



Peacehaven & Newhaven Community Supermarkets

Evaluation Report 2022

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WELCOME TO OUR COMMUNITY SUPERMARKETS!

SCDA operates two community supermarkets (CS) in Newhaven and Peacehaven, East Sussex. They support upwards of 150 households each week to access free and affordable food. The model was developed as an alternative to a foodbank.

The aims of our community supermarkets are to:

- **Ensure that everyone in our community can access high quality, affordable food**
- **Eliminate food waste and reduce our impact on the planet**
- **Empower people to make healthy choices**
- **Bring people together to cook & share food**

Local residents in Newhaven, Peacehaven and Seaford are able to join a CS, and can attend for as long as they would like to. Additionally, three teams of cookery volunteers produce up to 300 portions of food each week, which are offered in the CS and café areas.

CS members have the option to contribute on a pay-as-you-feel basis, meaning that as people's financial position becomes more stable, they are able to pay it forward for those in greater need. Members also benefit from having a choice of food and other essential items, being able to stay for a cup of tea and a chat with others, and the advice and support of specialist signposting volunteers and community navigators.

An evaluation of the community supermarkets at Newhaven and Peacehaven was carried out, using questionnaires and optional interviews to explore CS users' perspectives and experiences.

This evaluation found that users highly value the CS and the support it offers, as well as the work of the volunteers. Both the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent cost-of-living crisis impacted negatively upon users, some of whom required food support for the first time. CS users valued the pay-as-you-feel model, opportunities to socialise, support of volunteers and the fixed price items, in addition to the range of food and household items offered. Nonetheless, challenges were identified. These included restrictions on the amounts of food available. This posed a greater challenge for those who relied more on the CS for their household needs, although most users suggested that the CS was not their sole source of food. Data also suggested that the CS introduced many users to novel foods and dishes, potentially contributing to healthier intakes.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This report was prepared by a team researchers at Kingston and London Metropolitan Universities in partnership with the community food team at SCDA. It is an attempt to capture the perspectives and experiences of CS users at two locations, Peacehaven and Newhaven. The research was conducted between December 2021 and May 2022. The research included three site visits (two to Peacehaven [PH1 and PH2] and one to Newhaven [NH1]), 111 completed CS users' questionnaires, and 25 detailed interviews with CS users. The questionnaire and the main questions asked during the interviews were agreed beforehand with Stef Lake, the food security project manager for the Sussex Community Development Association (SCDA).

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Dr Dee Bhakta is a dietitian and Reader in Health Sciences (Human Nutrition) at London Metropolitan University. Her interests include community and workforce nutrition interventions.

Stef Lake is the community development & health programme manager at SCDA. She chairs Lewes District Food Partnership steering group, and Lewes District Emergency Food Network. Stef specialises in community responses to food insecurity which centre dignity.

Data collection

Data were gathered on two occasions at Peacehaven CS (PH1, 9th of December 2021; and PH 2, 28th of April 2022) and on one occasion at Newhaven (NH1, 16th of May 2022) by a team of researchers from Kingston and London Metropolitan Universities (3 and 1 researchers respectively).

Data tools

Data were gathered using questionnaires administered in person at the supermarkets. Questionnaires were developed with the manager of the CS. Questionnaires included a number of sections, as follows. Demographics data included factors likely to impact on use of the community supermarket such as age, gender, ethnicity, housing and disability status. Questions related to the community supermarket included how long it was used, whether it is a main source of household food. In addition, participants rated their level of agreement with a series of statements about the CS but also related to healthy eating using a five-point Likert rating scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'.

Interviews

Participants were offered optional interviews to more fully discuss their responses. An interview guide was used to ensure consistency and all interviews were audio-recorded with permission for accuracy. Additional contemporaneous notes were taken. Audio recordings were transcribed and basic thematic analysis was carried out to identify key themes. Where quotes are used to demonstrate themes, pseudonyms are used to maintain anonymity. Those who were interviewed received a small token of acknowledgement of their time in the form of an Amazon voucher. In total 25 interviews were conducted.

