



Food on the Table

An impact assessment of emergency food parcels and a
Community Pantry in North Edinburgh during Covid-19

Fresh Start
March 2021

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This report is part of an ongoing Fresh Start community research project which is funded by the Scottish Government Investing in Communities Fund and supported by Community Enterprise

Introduction

The overall aim of this project was to assess the impact of Fresh Start's services and steer future learning for the organisation. The key aim of this work was to evaluate the Covid-19 activities that Fresh Start had put in place during 2020. This included the distribution of Emergency Food Packs (EFP) to a range of local residents and the development of a community pantry, "Fresh Start Pantry", a member of "Your Local Pantry" franchise.

Methodology

Participatory Action Research (PAR):

In order to carry out this project a team of five 'Community Researchers' were recruited from within the community and trained appropriately. The researchers represented a cross section of the community in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and current community activism; all ranging in their experience.

The methodological approach adopted for this project was a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. This was deemed most appropriate as it locates power within the community and allows for local people to be active participants within the research, giving them a voice to share their own perspectives and experience, creating opportunity for joined up evaluation.

Working collaboratively, the team of researchers took a lead role in designing and conducting the PAR, working to assess the extent to which the project is meeting its outcome, then making recommendations for the future of Fresh Start's services.

Methods:

The decision was made to employ qualitative methods to conduct research for this project in the form of semi-structured phone surveys. This was co-designed with the Community Researchers and conducted over the phone with both the Food Pantry members and individuals who had received Emergency Food Packs. This method enabled a flexible approach to the research, covering both closed and open questions. In this way, standard data and qualitative 'soft' stories were gathered from participants about their experience. The survey was created and conducted using Survey Monkey software with feedback input and recorded onto researcher's individual tablets.

Sampling:

To enable evaluation of both the Food Pantry and Emergency Food Packs service, a survey containing a total of 45 questions was designed. These questions related to a range of indicators such as experience of using the services, the impact it had on their household finances, health and well-being, and community engagement. To avoid potential issues of cold calling, awareness of this survey was raised through leaflet drops and posters in the Pantry.

- 166 responses to the full survey were gathered.
- Participants were directed to relevant questions whether they had: received an emergency food pack, received a pack and joined the Pantry, or if they had solely joined the Pantry, without having previously used the emergency food pack service.
- 94 respondents received an Emergency Food Pack (household information was gathered from 80 Pantry members).
- 99 Pantry members participated in the telephone survey. At the time of the research the Pantry membership was 200 and from that number 162 members were consulted resulting in a representative sample size of 81%. (information on household numbers were gathered for 83 recipients).

- A further 162 individuals did not have contact details linked to their emergency food packs so were sent a shorter survey in the post in the form of a Christmas card.

The Pantry and Emergency Food Pack surveys were conducted over a two-month period from October 2020 until December 2020. The postal surveys were dispatched in late December 2020, with feedback received up until March 2021.

Ethics and reflexivity:

Respondents were informed of the details of the research project, its aim and objectives at the beginning of the survey. Every participant was informed of how the data would be utilised and stored and the confidential nature of the research was reinforced throughout the process.

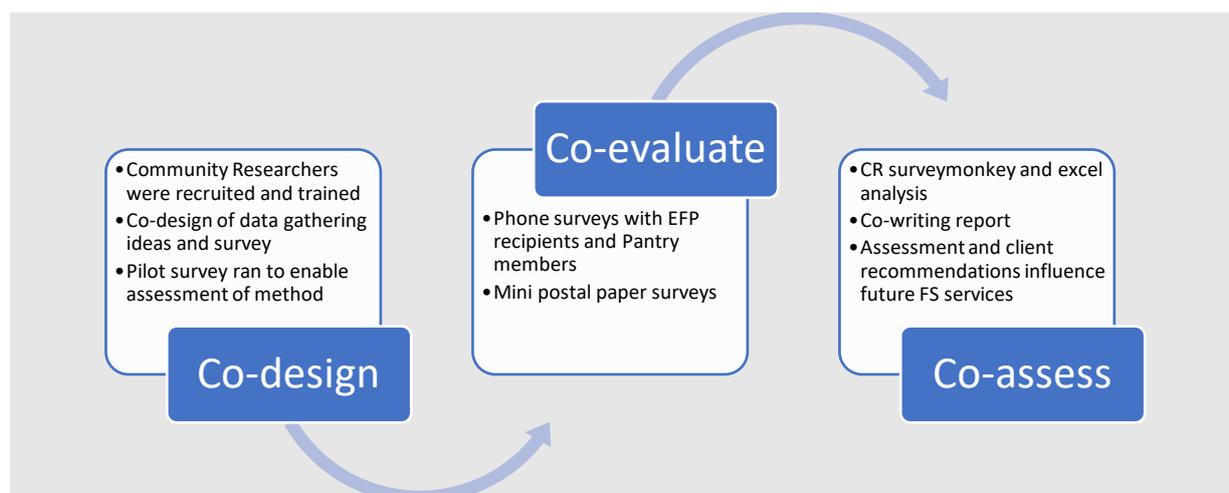
Participants gave informed consent over the phone before participating in the survey. Furthermore, the Community Researchers were continually reflexive in their research approach; through ongoing research diaries and discussion with fellow Researchers and staff.

Analysis:

Data was compiled using Survey Monkey Software to create visual aids for analysis. Moreover, we developed an excel qualitative coding framework to manage and analyse the data from the survey. This allowed for the data to be coded along themes of interest and relevance for the evaluation of Fresh Start's services. Examples of key themes that were coded related to finances, satisfaction of service and isolation. This also enabled additional textual comments and suggestions to be examined.

The Community Researchers took a lead role in the analysis and write up of the survey results. Each researcher assigned themselves an individual section of the data and set the task of analysing accordingly. They worked independently, however regular correspondence through email and zoom sessions enabled discussion and comparison of analysis and findings. This collaborative process enabled peer learning and support for any issues in this co-assessment process.

Key findings from the impact assessment and recommendations for the future of Fresh Start's services could then be presented.



Key Findings - Emergency Food Packs

- In the sample of 83 households surveyed, emergency food packs supported over **200 people**. Therefore, on average, each Pack was shown to support 2.4 people.
- They most commonly supported **single person households** (42%).
- **Over 40% had received information on these from a range of statutory and support orgs** including GPs, local community services and referrals from local council services
- 90% felt it was **'Very Easy' to receive the packs.**
- 78% were **'Very Satisfied' with what they received in the emergency food packs**
- The packs had a **positive impact on financial management** for over three-quarters of respondents.
- Over half of respondents felt receiving emergency food packs had **increased their connection to the local community and/or reduced their isolation.**
- 83% 'Strongly Agreed' that these packs had **an impact on their stress or anxiety.**
- **44% did not feel more aware of Fresh Start services** as a result of receiving the packs.

Although the survey did not directly ask whether or not clients were shielding during this time, a number of respondents mentioned that they were shielding due to health issues and that they were reliant on the Emergency Food Packs and toiletries/cleaning products that they received as they were unable to go out to the shops themselves.

This also highlighted another key theme that came out of the survey, as a large proportion of survey respondents, whether shielding or not, were feeling very lonely and isolated during this period and looked forward to receiving the packs and seeing the volunteers that delivered them. The deliveries were a vital human interaction for some during the lockdown and helped to boost mental wellbeing, with more than one respondent saying it was the highlight of their week and that the delivery driver was often the only person that they saw each week.

"At one point I didn't leave the house or see anyone for almost 8 weeks, so just seeing the volunteers every week delivering the packs and having someone to speak to was amazing."

"The delivery man was so nice and it was lovely to have people think of us at that time."

Some clients even mentioned that when they were having a particularly tough time, they had been very grateful to receive a bunch of flowers or chocolates with their next food parcel.

Emergency food packs helped reduce stress and anxiety for recipients, either around finances or around going out during the pandemic. For those who were shielding, the Emergency Food Packs were crucial in reducing anxiety, providing them with essentials so that they didn't have to leave the house and fear compromising their health. For those struggling financially, particularly during the pandemic, responses showed that receiving the packs helped them with this to varying degrees.

"It was a life saver. I totally had nothing and what I had had to go on light gas and bills."

"Huge help. Saved money on essentials so could afford other essentials. Saved me getting in more debt or having to go without stuff."

Suggestions for the service:

Although overall the Emergency Food Parcels were very gratefully received, there were some suggestions about the service from respondents.

- **More fresh food** - a number of people said that they would have liked more fresh produce to allow them to cook more healthy meals from scratch.
- **Packs too large** – some felt that the packs contained too much for a small household.
- **Dietary preferences** – some clients felt that the packs included too many items that they wouldn't normally eat or items that they couldn't eat due to dietary requirements.
- **Personalisation** – some clients suggested that they would like the ability to give feedback on contents in order to receive more suitable packs, reducing waste of products that weren't suitable.

Some clients did acknowledge they understood the difficulty in providing fresh produce or catering for dietary options in the emergency packs. They were still very grateful to receive the essentials during the lockdown.

