

# Planet Card

## Good Food for All



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# Executive Summary

In the UK, stagnated incomes, cuts to social support, and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis leave six million households experiencing food insecurity. At the same time, organic produce costs 75-90% more than conventional alternatives, meaning that many low-income households are financially excluded from having a healthy and sustainable diet. Supermarkets dominate the UK food system, putting pressure on prices for both consumers and farmers, while prioritising efficiency over resilience and limiting more local supply networks.

The Planet Card is one of nine pilots delivered under Bridging the Gap – a programme improving access to affordable, climate friendly foods for everyone. Co-designed with residents and market stallholders, the Planet Card aimed to increase affordability of organic fruit and vegetables among people on low incomes. To do this, the Planet Card provided low-income households with a weekly £11 voucher to spend on organic fruit and vegetables across two farmers markets in Cardiff, Wales. This report evaluates the impact of the Planet Card, with a focus on member experiences. The report's findings draw on 97 baseline surveys, 67 follow-up surveys, three mid-point workshops, and 40 interviews with Planet Card members, conducted between October 2024 – March 2026.



- **6 Million UK households experience food insecurity**
- **Organic fruit & vegetables is 75% – 90% more expensive**
- **Supermarkets control 95% UK food sales**

Cardiff Farmers Market

## Executive Summary Continued

On average, Planet Card members visited the markets 18 times. The surveys show a statistically significant increase in fruit and vegetable portions by 0.5 portions from below to above 5 per day and less frequent consumption of sugary and processed foods. In the interviews and workshops, most reported feeling more empowered to make healthier and more sustainable food choices and eating more varied fruits and vegetables. For many, the value of attending the markets went beyond access to fresh produce. Regular visitors reported increased confidence and a greater sense of community, attributed to relationships built with both farmers at the market and other shoppers. These relationships transformed market visits into informal learning experiences, with Planet Card members learning about cooking unfamiliar produce and developing a greater appreciation for the work that goes into organic farming.

The Planet Card demonstrates that the access gap to healthy and sustainable food can be meaningfully reduced, while underscoring the need to address practical barriers that affect regular market access. It also highlights the wider role that community food markets can play in improving diets, wellbeing, social connection, and a more equitable food system.

### The evaluation insights translate into clear policy recommendations:

#### **Make it Affordable**

Scale access to healthy, sustainable fruit and vegetables through voucher and social prescribing programmes.

#### **Make it Local**

Invest in community food infrastructure.

#### **Make it Resilient**

Grow climate-friendly fruit, vegetable and pulse production.

# The Affordability Gap

Healthy and sustainable diets remain unaffordable for many low-income households, contributing to food insecurity and unequal access to sustainable food

Food insecurity in the UK has risen sharply due to the cost-of-living crisis, stagnant incomes, and cuts to social support. Currently, around 6 million households experience food insecurity, with 1.8 million adults going a whole day without eating because they could not afford or access food ([Food Insecurity Tracker, 2025](#)). Healthier foods cost more than twice as much as less healthy options. For the most deprived 20% of households, meeting the government's recommended healthy diet would require spending 45% of disposable income on food – rising to 70% for households with children ([Broken Plate Report, 2025](#)). Around 10% of households in Cardiff have worries about food security, have skipped or reduced meals or sought external help ([Cardiff Public Service Board, 2022](#)). People living in the most disadvantaged communities of Cardiff are more likely to report not being able to afford food ([Cardiff Council, 2025](#)).



These financial pressures also push sustainable food further out of reach. Organic produce can cost 75–90% more than conventional alternatives ([Soil Association, 2025](#)), making it unaffordable for many on low incomes. Due to cost, 60% of food insecure UK households already report buying less fruit, and 44% fewer vegetables ([DEFRA, 2024](#)). Yet organic and agroecological farming offers significant environmental benefits, including lower emissions, reduced energy use, less soil and water pollution, and greater carbon sequestration ([Skinner et al., 2019](#); [Soil Association, 2025](#)). This reflects a deeply unjust food system where those who are already struggling to eat well are also the least able to participate in more sustainable food systems.

In the UK, supermarkets dominate the food system. This puts pressure on prices for both consumers and farmers, while prioritising efficiency over resilience, and limiting more local supply networks. However, there is growing evidence that shorter, more local alternatives can work ([FoodRise, 2025](#); [Jennings et al., 2015](#)). Globally, cities including Barcelona, Madrid, Bogotá, and Copenhagen have begun to support more distributed food infrastructures, including local markets and direct sales, to improve access, resilience, and sustainability ([Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2023](#); [Jennings et al., 2015](#); [Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2022](#); [City of Copenhagen, 2019](#)).



