



Fresh Street Community: feasibility testing a community centre-based voucher scheme for fresh fruit and vegetables.

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TRANSFORMING
UK FOOD
SYSTEMS
Strategic Priorities Fund





Fresh Street Community

- Fresh Street Community is a new study testing ways to help communities access good quality fresh fruit and vegetables via community centres in Reading and Plymouth.
- Fresh Street Community focuses on the role of community hubs as centres for social connectivity and support, providing a point to buy fresh vegetables and fruit, but also to access wellbeing, healthcare and social activities that provide more wide-ranging support for local communities

Website: <https://www.freshstreet.uk/>





Research Questions

Primary Research Question

- What is the most effective way to embed the Fresh Street Community Scheme within local food systems in areas of high deprivation?

Secondary research question

- What is the acceptability of Fresh Street Community by local households
- What is the preliminary evidence of the impact of the Fresh Street Community on
 - a) social connection
 - b) health inequality
 - c) self-reported dietary behaviours and wellbeing status and
 - d) the availability and affordability of fresh produce?



Overall Intervention design



Complex intervention with many parts

Key to the intervention is Community Participatory Action Research principles of equal partnership, collaboration and community action

Locations

Fruit and vegetable
suppliers

Treatment

Food and wellbeing
chats

Biomarkers
& health checks

**Whitleigh
(Plymouth)**



Four Greens Community
Hub

**Whitley
(Reading)**



Whitley Community
Development Association



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Quality is our first priority

Intervention streets

~150 households in each
location receive £10-worth
F&V vouchers each fortnight,
PLUS, programme of
community-hub based
activities

Control streets

~150 households in each
location receive
programme of community-
hub based activities

100 individuals
recruited from
intervention and
control streets (each)
in both locations
(~400 individuals in
total)

Option to provide
hair/urine samples for
biomarker assessment

Option to attend NHS-
run health checks





Reading: Intervention design



WEEKLY FRUIT AND
VEGETABLE STALL
RUN BY WCDA STAFF,
AND A TEAM OF
VOLUNTEERS
STARTED 11/11 2023



PRODUCE IS SOLD
LOOSE CUSTOMERS
CAN CHOOSE WHAT
AND HOW MUCH THEY
BUY.



OPEN TO ALL,
VOUCHER, CASH AND
CARD PAYMENT
ACCEPTED



COMMUNITY
RESEARCHERS
CONNECT WITH
CITIZENS FACILITATE
INTERACTIONS,
INFORMAL CHATS
AND DATA
COLLECTION .



FRESH STREET COMMUNITY

The FoodSEqual-Health project is bringing fresh fruit and vegetables to Whittleigh along with fun events and activities to share ideas about shopping, cooking and eating.



1

HOW DOES IT WORK?

2

PLACE ORDER FOR
FRUIT + VEGETABLES



Tuesday
(Fortnightly)



10 AM - 12 PM



The Salvation
Army, PL5 4AA



Thursday of
the same week



10 AM - 12 PM



The Salvation
Army, PL5 4AA

Please make sure to bring your payment card/voucher on both your visits

Interested? Contact us on the details below.