Key Findings – The Pantry

- **In the sample of 80 households surveyed, the Pantry supported almost 250 people** across North Edinburgh. This indicates, on average, every Pantry membership supports 3 people.
- Just under half of the people supported are under 18 – illustrating impact of the Pantry on local families in particular.
- **Most respondents learned about Pantry by word-of-mouth** and only 20% through social media or the website.
- 91% felt it was **'Very Easy' to join Pantry.**
- 86% indicated **satisfaction with the Pantry service.**
- 72% 'Strongly Agreed' that being a Pantry member **helped stretch their weekly food budget.**
- Almost two-thirds of respondents indicated that the Pantry had **enabled them to cook/eat more healthily.**
- Over half (58%) indicated that having access to the Pantry had a **positive impact on their levels of stress and/or anxiety.**
- 47% highlighted a **positive impact on feelings of community connectedness and social isolation.**
- There was a strong interest in learning about other Fresh Start services e.g. **85% interested in future Community Hub.**

One of the most reported findings was that clients valued the Pantry service as it provides good value for money, especially for larger families, helping them to stretch their weekly budget whilst enabling them to meet other costs, like paying bills. A number of clients highlighted that being a member of The Pantry has reduced their financial stress. One recipient reported that they were able to start putting money into a pension due to how much they were saving on their weekly food bill.

“Peace of mind. My pantry membership means I can afford to have food in the house at all times.”

However, those with debt or arrears didn't mention seeing any real impact on outstanding debt by using The Pantry.

Another prominent theme found in the results of both the Pantry and EFP surveys was that being a Pantry member helped to reduce stress or anxiety for clients. In particular, financial worries or anxieties about going to a larger supermarket or shop.

“Being able to use The Pantry means that I can sleep at night knowing that I can put food on the table weekly for my family.”

“There’s no stress of having the children there, the pantry is so much easier to shop in than a supermarket so is much less stressful.”

Increased community cohesion was another key theme that emerged from the pantry survey responses. A number of people mentioned that it was a “talking point” amongst members in the community, this also demonstrated by the number of respondents who had heard about The Pantry from friends or neighbours. It was seen by many as a central hub, providing a friendly and welcoming space that connects different members of the community, particularly at a time when most other community spaces were closed due to the pandemic.

“The Pantry is honestly the talk of the town at the minute. Everyone knows about it and it’s great that people in the community have somewhere where they can bump into their neighbours and friends, especially at the minute because of COVID when there isn’t much else going on.”

The helpfulness and friendliness of the Pantry volunteers was frequently mentioned and was key form of contact for some people who were feeling isolated during the lockdown.

“Fresh Start is always very welcoming and allows you to have a chat with staff and others.”

A number of respondents also commented that they felt less embarrassed to use the Pantry in comparison to other services such as a Foodbank. Clients reported they had felt had a stigma of deprivation and poverty when using foodbanks in the past with multiple clients commenting that they were initially apprehensive, anxious or embarrassed to visit the Pantry because of this. However, after visiting for the first time, they said that the service, the set-up and the volunteers all made them feel at ease and comfortable to shop there.

“When I use The Pantry, I don’t feel embarrassed because nobody there is judging your personal situation. It’s different to using a foodbank as I’ve often felt ashamed having to use them because you feel like you are begging for food. Using the Pantry is amazing because it allows me to shop with dignity.”

Suggestions for the service:

Overall, feedback about the Pantry was generally positive, but members did have some suggestions about how it could be improved.

- **More fresh produce** – a high proportion of respondents would have liked more fresh produce available, such as fruit, vegetables, and meat. This would mean that they don’t have to top up their shopping elsewhere and to allow them to cook more meals from scratch. Some suggested that they would be happy to pay an additional fee to access this.
- **More variety in items** - a number of members would have liked more varied choice of food items and access to other essentials such as toiletries, cleaning, and sanitary products.
- **Different membership options** – a common suggestion was for membership options for single or family households, enabling members to purchase more for a larger family, as some noted that the current allowance was not enough to support their whole family. Others noted that as a single person, a Pantry shop lasted them more than a week.
- **Sharing information** – the Pantry could be used to share more information on other support available either through Fresh Start’s services or other local services.

- **Money management and debt advice** – the Pantry could be used to encourage users with money worries to engage in debt and money management advice. 29% of respondents said they had issues, but only 8% wanted any follow-up support.
- **Social isolation** – The Pantry has evolved during Covid, and enforced social isolation has been a major theme in this period. Although the survey revealed that Pantry membership did have a positive impact on social isolation, there is scope for the Pantry to reach out further.
- **Accessibility** – a small proportion of members reported finding the Hearts and Diamonds system confusing. A few members also mentioned that it was difficult for them to get home from The Pantry with heavy shopping bags.

Conclusion

This research has been effective in identifying that overall, people were very grateful for both the Pantry and the Emergency Food Pack services, especially during the first lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic, this being particularly difficult period for many of the survey respondents.

A number of respondents described the services as a “lifeline”. Respondents mentioned various circumstances that made it difficult for them to access food and other household essentials during the lockdown. These included unemployment and job insecurity, benefit cuts, debt, health issues that required them to shield, mobility issues or mental health conditions such as anxiety.

“Using The Pantry was a lifeline for me, helping me through a rough patch when my benefits were delayed and I had no other support.”

“The very fact the Food Pack existed made me feel that the community around me cared.”

The results highlight that the provision of these services, one as a crisis response, the other longer term, both positively impacted on physical and mental wellbeing through stress alleviation, healthy eating, social connectedness and improved financial circumstances. Service users highlighted a range of potential improvements to these services. A greater selection of products (including fresh produce) emerged a key consideration for Fresh Start along with other issues of personalisation including Pantry membership flexibility and consideration of dietary requirements. Amongst Pantry members there was considerable interest in additional services such as the Community Hub.

Whilst the Emergency Food Pack service is envisioned as a temporary solution to Covid-19 pressures, these recommendations will be particularly relevant to the ongoing development of the Pantry and other Fresh Start services.

Appendix 1:

Emergency Food Packs Data Analysis

We surveyed 94 people who received Emergency Food Packs.

Who do the Emergency Food Packs support (including yourself)?

83 of 94 respondents answered this question. The detailed analysis shows that 83 food packs supported 205 people.

Emergency food packs sustained households in all age groups.

- 39% (79) are under 18,
- 44% (91) are adults aged 18-64,
- 17% (35) are 65+.

There is a wide range of household sizes:

- 42% (35) households are single person households
- 19% (16) households comprise 2 people
- 17% (14) households comprise 3 people
- 10% (8) households comprise 4 people
- 4% (3) households comprise 5 people
- 5% (4) households comprise 6 people
- 2.4% (2) households comprise 7 people
- 1% (1) household comprises 8 people

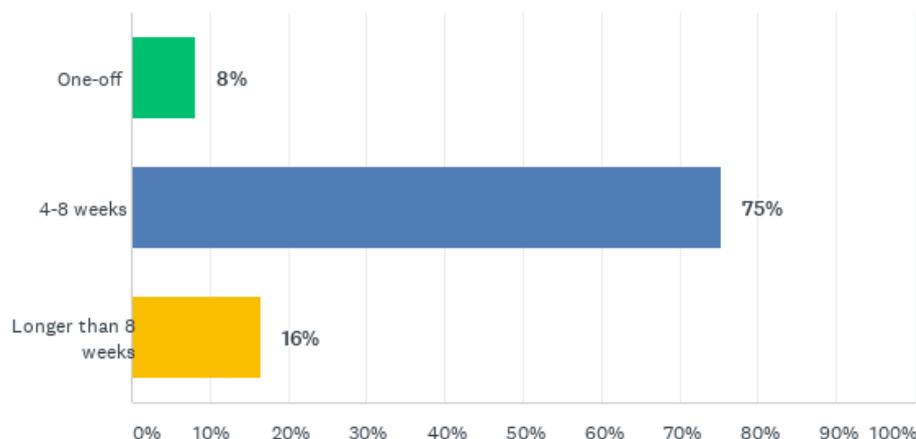
34 households contained people under 18.

One respondent highlighted that the packs supported their large family (2 adults and 6 children) commenting:

“The food pack helps so much in supporting me and all the kids, meaning I can stretch the weekly food budget as I’ve got a lot of mouths to feed”.

Section 1 Using the service

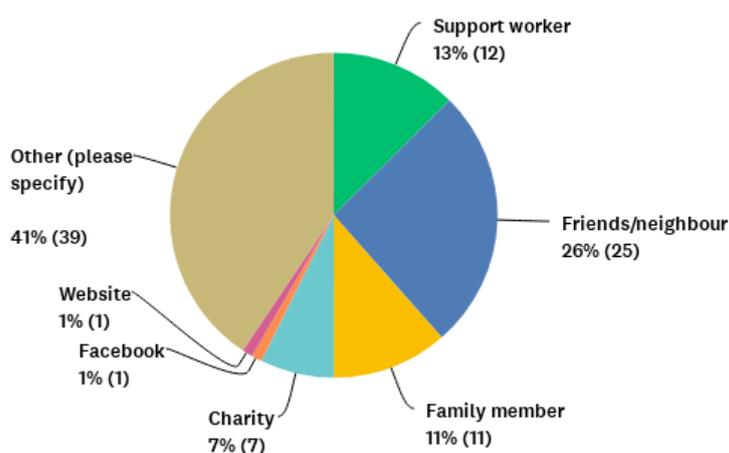
How long did you receive the emergency packs for?