The [Bridging the Gap](#) programme was designed as a direct response to these challenges. From 2022–2025, six lead partners, [Sustain](#), [Food Sense Wales](#), [Growing Communities](#), [Alexandra Rose Charity](#), [Nourish Scotland](#), and [Nourish NI](#), worked with communities to co-design and deliver the pilots across the UK. Funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, the programme developed local pilots to increase the production and consumption of organic fruit and vegetables among people on low incomes and in schools, reaching over 80,000 people. The Planet Card is one of the local pilots that was run in Cardiff from October 2024 to December 2025. To learn more, check out the [Bridging the Gap](#) report.

# About the Planet Card Programme

## The Planet Card: A Community-Designed Programme to Improve Access to Organic Fruit & Vegetables

The Planet Card is one of nine pilots delivered under the Bridging the Gap programme. Through Bridging the Gap, [Food Cardiff](#) brought together over 40 people from diverse communities in Cardiff, including residents, growers, stallholders and dietitians, to explore how to improve access to locally grown, sustainable and culturally appropriate food. This led to the development of the Planet Card.



Following the award of Bridging the Gap funding in November 2023, a group of 20 community members, stallholders, dietitians and the market manager co-designed the first version of the card in early 2024. It was introduced for food insecure households as a paper-based voucher worth £11 per week to be spent on fruit and vegetable, adjusted to reflect the higher cost of organic produce. After trialling the paper-based card, the Planet Card was digitalised and gradually rolled out to 120 households between October 2024 and May 2025 and ran until December 2025. Members were assigned a unique membership number, which they used via a dedicated online platform to access and track their credit. This could be spent across one or more market stalls, although any unspent balance did not carry over to the following week. The Planet Card Programme was coordinated locally by [Food Cardiff](#) in partnership with [Cardiff Farmers Markets](#).

This report presents findings from an independent evaluation of the Planet Card programme completed by the authors of this report from Cardiff University Business School. In total, this report draws on four types of data: (1) surveys completed by 97 of the 120 Planet Card members at the start of the programme, and a follow-up survey completed about five to six months later by 67; (2) three workshops with Planet Card members at the mid-point of the programme and (3) 40 interviews conducted at three stages: at the beginning, during, and at the close of the programme. The following pages report Planet Card members' experiences and the programme's impact.

## Planet Card approach

- **£11** weekly voucher to spend on organic fruit & vegetables
- **2x** weekly farmers markets

**Riverside** – Sunday 8.30am – 1pm

**Roath** – Saturday 8.30am – 1pm



## Co-designed with the community

The co-design process initially focused on low-income and ethnically diverse communities, following mapping work undertaken by Cardiff & Vale University Health Board Public Health Dietetics' Children and Families Pilot. This involved five focus groups with 40 people from ethnically diverse households with young children about what they eat and what they do to keep active. Within these focus groups, there was a desire among participants to access more local and organic food, including from farmers markets.

Read more about the 'Big Idea' workshop held in 2022:

<https://foodcardiff.com/bridging-the-gap-big-ideas-to-be-piloted-in-cardiff/>



Learn more about the creation of the Cardiff 'Planet Card' in this video:

<https://youtu.be/liUlrdhG6Vw?si=D2YnZTiOS43Z9ZT6>



# Who are the Planet Card Members?

## Multiple Pressures Limit Access to Healthy and Sustainable Food

For food insecure households, the cost of fresh fruit and vegetables remains a key barrier to healthy and sustainable diets. In Wales, people in lower-income households eat fewer fruit and vegetables than those in higher-income households, and for most age and sex groups this gap is wider than across the UK as a whole ([Bates et al., 2019](#)). The Planet Card helps overcome this by providing £11 weekly vouchers for organic fruit and veg at Cardiff's Farmers Markets. Before joining the programme, Planet Card members frequently experienced moderate to severe food insecurity, which further restricts their access to nutritious food. Many Planet Card members are parents, managing chronic illnesses and disabilities, or facing financial hardship, often dealing with several of these challenges at the same time. These lived experiences shaped why people engaged with the Planet Card.

Through community networks, low-income and food insecure households were invited to apply for a Planet Card and asked about their motivation to join.