Sussex Community Development Association (SCDA) is a community development charity aiming to build stronger, healthier, more inclusive communities. We make a difference in our communities by reducing loneliness and social isolation, improving health and wellbeing, and increasing economic stability. SCDA is a multi-purpose locally rooted organisation based in Newhaven. We started our work as Newhaven Community Development Association back in 1997 and have been supporting community regeneration in Newhaven ever since. We have been based at Denton Island Community Centre in Newhaven since 2004, with a dedicated Youth Centre added to the site in 2021. In 2013 we changed our name to Sussex Community Development Association, reflecting our growth and extended reach supporting socially and economically deprived communities across East Sussex. As a community anchor organisation, we work to combine community-led action with social enterprise to bring about long-term social, economic and environmental benefits.

Community Supermarket Demographics

- The majority of CS users at both venues were female and white.
- Almost half considered themselves to have a disability, which may reflect either high levels of need for aid among those with disability or the age groups represented in the sample;¹ it is important to note that several of those without a disability provide caring responsibility for family members with disability.
- All age ranges were represented.
- Over half the sample were either single, separated or widowed.
- A range of housing types were used by participants; 25-44% living in private rented accommodation, 14-30% living in homes owned by themselves or their families; and 17-30% living in accommodation rented from the local authority.
- Between 38-49% had no dependants.

Previous and Current Access to Food Aid Provision

Most CS users had used it before, on a weekly basis. More CS users from Newhaven than Peacehaven used other food support services.

One point that is interesting to note is that most users at Peacehaven and a significant minority of users at Newhaven had never previously used any food support services. This is probably a reflection of the impact the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis had on users' finances and wellbeing. It also points to the fact that both events have affected a much wider section of the population that might have been previously acknowledged.

¹ According to disability charity Scope, and based on 2021 data, 21% of working age adults and 42% of pension age adults had a disability.

1. REASONS FOR USING COMMUNITY SUPERMARKETS

The Covid pandemic and cost-of-living crisis clearly impacted upon the use of the CS, however, those particularly from Peacehaven stated that they would use the CS even without those. In terms of other support offered by the CS, the most frequently used service was advice.

The qualitative data (questionnaires and interviews) points to a wide range of often overlapping reasons for using the community supermarkets. The main reasons stated to us were: financial difficulties, particularly brought about or exacerbated by the pandemic and/or the cost-of-living crisis; changes to benefits and or other support received; rising food and fuel/electricity/heating costs; and adverse changes to physical and mental health. Additionally, in the April/May 2022 data collection period, several users pointed to the importance of food waste as a reason for accessing the community supermarket.

While the reasons for using the CS vary considerably, and are often context-dependent, we suggest three broad categories of members with some overlap.

1. The **first** category includes those who have been on benefits and have used various support services prior to using the CS. Many in this group were either struggling with long-term mental or physical ill health or were taking care of a family member with mental or physical health problems. For members in this group, the reasons behind their long-term struggle with food insecurity are complex and affected many aspects of their lives.

Daisy's Story:

A former skilled professional aged 45–54 years, who has been unemployed and on a variety of different benefits for over seven years. Daisy suffers from serious mental health problems and has a disability that negatively affects her ability to lead a normal life and work. She has been assessed periodically and has been having ongoing discussion with local authorities and the DWP over her situation, ability to work, accommodation, and levels of support. She is currently renting from the local authority.

She told us that she has been struggling prior to the cost-of-living crisis, but that her situation has got a lot worse: *'I can't afford hot water so I can only really afford like one bath a month so if I have in-person appointments I try to make them all at once. I can't, I haven't been able to afford to have the heating on over winter'*



2. The **second** category of members are those who have started to use the CS as a result of a sudden change in their circumstances, brought about through the death of a family member (most often the main breadwinner), a serious physical injury, and the loss of employment. This group could be further broken down into those who required short-term support, often while they waited for their first Universal Credit payment, and those who now needed longer term support.

[Betsy PH2] *'We'd never claimed [before]. I myself am on zero hour contract. [M]y partner was on a good wage but then he lost his job. [H]e found another one quickly but it paid quite significantly less. We've got a mortgage and children. We were down about £500 a month so that's when I started looking into ways to help out financially and ease the pressure a little bit. And then my auntie told me about the community supermarket'*.

