offered me a place to garden, obviously at the centre there, I was oh so happy. I was like yes, I'm really into this gardening right now. I cannot wait to start. ... [Despite the above-described anxiety] going there helped me, and it helped me with my mental health. First person I met was L, and G, and they were absolutely brilliant. L just

took me under her wing and G was just so welcoming. And then we just went from there. I started with the weeding and planting some seeds and stuff. Yeah, we just started like that.

Roxie soon became one of the key volunteers in the community garden at FCC. However, taking further steps into other types of volunteering (e.g., inside the CSS) was not straightforward. Despite her initial interest to engage further, Roxie's anxiety levels increased and for a little while she completely stopped going to the FCC.

...and then I thought I've got to face this... I said to [Operations Manager] that I don't feel ready. She said, "That's fine, we don't force people into it. You do what you're ready to do." G mentioned to me about, you know, the family hub, about doing the gardening there, and if I wanted to help. And I helped out. I was like 'Yes, I'm on that. I want to do that.' And my youngest helped as well because she was only in nursery at the time... So, she came and helped...

With the support of FCC's staff and volunteers, Roxie restarted her volunteering and became actively involved in supporting the creation of a new garden at a nearby community organisation. From then on, she returned to volunteering regularly. By late 2021, she also started to volunteer in other activities at FCC that slowly helped her overcome remaining concerns about interacting with people. She worked 'behind the scenes', re-stocking, sorting products on shelves and other stocktaking activities. In addition to her work as a volunteer in various roles and the confidence gains she made through these activities, having trustful relationships and conversations at the centre also helped her being signposted to an organisation that is able to support her with her and her family's mental health challenges.

There were also other offers at FCC that Roxie and her family engaged in. This included receiving debt counselling and making occasional use of GrowKids' offer at the centre. Roxie and her children participated in the summer and winter HAF programmes. Roxie also took part in Arts and Crafts activities where she learnt about other community centre-based craft activities - she is now regularly partaking in those activities, describing them as key to her personal well-being.

...There are craft courses that I do. And they keep me sane as well.

Since starting going to FCC in Spring 2020, Roxie has changed from a person who was suffering from high levels of anxiety that mainly saw her housebound, to one who is regularly engaging within the centre, volunteering, seeking and receiving support for her own mental health challenges as well as those of her children.

She works creatively, is able to provide healthy and varied food for her family and, last but not the least, feels part of a community. All these experiences have contributed to Roxie's gains in confidence. This is evidenced by two anecdotes, one illustrating this change in an everyday moment, the other within the context of a cultural event, where the spotlight was on her (and fellow performers). Referring to all her accumulated experiences with the centre, Roxie described:

...I definitely think it has helped me. Because I walked to town this morning, and I passed loads of bus stops with people inside and I knew the bus stops were closed because the buses were being diverted. And I put my head in and told everyone, in every single bus stop I went past that the buses are being diverted, you might want to walk because there was a crash on Foleshill Road...

Asked if she thought she would have done that earlier, Roxie responded "No, probably not."

Another, more unexpected outcome of Roxie's journey with the FCC was her participation in the 'Hungry Nation' theatre performance, which emerged out of a collaboration and co-production between a theatre company and FCC as part of the City of Culture events. Describing her participation after the performances in December 2021, Roxie recalled:

...Recently we did that food poverty play. And I did a painting and a poem to go in the play. ... But I nearly didn't... I was backstage saying 'I can't do this'. But I got out there and I did it...

While performers were not reading their own words, Roxie – despite her anxiety and nervousness – stepped out to be in front of an audience:

...I didn't read my poem, someone else read my poem. But I painted in front of people... I did. We actually performed two plays. The first play, I didn't paint because I was too scared. The second play in the evening, my family were there. So, it made me more confident to paint. And I promised them I'd paint. So, I had no choice but to paint.

In April 2022, Roxie stood – with her fellow performers – in front of a much larger theatre audience, performing publicly in an event that made it into national news and contributed to raising awareness of the many faces of food poverty in the UK.

These days, Roxie feels like the FCC is her "second home".

Simon's journey



Simon is a single man in his early 50s who was made redundant from a job in the travel industry, which had taken him travelling abroad for more than 25 years. When he arrived in Coventry, he felt very low with the situation he found himself in.

...I didn't know what I was going to do. I was getting some help from the council trying to find somewhere to live. And then I found somewhere through a housing association... But when I moved to my new accommodation, there was nothing in there at all. No kettle, no cooker, hardly anything, no carpet. So, it was quite traumatic, I can say. Not so much in comparison to a lot of other people around the world, but it was traumatic for me. And what I did is I just contacted the council about how I can get some food and things like that. I knew about food banks anyway, because I used them in different areas.