Photographer Credit: Eleanor Church

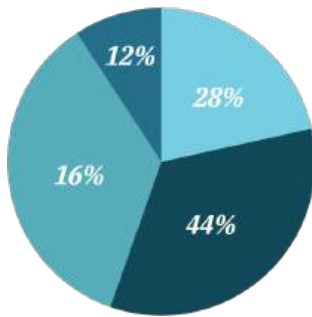
### Three themes emerged consistently:

1. A genuine motivation to improve diet and nutrition, frequently driven by health conditions or concern for children's wellbeing
2. The barrier of cost, with rising food and living prices making healthy choices feel out of reach
3. The compounding impact of disability, illness and recovery, where food quality is not a preference but a necessity.

These responses show that many people in the programme face wider challenges that make it difficult to regularly access healthy and sustainable food, largely due to financial pressures and food insecurity.

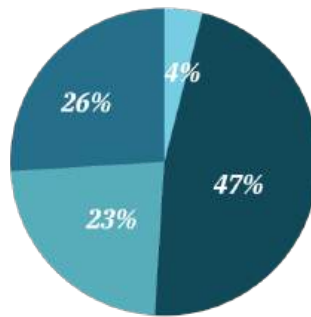
## Experiences of Food Insecurity

N = 92 Planet Card Members



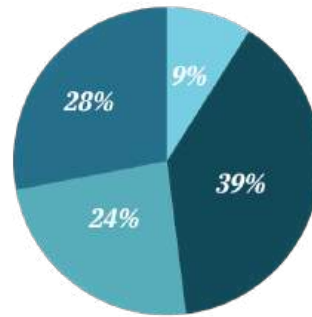
In the last month have you, or anyone else in your household, had smaller meals than usual or skipped meals, because you couldn't afford to buy food?

N = 93 Planet Card Members

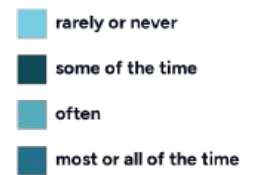


In the last month, have you found it difficult to afford to buy your weekly food shop?

N = 88 Planet Card Members



In the last month, have you found it difficult to household bills or manage debt repayments?



Participation was often motivated by a combination of ongoing health conditions or recovery from illness, financial hardship and affordability barriers, and a desire to eat more healthily to address fatigue or poor nutrition

Yeah, I did realise that we don't eat enough veg as a family. So we're a family with children and adults in it. adult children, and I just realised that we tend to eat convenience a bit too often, that we certainly don't get our five a day, 100%.

Eve

I try to live sustainably and eat healthily, I have a number of chronic health issues, including diabetes & hypertension, but cannot afford to do this as much as I should as I am on benefits.

Evan

I am disabled and on a very low income. I struggle to afford food. I am diabetic and overweight and try to manage my conditions with a healthy diet. I also prefer to shop locally and organic for environmental and political reasons but my low income often restricts me from doing so.