[Elise PH2] *'My husband was working [as a driving instructor] but then there were some lockdowns with COVID, so he stopped working for the company and he was going to go back and work for himself, and then he got ill and that was it [he died]. So, before, I was on furlough, I had a job and he had a job so we were alright'*.

3. The **third** category of members does not fit the prevailing notions of those in need of food aid. These are members who are mostly not entitled to receive benefits and who had never previously used support services or needed food aid. This group could be categorised as the just-about-managing, who often comprise of two working adults with children, and who are facing financial difficulties as a result of the cost-of-living crisis. We only encountered this group in the second round of data collection in May 2022.

[Dinah PH2] *'I'm not on any benefit, which I know might seem strange because I use the food bank but we're one of those families who are, you know like you're not entitled to any help but you're at that end where you're not entitled to help but then you're paying for absolutely everything which I want to do and be self-sufficient...I think the scales are going to tip in to a negative because our household income and our outgoings are not, are starting to slightly not balance out, you know like with the cost of food and stuff like that. I'm in a fixed rate with my gas and electricity at the moment but I am aware as soon as I'm out of that fixed rate, things like that could start taking a toll...I was spending about £140 a week on food shopping. Now I would say I'm spending £95 and that's not just because I'm getting that saving purely from the food bank, it's because I'm adapting to doing cheaper meals but still really mindful that they're nutritious'*.

[Louise NH1] *'I worked, my partner worked, we don't get any financial help, I wouldn't be able to access any food banks on basically what we earn combined. But the childcare was increasing, everything was increasing at the time and we had to pay for everything, we don't get any help, we don't get any support so it was becoming quite, the childcare rates were going up so high it was taking my whole wage and it became a source of helping out with the, obviously the one thing I could control was the food shopping and I was buying the cheap ranges everything I could do and it just became sort of helped out keeping the food shop down basically...So it was a sort of, I can't go to a food bank but I could, this was open to everyone and you could pay as you feel for that, and pick and choose a little bit and obviously I was going to find, I was already trying to find places where they give excess food that's got a short date and things like that, there's other places that do that just to try and, yeah...*

2. HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM A FOOD BANK?

In the questionnaires and interviews, those that had used food banks previously, found their experience of the CS by and large better. The main reasons given were the ability to choose; the friendliness of the volunteers at the CS; the fact that referrals were not required and there were no limits on the number of times they could shop; and their ability to limit their food waste.

[John PH1] *'It's much better, isn't it? It's because with the foodbank they choose what you're going to have...this way I can think, what do I need, and only pick up what I need and leave what I don't need'*.

[Helen PH1] *'So it's nice that you can go and have a look and see what's there and just get what you need, rather than have what's all in the bag and then not use it'*.

[Alice PH1] *Food bank experience: 'Horrible. Really humiliating. Yeah, awful! Awful that, I don't know, like I've had benefits stop because I had complicated benefits...Yeah, you'd have a referral, and you could only go -I never used it every week -but you could only go 6 times and then you'd have to go back to your GP or a health visitor and stuff like that, which I don't think is necessarily a, I don't know it's a horrible way'*.

[Daisy PH2] *'For example at one I used to be forced to pray every time I went there you know because I felt obliged. So I'd have to sit there and have my hands held while they prayed with me, it was just ridiculous'*.

[Mary NH1] *'I think [choice] is important, I hate, absolutely hate waste, I don't agree with it, I don't agree with throwing things away that you could eat. And if someone gave you or made you, made that choice for you, you might not be able to eat it and want to eat it'*.

[Francis PH2] *'I was using the food banks but I felt like I was wasting food because there were loads of tins and stuff that I couldn't eat because they'd got black pepper in it and I just thought, "No, I can't do this"'*.

While most members stated their experience of accessing the community supermarket was a positive one and did not involve any embarrassment, this was not shared by all. This is an important point to note because it points to the fact that for some members the notions of stigma and shame remain in the background.

[Joan PH2] *'I tell some close friends and other people I don't, I mean I'm not bothered, it is what it is so I don't mind but no I don't broadcast it'*.