Simon was referred by the Council to a food bank, which brought him to Foleshill Community Centre (FCC) one day in Autumn 2020. Recalling what he was thinking when receiving the food parcel he was eligible for, he described:

...It wasn't much really because most of the food there obviously were for maybe if you have a microwave, or you have a kettle. I think I had a kettle at the time and a toaster. But everything else that was offered to me, I really couldn't cook it, unless it was to be eaten cold... things from the can.

Feeling "quite frustrated" with the content of the food parcel and how little of it would be useful for him given his circumstances, he nonetheless felt he had been treated in a very positive manner during his first encounter with staff and volunteers at FCC. He described what struck him most at this first meeting with project staff at FCC and the impact it made on him:

...how calm they were with my reactions to my position which was really cool when I looked back at it as I was going home. And it was so good that I decided to meet [the staff] and let [them] know that I would like to volunteer because they also introduced me to what sort of plans... whatever else they did in the social supermarket in the community centre. So that was new to me... I was

quite impressed by the diversity of stuff they were doing, and I think it was a brilliant thing to do.

Simon knew he had some skills and insights from the various jobs he had done, through his volunteering with charities like 'Crisis' in London, and through his personal experiences of crises. Despite this, he had lost confidence in his own abilities. He described his meeting with the Operations Manager as a pivotal moment, which led him soon after to decide to become a member-volunteer at FCC.

...It was [the Operations Manager] that really convinced me about my transferable skills and things like that... So it was good, because [the Operations Manager] said, I can come and do some volunteering. And yeah, that's how it started really... I got involved in the social supermarket first.

Soon after, Simon also joined the community food growing group at FCC. He had been interested in gardening from his childhood days and remembered going to the allotment their family had every Saturday and collecting fresh produce for their meals.

...subconsciously or consciously, I don't even know which one, but I always knew that sort of thing used to make me feel better inside. Maybe more so because I'm out in the open. I don't know, really. But yes, I did the allotment. I jumped all over that, because I know how much it did for me when I was... working with my stepdad on the Saturdays.

Another milestone on his personal journey was when the Operations Manager offered him the opportunity to do paid work at FCC during the school holidays:

...[She] could see that I'd be good for the HAF programme during the summer holidays for the children. And it just went on from there really. And it's been very consistent for me here... it has been very helpful for my mindset, as well as understanding the skills I have, how I can work with the families. So, I've started to see that a bit more with the response from the families to myself. I believe that a lot more. And that's where I'm at right now, to be honest.

This assessment of his own situation, about the impact and the positive feedback he has received about his volunteering and the good work he has done, illustrates the positive changes Simon has experienced regarding his mental health and confidence.

...I was quite good at talking to people, but in my own social life, I'm quite withdrawn. So, I'm trying to work on that... why that is so. [The Operations Manager] has been the director and she sat down with me a few times for jobs that are available. But it's things that I'm dealing with right now, my concentration span, being more confident in terms of progression in my employment, which I had a problem with all my life and all those sort of things... So, it's changed me... But now I really enjoy what I do...

This increased confidence, while not without struggle, seems to have even helped getting Simon back into doing more volunteering and paid jobs at FCC that draw on some of his previous work experiences:

...Like the last week, we took... I took three coaches to an adventure playground in Northampton, a hub for children. And I also took them to the Belgrade Theatre. And I was like, what, on my own on 3 coaches?? [The Operations Manager] looked at me and said, 'why not? ... I want you to do it because I think you can handle it'. And I was like 'My God' and it just took me back to when I was a rep... took coaches ... took people on holiday to excursions. So, I just thought back at that and just used that for me to be a bit more confident when I did take them.

Another key moment came in relation to participating in the Hungry Nation performance, a co-written theatre play on experiencing food poverty, which turned out to be an emotionally challenging but positive experience for him.

...I've done a bit of film extra work as well... work on parts and things like that when I was younger. And when I started looking into that, it just brought me back to those days. But at the same time... I didn't realise how much it [the performance] would affect me... because you have to really dig deep into your past, present and future. Mine has been so much up and down. I must be honest with you; it kind of stressed me out and got me quite anxious... it took me a while to really get myself back in my mind-set. But what it taught me was that I still have things to work on... I realised, I still have to work on them.... it triggered a lot of things for me.

While the emotional journey involved in taking part in co-writing and performing the play was not easy, Simon felt it important to play a role in raising

awareness of food poverty. He summarised it as a positive experience overall:

...But yeah, it was really, really good. I enjoyed it. We want to put more of the acting into it. I mean, really give it a bit more oomph in terms of maybe doing some acting scenes of the actual trauma or the actual hardship that people go through. But yeah, it was really, really good. I think it's a good direction to go in...

Three months later, Simon – together with Roxie and a number of other members and volunteers of the FCC – brought to stage a public theatre performance during Coventry's City of Culture year.

It was a great success that gathered public media attention beyond Coventry itself.