Luke

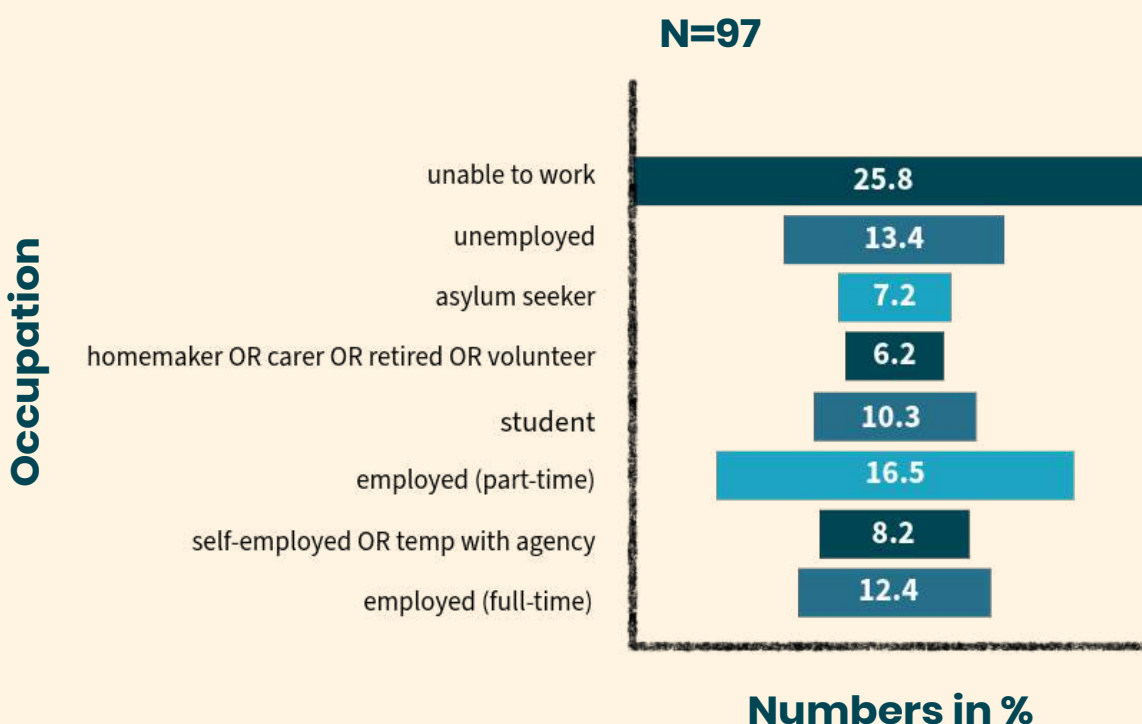
**56%** of households include children

**52%** live with a long-standing illness, injury, or disability

## Planet Card members largely reflect groups most at risk of food insecurity, including people unable to work or those living on low and unstable incomes

Low-income households, particularly those with children or disabilities, face significantly higher risks of food insecurity (DEFRA, 2024). This is reflected in the profile of the Planet Card members: 56% live in households with children, and 52% report a long-standing illness, injury, or disability affecting their daily activities.

These vulnerabilities can be closely tied to employment status. Most Planet Card members were not in full-time employment. Over a quarter were unable to work due to illness or disability, and a further 13% were unemployed, together representing the largest share of the member base. Part-time workers (16.5%) and students (10.3%) made up much of the remainder, painting a picture of a community largely living on reduced or uncertain incomes.



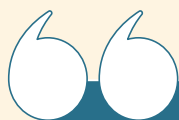


Cardiff Farmers Market



It's been pretty bad because I've been... oh, the whole stopping work and Universal Credit...and then, the work capability assessments... And now, [...] it has tipped the balance into thinking about it all the time, and it's stressful.

Sonia



I've had to give up work due to disability and am awaiting surgery, so my income has reduced.

Catherine

# More than Mainstream Food Vouchers

## The Planet Card built belonging, not just food budgets

On average, people visited the markets 18 times with some Planet Card members visiting very frequently and others only visiting a few times. There were also a few Planet Card members who did not visit the market at all. Interviewing those who visited the market showed that it had a noticeable impact beyond the food itself.

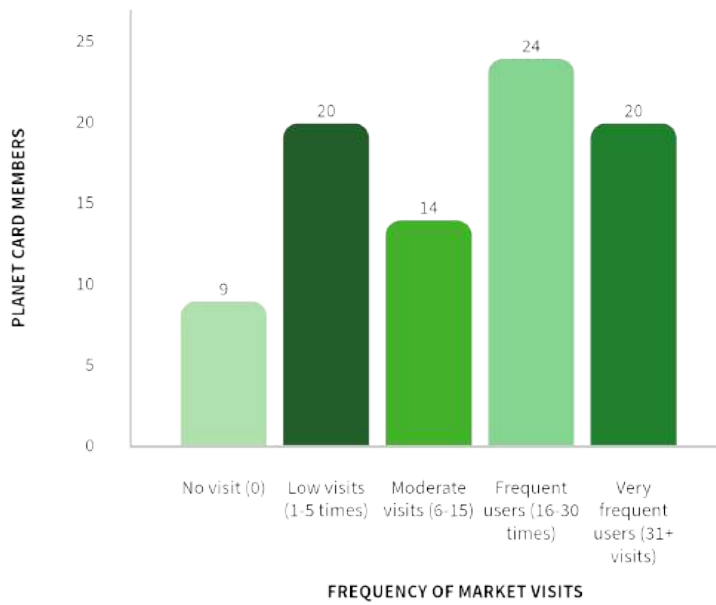
Regular market visitors talked about feeling encouraged to try new vegetables they would not have considered before. Many described feeling more confident, more connected, and more like a valued member of a community. Some contrasted this with their experiences of feeling anonymous when buying food in the supermarket.

This shows that the Planet Card programme offered something a mainstream food voucher could not: a genuinely social and empowering experience. Being able to pick individual pieces of produce in tailored quantities compared to the pre-packaged produce in supermarkets allowed members sense of control and freedom of choice.

