



Celebrating 100 years supporting
rural communities in Derbyshire

1924 - 2024



Feeding Derbyshire

**Feeding Derbyshire
Community Pantries Pilot
EVALUATION REPORT**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Produced by
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Rural Action Derbyshire
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INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

The Feeding Derbyshire Community Pantries (FDCP) project, launched in May 2021 under the broader Feeding Derbyshire initiative, aims to provide affordable and sustainable food solutions across Derbyshire. Managed by Rural Action Derbyshire (RAD) for Derbyshire County Council (DCC), the pilot was initially funded for two years and extended due to its success. The evaluation of FDCP focuses on its effectiveness in alleviating food poverty and insecurity, utilizing a blend of statistical data and qualitative insights to assess successes, challenges, and future opportunities.

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The Feeding Derbyshire Partnership, established in 2014 and coordinated by RAD since 2017, evolved to address food insecurity exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The FDCP pilot was introduced to transition from emergency food models to sustainable community pantries, particularly targeting high-deprivation areas and addressing food deserts. The pilot's importance has increased amid the cost-of-living crisis, with the evaluation providing insights for future food security programs.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND DATA COLLECTION

The evaluation used an action-learning approach to gather both qualitative and quantitative data through interviews, observations, and various reports. It focused on key outcomes such as reducing food bank dependency and improving community resilience. The methodology adhered to ethical standards and was reviewed for rigor by an external academic.

QUANTITATIVE PERFORMANCE

As of September 2023, the FDCP pilot exceeded expectations with 2,788 members, significant weekly shopper numbers, and substantial savings on food purchases. Despite challenges like rurality and infrastructure issues, the pilot demonstrated strong performance. The need for improved data management was identified to support future growth.

EXPERIENCES OF ORGANISERS AND STAFF

Interviews and observations revealed diverse origins of FDCPs, challenges in membership management, and issues with food supply and staffing. Support from RAD was crucial, but challenges such as volunteer fatigue, waste disposal costs, and the need for additional support services were noted. Many FDCPs successfully transitioned from emergency food models, showing reduced food bank demand and providing significant social benefits.

MEMBER EXPERIENCES

Surveys and case stories highlighted the positive impacts of FDCPs on health, social connections, and financial stability. Members reported reduced anxiety, improved dietary habits, and increased social interaction. The data suggests that FDCPs play a critical role in enhancing overall well-being.

SOCIAL VALUE IMPACT

Using the Social Value Engine (SVE) toolkit, the FDCP pilot demonstrated a substantial social return on investment (SROI) of £4.24 for every £1 spent. The SVE analysis attributed significant monetary value to outcomes like reduced social isolation and improved mental health, supporting the broader impact of community pantries.



1 Membership and Impact

- Diverse membership base with varying needs, including working individuals and pensioners.
- Positive impact on mental wellbeing, social connections, and financial stability reported by members.
- Reduction in emergency food demand and transition from food banks to community pantries observed.

2 Challenges and Recommendations

- Supply chain challenges, volunteer dependency, and funding uncertainties identified.
- Recommendations include targeted rollout, stabilizing food supply, consolidating the network, supporting staff development, developing a sustainability plan, and enhancing the monitoring system.

3 Social Value Impact

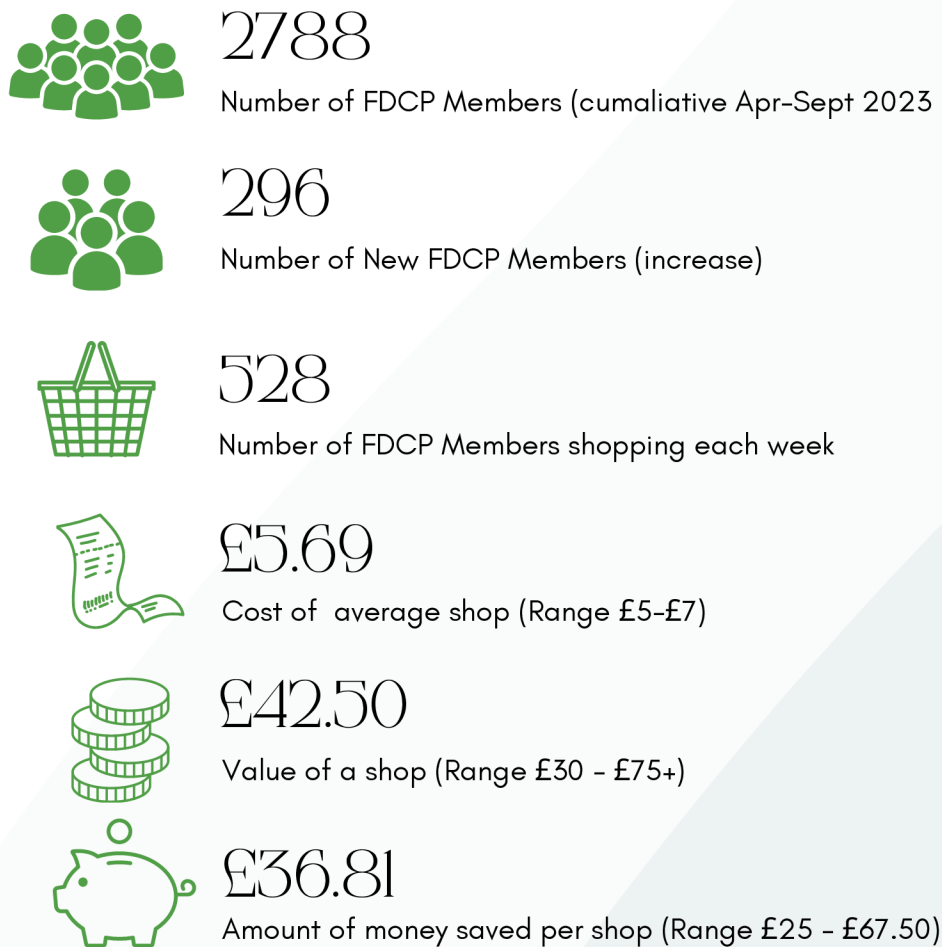
- Social Value Engine (SVE) analysis revealed a total social value of £658,419.94 and an impressive Social Return on Investment (SROI) of £4.24 for every £1 invested.
- Broader social, health, and financial outcomes beyond food provision were quantified, emphasizing the project's effectiveness in addressing community needs.