Simon's journey with the FCC is continuing. Expressing his appreciation of engaging with FCC, he believes that "What works really well is that we're all together." Having first come to the FCC in search of the food bank for his immediate food needs, the caring reception he received started his personal journey of change. By volunteering and using various opportunities at the FCC, different aspects of his life have come together and allowed him to draw upon and recognise more of his own experience and skills – whether it was building on his earlier volunteering skills, his enjoyment of gardening, or his interest in performing arts. Simon has now become a core member of the volunteer team at FCC and has felt confident enough to take on paid (short-term) jobs.

We would like to end this section with the Operations Manager describing her story of change:

...I think it [FCC] has started to really change people's mindset... Because I know my mindset has been changed. You know, I'll be totally honest with you, two years ago, I didn't know what a community garden was. And I didn't know anything about creative art at all. For me, on my personal journey, obviously, I've got a lot of experience in management. And I've got a lot of experience in supporting people. But I hadn't realized the benefits really of wellbeing and community gardens and creative projects, and how that engages people. I'll be totally honest, I hadn't even considered it. Now, that's the thing that gets me excited, that's what gets me out of bed in the morning. And, you know, that's what gets me bid writing. And I am 100% sold on how that impacts... I feel like, we really have been able to influence other partners across the city to see, like, this is something that we could do and it is beneficial to people. [April 2022]

6. Summary of findings and recommendations

6.1 Summary of tables

In this section, we are using five tables to summarise our key findings over the two years that the CFH project in Foleshill has been in operation. These findings encapsulate CFH's achievements in four outcome areas -- Food Resilience (Table 7.1), Training and Reskilling (Table 7.2), Health and Wellbeing (Table 7.3), and Regeneration of Foleshill Community Centre (Table 7.4) -- while also looking at the additional achievements that have emerged through the co-construction of CFH's activities with the local community and other organisations (Table 7.5). In each of these tables, we have summarised the outputs, the outcomes (changes) for different groups, and areas in which we identified scope for improvement.

Food Resilience		
Outputs	Outcomes for Members	Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to affordable food (516 active members in 2021) • Food procurement from FareShare, local food suppliers, donations, direct purchases • Engagement with local food projects & other 'food hubs' in Coventry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced shopping bills on food • Without food from CSS, many would have turned to foodbanks • Reduced worry about food • Increased consumption of fresh fruit & vegetables • Increased consumption of different types of food • Increased confidence in cooking new dishes • Increased engagement with local food projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement of enough food across essential food groups at low cost • Expansion of food options for diet-specific & culture-specific needs • Connections with producers of locally grown produce • Connections with local food business groups • Data on reduced visits to food banks and on members who no longer require visits to the SSM • Data on changes in understanding of nutritional and dietary choices in everyday food consumption
Source: CFH project records + Research Interviews	Source: Member Survey 2020, 2021 and interviews with member-volunteers	

Table 7. 1: Summary of Section 3.1

Training and Reskilling		
Outputs	Outcomes for staff, volunteers, and members	Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment created (staff) • Apprentice, Kickstart, Volunteer Coordinator • Staff training • Volunteers on-the-job training • Members becoming volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved knowledge & skills of staff & volunteers (formal training) • Improved knowledge & skills of volunteers (informal on-the-job training) • Increased knowledge & skills of members engaged in project delivery as volunteers (informal training) • Volunteering experience at FCC helping with gaining employment elsewhere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of members' needs • Structured training and reskilling programmes/ activities for members
Source: CFH project records, Research Interviews	Source: Research Interviews	

Table 7. 2: Summary of Section 3.2

Health and Wellbeing		
Outputs	Outcomes for staff, volunteers, and members	Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to wraparound support services for members • Creating a community space for staff, volunteers & members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased physical wellbeing • Increased mental wellbeing • Increased social connections • Increased confidence & self-esteem • Increased control over life • Increased level of wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of members' needs • Structured health & wellbeing programmes/ activities for members
Source: CFH project records	Source: Member Surveys, Research Interviews	

Table 7. 3: Summary of Section 3.3

Regeneration of Foleshill Community Centre		
Outputs	Outcomes for FCC	Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community food growing onsite • Hosting of a number of community-led projects • Commercial letting of space for community-led programmes/ activities • Hosting of cultural activities/ events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased engagement with local community partners (e.g., educational programmes, martial arts) • Increased collaboration with council-led food projects • Increased links with other food projects in city • Increased participation by local community in FCC events/ programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of timely funding for community gardening • Increasing diversity in community participation • Coordination with other food projects in city • Engagement with city wide food strategy • Project database management
Source: Interviews with staff volunteers, project coordinators of other projects, community partners	Source: Interviews with staff volunteers, project coordinators of other projects, community partners	

Table 7. 4: Summary of Section 3.4

Co-construction with stakeholders		
Outputs	Outcomes for members, staff and volunteers and wider community	Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of internal working culture based on empowerment, trust, respect and co-creation • Regular engagement with Board of Trustees • Engagement with local Council • Engagement with local networks & other community organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing number of members as member-volunteers (influence on project delivery) • Co-learning between staff & volunteers • Increase in reach and impact for FCC and other community organisations • Increase in range of community offers at FCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation & engagement of members in decision-making • Diversity among staff & volunteers to reflect diversity in local community
Source: Interviews with staff, volunteers, community partners	Source: Interviews with staff, volunteers, community partners	