[Lisa PH2] *'I have told two friends but I still would not feel like it's something I would want to broadcast really. I don't know why, like I say there's no shame or stigma at the supermarket but I would still feel a little bit insecure, judged'*.

Expressions of embarrassment and or awkwardness at accessing the CS, and particularly queuing to enter, were particularly evident among the third category of members, who were

mostly not entitled to receive benefits and who had never previously used support services and or needed food aid. Many also expressed a feeling of not deserving help because they were/perceived themselves to be relatively better off than others.

[Ingrid NH1] ‘You know where you feel ashamed to even ask for any help or anything and that I felt really quite, because you’re queuing up outside so everyone can see you, yeah I did find that embarrassing’.

<i>I would prefer not to be seen visiting the community supermarket</i>					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Peacehaven	0 (0.0)	2 (5.4)	6 (16.2)	12 (32.4)	17 (45.9)
Newhaven	0 (0.0)	10 (25.0)	6 (15.0)	14 (35.0)	10 (25.0)



3. THE VALUE OF THE COMMUNITY SUPERMARKET AS AN INNOVATIVE MODEL OF FOOD PROVISION

The Pay-as-you-feel Scheme

The majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the pay-as-you-feel model worked well for them, 67.6% in Peacehaven and 77.5% in Newhaven. As the pay-as-you-feel model offers the opportunity to contribute voluntarily towards accessing the food aid provision, not everyone (especially not first-time members) were aware of how it worked or that they had the opportunity to contribute/pay. Overwhelmingly, however, members found it a good idea. The scheme relaxed their anxiety about not having enough money, or being particularly pressed during certain weeks, they found it 'respectful', 'fair' and 'ethical', as well as, importantly, 'non-judgmental'.

[Alice PH1] *'It's good, yeah. I think it takes away the embarrassment and the shame. So I think it's really helpful'.*

[Ben NH1] *'Oh yes, definitely, because obviously somebody has got to arrange it all and without a doubt, no I couldn't go down there and not put money in the box, that wouldn't be right'.*

An important point to raise here is the explicit wish of many members to contribute towards their use of the CS: they want to be able to pay for their food, albeit often with a symbolic gesture. Some spoke of dignity and, especially male members, the need to be 'providers' in the context of being able to pay something.

[Daisy PH2] *'I really like it, I always donate, I know it sounds silly doing that when I'm so hard up, but it allows me to keep a little bit of pride. Pride is a bad word to use because I'm not a prideful person but it kind of, I don't feel guilty, I don't feel bad'.*

Healthy Eating

One important feature of the community supermarket that came up in the questionnaires and interviews was the relationship between accessing

The highest ranked statement with the greatest level of agreement across all venues was the importance of food choice (92.1% agreement across all venues). This was followed by the role of the CS in helping to reduce food waste (75.6% agreement across all venues), and the pay-as-you-feel model (72.6% agreement across all venues).

The lowest levels of agreement were to the statement 'I am not sure if the meals I eat are healthy' (14.9% average agreement), and 'healthy eating is not a priority for me' (15.8% average agreement across venues). Although there was an average 17.3% agreement across venues with the statement 'If I knew how, I could prepare healthy meals', no participants at any venue strongly agreed with this statement.

Trying new foods:

Being able to choose the foods to eat was clearly important, with 94.1%, 94.6% and 87.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing in Peacehaven I, II and Newhaven respectively.

In the context of healthy eating, it stood out that the CS provision was central in providing the opportunity for members to try new foods and expand their culinary horizons. This applied both to experienced cooks and those who possessed little or no skill in preparing their own food:

[Alex PH1] *'There's foods there that I thought I would never try before and lo and behold it's come out as tasting and liking some of this stuff'.*

[John PH1] *'I never would have thought about eating pumpkin, you know. And they put some different things in the salad like that quinoa and peas and all that kind of stuff, and it's actually alright, the salads are nice'.*

[Betsy PH2] *'[T]hey do frozen meals, as you leave the building you can choose to pick I think maybe two frozen meals and yeah, there's a couple of things that I've never really thought to do before. [T]hey're pretty much all veggie and vegan meals and some of them I've never thought to try and they've been quite nice so yeah, I guess it's introduced me to some new foods in that way'.*

