

FreshStreet Community: Household voucher scheme for fresh fruit and vegetables



Puranik M, Relton C, Pettinger C, Kuhnle G, Thomas M, Bennett T, Alloune L, Diouri B, Garg P, Howard L, Pan J, Sutton R, Bradbeer J, Wagstaff C

Introduction

Fruit and vegetables (FV) are generally unaffordable, inaccessible or unavailable in disadvantaged communities leading to a higher intake of cheap high-fat, high-sugar low-fibre foods resulting in poorer health¹. A couple of FV schemes currently exist in the UK, however, households need to prove eligibility criteria which can be a barrier and create stigma. FreshStreet is an area-based household scheme for locally supplied fresh FV. All households are eligible regardless of size or income². The study aims to develop the feasibility test in different ways to enable local suppliers to sell fresh FV at the community hubs supported by FreshStreet vouchers in two areas of high deprivation in Reading and Plymouth.

Intervention design

All households in streets near two community hubs receive £10 FV vouchers every fortnight (150 households at each location). Academic and community researchers co-develop food-related engagement and support activities.



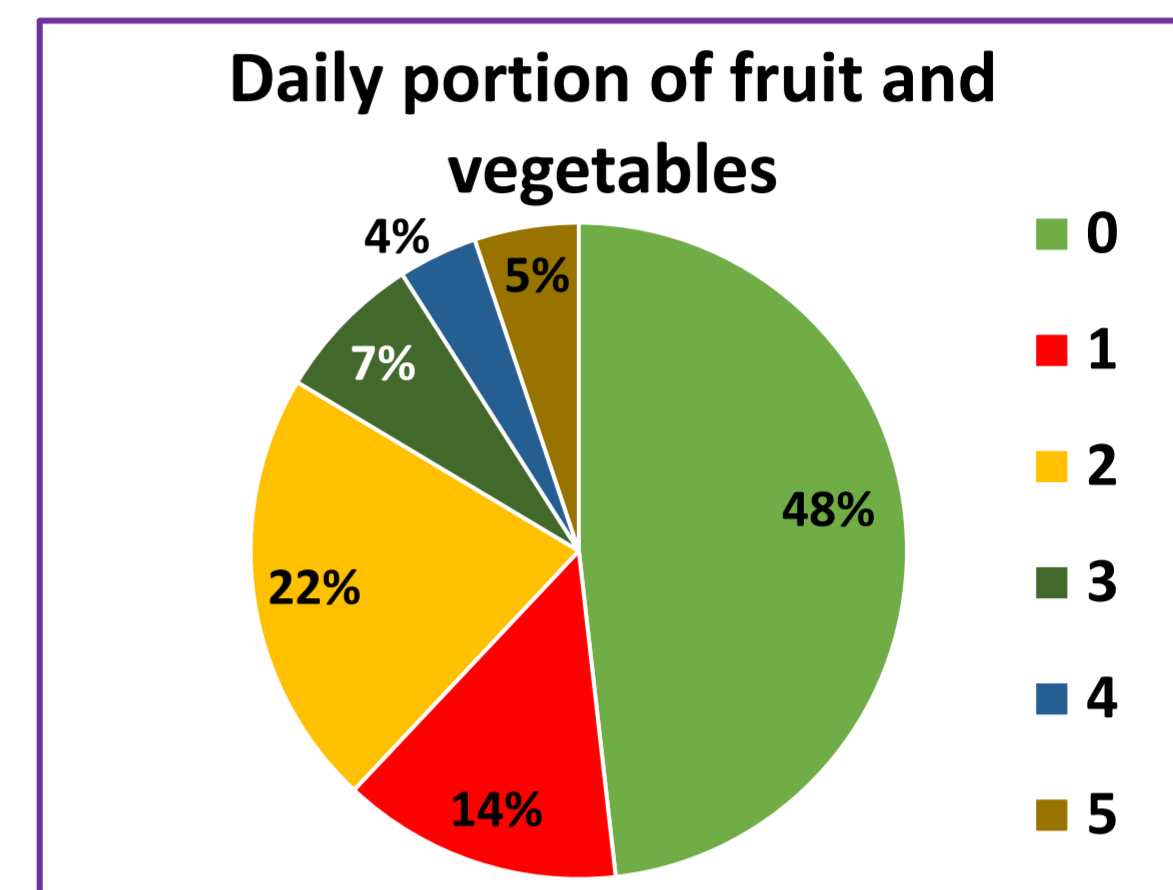
Evaluation

Information on individual self-reported FV consumption and food and well-being is collected through face-to-face conversations and questionnaires and area-level NHS Health Checks with both intervention and control streets. FV stall and voucher use data is collected weekly. Households, vendors, community workers, and the public health team's views, thoughts, and experiences of the scheme are collected through informal conversations.