Table 7. 5: Summary of Section 5.4

6.2 Recommendations

Our interim evaluation at the end of Year 1 had led to recommendations in five areas aligned with the challenges faced during that year. These related to diversifying food procurement; developing wraparound support services for members; increasing community outreach and engagement; securing long-term funding; and, aligning project management and governance. At the end of Year 2, while noting the specific changes put in place aligned with these recommendations, and the progress made in the four outcome areas as described in sections above, we also noted that there remains further work to be done. Considering the tremendous expansion of FCC's activities in 2021 and the challenges faced (Section 4), we make two additional recommendations linked to volunteer progression routes and the currently limited organisational capacity.

We consider it important that the project builds on its strengths and addresses the constraints it faces. The seven recommendations informed by our research are as follows.

1. Diversify local food procurement for food resilience

In the two surveys we conducted across the evaluation period, the members unequivocally expressed their satisfaction with the food that they can purchase at the CSS. However, from an organisational perspective, our findings also emphasise the challenges that exist when relying on surplus food while aiming to secure a stable supply of a diverse selection of food that meets the nutritional needs of vulnerable communities without aggravating existing health inequalities. The sole dependence on food donations and/or food surplus is inherently unreliable.

In conversations, staff and volunteers acknowledge the limitations of depending on food surplus and the need for a food offering at CSS that supports healthy diets. The purchase of increasingly larger amounts of food has become inevitable with increasing food costs, threatening the financial sustainability of the FCC. While some income-generating streams are part of FCC's activities (see Section 4.5 and recommendation 5), these are likely to remain insufficient to fully subsidise the food costs incurred.

Therefore, it would be beneficial and highly encouraged to explore alternative approaches, focusing on a more diversified and stable local food supply (i.e., a move away from a heavy reliance on supermarket surplus). Options could include considering economies of scale via the establishment of independent relationships or working with other similarly interested community organisations or groups to create a 'food supply network' -- connecting with local farmers and producers, processors, distributors; bulk purchasing to reduce costs; connecting with community food growing sites and community food growing networks to get more locally grown food. We recommend a specific task to be undertaken that explores these various options, including working with Coventry Food Network around the emerging citywide food strategy, which aims at supporting the

transition to healthy, affordable, and sustainable diets. However, we also acknowledge the additional strategic and organisational capacity this would require (see recommendation 7).

2. Extend support for enabling effective support provision for members

Going beyond a compartmentalised approach of addressing food insecurity only through subsidised food provisioning in the social supermarket, the project has started offering wraparound support services for its members. It has become clear that many members have multiple vulnerabilities. Hence, the provision of a structured support services programme with the help of CIAS onsite, the organisation of various types of wellbeing activities at FCC, and the closer linking up with existing activities outside of FCC has shown to have multiple cross-benefits. This emerging holistic approach can address some of the wider challenges members are facing that contribute to their food insecurity.

Specifically considering the level of support required by members with multiple vulnerabilities and the rate at which more such cases have been identified in Year 2, we recommend recruitment of additional staff to reduce the pressure on a small team coping with the increased demands of support provision. Training on the various methods and tools used in the charity sector for supporting members in their 'journeys of change' and effective monitoring and data capture for managing the support provision is also required. Given that support services are critical to the project's vision and priorities, we recommend allocating resources specifically for meeting these requirements, including a continuation of CIAS onsite support services at the Centre. Financial and infrastructure resources, including a dedicated space for confidential conversations of a sensitive nature (e.g., financial; family-related; domestic violence; issues related to immigration, and asylum seeking) are currently insufficient given the growing demand.

This provision of support services and its effective management will become all the more critical in the months ahead as the costs of living crisis unfolds adding to existing vulnerabilities and disadvantages experienced by the local community.

3. Enable volunteer progression

In the first year of its existence, the project's attention had primarily been on stabilising the food provisioning aspect of its operations, given the challenging circumstances brought on by the pandemic and its impact on worsening food insecurity. However, by the end of Year 2, in addition to the provision of support services for members, the importance of addressing wellbeing and support needs of FCC volunteers (who continue to be vital for the project's success) has come to the fore. We acknowledge the efforts to build on achievements in a more structured way.

FCC volunteers span a wide age group, have diverse backgrounds, and diverse motivations for volunteering. For some it is about their mental health, for others it is about making good use of free time and giving back

to the community, while for others, it is about gaining confidence or getting useful work experience and skills for future employment within FCC and beyond. For some, it is a combination of all these reasons. For volunteers interested in employment, we recommend developing structured progression routes and training sessions for volunteers. However, we also acknowledge that this will require the allocation of specific resources.