Approximately 75% of respondents received the Emergency Food Packs for a duration of 4-8 weeks and 17% of respondents reported receiving the emergency packs for longer than 8 weeks. A one-off use of the service being the least frequently reported, with only 8% of respondents receiving the packs once.

The data shows that the majority of respondents received the Emergency Food Packs for more than 4 weeks. This could be down to various factors highlighted elsewhere by respondents to the survey, including shielding during COVID-19 due to health problems and associated risks or because of financial hardship.

How did you hear about the Fresh Start emergency packs?

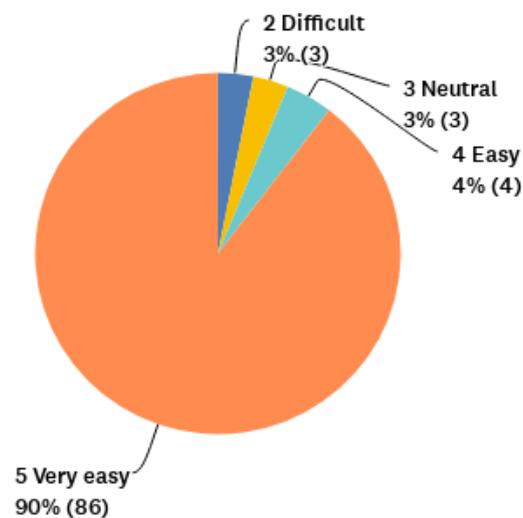


The pie chart shows that 26% of respondents heard about the Emergency Food Packs through a friend or neighbour. 13% heard about the packs through a support worker, 11% heard about them through a family member and 7% heard through a charity. Only 1% of respondents heard about the Emergency Food Packs through either Facebook or the Fresh Start website, with none hearing through Twitter.

A large number of respondents (41%) indicated that they heard about the Emergency Food Packs through “other” sources, these included GPs, local community services and referrals from local council services.

As a large proportion of respondents heard about the packs through friends/neighbours and family members, this could indicate that general word of mouth was also a frequent way through which individuals learnt about the packs.

How easy was it to get the emergency packs, on a scale of 1-5 where 5 is very easy?

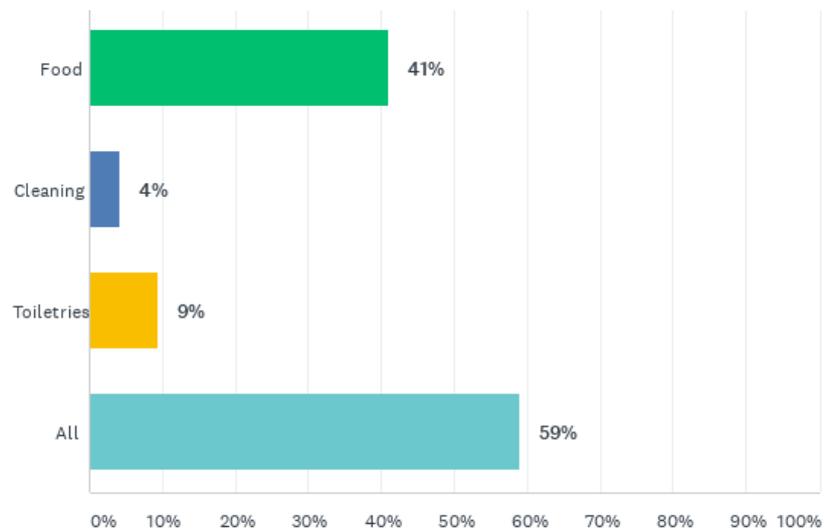


The pie chart shows that the majority of respondents found it very easy to receive an Emergency Food Pack and only 2 respondents found it difficult to register for the packs, with one reporting that there was some confusion when signing up for the packs between Fresh Start and the Council, commenting:

“I initially received my packs, however the week after they didn’t turn up because I think there was a mix up between Fresh Start and the council.”

Overall, these findings show that respondents found it very easy to get the Emergency Food Packs, which could indicate an efficient service in accessing and delivery of the packs.

Did you get food, cleaning or toiletries packs (or all)?



The bar chart shows that around 59% of respondents received packs containing food, cleaning and toiletry products. 41% of respondents (39 people) received Food Packs, with 9 of these also receiving toiletries and 4 also receiving cleaning products.

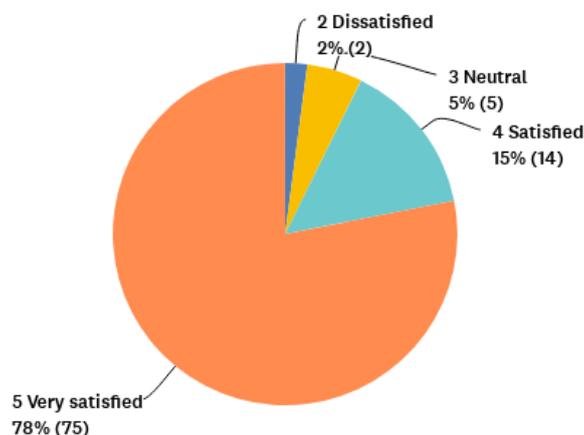
It was unclear from responses to the survey as to why some households did not receive toiletries and/or cleaning products in their Emergency Packs, but clearly food was the most essential item for people to receive. There was a degree of uncertainty from recipients as to the referral process and whether they could have had input into what type of Pack they received.

Many respondents commented that receiving the additional toiletries and cleaning products were really beneficial. One commented:

“The toiletries were also such a great help because they cost me a lot in my weekly shop.”

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is very satisfied

How satisfied are you with the emergency packs you received from Fresh Start?



From the pie chart it can be seen that the majority of respondents, 93% were very satisfied or satisfied with the Emergency Food Packs that they received from Fresh Start. Only 2% of respondents were not satisfied with the packs that they received and nobody was very unsatisfied.

A large number of clients commented that the packs were really helpful for them, with many reporting being extremely satisfied with the variety and range of food items within the packs, calling them a “lifeline” and an “absolutely amazing service”.

However, some clients who were less satisfied with the packs reported having leftovers from the week before such as pasta, rice or lentils as they did not always have the resources to cook these items, did not like them or received too much.

Do you have any comments or suggestions on the service?

When answering this question, a number of respondents reported being highly satisfied overall with the service of the packs and the quality and variety of the items within them. Comments included that the packs were “faultless” and it was an “amazing service” during lockdown, with one client commenting that receiving the packs helped “ensure there was food on the table for the family to eat”. However, there were some suggestions here on how to improve the service:

- 17 respondents mentioned that they would have liked to see more variety in the contents of the food packs, with some specifying that they would have liked more fresh fruits, vegetables and meats to cook with.
- 2 respondents commented that they received too much food within their packs as they were a small household and found that they wasted the items from having too much left over from the week before.
- 2 Muslim clients said that they were unable to eat any of the meat products in the packs, so had to throw away a lot of the contents.
- 1 client commented that as a large family, they would have liked the packs to be bigger as the volume of contents was not enough to support them all.

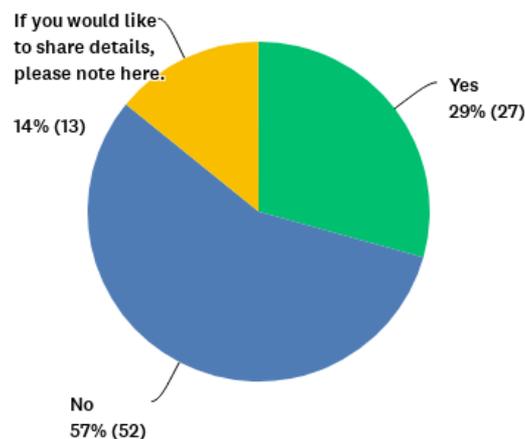
From further analysis of the comments and suggestions for the emergency packs, it was found that overall clients were generally very satisfied with the service in relation to the quality and variety of the contents of the packs, however a large number of respondents would have liked to have seen a more varied selection of foods within the pack, with particular suggestions for more fresh fruits and vegetables and allowing for dietary requirements.

Suggestions for the future and running the service again:

- 2 clients recommended a live feedback or a commenting service for the packs. This way they could feedback on what they found useful in the packs or not, what products they liked/disliked to avoid food waste as they found that they would have the same products left over from the week before.
- 2 clients reported that they would really benefit from the same service to run again because they were so useful to them, especially with the ongoing lockdowns.

Section 2 Impact on Household Finances

Do you currently owe any money or have arrears to pay such as mortgage, rent, other?