The FDCP pilot has shown significant successes, but also faces ongoing challenges.



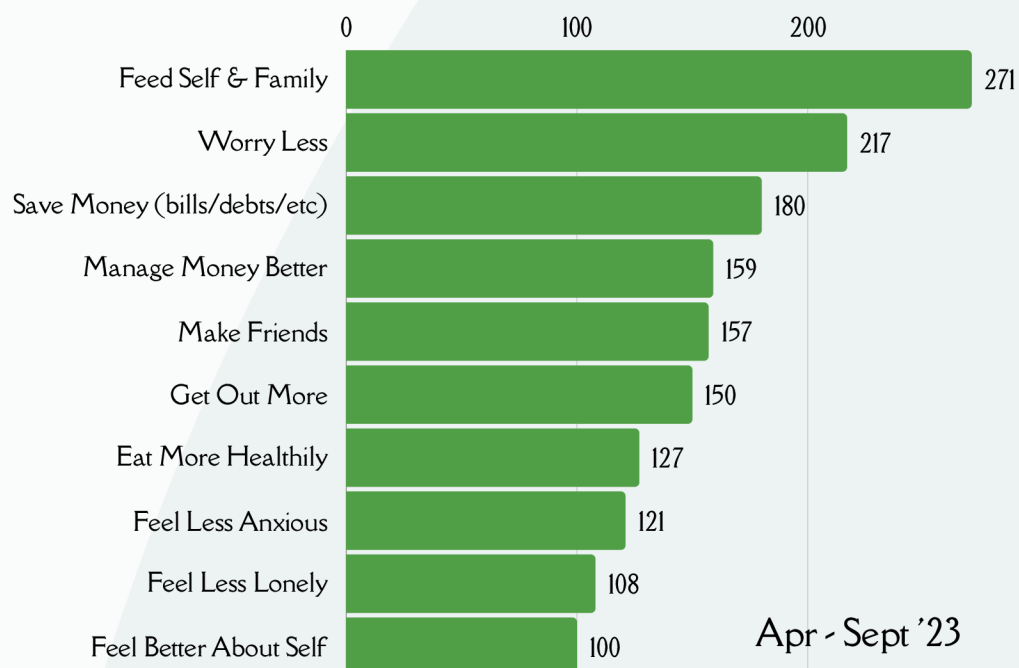
What the FDCP pilot delivered in 6 months

Figure 2: FDCP pilot snapshot of monitoring information for April to September 2023



What do FDCP members (customers) say

Figure 4: Analysis of FDCP Members' Postcards Survey



Recommendations

Recommendations include:

- Targeted Rollout: Continue the tailored approach, address gaps in representation, and explore solutions for rural areas.
- Food Supply: Develop central storage solutions and explore local wholesale options.
- Network Consolidation: Enhance communication, hold annual events, and support promotional activities.
- Staff Development: Assess training needs, implement mentoring, and foster collaboration.
- Sustainability: Secure funding, build local relationships, and explore charitable status.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Improve data management, gather qualitative evidence, and assess impacts on food bank usage.

These recommendations are designed to refine and expand the FDCP model, address food supply challenges, strengthen network cohesion, and enhance monitoring and sustainability efforts.

The findings highlight the FDCP's critical role in combating food insecurity and enhancing community well-being, laying a solid foundation for ongoing development and support.

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