[Kim PH2] *'I've had a couple of recipes from there which have been quite interesting. One week there was a parsnip cake. Now I've never made a parsnip cake but it was delicious so of course you can get the recipe from them, so that's quite interesting'.*



[Daisy PH2] *'Yeah, oh yeah definitely, I mean it's, there's things that I'm eating now that I could not afford in a million years, healthy things and I've learned to eat new things as well'.*

[Francis PH1] *'I mean there's loads of different fruits and things, I'd never tried a mango before in my life...I'm probably, because I've spent so many years avoiding different things that I don't know what it is because of the allergies, going to the food bank, the supermarket, means I can actually maybe try something that I wouldn't have tried before'.*

Subsidised fixed-price products

While most of the food offered at the community supermarkets is on a pay-as-you-feel basis. The service also offers subsidised eggs (a box of six) and milk (a litre of UHT) for 50p per item. Most of the users were very happy with the scheme for paying for eggs and milk. The one concern raised was the limit on how many cartons of eggs and pints of milk could be purchased, due to the limited number of items available.

[Francis PH2] *'I always get my eggs, I definitely get my eggs but it depends on the tops, this sounds really stupid but my dexterity is not so brilliant so unless it's got one of those twist caps on the top of the milk carton, I can't open the milk!'*

[Iris NH1] *'I really like how they do milk because I actually drink a lot of milk, I think it's milk what's keeping me going and it is really brilliant that I can buy my milk down there'*.

[Lara NH1] *'They buy it and then you could have like 12 eggs for 50p or the cartons of milk you could buy for like 50p. Well that's really handy for me because I would buy, because if my kids are hungry they have a bowl of cereal so I always used to get like four or six cartons of the milk and now today, well you can only have one carton of milk and one packet of eggs. And I was like, "Well last week I had six cartons of milk", you know what I mean?'*

Social element:

A central feature of the community supermarket provision is the opportunity to sit down for a cup of tea or coffee and socialise with fellow members and the volunteers. While some members were too busy to take advantage of this feature (especially mothers with children), overwhelmingly they expressed enormous satisfaction with it. To our surprise, in the questionnaires, members expressed similar support for the social aspect at both locations. We expected members at Peacehaven to rate this feature higher. In the interview this is exactly what we found. Members at Peacehaven spoke more and more positively about the social aspect.

[Alex PH1] *'I stay there for a coffee and a cake and a chinwag with people'*.

[Judy PH1] *'You can sit down, you can chat to the people. It's a really lovely place even to get that bit of socialisation out of it as well'*.

[Nancy Ph1] *'The people and the way that it was set up. You can sit and have a coffee and stuff because it's quite nice, it's not like everyone going round and like just being grumpy and stuff, if you know what I mean'*.

[Elise PH2] *'I think it's really nice, everyone's very pleasant and the people there are nice and the staff that work there are all very lovely and pleasant and you can have a cup of tea and a cake and it's sociable and no, it's all lovely really'*.

[Kim PH2] *'Well of course right from the beginning, down where I met you, they offered a cup of tea and whatnot, so of course this for us was a huge incentive because it meant we could sit and socialise. I mean the shopping is a bonus but my favourite bit of the whole experience is always the fact that I can socialise. It's brought people together. We've met new people since we've gone there which is nice, you know people that you've never met before, yeah'*.

[Ben NH1] *'I actually look forward to going in there, there's a little bit of a social aspect as well, they offer you coffee and it's, no it's a very, very nice environment, very friendly'*.

People running the CS:

Being staffed by friendly volunteers who were regularly and appropriately briefed to provide the service also stood out as a positive element in the CS provision. The interviews very much corroborate the data on the friendliness of the volunteers and the support they provided at the CS:

[Helen PH1] *'Yes, definitely felt welcomed. And it's nice that you can go in there and have a look around and sit down and have a cup of tea and everything as well'*.

[Judy PH1] *'But they're so lovely, they've got a little café, they give you a cup of coffee'*.