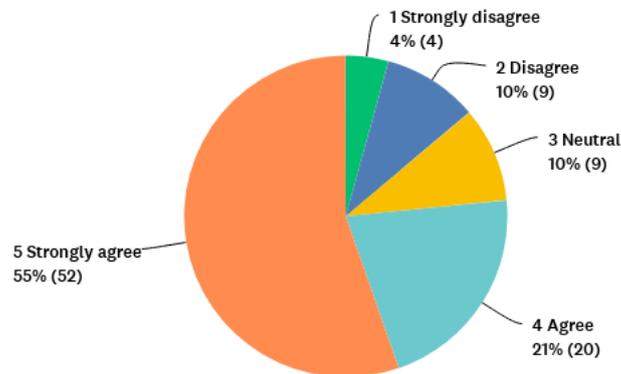


57% of respondents indicated that they did not have debt issues. Of the 29% who said that they did have debt or arrears, a number commented that their outstanding debt was linked to rent arrears and/or council tax.

With more than half of respondents highlighting no debt issues, financial pressures were likely not the only reason for individuals using the emergency pack service. Instead, circumstances such as shielding and other health issues impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown will have influenced uptake of these packs.

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is strongly agree, how much would you agree with this statement?

Receiving the emergency packs helped me to save money and/or manage any debt?

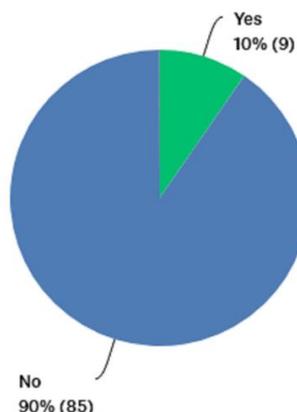


76% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that receiving the Emergency Food Packs helped them to save money or manage debt. 14% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Through analysis of respondents' additional comments, it was found that 6 individuals commented that the packs helped them to save money weekly, often on their food shopping bill. However, some comments also highlighted that they did not use the packs to save money necessarily, but for other reasons including shielding due to COVID-19, or because they were unable to get to the shops due to health issues and limited mobility.

Overall, these results indicate that the Emergency Food Packs did help respondents save money during the first COVID-19 lockdown, mainly by cutting back costs of weekly food bills.

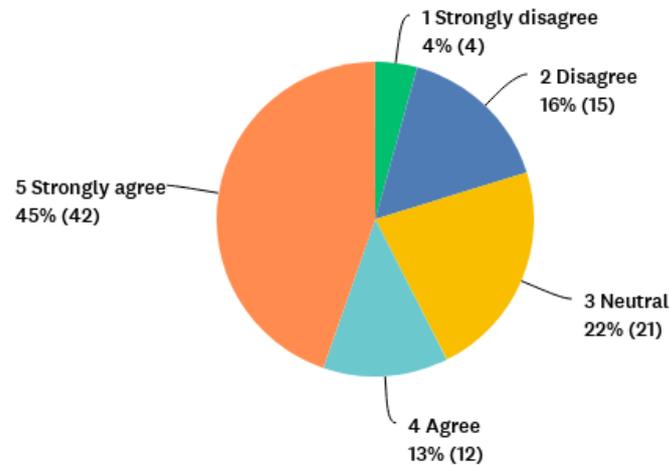
Do you need any money management support or debt advice? If yes, make a note and refer to Granton Information Centre, Advice Shop or CAB.



Only 10% of respondents indicated a need for money management support or debt advice. They were given the contact information for Granton Advice Centre, Advice Shop or CAB by the Community Researchers.

Section 3 Impact on health and wellbeing

Receiving the Emergency Food Packs helped me to cook and eat more healthy meals at home



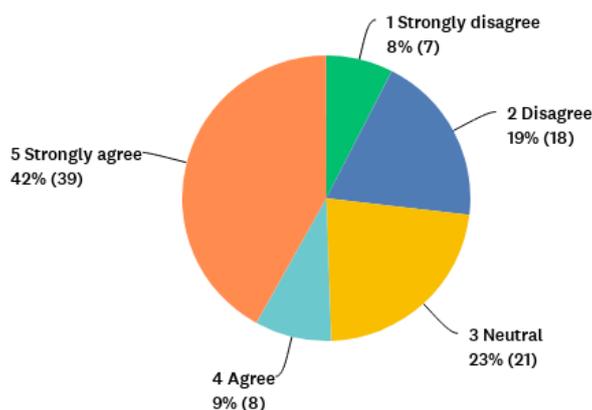
58% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the Emergency Food Packs helped them to cook and eat more healthy meals at home, but around 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Of the respondents that agreed, one noted that the packed lunches for the kids contained lots of fresh fruit and that there was a variety of food to choose from, whilst another noticed that the family ordered less takeaways when they were receiving the emergency packs, so consumed healthier meals. A number of the respondents noted that fresh produce was limited in the packs and they received a lot of tinned goods, which they felt was less healthy than their usual diet.

“Canned food is not as healthy as fresh but it was really helpful all the same.”

It should be noted that different people will have different views on what counts as a “healthy meal” and this will be reflected in their answer to this question.

Receiving the Emergency Food Packs helped me feel more confident and able to cook at home

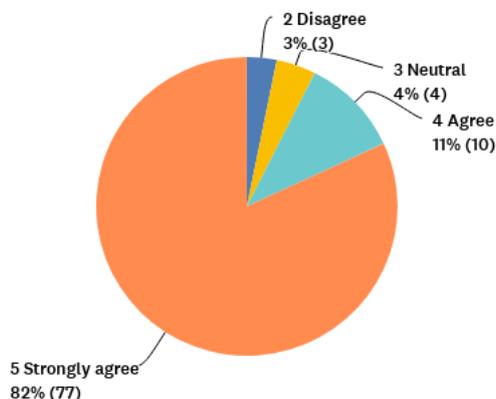


Over half of respondents believed the EFP had helped them feel more confident and able to cook at home.

Some people went on to note that they had been motivated to cook more meals at home and that there was a good selection of food in the packs to enable them to do so. The fact that over a quarter of respondents disagreed may relate to the responses to the previous question, indicating that some people felt that there was a lack of fresh produce to cook with.

"I was glad to receive the packs but some more fresh food would be nice."

Receiving the Emergency Food Packs helped me feel somewhat less stressed and anxious



93% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the Emergency Food Packs helped them to feel somewhat less stressed and anxious, with only 3 people disagreeing with this statement.

Several respondents noted that these had helped reduced stress, particularly for those who were shielding or anxious about going to the shops during the COVID-19 lockdown.

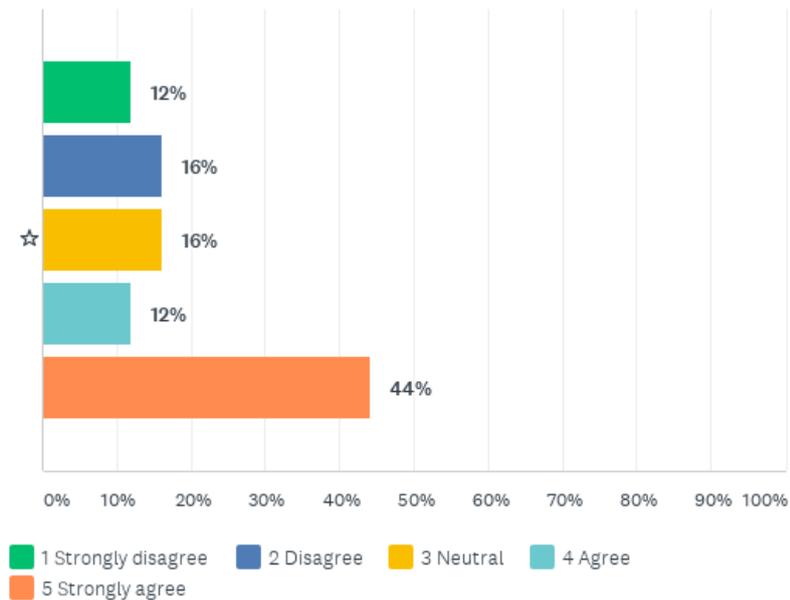
"It reduced my stress knowing that I was able to receive food weekly in the parcels. I was shielding so was unable to leave the house at the time."

Others mentioned that the Emergency Food Packs helped them financially, reducing their stress about money. These results show that receiving Emergency Food Packs during the first COVID-19 lockdown really helped to reduce stress and anxiety for most recipients, particularly those who were shielding, have anxiety or were worried about their finances.

Section 4 Impact on social isolation/community engagement

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is strongly agree how much would you agree with these statements

Since receiving the emergency food packs: I feel more connected to my community/less isolated



More than half of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that since receiving the Emergency Food Packs they felt more connected to their community or less isolated. Several people went on to highlight that they felt less isolated when receiving the emergency food packs and seeing the volunteers who delivered the parcels.