### Planet Card in numbers

**£20,000+** spent by members at Cardiff Farmers Markets directly going to local producers & the local economy  
**£19,000** through Planet Card vouchers  
**1,744** estimated market visits  
**120** participating households

## Frequency of Market Visits of Planet Card Members

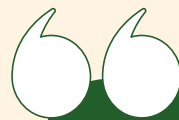


## Experiences from Planet Card members:



It feels empowering and I feel like I'm actually there, I'm valid, because before in the supermarket, you're just by yourself walking round, you don't say anything to anyone normally until you get to the cashier. When I go to the market, because there are certain traders, I go to all the time, so they've gotten to know me and it feels like I'm a valid person. And I also feel like I'm doing something for the environment.

*Selina, 28 market visits*



I'm disabled for more than six years, so it's normal for me to have difficulties to go out of the house [...]. But now, the only place I go is every Sunday to farmer market [...]. Sundays became very happy days for me.

*Bina, 28 market visits*

# The Planet Card helped Members reach their Five a Day

**Planet Card members went from below to above the five a day recommended intake of fruit and vegetables and reduced frequency of unhealthy food consumption**

Planet Card members ate more fruit and vegetables and scored higher on a healthy diet measure. Consumption of unhealthy foods including sugary snacks and processed foods also decreased significantly.

Before joining the Planet Card programme, members ate an average of 4.76 portions of fruit and vegetables per day. Twenty weeks later, this had risen to 5.33 portions, an increase of just over half a portion per day. This increase is notable given that baseline fruit and vegetable intake among Planet Card members was already relatively high compared with the Welsh average of around 3.8 portions per day, with around two-thirds of people not meeting the recommended five-a-day ([Bates et al., 2019](#)). Despite this higher starting point, members still showed measurable improvements. Similarly, Planet Card members reported less frequent consumption of sugary snacks and ready-made meals or takeaways. These findings were statistically significant and indicate that the Planet Card had a genuine and positive impact on members' diets.

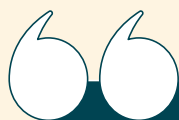


## Planet Card members eat more varied vegetables and less processed foods



in the summer, there's been so much fresh stuff, and it tastes so good. It's meant that we've definitely eaten more fruit and veg.

*Eve, 37 market visits*



the amount of processed food I'm eating has gone right down, I would say. It's probably gone down by over 50%.

*Nadia, 47 market visits*

### Average daily Portions of Fruit and Vegetables

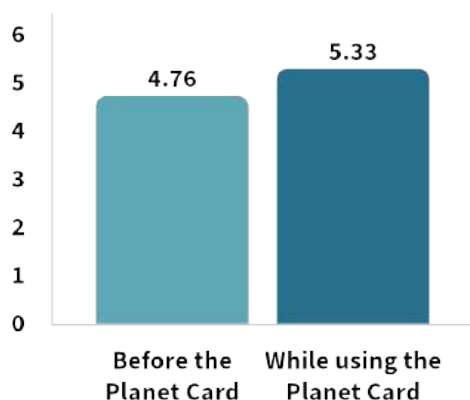


Figure 1



Without the Planet Card, I would just buy what I need for the meals, whereas with the Planet Card, it really did allow me to say, 'Oh, I'm going to have kale this week as well.'

*Maya, 18 market visits*

To assess whether the Planet Card programme had a meaningful effect on members' diets, we used a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). This statistical technique allowed us to examine changes across multiple diet-related outcomes simultaneously, comparing members' responses at the start of the programme (baseline) with those collected twenty weeks later (follow-up).

We measured three outcomes:

- 1) fruit and vegetable portions consumed per day,
- 2) healthy diet score, and
- 3) unhealthy diet score.

MANOVA: Fruit and vegetable consumption increased from baseline ( $M= 4.74, SD= 1.98$ ) to follow-up ( $M= 5.26, SD= 2.00$ ),  $F(1, 57) = 4.748, p= .034, \eta^2 = .078$ , representing a small to medium effect.

Healthy diet scores also improved significantly, from ( $M= 2.59, SD= 0.68$ ) to ( $M= 2.92, SD= 0.62$ ),  $F(1, 57) = 16.454, p < .001, \eta^2 = .227$ , a large effect.