Preliminary results

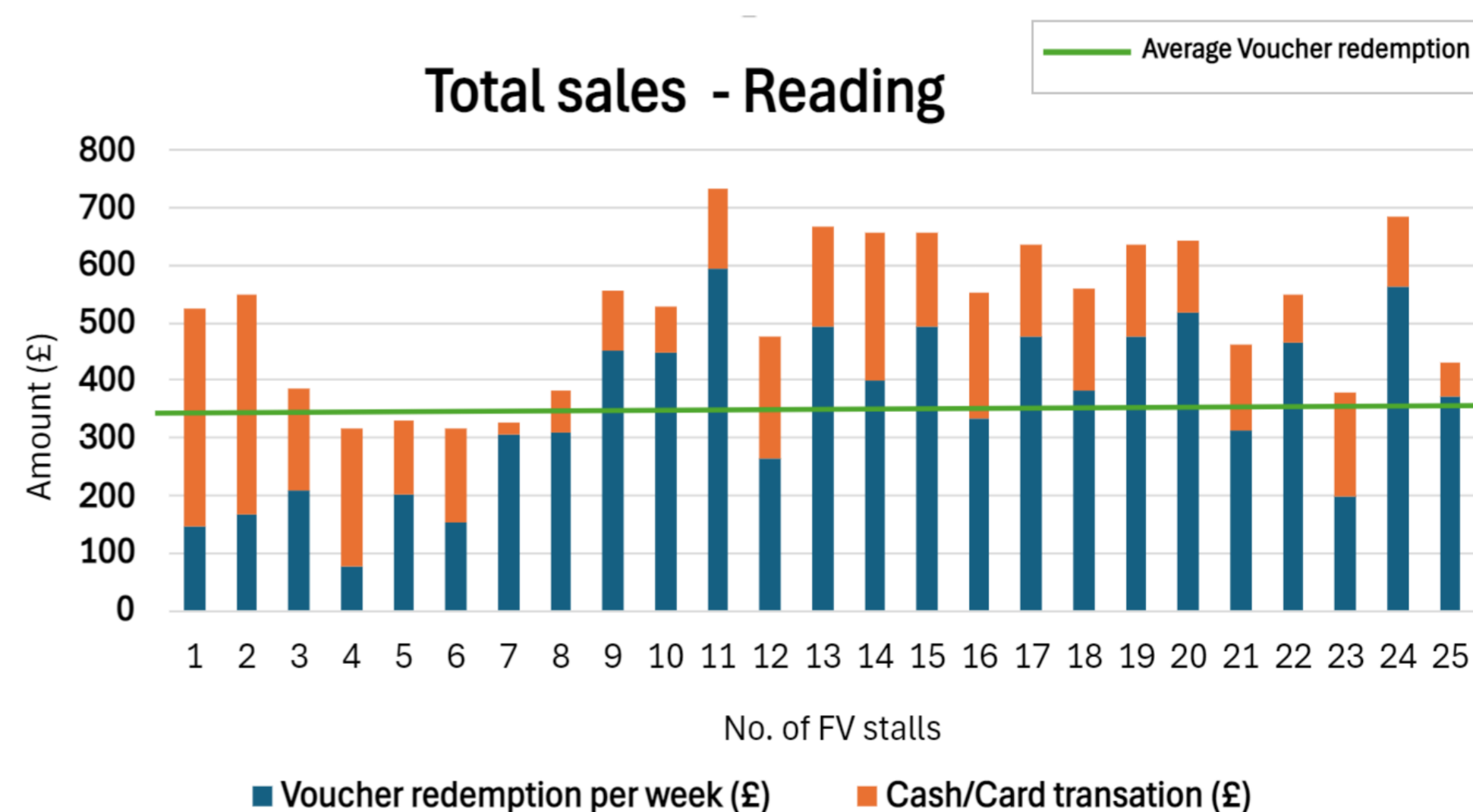
At baseline, the average self-reported FV consumption was 2.4 portions per day.

Almost half (48%) of households reported eating **no fruit or vegetables** the preceding day.



Intervention development and uptake

The weekly Reading community hub outdoor FV pop-up stall is popular with households and is mostly used by households receiving FV vouchers. The average voucher redemption so far is £350/week.



At Plymouth Community Centre the uptake of prepacked FV bags has been low £53/week. As households are keen to choose fresh FV, a monthly market stall has been introduced.

Conclusion

The baseline self-reported FV consumption is significantly below the UK Gov recommendation (five FV portions a day). Data collection will continue until December 2024. Community centre teams continue to develop their provision of fresh FV. FreshStreet Community enables households to choose their FV, supports local suppliers, and makes FV more affordable and available for everyone in the community.

References

- Woodside, J. et al (2023) 'Fruit and vegetable consumption as a preventative strategy for non-communicable diseases', *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 82(2), pp. 186-199
- Relton, C. et al (2024) 'Place-based household vouchers for locally supplied fruit and vegetables: The Fresh Street Pilot Cluster Randomised Controlled Trial' Preprint <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-4145192/v1>

m.p.puranik@reading.ac.uk

www.freshstreet.uk

No conflict of authors