<https://foodplymouth.org/project/foodsequal-health/>

foodsequalhealth@plymouth.ac.uk

07908729344



Fresh
Street

Plymouth: Intervention Design



FORTNIGHTLY
ORDER/ COLLECT
APPROACH



£5 PRE-SORTED
SEASONAL BAGS



ORDER IN PERSON
ON A TUESDAY,
COLLECT IN
PERSON ON A
THURSDAY



INTERVENTION
STARTED 16TH
JANUARY 2024



COMMUNITY
RESEARCHERS
FACILITATE
DISCUSSION, DATA
COLLECTION AND
ACTIVITIES



HELPING PEOPLE
4GCT
CHANGING LIVES



Differences and similarities between the Reading and Plymouth



Similarities

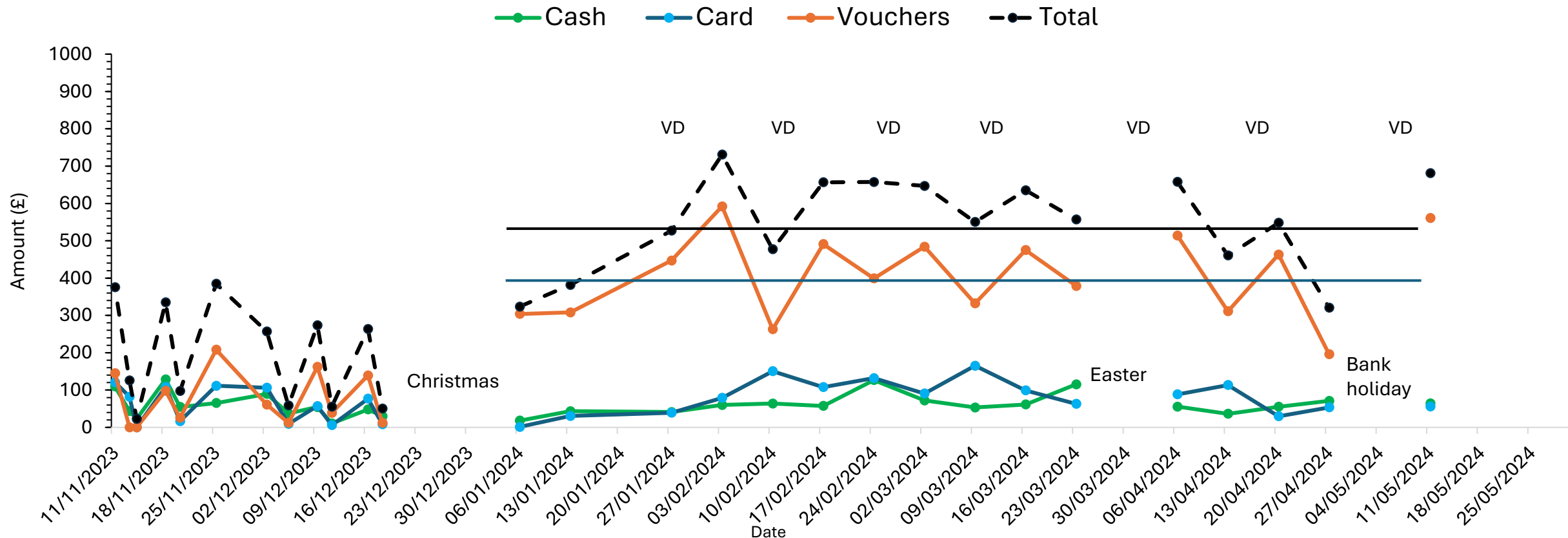
- Schemes are operating in locations with relative high levels of deprivation
- Voucher value £5 per week, delivered fortnightly
- Community researcher have a key role in liaising with citizens and collecting data
- Operate from community hubs

Differences

- Reading= weekly fruit and vegetable stall
- Plymouth = fortnightly order and collection of predefined bags
- Reading = Stall run by Whitley Community Development Association
- Plymouth= Scheme run by research group



Results: Total sales, voucher, cash and card sales, Reading

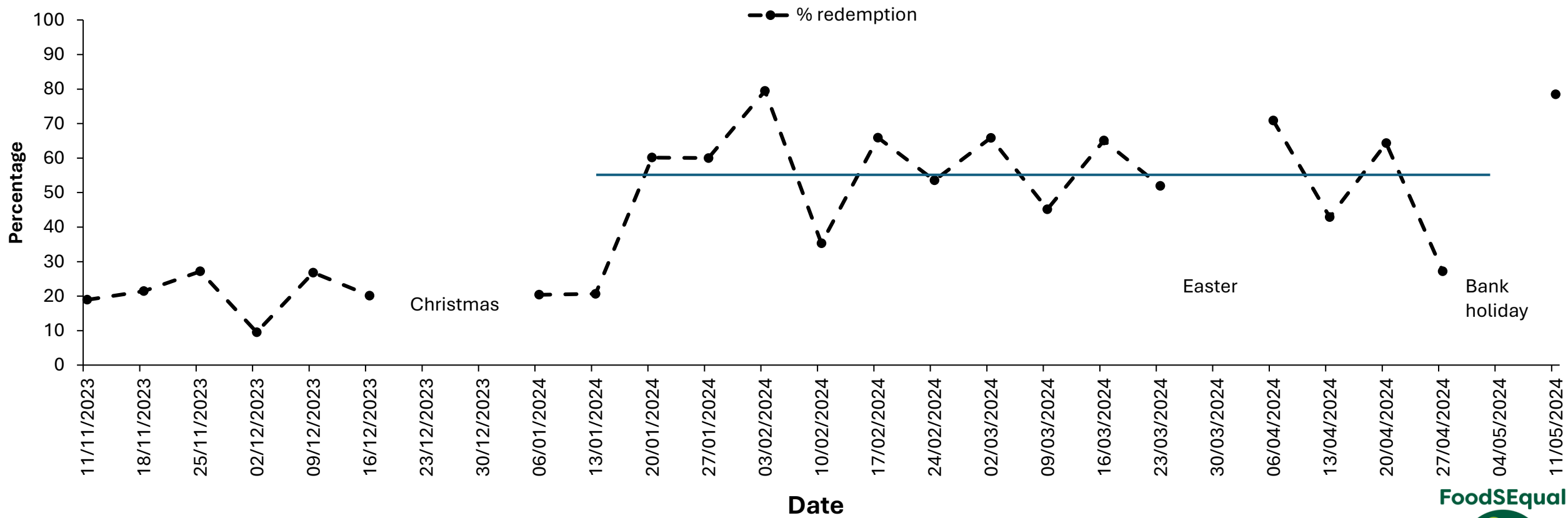


— Average **total sales** since Christmas **£551.00** per week.