[Daisy PH2] *'She was lovely the lady who helped me, she was really lovely, really kind and she showed really good empathy, she didn't talk down to me or say, "This is what we do and this is how we do it", it was more about me than about them... It's nice, it's friendly, so rather than dreading it, I actually look forward to it now, it's the only thing I've got to look forward to every week'*.

[Dinah PH2] *'Hugely, very friendly. Like I say, I was worried about going and being sort of looked at and I was a bit like, "Oh my god", like I made sure I wore my face mask, I felt so embarrassed walking in there but you don't need to'*.

[Ben NH1] *'I just can't believe how friendly they are'*.

[Ingrid NH1] *'The people there are lovely, absolutely lovely, they can't do enough for you, they are the sweetest people I know'*.

Accessing additional services

When asked, long term users of the CS were aware of the various support services provided, particularly at Newhaven, given the relevance of the SCDA to other services. It is interesting to note that a sizeable minority either did not use any of the support services or were not aware of them. Nevertheless, those who had used the various support services provided, at Peacehaven and Newhaven, were very complimentary. They pointed to the support provided, such as cookery classes, recipe cards, and support accessing services and benefits, as well as *ad hoc* support, such as school uniforms.

[Alex PH1] *'They've helped us with monetary things like grants and other things that I never knew were there or existed, like... the electric, heating, housing heating grant'.*

[Kim PH2] *[has used advice services before] 'It's very useful to know that if you've got a problem with anything, there's normally one of their representatives there that even if they can't help you, they can signpost you'.*

[Nathan NH1] *'Well there are people there from the SCDA who came and explained this side to me also when I started using it and made me aware of their other services'.*

[Ingrid NH1] *'They've helped me out a few times with council tax and things like that and put me in touch with people, they've been brilliant...And with debt you know and we'd sit down, we'd go through it all and they've been brilliant like that, absolutely brilliant'.*

[John PH1] *'Sometimes they've got the school uniform and shoes and stuff like PE stuff, and that's really helpful as well'.*

[Ben NH1] *'The cooking lessons, they have that, they had a plant based cookery course which was a couple of hours one afternoon, things like that it's absolutely fantastic...they also had some recipe sheets there which I found very useful and did that'.*

[Kim PH2] *'It's very useful to know that if you've got a problem with anything, there's normally one of their representatives there that even if they can't help you, they can signpost you. I have asked about my son with mental health, and [my husband with onset of dementia] has asked about a few things'.*

[Ben NH1] *'Now and again they've been doing packages of food like a menu, like a HelloFresh menu where they give you all the ingredients and the instructions on how to cook it and everything is in the bag and I thought that's absolutely brilliant..., that they often have various things going on in the community there, the cooking lessons, they have that, they had a plant based cookery course which was a couple of hours one afternoon, things like that it's absolutely fantastic...they also had some recipe sheets there which I found very useful and did that'.*



4. CONCERNS & FRUSTRATIONS RAISED BY MEMBERS

The concerns and frustrations most mentioned by users boil down to three key issues:

- How the CS has changed over time
- Not being able to get what they required
- The sense that there were different levels of provisions at different times of the day.

At both locations members mentioned how often the shopping can be a bit of a **hit and miss** experience, particularly when they were unable to get basic food items or there was limited general availability of food.

Another issue that came up at both locations, but particularly at Newhaven, was the issue of **timing**. Some members felt that there were different levels of provision depending on the time they shopped. This was a particular issue for those who could not or preferred not to queue early in the day. It could also be a reflection of the fact that members queuing at Newhaven are not able to see what is going inside, as members could at Peacehaven.

While the issue of timing and the availability of certain items was the main concern for many, for some, particularly those less reliant on the CS for their essential items, these were less of an issue.

Coping for people with mental health issues and anxiety about choice and communication

There is no doubt that the community supermarket has made a special effort to accommodate people with mental health issues and social anxiety in particular, by dedicating a slot for them especially. This is often appreciated by members who can easily be overwhelmed by choice or the need to discuss their selection:

[Kim PH2] *'And this is how I'm finding that supermarket, where I met you, it's so much easier because it's not this massive space with shelves and shelves and shelves'*.