At the time of writing this report, a Volunteer Coordinator has been recruited who is responsible for addressing the needs of volunteers. This is a key step in the direction recommended, which needs to be supported by sustained funding for the role and the availability of dedicated resources. This is particularly relevant considering that many members have become volunteers. It is important to build on this success, by supporting volunteers and member-volunteers develop their areas of interest, self-confidence and skills, and broadly supporting their 'journey of change'.

4. Increase community outreach and engagement

We acknowledge and positively comment on the Wellbeing Days and the HAF programmes which have successfully extended the project's reach and community engagement. Nonetheless, our evaluation indicates that further efforts are necessary to achieve a membership and volunteer and staff composition that reflects the diversity of Foleshill community, and also raise the level of awareness about the activities at FCC in the local community. This recommendation has two elements.

First, there is a need for targeted engagement with non-English speaking communities to encourage their involvement as member-volunteers, volunteers and in the staff. Reaching out will require the continuation of further relationship and trust building with local community organisations and groups to further gain strong local insights and connections. This requires dedicating specific time and resources for this purpose. One example could be the development of communication materials, such as flyers, leaflets, and other information resources in multiple formats and in the various languages spoken in the Foleshill area.

Secondly, more specific attention to using diverse communication methods is required for raising awareness about the range of services and the events and activities organised by and in FCC. Acknowledging the positive impact of 'word of mouth' and the already effective use of social media, we recommend a more prominent use of information boards outside the centre and the regular holding of Open Days for the local community. Here, providing information in multiple languages would be beneficial. This could be one way to address the issues of digital and language-based exclusion.

5. Secure diverse streams of funding (including long-term) and income generation

The project staff have raised substantial funding in-house from numerous successful bids over the two years. However, there is a recognition of the challenges faced

and the explicit need for dedicated time to fundraising, or the recruitment of a fundraiser. Raising large infrastructural grants normally requires a specialist skill set and is time consuming. We recommend dedicated time by current staff to fundraising, or the recruitment of an experienced fundraiser, until operations become financially self-sustaining. Availability of longer-term funding would certainly help alleviate uncertainties over meeting the operational costs and capital costs.

The availability of sufficient and timely funds is also critical for building on the numerous successes and outcomes already achieved. For example, in the case of community gardening, staff expressed the need for funding/grants, which are available in advance or at the least more aligned with the growing seasons so that they could plan their growing activities more effectively. Creating a paid position to develop and monitor the growing site all year round was another suggestion.

The training of volunteers and member-volunteers, which the project has embarked upon, and which will be a focus for the next year, will also need dedicated funding. A key enabling factor for each of the four recommendations as described above is availability of sufficient and sustained financial resources. In addition to fund raising, as a related point, we recommend specific allocation of time and staff resources towards identifying the possibilities and developing strategies for income generation.

At the time of writing this report, the staff have started on re-designing the plans for developing the Community Café space and the kitchen and creating a new lobby area at the front of the building, to catch up on their targets for generating income from the new services. Our conversations with staff and volunteers have revealed a number of creative ideas that they have started considering for generating revenue. This includes, for example, micro-entrepreneurial opportunities – such as making jams, pickles, etc. from the community garden's produce, cooking meals onsite for sale, community cooking sessions in the community kitchen, and making cosmetics (creams, oils, etc.) from herbal plants grown in community garden, and then prepared and packaged for sale by the members. Also, the successful delivery of the two Wellbeing Days (the new connections made and the highly positive feedback received) has opened up the possibility of organising such events as income generating opportunities, with participation by CSS members continuing for free while a participation fee would be charged for others. Furthermore, options for crowdsourcing and targeting specific funds for start-ups could be explored. More broadly, we recommend developing a strategic finance plan to include income generation targets alongside key risks and enabling resources.

6. Strengthen project governance

Considering the massive expansion in the scope and scale of the project in Year 2, extensive engagement with diverse partners, and concerns over the gap in the operational budget and overall financial sustainability, we recommend that steps be taken to strengthen project governance to aid decision-making in managing and

resolving strategic and operational issues. This is even more important as the project steadily moves away from the 'emergency-mode', which has dominated the first two years of its operation, to fulfilling its wider agenda in all the four outcome areas. These steps need to be aligned with the project's strategic vision and the values of Feeding Coventry as a charity centred on understanding the complex nature of poverty and the barriers faced by those needing to access their services. The strengthening of project governance requires the development of processes and policies that deal with responsibility and accountability that surrounds the project, the outlining of specific roles, responsibility and relationships among the various project stakeholders, as well as the review and auditing functions for effective internal monitoring and tracking of project performance.