— Average **voucher** redemption **£409.82** per week , Voucher driving sales.

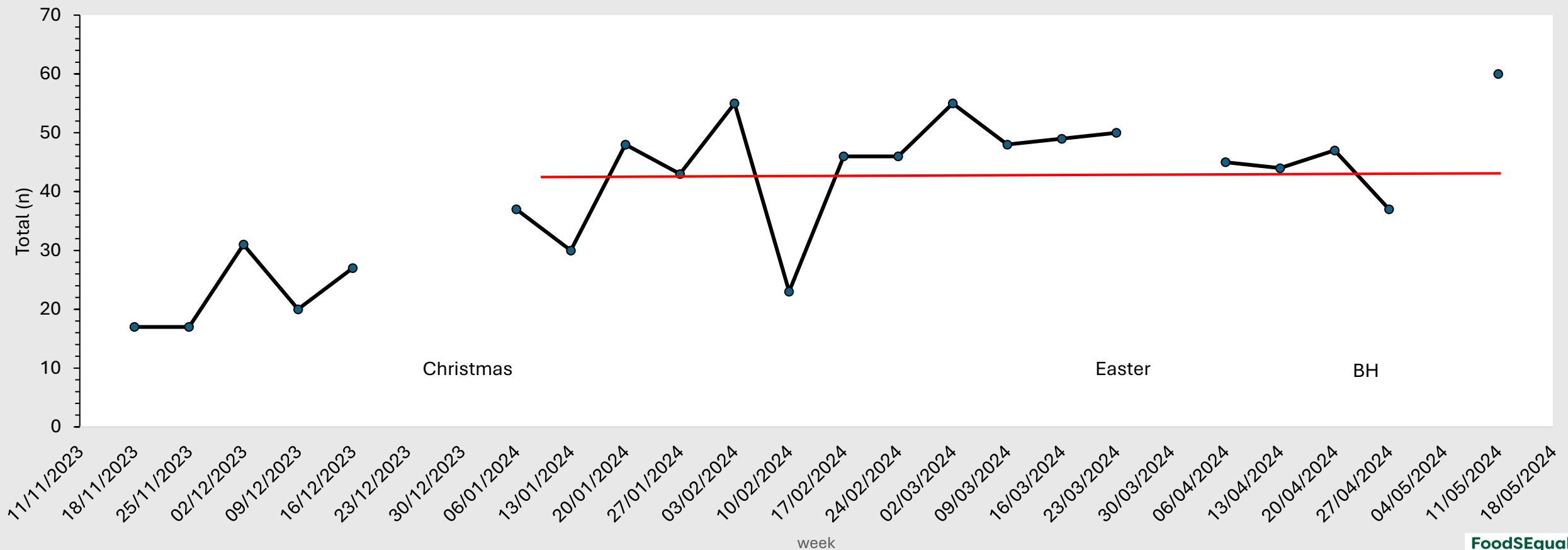
VD= voucher delivery week.

Results: Voucher redemption rate, by week, Reading.



— Average percentage redemption since Christmas per week = 53.4%

Weekly footfall, Reading



Average footfall since Christmas 45 citizens per week.
BH= Bank holiday



The Fruit and Vegetable stall, Reading



Citizens' Purchases, Reading.

- Fruit is popular, banana grapes and strawberries.
- Special requests for mooli and bitter melon .
- WCDA purchase items that are not always available in mainstream retailers such as dragon fruit, pineberries and kumquats.





The team making Fresh Street Community possible each week

- Dr Trisha Bennett- Community Development Officer
- Barbara Diouri- Community Researcher
- Rachel Sutton- Administrator
- Jane Bradbeer – Project manager
- Whitley Community development Association Team
 - Maria,
 - Pat
 - Annie,
 - Kelly
 - Bob
- And many others who work behind the scenes ordering produce, delivering vouchers, leaflets and setting up the stall each week.
- A huge thank you to the citizens of Whitley who come each week and support the stall.



Conclusion

- Area based (non-means tested) voucher schemes have the potential to address dietary inequity and create change in the local food environment by increasing access to affordable FV and stimulating the local supply of fresh FV.
- Linking with local community assets and support services enhances social cohesion and enables people to more easily take action to improve their own lives.



FoodSEqual



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