[Ingrid NH1] *'I haven't got that now but at the time it was like to me it was like, "Oh my god, standing in the queue, everyone can see me", I can't provide for my family, I've got to come here to get something to help us...No, because I still felt very self-conscious. Yes, because I had mental health problems a while back and I had a breakdown and I'm all better now but..'*

Nevertheless, it did transpire that some members still struggle with some aspects of the set-up or experience in the CS. This is particularly the case at Newhaven.

5. SHOPPING ELSEWHERE

How much of their weekly shop members receive from the community supermarket is important both in terms of evaluating the demand for food aid provision but also in terms of tailoring the provision of the CS, given the limited food supply. Almost all CS users at both locations also used other supermarkets, and which ones they used depended on what was available to them but included a range of lower cost supermarkets (e.g. Iceland, Aldi, Lidl). Almost a third of CS users at both locations got about half of the household food from the CS, while almost half of those in Newhaven and almost a third at Peacehaven used the CS for the basics. Twice as many of those without compared to with disability used the supermarket for the basics (50 vs. 25% respectively); by contrast, a greater proportion of those with disability used the CS for most or half of their household food.

Overall, the interview data corroborates the finding that for most members, the community supermarket is used for either the basics or around half of their household food needs. The only exception here seems to come from the third category of members where some used the community supermarket mainly for essentials and/ or in addition to their usual weekly shop.

[Betsy PH2] *'I do still have to go to a supermarket as well, there's no way I could get enough there to feed our family of six. We've got four children and one of my daughters has celiac disease so I have to specifically go and buy gluten free produce for her as well which is one of the things that was sending our food bills sky rocketing and that we were struggling with because being gluten free is very expensive'.*

[Dinah PH2] *'I'll see what I get from there and then when I get home I'll unpack that and be right, "Now I'm going to the actual supermarket to buy a bit of meat or some fresh fridge food" and that sort of thing and work out, actually I work around what I've got from the community supermarket but I never need eggs, cereal, potatoes, carrots, fresh veg because I will use what's on offer that week and work around that'.*

[Nathan NH1] *'It gives me some of the bare essentials. Obviously personally I can't live from this alone...and I'd shop at Lidl which is about the cheapest. I would say about 25% is from, 25 to 30% is from SCDA and the rest is from the normal supermarket'.*

[Louise NH1] *'That's okay, obviously I'm not sort of, it's not my only source of food, so it wouldn't, I would, it essentially helps whatever I get there I can save on the shopping bill and it'll just be that bit, yes, it just helps out'.*

It is important to note, however, that for some, in particular the first and second category of members (long-term users; and those who have suffered a sudden change in circumstances), it is either their main or an essential source of their weekly food.

[Elise PH2] *'I still have to get some stuff outside obviously but yeah, it really, it does help me a lot. But I think if I didn't go there, we'd go without a lot to tell you the truth, we'd just go without and that's it because that's the way it is'.*

6. SUMMARY

Overall, members were very positive about their experience of using and accessing the community supermarket.

The most important features of the CS in both locations were:

- The friendly atmosphere
- The pay-as-you-feel model
- The availability of fresh foods
- Being able to choose foods

In addition, those at Peacehaven rated the wide range of foods available highly, while those in Newhaven rated the ease of reaching the location highly.

The importance of features of the community supermarket, by location

	<i>Peacehaven</i>	<i>Newhaven</i>
Wide range of foods available	8	12
Availability of fresh foods (e.g. salads, fruit, vegetables)	8	18
Availability of meals (e.g. frozen meals, soups)	5	16
Being able to choose for myself	9	19
The friendly atmosphere	10	19
Being able to sit and have a chat	6	14
Availability of non-food items (e.g. toiletries, household items)	4	14
The location is easy to get to	7	15
Being able to pay a bit when I can	10	18
Additional services (e.g. financial, recipes)	2	9
Other	2	3

'All of the people that work there are really nice...they remember your name, they say, 'Hi, John how are you? How's your little girl doing? I like coming here because they're all nice to me, 'Do you want a cup of coffee?' And it's like you're going to see friends rather than, you know, they really want you to take things and they're really helpful...It's brilliant really, honestly, they do a fantastic job up there, I really do rely on it, so I'm just so grateful for it, you can write that down, yeah'.

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