7. Strengthen strategic and organisational capacity

For sustaining and building on the successful project outcomes, and for coordination between the large number of community partners that the project engages with, additional support with operational

management as well as strengthening of strategic and organisational capacity will become critical. To manage the expectations, and progress further in its strategic vision towards alleviating food poverty through providing holistic support, it is important that the project team is supported with mentorship and training programmes, while their accumulated experience, expertise, skills and built (internal and external) relationships are retained. We would recommend consideration be given to ensuring key staff retention (e.g. through the provision of appropriate HR support or supervision, benefits, mentorship and training programmes) to manage risks of potential disruption from burnout, sickness or absence, and to succession planning. Moreover, enhancing organisational capacity affords more space for staff (and perhaps volunteers) to engage in networking opportunities with peer organisations and others engaged in the sector. This is critical for learning, ideation, forging collaborative projects, exchanging good practices, and building a wider community of practice who operate at the sharp end of food insecurity and crisis intervention.



7. Conclusion: beyond 'responding to change' to 'shaping change'

In the first two years of its existence (since its launch just one week prior to the first national lockdown in March 2020), we have noted the remarkable progress made by the project. Foleshill Community Centre has become a vibrant and vital community space. From hosting a social supermarket offering food support during the lockdowns in 2020 (Year 1), it has evolved in its second year (2021) into a centre offering a holistic approach providing wraparound support services, and community-centred activities such as HAF programmes, Wellbeing Days, and creative food poverty activism. Notwithstanding the many challenges along the way, this project has achieved substantial social impact in Foleshill, by fulfilling a range of expected outcomes in the four areas of food resilience, training and reskilling, health and wellbeing, and regeneration of a community asset as we have detailed in this report. From being described as a **'lifeline' in Year 1**, it has become **'life-changing' in Year 2** for many who engage with it, including its staff, volunteers, and members.

While improving operational efficiency of food offer provided to the members of CSS in response to increasing demand and during a most challenging time is truly a major achievement of Year 1, we have identified changes in three key areas as the highlights of Year 2.

First, the start of CFH providing structured wraparound support services for its members. Our evidence indicates the considerable difference that access to support services through the Support team at FCC and CIAS has made to many members. The regular presence of an Advice Caseworker onsite is particularly beneficial since it reduces access barriers (including emotional, financial and time barriers) by allowing for interactions within familiar and already frequented surroundings at the FCC. The project has demonstrated an indomitable community spirit and an **ethic of care**, providing an invaluable safety net for the increasing numbers of people living in or at risk of food poverty.

Second, the phenomenal success of events such as the HAF programmes, Wellbeing Days, and the 'Hungry Nation' performances organised by and in FCC. This demonstrates the blossoming of **a wide range of partnerships** with local community organisations and groups, enabling FCC to make the shift to nurturing food resilience along with health and wellbeing of members in numerous creative ways. This is also reflected in the community gardening element of the project, which has become more established with better infrastructure, and with greater evidence of positive impact on health and wellbeing for the members. All of this in turn has led to widening the reach and scope of the project, and to a more diverse membership.

Third, the burgeoning of employment opportunities within FCC and more members becoming volunteers, along with the two developments as described above have laid strong foundations for an **emerging Community**

Hub at FCC for the local community. This project has transformed a building lying unused and neglected for several years into a vibrant, welcoming and thriving community space. It is set to become more of a vital local community asset with the plans for the opening of the Community Café and kitchen in Year 3.

It cannot be stressed enough that the key to this project's success so far has been the connections, links, and partnerships that have been established with a diverse range of local community partners, including with the local council, and at national level with Feeding Britain. Also, importantly, behind this success lies a committed and **dedicated team of staff, volunteers, and member-volunteers**. They carry out an incredible amount of administration, organisation, and logistics planning to ensure that the operations of the CSS run smoothly each week, along with all the other activities/events organised in and by FCC.

Notwithstanding the successful outcomes achieved with limited resources at its disposal, the project faces numerous challenges. Financial sustainability remains the biggest concern, along with challenges in other key areas of membership and provision of support services; sourcing of healthy and low-cost food; data management; coordination with other food projects in the city; limited organisational capacity; and overall project management and governance. These challenges need attention for the project to move out successfully from the 'emergency-mode' that has dominated the two years of its operation to a 'normal' mode that can sustain the positive outcomes already achieved for the long term. Furthermore, the practical realities of the currently unfolding costs of living crisis and rising utility bills in the months ahead will considerably affect the running costs of the FCC building as well as the costs of food procurement, which together will invariably add enormously to the pressure that such community projects face.

Our recommendations emphasise securing the financial stability of the project, followed by support on the operational management, particularly for the effective provision of support for members to meet the complex needs that go together with food insecurity. Other recommendations relate to diversifying local food procurement, enabling volunteer progression, increasing community outreach and engagement, and strengthening of strategic and organisational capacity and overall project governance.