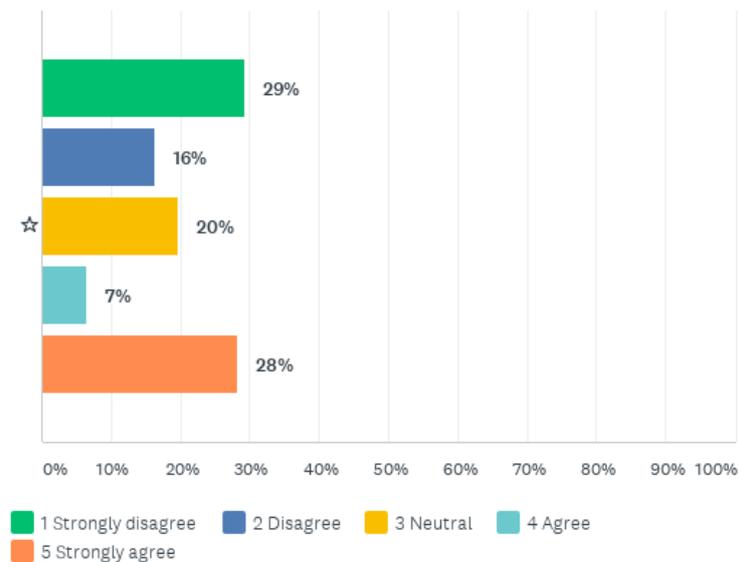
“There was always someone to talk to when the delivery was made. I miss them coming to the door.”

Others mentioned that the Emergency Packs helped them to feel less isolated and gave a sense of community spirit.

“Receiving the packs kept everyone going and encouraged a real community spirit.”

Some respondents also highlighted that they appreciated the volunteers asking how they were, and one even mentioned that the volunteer delivered them flowers when they were having a particularly tough time. One respondent who disagreed with the statement noted that they still felt isolated despite this and missed getting out to their clubs.

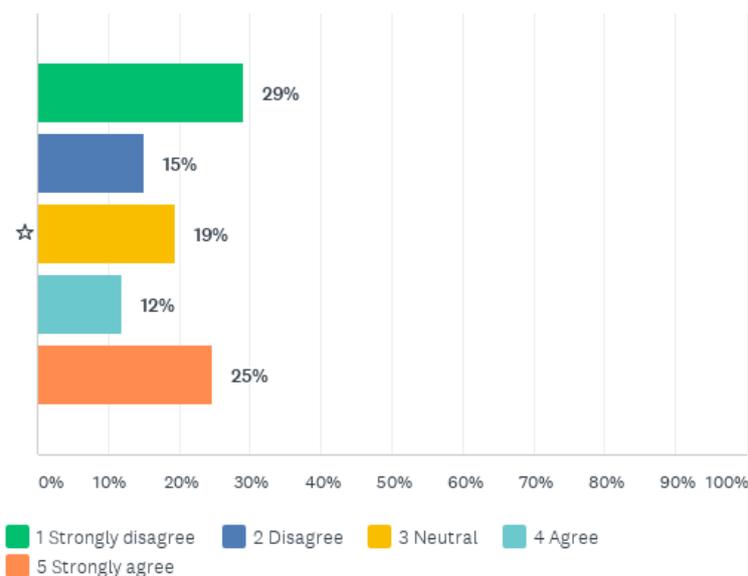
I know more about local services that can provide advice and support



Most respondents didn't feel that they knew more about local advice and support services than they did prior to receiving the packs with only 35% of respondents indicating that their knowledge had increased.

Whilst it could be that recipients already had a reasonable knowledge of other local services, this was not indicated through additional comments. The responses to this statement suggest that perhaps more could have been done to signpost people receiving the emergency food packs to other advice and support services.

I know more about the services that Fresh Start provides



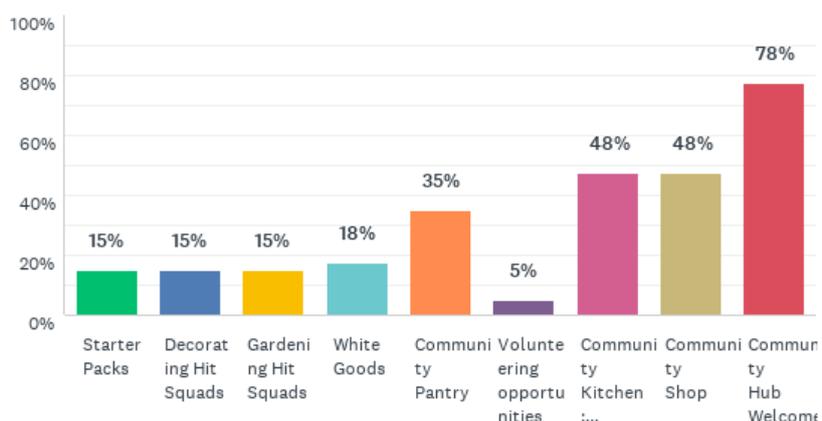
In terms of Fresh Start services, the results are similar to the previous question with 44% of respondents highlighting no increased knowledge of Fresh Start since receiving an EFP.

One respondent who agreed with the statement noted that they remembered receiving a leaflet about Fresh Start in the packs. However the majority of respondents felt that they did not know more about Fresh Start's services since receiving the packs, with one noting that they had only received one phone call from Fresh Start.

It should also be noted that some people surveyed were unsure who the Emergency Food Pack had come from, which could be due to the fact that Fresh Start was working in partnership with other organisations, such as schools, to distribute the food packs.

Section 5 Future services/support needs

Would you like to learn more about how to access these Fresh Start services? Tick all you are interested in.

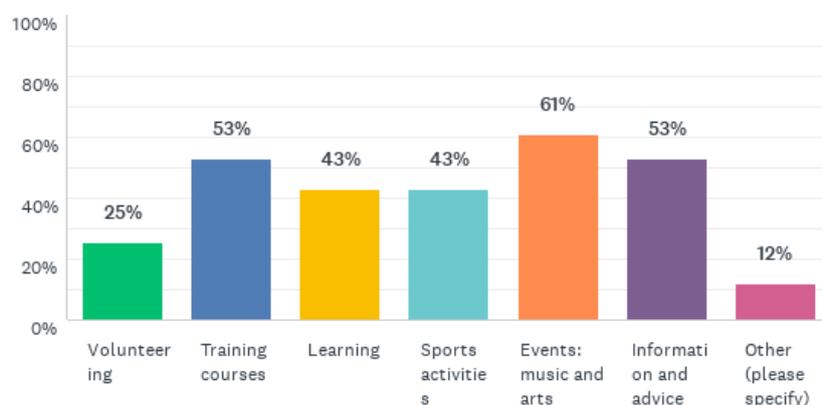


Of the 40 respondents that were interested in finding out more about Fresh Start services, more than three quarters of these were interested in the Community Hub Welcome Space, just under half were interested in the Community Shop and Community Kitchen and over a third were interested in the Community Pantry.

The responses to this question suggest that a number of people are interested in accessing community spaces and services, which could be seen to reflect responses to previous questions in the survey, where respondents mentioned feeling particularly isolated during the lockdown and missing getting out in the community.

There was also some interest in receiving more information about White Goods, Gardening and Decorating Hit Squads and Starter Pack services, suggesting that there is some demand for these services when they are able to resume, but that perhaps fewer people had been placed in new accommodation during the lockdown.

Would you like to learn more about other services or opportunities in the local community?



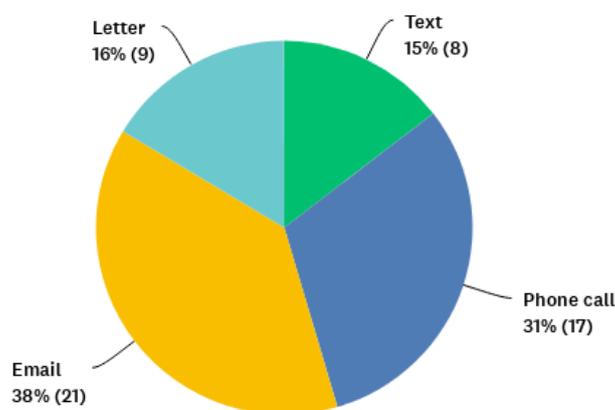
Of 51 respondents, more than half were interested in Events, Training Courses and Information and Advice services. There was also a reasonable amount of interest in Learning and Sports Activities in the community and over a quarter of respondents were interested in Volunteering opportunities. 6

respondents stated that they were interested in finding out more about other opportunities in the local community.

The level of interest in Training Courses and Information and Advice services could in part be due to work or financial situations changing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a number of survey respondents mentioning being on benefits, being unemployed or being on furlough.

Of the respondents who said they would like to find out about other services and opportunities in the local community, 2 specifically mentioned activities for kids and two were interested in improving their English, again showing an interest in accessing local community activities for children as well as adults.

Please tell us how you would like to be contacted about the above services you are interested in.



The pie chart shows that the preferred method of contact for receiving further information about Fresh Start services and other services and opportunities was email, closely followed by phone call, with significantly fewer respondents wanting to be contacted by letter or text.

The fact that nearly a third indicated that they would prefer to receive further information by phone could reflect the number of respondents with limited internet access or lack of confidence using internet and email. While conducting the survey, a number of respondents expressed how grateful they were to get a phone call, with some saying that they hadn't spoken to anyone in days, which may be another reason that phone calls were the preferred method of contact for so many.