Unhealthy diet scores decreased significantly, from ( $M= 3.61, SD= 1.06$ ) to ( $M= 3.37, SD= 0.91$ ),  $F(1, 57) = 5.994, p= .018, \eta^2 = .096$ , a medium effect.

Note: Dietary changes were based on self-reported data from the surveys.

# The Relational Side of the Farmers' Market



**The social atmosphere of the market turned shopping into an enjoyable weekly activity rather than a chore**

Going to the farmers' market created a sense of community that many members valued beyond simply buying fresh organic fruit and vegetables. Regular visits meant familiar faces, brief conversations, and occasional exchanges of cooking tips or advice on unfamiliar vegetables. Planet Card members described building relationships with both other customers and growers, and they often contrasted this with the more anonymous experience of supermarket shopping. These interactions helped create a welcoming, social and meaningful atmosphere, which for some became an important reason to return each week. At the market, shopping was not just about buying food, it was also about the conversations and connections.



Last week I saw a lady... I see her every week... I asked her what do you do with this vegetable and she explained how to make a soup with it.

*Bina, 23 market visits*



## Relationship with other customers and the growers

Planet Card members particularly valued being able to speak directly with growers. These conversations deepened their understanding of what they were buying, how it was grown and how to prepare it, while also building appreciation for the people behind their food. Conversations with growers built trust in the produce, made visible the work, skill, and passion involved in smaller-scale organic farming, and offered something many felt was absent from supermarket shopping.

This stands in sharp contrast to "farmwashing", the use of farm imagery by large supermarkets to simulate British provenance. A Riverford **survey with over 2000 shoppers** found that 59% felt distrustful and annoyed upon learning that the word "farm" can be used by supermarkets without the produce coming from a real farm. Together, these findings point to the value of authentic, direct relationships between market visitors, growers and community food networks.



I bought some tomatoes one day, and they weren't quite ripe, and the farmer said, [...], if you leave them on your windowsill for a few days, and they're in the sun, then they'll start to turn colour [...] I did what he advised, and I left them on the windowsill, and it was amazing, because you saw them change colour over those few days. [...] they know their produce, and they know what their produce is best for..., in a supermarket, sometimes you ask them where the produce is, and they can't even tell you. But when you go to the market... it's lovely having that access to information.

*Amira, 40 market visits*

## Planet Card created value by:

Building a sense of community

Building trust in local organic produce

Building appreciation of growers and their work

Making shopping more personal, enjoyable, and educational



I have a lot more respect for organic farmers now, especially having spoken to Paul so much. I think with supermarkets there's a massive disconnect from food, whereas you get a lot more familiar with the process and what actually goes into creating the food on your table when you're able to talk with farmers each week and listening to their stories and everything. It just, and it makes me feel a lot more grateful for the food and a lot more appreciative of like where it's come from and the people who have grown it and kind of a closeness to your community that you don't get with supermarket veg.

*Aria, 27 market visits*

# Challenges & Opportunities

## The social atmosphere of the market turned shopping into an enjoyable weekly activity rather than a chore

Planet Card members were generally very positive about the programme, but some practical barriers limited regular attendance and full use. The main challenges were limited market opening times, travel distance, and poor weather, which made it difficult to fit visits around work, caring responsibilities, illness, and other commitments. Additionally, supply side challenges linked to the relatively low levels of horticultural and organic production in Wales limits the number of participating markets and outlets available to members.

For many participants, reaching the market involved additional time, transport costs and sometimes difficult journeys, especially where public transport links were limited. These barriers mattered most for people with low-incomes, mobility issues, health conditions, or caring responsibilities. Some members said that by the time they had paid to get to the market, there was little of the allowance left to spend.

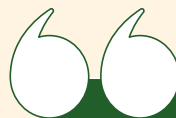
Poor weather also discouraged attendance, particularly given the outdoor setting of the markets, and was a greater concern for elderly members and those with health conditions.

Some had ideas to address these challenges, for example through additional locations, local collection points, and more flexible access during the week. However, some Planet Card members also emphasised the importance of maintaining opportunities for direct interaction with growers and other customers, which they valued as a distinctive aspect of the farmers' market experience.



It's not always easy getting there because sometimes you have to take two buses.

Selina, 28 market visits



If the weather is really bad you might think twice about going.

Sonia, 29 market visits



The Markets are very limited because they are sort of once a week. Maybe if, the local producers could team up with some of the little shops and sell stuff within them, things like that would potentially give people the option to buy stuff throughout the week. And then I noticed there's a new farm that has recently been added to the market page and I know they do delivery for veg boxes, so that's quite good.