The findings from our earlier interim evaluation conducted in Year 1 of the project and this final evaluation conducted at the end of Year 2 strongly support other studies from across the UK that point to the **critical role that community initiatives and organisations can and are playing in alleviating food insecurity**. We believe that the Foleshill project stands out in its efforts at going beyond a somewhat simplistic narrative of food provisioning to acknowledging food poverty/security as symptomatic of underlying, deeper individual and societal problems of poverty, poor mental and physical health, and social isolation. It has adopted a much-needed **holistic perspective** in addressing the individual, household, and community context of those

who find themselves struggling to meet their needs. In practical terms, this project is demonstrating effectively how a community food hub can act as a bulwark against chronic food insecurity and the often-accompanying dependence on food banks. It is setting the bar high through its innovative combination of low-cost food (and other essentials), wraparound support to tackle underlying causes of food insecurity, school holiday provision for children and families, community gardening,

and creative arts and crafts programmes for health and wellbeing. We believe that the key learnings from this project can inspire community food initiatives more broadly to **move beyond 'responding to change' to 'shaping change'**, not only seeking to alleviate but also to prevent chronic food insecurity and its insidious impacts, from a more transformative and socially just stance.



APPENDICES

1. Evaluation Matrix

Saxena, L.P. (2019) Evaluation Matrix for Coventry Citizens Supermarket

An Evaluation Working Group established by Feeding Britain in early 2019 developed an Evaluation Matrix, which is presented below. The group comprised of academics/researchers and practitioners from across the Feeding Britain pilot projects. The aim of the evaluation matrix was to develop simple guidance and tools for effective monitoring and evaluation of progress across a range of expected outcomes from the pilot projects, adapted to the local contexts.

Outcome [1]

People who have experienced hardship crisis are better able to improve their circumstances.

Outcome [2]

People who are at high risk of experiencing hardship crisis are better able to plan for the future.

Outcome [3]

Organisations are better able to support people to effectively tackle hardship through sharing learning and evidence.

Outcome [4]

Those experiencing/who are at high risk of experiencing, hardship crisis, have a stronger, more collective, voice, to better shape a response to their issues.

[5]

Project is running successfully

Matrix with the above outcomes [1] to [5] for Community Food Hub Pilots as identified by Feeding Britain along with specific outcomes for Coventry Citizens Supermarket arrived at in discussion at local pilot level are presented in Tables below.

PROJECT COMPONENT -1				
Citizens Supermarket				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sale of mainly food (some non-food consumables) at deeply discounted prices (and some free) with wraparound support services • Choice & dignity through shopping experience 				
EXPECTED OUTCOMES	OUTPUT INDICATORS (process)		OUTCOME INDICATORS (impact)	METHODS
[1] [2] Food resilience Health & Well-being (physical, mental, social)	No. of members - gender - age-group - post-code	Data collection form (monthly basis) [5]	Improved access to affordable quality food for vulnerable groups	Baseline data required from which change can be assessed - questionnaires at the time of membership - questionnaires at the time of membership renewal/every 6 months - monthly data collection forms from month 1 of operation
	Frequency of use by members Membership renewals/non-renewals Total food sold/redistributed - type by category [chilled, ambient, frozen] - by product type [fresh produce, meat, fish, poultry, dairy, bakery, drinks, canned products, snacks, prepared meals, other]		Increased consumption of healthier food/fruit & vegetables Increased buying/cooking of different types of food Change in weekly shopping bill on food	
	Total non-food items sold/redistributed - type by category		Increased engagement with food industry including local food producers, suppliers and retailers Fostering a market for locally grown produce & local food producers	Interviews

PROJECT COMPONENT -2**Community Café**

- Shared eating space (hot meals prepared onsite at deeply discounted prices)
- Community bakery
- Cooking workshops/demos
- School holiday hunger programmes
- Space for social interaction

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	OUTPUT INDICATORS (process)	OUTCOME INDICATORS (impact)	METHODS
<p>[1] [2] Food resilience</p> <p>Health & Well-being (physical, mental, social)</p>	<p>No. of users on daily basis - members of Centre - non-members (from community)</p> <p>[gender, age-group, post-code]</p> <p>Frequency of use by members/users</p> <p>Total food used in Café No. of meals served</p>	<p>Data collection form (monthly basis) [5]</p> <p>Improved access to affordable meals</p> <p>Increased consumption of healthier food/fruit & vegetables</p> <p>Reduced social isolation</p> <p>Increased level of well-being (physical, mental, social)</p> <p>Increased numbers of people who feel confident in their food literacy/cooking skills</p> <p>Increased understanding of nutritional and dietary choices in everyday food consumption</p>	<p>Focus group of users</p> <p>Self-reports from users</p>

PROJECT COMPONENT -3**Community Hub**

- Space for provision of wraparound support such as
 - Job skills training
 - Debt and benefits advice
 - Health & wellbeing services
- Space for hire by local community groups for social activities
 - Music, arts, sports
- Community food growing