Appendix 2

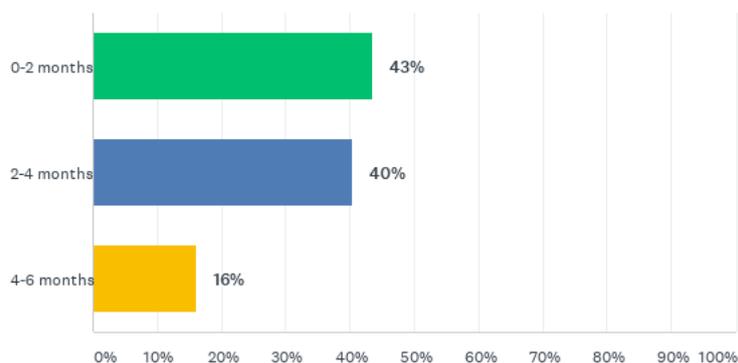
The Pantry Data Analysis

99 Pantry members participated in the telephone survey.

Section 1 Experience of using the service

How long have you used the Fresh Start Pantry?

The telephone survey was carried out in October-December 2020. At that time more than half had been members for more than 2 months and 43% were relatively recent members.



Tell us about your household, who does the Pantry support (including yourself)?

80 of 99 Pantry members answered this question. The detailed analysis shows that these 80 Pantry memberships support 248 people in households of varying sizes.

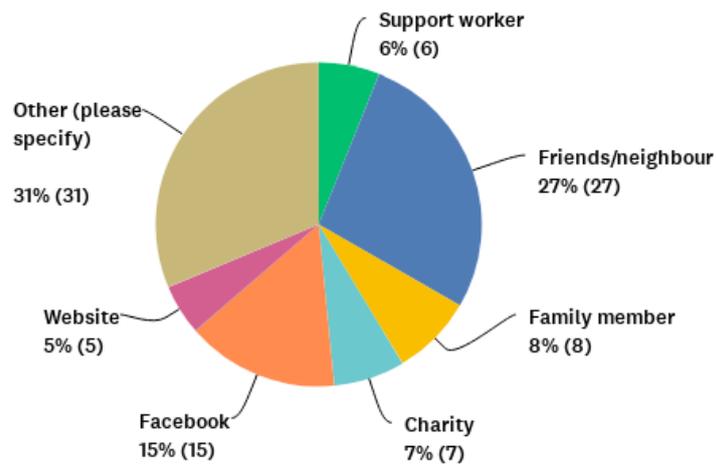
- 44% (110) are under 18
- 50% (124) are adults aged 18-64
- 6% (14) are 65+

There is a wide range of household sizes:

- 23 are single person households
- 11 households comprise 2 people
- 15 households comprise 3 people
- 15 households comprise 4 people
- 10 households comprise 5 people
- 2 households comprise 6 people
- 2 households comprise 7 people
- 2 households comprise 8 people

The majority of households (58%) contained people under 18.

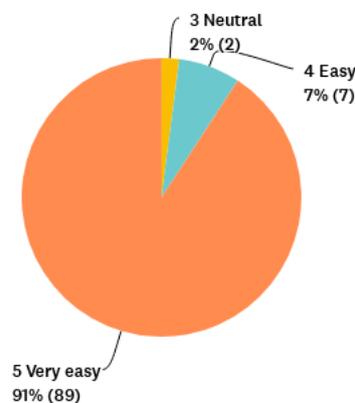
How did you find out about Fresh Start Pantry?



Members heard about the Pantry in the main by word of mouth from friends/neighbours or family member (35%), 15% found out from Facebook, which is less than you might expect, and 5% from the website.

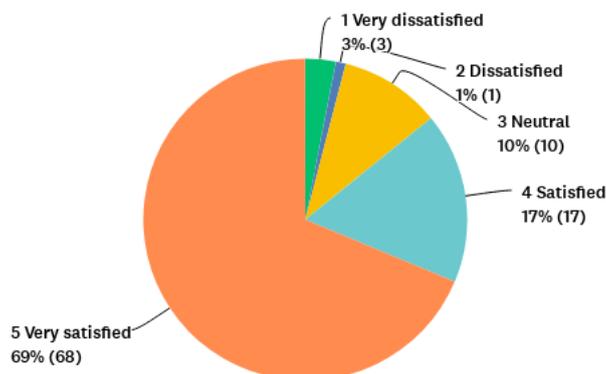
In the "other" category (31%), 4 Members joined after receiving Emergency packs 4 had heard from Forthview Primary, 4 had just passed by, others had been referred by their health visitor or support worker, or had heard from PCHP, their Church or PEP.

How easy was it to join Fresh Start Pantry? (where 5 is very easy)



It is clear that Pantry members find it very easy to join with 91% ranking this 5 out of 5 and no-one finding it difficult.

How satisfied are you with your experience of using the Fresh Start Pantry so far? (where 5 is very satisfied)



Pantry members show a high level of satisfaction with the service with the majority (86%) scoring 4 or 5 and 69% scoring 5. Pantry members commented positively about the good value offered by the service and the friendly and welcoming atmosphere.

When asked to think about possible improvements to the service, Pantry members felt the service could consider offering more variety (more fresh fruit and veg, toiletries and hygiene products, pet food). 3 members find the hearts and diamonds system confusing, and 4 members find the Pantry hard to get to and return from with heavy shopping.

“Great choice, value for money, good for kids.”

“Straightforward, welcoming and friendly.”

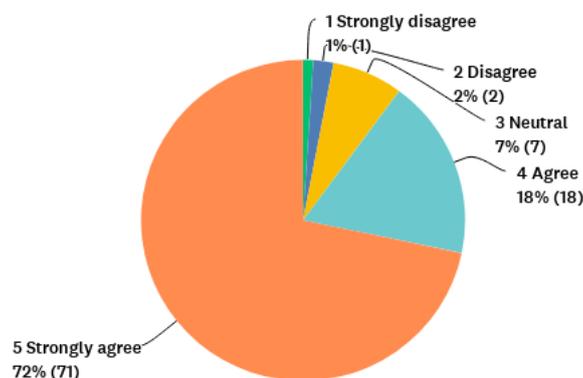
“More fresh produce if possible.”

“Good variety of store cupboard goods.”

Section 2: Impact on Household Finances

Using the Fresh Start Pantry helps me to stretch my weekly food budget

(On scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is Strongly Agree how much would you agree with this statement)



90% of Pantry members agree the Pantry helps them to stretch their weekly food budget, with 72% scoring the highest level of agreement. 7% feel no change and for 3% it makes no difference.

Themes in the comments included good value for money, and savings made.

“Made redundant 2 months ago, Pantry has really helped save money on food bills.”

“On Universal Credit, Pantry helps me to stretch my benefits.”

“Good value for money, makes income go further.”

“In limbo due to immigration status, the Pantry is a huge help.”

“I would not be able to get as much food at the supermarket.”

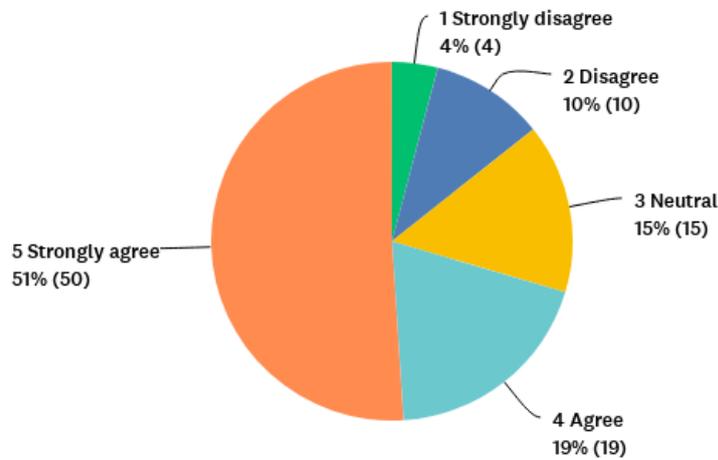
“I use the money I save on household and utility bills.”

“The Pantry is a big help and I don’t feel judged for using it.”

Of those who felt no change or no difference, comments included:

“I have to go elsewhere to complete my shop.”

Using the Fresh Start Pantry helps me to save money and/or manage any debt on a regular basis?



70% of Pantry members agree that using the Pantry helps to save money/manage debt, while 30% feel there is less or little impact on their circumstances.

The main theme in the comments is about saving money which helps with budgeting and meeting other costs.

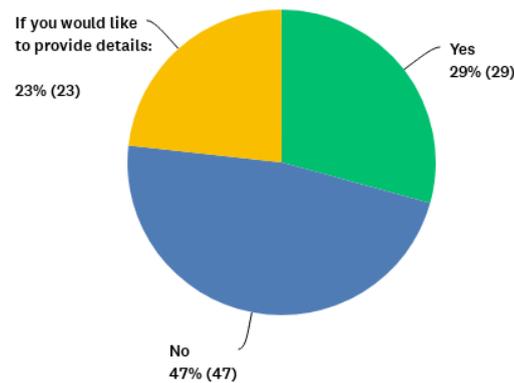
Of those on low incomes with debts, however, the comments suggest that some members find they can pay debts, others find no real impact is made on outstanding debt.

"I can juggle the household finances much better due to Pantry membership."

"Using the pantry helps me save money for other bills like heating and gas. When I use the Pantry I can afford to leave the heating on a bit longer every night."

"I have been out of work since March and benefits do not cover all my bills. The Pantry has really helped with my weekly food shop."

Do you currently owe any money or have arrears to pay such as mortgage, rent, other?