*Lily, 29 market visits*



Maybe community centres or somewhere local could have a pickup point.

*workshop discussion*



... you're more in contact and realise that someone has grown it locally, because there's a distance when you buy something in plastic in the supermarket, you don't tend to think of the farmer. It's just convenient, and you pick it up. But then, obviously, you're more in touch that someone has grown that.

*Maria, 15 market visits*





## Key Opportunities

- Make access easier
- Reduce travel/cost barriers
- More flexible ways to take part
- Keep contact with growers
- Retain learning and connection missing from supermarket shopping

# The Wider Benefits of the Planet Card

**Planet Card members reported improvements to their wellbeing, sense of community and healthier choices**

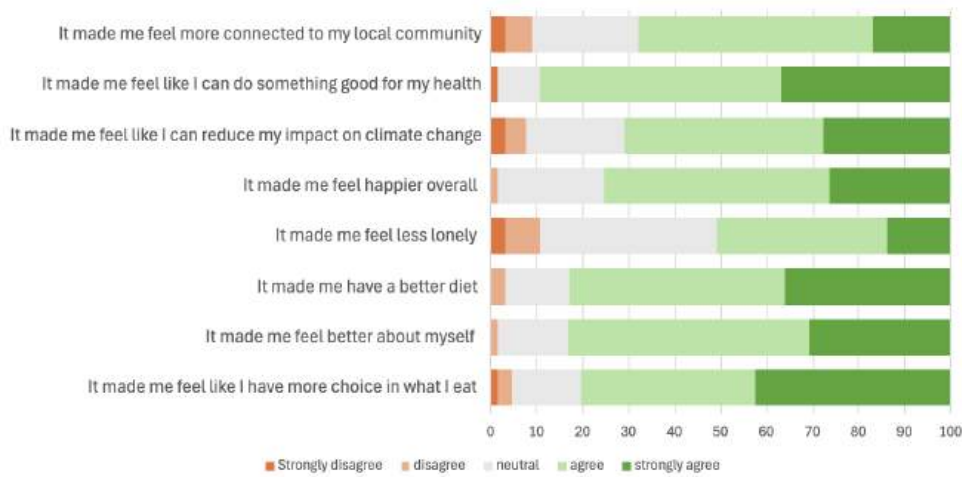
Taking part in the Planet Card had a meaningful and positive impact on members' lives. The majority of members reported feeling more connected to their local community and felt empowered to make healthier choices and reduce their environmental impact. Wellbeing benefits were also evident, with most members feeling happier and less lonely as a result of visiting the markets.

These findings suggest that the Planet Card goes beyond encouraging sustainable consumption and also supports people's mental health and sense of community belonging, as shown in the graph (located on the following page). This points to the potential of voucher based or social prescribing (a person-centred approach to connecting people to local community groups, interventions and services; [Welsh Government, 2024](#)) programmes to deliver environmental, health, and social wellbeing benefits simultaneously.



Cardiff Farmers Market

How did taking part in the Planet Card make you feel?



N = 65 of people who filled in the survey both before and after signing up to the Planet Card.

Responses are presented in %



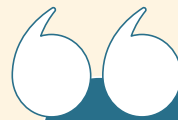
**It's brilliant. It shows schemes like this can be done among the community for the community. It's a pattern that can be repeated in many areas of people's lives.**

*Claire, 36 market visits*



**My wellbeing's definitely improved, because I can look forward to my Saturday morning, and my health has definitely improved because I'm eating more fruit and veg.**

*Selina, 28 market visits*



**it's been really nice to go and engage with the local community. I've been living here a couple of years, and it's probably the most I've regularly gone to the same place and got to know people a bit.**

*Luke, 10 market visits*



**I feel like I'm nourishing myself with good food. I've noticed like a change in my mood, mental health, for the positive**

*Nadja, 47 market visits*

# Curiosity & Joy in Fresh, Organic Fruit & Vegetables

**Planet Card members describe how fresh, local produce inspired experimentation, learning and a renewed appreciation for vegetables**

Access to fresh, seasonal produce sparked curiosity and experimentation in Planet Card members' cooking. Many tried unfamiliar vegetables, discovered new varieties, and picked up recipes through conversations with stallholders and fellow shoppers. The vibrancy and freshness of the produce was a recurring theme and members described it as an incentive to cook more from scratch, eat more fruit and vegetables, and rely less on processed foods. For some, this rekindled the pleasure of cooking; for others, it was about learning something new. The quality and taste of the vegetables came up in nearly every interview, with many members saying it made the produce feel more precious and worth making the most of.