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	OUTPUT INDICATORS (process)		OUTCOME INDICATORS (impact)	METHODS
[1] [2] [3] Training & Reskilling Health & Well-being (physical, mental, social) Community engagement/ Cohesion Community food growing	No. of programs/ sessions run/ hosted by community partners No. of members supported on the different programmes Gender - Age-group - Post-code - Members/non-members Frequency of use by members No. of growers Type of food grown & uses	Data collection form (monthly basis) [5]	Increased access to advice and information Increased skills of users increased ability to plan for future Improved levels of self-esteem & confidence of users Increased feeling of being in control of their own lives Reduced number of visits to emergency food provision Increased level of physical activity Increased participation in group/social activities Increased participation by wider local community between different groups	Focus group of users Self-reports from users Self-completed exit questionnaires

FOLESHILL COMMUNITY CENTRE PROJECT		
<p>Foleshill Community Centre - expected outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased food resilience • Improved skills through training & reskilling • Improved health & well-being (physical, mental, social) • Revitalised community asset (embedded into a more comprehensive city-wide approach) 		
OUTPUT INDICATORS (process)	OUTCOME INDICATORS (impact)	METHODS
<p>[1] [2] [3] [5]</p> <p>No. of members + users of Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender - Age-group - Post-code <p>Frequency of use by members + users</p> <p>No. of members who move out of using social supermarket for food</p> <p>No. of members/users who reduce visits to food banks</p> <p>No. of volunteers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who are members - who are non-members <p>No. of paid staff</p> <p>No. of community partners</p> <p>No. of wider community engagement events hosted/participated in</p> <p>No. of links to local council-led projects: Family hub, school holiday hunger, school breakfast clubs, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No. of beneficiaries 	<p>Increased participation/engagement of local community in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Citizens Supermarket - Community café - Community hub <p>Increased collaboration among organisations to meet local needs</p> <p>Success of project in transitioning people away to mainstream food shopping and/ or making them financially stable</p> <p>Success of project in reducing demand for emergency food provision</p> <p>Number of volunteers trained & supported</p>	<p>Focus group of members + users</p> <p>Self-reports from members + users</p> <p>Questionnaires for community partners</p> <p>Interviews with stakeholders</p> <p>Narrative inquiry/Story sharing forms filled in by users</p> <p>Survey of wider Foleshill community</p> <p>Photo documentation</p> <p>Focus group involving ex-members/ex-users</p> <p>Focus group</p> <p>Questionnaires</p>
<p>OUTCOME [4]</p> <p>Co-construction with stakeholders</p> <p>Community 'ownership' over project</p>	<p>No. and type of activities for members/ users/stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to give feedback on project (what works, what doesn't) - to engage with improving project delivery (type of food, identifying activities/skills training etc.) <p>No. of community open days/other events</p> <p>No. of attendees to the events</p>	
<p>Create opportunities for members/users to have a strong, collective voice, to better shape responses to their issues/engage with local and national policy makers</p> <p>Inform local and national policy reform through identifying key drivers of food poverty</p>	<p>No. and type of opportunities for members/users to voice their issues</p>	<p>Feedback box</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Questionnaires</p> <p>Citizens Juries</p> <p>Citizens forum</p>

2. Members Survey

The survey questions designed by the evaluation team included questions under six sections:

SECTION 1: Member of Coventry Social Supermarket

SECTION 2: Your food shopping

SECTION 3: Your food at home

SECTION 4: Your health & wellbeing

SECTION 5: Other involvement at Foleshill Community Centre

SECTION 6: About you

3. Data collection

Members Survey	2020	2021
Total surveys returned	44	46
- Romanian	7	8
Online filled in	NA	21
Hard copies	44	25

Interviews	2020	2021
Volunteers	5	6
Member-volunteers	2	3
Staff	4	7
Community partners	3	7
Total	14	23

4. Interview Schedule for Volunteers

Semi-structured

1. How did you hear about Coventry Social Supermarket (CSS)?
2. How long have you been volunteering?
3. Reasons/motivations for volunteering
4. Nature of involvement/engagement? How often? How has it changed over the period? Why?
5. How would you describe your overall experience?
6. How has volunteering helped you?
7. Vision for FCC over the next few years
8. How do you feel about the management? Their level of support? How do you provide your feedback?
Do you feel 'listened to'?
9. What isn't working with the volunteering as it is structured? What can be changed/improved?
10. Reasons why you think there is a need for social supermarket?
11. What in your understanding are the main reasons for food poverty?
12. How would you like to see food poverty addressed?

References

Feeding Britain_Citizens Supermarkets

<https://feedingbritain.org/what-we-do/flagship-projects/citizens-supermarkets/>

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Saxena, L. P. (2019). Evaluation Matrix for Community Food Hub, Foreshill, Coventry (Prepared for Feeding Britain).

Saxena, L.P. and Tornaghi, C. (2018) [Social-Supermarkets-and-Austerity-Retail-in-Britain](#)

Websites

<https://www.facebook.com/ForeshillCommunityCentre/>

Get-together activity during Easter HAF 2022



Research Centre
Agroecology, Water
and Resilience