47% of the surveyed Pantry members had no debt or arrears.

29% owed money or had arrears to pay. 8 % members were behind on rent, 5 members were behind on their mortgage. 3 on utilities, and 3 on Council tax. 4 owed money on cards or a loan, others did not want to share. Of the 23% who provided details the following are typical quotes.

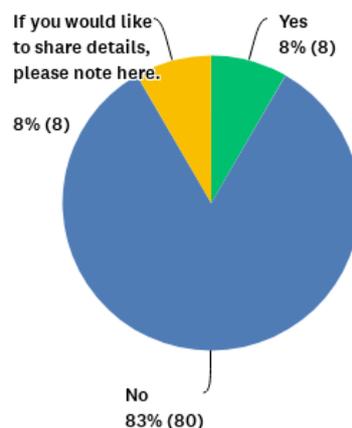
"I have been able to pay back a bank overdraft at £5 per fortnight due to saving money with the Pantry."

"My weekly food bill has gone down from £80 to around £30 by using the Pantry."

"I am behind on rent as my husband and son have lost their jobs."

"I have some debt and finding that my reduced income during lockdown is making it harder to pay off."

Would you like further money management support or debt advice?



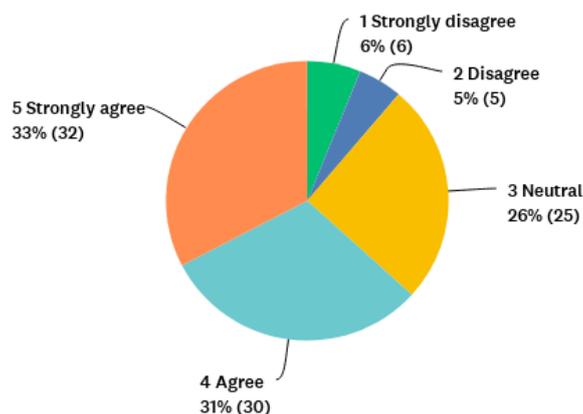
83% of respondents were not interested in receiving money management support or debt advice.

8 people were interested in support with money management or debt advice and were referred to a local agency. Of these, 4 were already receiving money management support/debt advice and 4 were interested in receiving advice and were referred on.

Section 3: Impact on Health and well-being

Since joining the Fresh Start Pantry, I am cooking and eating more healthy meals at home

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is Strongly Agree how much would you agree with these statements



63% of Pantry members surveyed felt they were cooking and eating more healthy meals at home, 25% felt no change, many commented they had always been home cooks, or were trained chefs, but appreciated the good value and fresh food from the Pantry.

11% felt they weren't cooking more at home comments included choice in the Pantry limited, or couldn't cook Pantry items at home, or perceived canned items as unhealthy

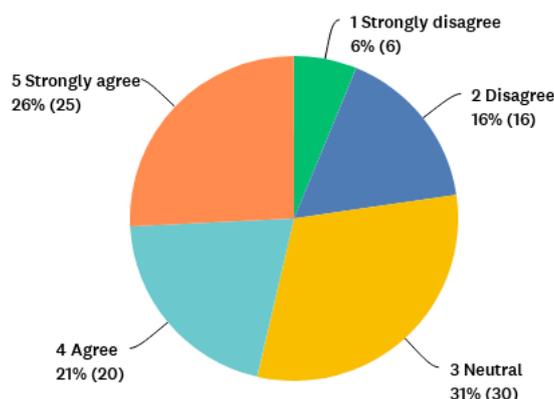
Themes in the comments included people cooking more in general, cooking healthier meals, and appreciation of the fresh items in the Pantry

"Used to rely on ready meals now cooking more."

"I can offer a good selection of food to the children if there is plenty fresh fruit and veg in the Pantry."

"Family has been trying to eat healthily and the pantry has really helped them to do this."

Since joining the Fresh Start Pantry, I feel more confident and able to cook at home



The majority of Pantry members surveyed (45%) agreed with the statement that they felt more confident and able to cook at home. 31% felt no change as they already cooked at home, and 22% felt less of an impact.

"I have always cooked at home, but the Pantry is helping me save on food bills."

"I can offer more variety to the children."

"There is a good mix of easy to prepare food and fresh food."

"Recipes and ideas in the Pantry would help. Recipes which would use only items regularly available in the Pantry which could be bought as part of a weekly shop."

"We make meals together as a family."

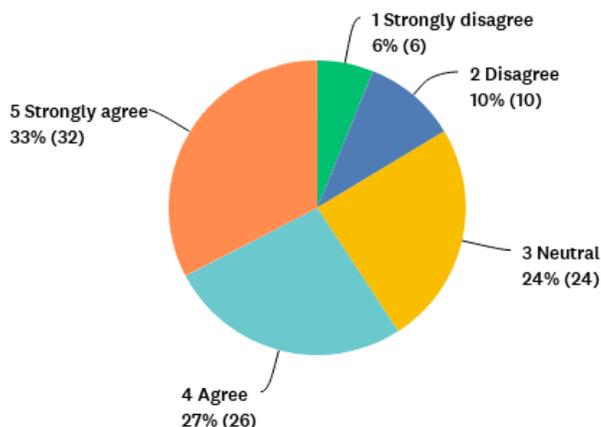
"Having the ingredients from the Pantry to cook a meal has encouraged me to cook."

"I don't feel any change as I find choices are limited at the Pantry."

"I make more soups and cook more meals."

"I find I have the same things left over every week."

Since joining the Fresh Start Pantry, I feel somewhat less stressed and anxious



58% of the Pantry members surveyed agreed that they felt less stressed and anxious. Almost a quarter felt there was no change and 16% did not feel less stressed or anxious.

There was a large number of comments on this question, 60 in all with the predominant themes of reduced levels of stress and anxiety and the importance of having enough food in the house for peace of mind.

"I feel less stressed because I know I can feed my kids."

"I have peace of mind as my Pantry membership means I can afford to have food in the house at all times."

"Using the Pantry reduces money stress when waiting to get paid at the end of the month."

"Since using the pantry I have been able to stock up on tinned goods and this reduces stress when I cannot afford a big weekly shop."

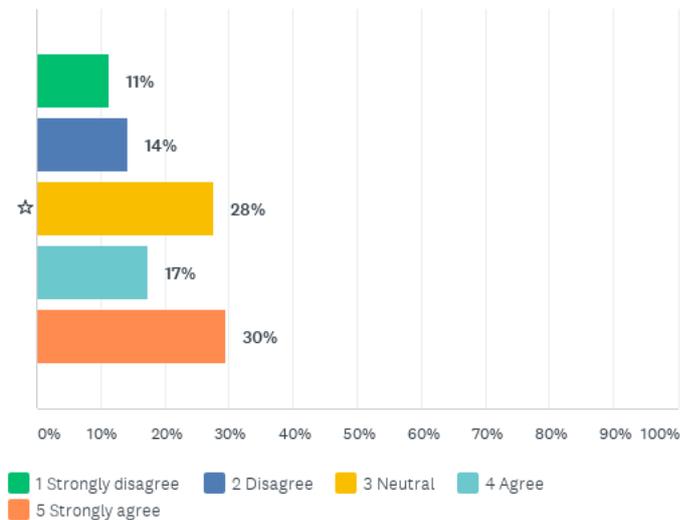
"You get more for your money so spending less on food and providing more for kids."

"It takes a weight off my shoulders knowing I can use the Pantry for a weekly shop and spend only £3.50."

Section 4: Impact on Social Isolation/Community Engagement

Since joining the Fresh Start Pantry: I feel less isolated and more connected to my community

On a scale of 1-5 where 5 is strongly agree



Pantry membership has a positive effect on social isolation with 47% of members agreeing that they feel less isolated and more connected to their community. 27% report no change, and comments reveal that many Pantry members already have networks. Fresh Start can think about ways to reach the 25% of members who did not score this statement highly. This group included people who don't get out much due to health conditions or who have family members shop for them

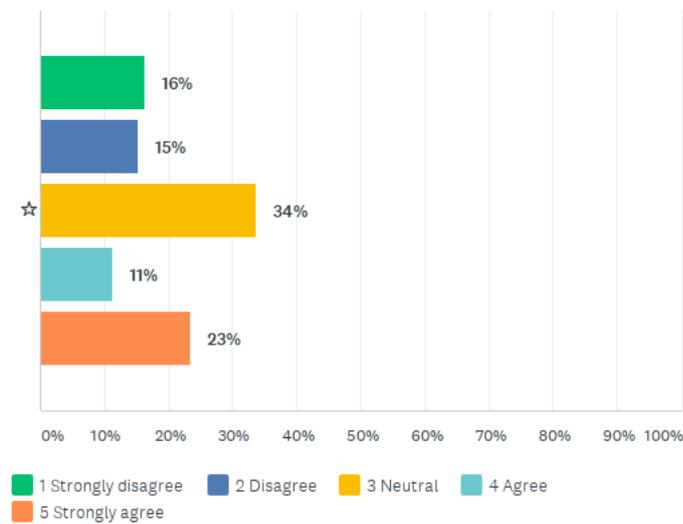
Themes in comments include increased social interaction meeting new people, and that the Pantry is welcoming and local.