## Joy, Curiosity, Learning

I felt really chuffed, because [...] I'm 58, I'm learning something new, and not only am I learning something new, I'm doing it with really good ingredients, and it tastes amazing.

Selina, 28 market visits

The experience of being able to get out and visit a market with my daughter is a lovely experience in itself. My daughter, she'd say, "We're going to see the fruit stand man!" you know, so it's lovely that, you know, she'd know, "Oh, Saturday, it's fruit stand man day." And seasonal, so learning about, you know, what fruits and vegetables are seasonal, and then I would try to avoid buying those products that were out of season in the supermarket, because, you know, at least I know my daughter is eating the right products, right produce at that time of the year.

Maya, 18 market visits

## Taste & Indulgence

Indulgence in the vegetables, they are more special, more real, they have dirt on them, the farmer is passionate, they are rare.

Nadia, 47 market visits

I come across [...] a hybrid, so he crossed a cauliflower with a broccoli, and it looks so pretty, and it was just so nice ... you would never find that in the supermarket.

Amira, 40 market visits

Oh my God, being able to bite into a tomato and not immediately taste water. Loved it. Fantastic. Tomatoes are one of my favourite, favourite fruits and veg and being able to get heirloom tomatoes all summer, beautiful!

Aria, 27 market visits

# Key Learnings & Recommendations

## Key learnings

This evaluation report shows that lowering financial barriers can help people on low incomes to eat more fruit and vegetables, have a more varied diet reduced in unhealthy and processed foods, improve their health and wellbeing and create community connection.

This report also shows that there are non-cost factors. People need supportive food environments that build trust, confidence, and practical knowledge. More direct and personal food settings, such as the farmers market that allows visitors to speak directly with the farmers, can encourage people to try unfamiliar local produce, cook differently, and share ideas with others. These interactions make it easier to ask questions and build confidence in shopping, cooking, and healthy eating.



Photographer Credit: Eleanor Church



One practical step would be to encourage people to take up and utilise existing schemes such as 'Healthy Start' in farmers' markets and community food spaces; or by developing other local voucher or social prescribing schemes for these spaces. This could be supported by funding informal advice and these kinds of interaction that help people make lasting changes to how they shop and eat.

The Planet Card evaluation further highlights that widening access to healthy, sustainable food would benefit from more flexible local food infrastructure, including community food hubs and markets distributed across neighbourhoods, alongside supply-side interventions to grow the necessary horticultural supply.

A practical step would be to support neighbourhood-based markets and collection points running on multiple days, helping to reduce time and transport barriers while preserving the direct farmer-user relationships that Planet Card users valued. This could build on approaches used in cities such as Barcelona, Madrid, Bogotá, and Copenhagen, where urban food policy supports food systems that are more accessible, more distributed, and more embedded in everyday communities.



## The findings from this evaluation point to three areas where policy action could make a meaningful difference

### **Make it Affordable**

Scale access to healthy, sustainable fruit and vegetables through voucher and social prescribing programmes.

Introduce and scale up targeted schemes that make nutritious food more affordable, especially for low-income and food insecure households, through voucher schemes similar to Planet Card and fruit and vegetable social prescription programmes; a person-centred approach to connecting people to local community groups, interventions and services ([Welsh Government, 2024](#)). Expanding these initiatives would help address food insecurity, improve diet quality, and deliver environmental and health benefits, reducing long-term pressure on the NHS.

### **Make it Local**

Invest in community food infrastructure.

Invest in local community food retail such as farmers markets, community food hubs and independent greengrocers, to better connect consumers with small-scale producers and with each other. Build in shared spaces where people can exchange recipes, learn and cook together. This can improve the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables in underserved areas, increase community cohesion, support skill development, strengthen the local economy, and create more opportunities for community connection and informal learning around food, health, and wellbeing.

### **Make it Resilient**

Grow climate-friendly fruit, vegetable and pulse production.

Increase the amount of organic or agroecological horticulture that is produced domestically, both by enabling new growers to enter the market and expanding production. Diverse local supply chains will build resilience, ensure supply is readily available and is fundamental for the previous recommendations.

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The Planet Card was a lifeline for me  
over the last year

*Aria, 26 market visits*



Cardiff Farmers Market