"Fresh Start Pantry isn't just about the food, it is about support and a friendly environment."

"It is a community shop and the volunteers are lovely. I had felt worried about being stigmatized or judged by using the Pantry but this is not the case."

"The Pantry has been a help with this but still don't feel very connected."

I stop and speak to more people in my community



Meeting people has been affected by Covid-19 restrictions. Nevertheless, a third of the Pantry members surveyed agreed or strongly agreed (score 4/5) that they stopped and spoke to more people in the community. Comments reveal that some members had met new people in the queue and pantry volunteers, though not all.

A third were more neutral in their response, the comments reveal that many people chatted to people they already knew

A further third felt they did not stop and speak to more people in the community, the comments note they went to the Pantry and went home.

"I have got to know people by being a Pantry member."

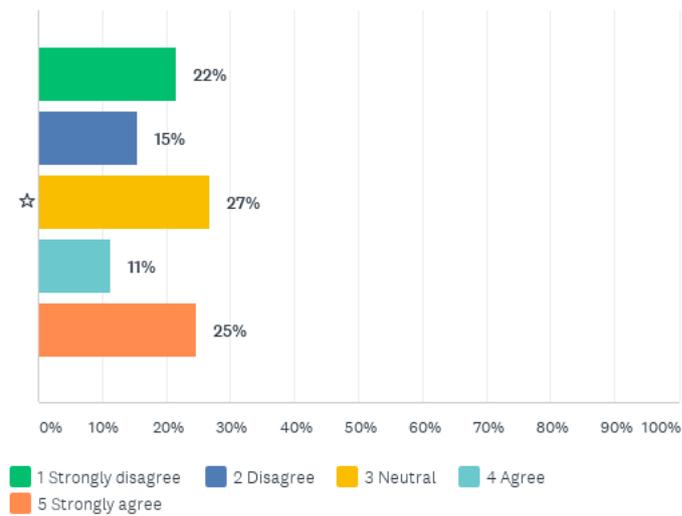
"I recognise more people in the community, although I don't stop and speak for long."

"I am usually quite introverted but have noticed since using the Pantry that I stop and speak to more people."

"I enjoy chatting to the volunteers."

"I just go to the Pantry and go home."

I feel more confident about participating in other activities in my community



Lockdown had an impact on answers to this question. Many people could no longer access their usual activities and clubs, some were doing so online. Nevertheless, there is evidence the people did feel more confident about taking part in other activities, and were keen to take up opportunities in future, for e.g., the proposed Community Hub.

Themes in the comments were the impact of Covid-19, people were taking part in some activities online. 4 people made an explicit link between involvement in Fresh Start and increased confidence in taking part in other activities.

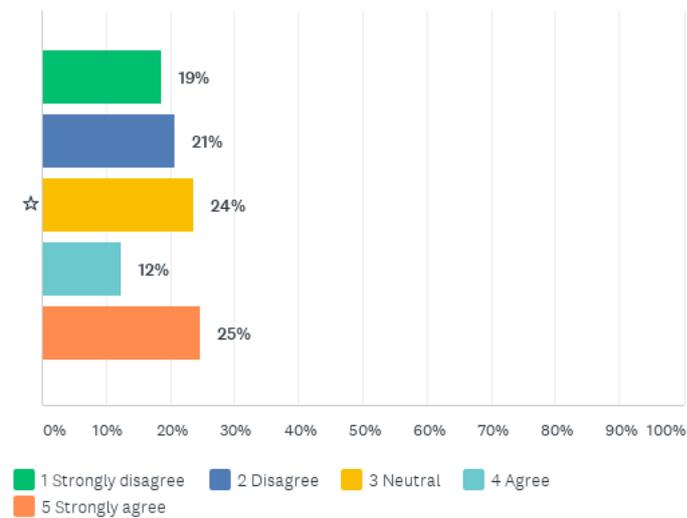
"I want to volunteer and share my chef skills."

"I have completed the PAT testing course at Fresh Start and volunteered. This has given me more confidence."

"Going to the Pantry has made me think about doing other things, e.g. visit Lauriston Castle."

"I like the Community noticeboard."

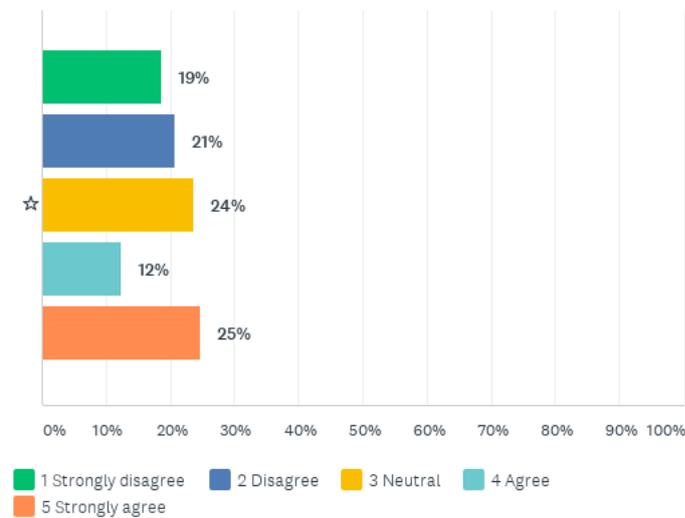
I know more about local services that can provide advice and support



The results show that Fresh Start could think about doing more to share information about other local services. This is borne out in the comments where a major theme was that Pantry members did not feel they were provided with any information about other services.

There was a suggestion about creating a noticeboard in either the Pantry or the Hub. A small number of Pantry members felt that they had received useful information. Other major themes in the comments are that some members already feel they know a lot about community services, and the volunteers are helpful but could be better informed.

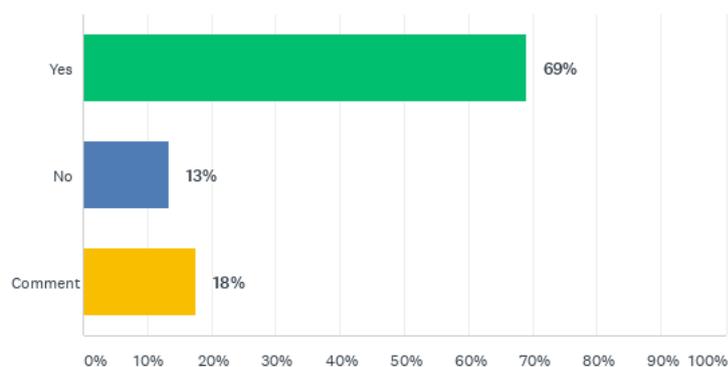
I know more about the services that Fresh Start provides



38% of those surveyed felt they knew more about Fresh Start services. There is potential for Fresh Start to think about new/more ways to share information about its services, this may have been hampered by Covid-19. Some Pantry members became aware of the other services via the phone survey.

Based on the additional comments, one Pantry member joined through a positive experience receiving an Emergency Food Pack, and one other had previously used another Fresh Start service. Facebook users felt well informed as the page has information about all Fresh Start services.

I feel the way I do in the answers above because I joined the Fresh Start Pantry



Survey members were asked to assess to what degree their views expressed in previous questions were attributable to Pantry membership. It is clear that Pantry members feel that it had a positive impact on their lives. Over two-thirds of respondents indicated their expressed views on saving money, improved connection and feeling less stressed were directly linked to joining the Pantry.

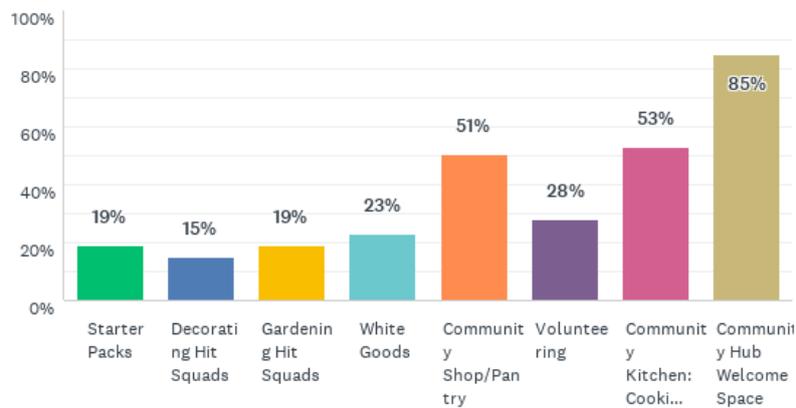
"The Pantry has generally helped with money saving and lunches for the kids."

"I feel more connected to my community than I did before."

"The Pantry is a great way of getting others within the community to socialize together who may not otherwise as it is open to a range of different people from different backgrounds."

Section 5: Future Services/Support Needs

Would you like to learn more about how to access Fresh Start services?



There is strong interest in Fresh Start's other services and evidence that the proposed Community Hub will be a very popular addition. The cooking classes and clubs in the community kitchen are also hotly anticipated.

How would you like us to contact you about these services?

There is a selection of contact preferences, with phone favoured. 43% prefer either a text or a phone call. 29% prefer email and 9% prefer a letter. Fresh Start should continue to use a range of ways to contact Pantry members or publicise for new members.

