

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

6 MONTHLY PROGRAMME REPORT

April to September 2024



INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period April to September 2024 and is intended to reflect on progress against some of the KPIs established with project partners and organisations.

BACKGROUND

The Fair Shares Community Empowerment Programme is part of the City's system-wide approach to tackling Health Inequalities through addressing the wider social determinants of health. Funded predominantly through the Devon Integrated Care Board's Fair Shares Fund to a value of £800k per year and administered through the Local Care Partnership, with match funding from a variety of sources. The programme aims to target additional funding to populations (defined by demographic or geographic characteristics) in which have historically been under-invested, consistent with the broader transition towards Population Management in the Integrated Care Strategy.

It is delivered through a programme of community and VCSE led health and wellbeing initiatives. with a view to building capacity for community approaches to health prevention initiatives within local neighbourhoods where there are higher deprivation levels, with the long-term aim to reduce health inequalities and pressure on primary and social care.

An underpinning logic model was established by September 2022, with the following outcomes:

Proximal Outcomes	Distal Outcomes
People feel: ➤ More willing to share skills and knowledge ➤ More willing to volunteer/serve community ➤ They belong in the community ➤ They have made friends in the community ➤ Awareness of community resources ➤ Diversity of engagement reflects population (ethnicity, identity, etc.)	Improved sense of community pride and resilience
People feel: ➤ They got the right support for an acute problem ➤ Less isolated/ more connected to community ➤ More active ➤ More confident in their skills	Improved mental health and well-being for individuals

These outcomes drive the development of the programmes and influence the KPIs we collect as one part of our evidence gathering.

As well as quantitative data in the form of numbers and demographics of people engaged we also collect qualitative data including case studies, quotes and photographs, the highlights of which are included in this report.

The current phase of investment is focused on the following areas:

- Wellbeing Hubs and VCSE capacity building (Section 1 in report)
- Individual Resilience: Income Maximisation and Food security (Section 2 in report)
- Community Builder programme (Reported in a separate report)

I. WELLBEING HUBS AND VCSE CAPACITY BUILDING

I.1 Wellbeing Hubs

This report offers a snapshot of our ongoing efforts as the development of the Wellbeing Hubs across the city builds momentum. A more comprehensive analysis, including a detailed evaluation of the impact of the hubs, will be provided in an end-of-year report. This will allow us to present a clearer picture of the hubs' effectiveness and community outcomes.

Wellbeing Hubs: A key component in a whole systems approach

The Wellbeing Hubs are an important part of Thrive Plymouth's strategy to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities in the city. Plymouth's Wellbeing Hub Network began with the Jan Cutting Healthy Living Centre in 2018 and has expanded steadily over the last few years. By March 2025, there will be 11 Wellbeing Hubs supporting communities across Plymouth by 2025. Three of our Wellbeing Hubs are also Family Hubs and we are using this partnership to develop an enhanced offer across the network.

Wellbeing Hubs play a vital role in ensuring equitable access to sustainable health and wellbeing resources across the city. The hubs operate at a neighbourhood level to provide integrated, community-focused services that improve the health and wellbeing of local residents. Guided by a city-wide strategic vision, the hubs tackle health inequalities by building strength and resilience, while curating bespoke provisions that flexibly respond to local needs. The Wellbeing Hubs are community-run by the VCSE, enhancing the community's experience of care, fostering a greater sense of belonging, and leveraging additional resources to ensure both quality and sustainability of their services.



Wellbeing Hubs: Promoting Health through Primary and Secondary Prevention

Wellbeing hubs play a vital role in both primary and secondary prevention. At the primary level, they help reduce health risks across the community by offering advice, education, and support for positive lifestyle changes, such as healthy eating and physical activity. At the secondary level, the hubs provide access to screening services and healthcare professionals through initiatives like One You Plymouth, which focuses on managing lifestyle factors that increase the risk of diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and other conditions. By doing so, they work to prevent strokes, dementia, disability, and frailty, improving long-term health outcomes.

The work of the Plymouth Wellbeing Hub network closely aligns with the NHS **Core20PLUS5** initiative, which focuses on reducing health inequalities and improving access to care for the most disadvantaged populations. Here's how the Wellbeing Hubs' approach connects with **Core20PLUS5**:

1 **Core20: Addressing Health Inequalities in the Most Deprived 20%**

The Wellbeing Hubs aim to provide **equitable access** to health and wellbeing resources by targeting the most vulnerable and underserved communities in Plymouth. By operating at a **neighbourhood level**, they ensure that those living in deprived areas receive the support and care they need, directly addressing the Core20 element of the NHS initiative.

2 **PLUS: Extending to Groups Beyond Deprivation**

In addition to targeting deprived populations, the hubs take a **flexible and community-centred approach** to meet the needs of specific groups at greater risk of poor health outcomes, including those facing **social isolation, mental health challenges, or barriers to healthcare access**. The Wellbeing Hubs curate services for groups that fall outside the deprivation scope but still experience significant health inequalities, such as older adults, carers, and people with long-term conditions.

3 **5: Prioritising Key Health and Wellbeing Areas**

The NHS **Core20PLUS5** initiative focuses on improving outcomes in five specific clinical areas: **maternity, severe mental illness, chronic respiratory disease, cancer, and hypertension**. The Wellbeing Hubs' activities link to this focus by offering services such as:

- **Mental health support** through partnerships with organisations such as Devon Mind to provide counselling services and drop-in sessions.
- **Chronic disease prevention** through NHS Health Checks and awareness programs for conditions like diabetes and hypertension.
- **Maternity support** through midwife appointments and perinatal support services.
- **Cancer support** through dedicated support groups, offering a non-clinical, safe space for people affected by cancer.
- **Social prescribing and lifestyle support**, addressing both physical and mental health through integrated community services, fostering long-term resilience.

By aligning with these priority areas and working collaboratively with healthcare partners, the Wellbeing Hubs contribute to the NHS's goal of reducing health inequalities and improving the health and wellbeing of the most disadvantaged populations.

Over the last two quarters wellbeing hubs have supported the community in the following areas:

Health and Wellbeing activities, some examples are:

- Physical activities
- Support for conditions such as long-term health conditions, diabetes
- Mental health support

Providing information, advice and guidance through the following:

- Advice regarding income maximization and benefits
- Family and parenting support

Supported economic development through:

- Training courses
- Volunteering programmes
- Employment related support supported by DWP

Wellbeing hubs have established relationships with several organisations, many of which are co-located or provide a pop-up service so that communities can access specialist support when they need it.

Some examples are:

- Plymouth Energy community
- Livewell Southwest
- Citizens Advice
- Southwest Water
- Food is fun
- Macmillan
- NHS health checks
- PCC Housing drop in

Some of the highlights from across the hub network

Telephone Befriending Service at the Age UK wellbeing hub:

The Telephone Befriending Service facilitated **302 calls** in the last quarter, providing essential support to **44 individuals** who experience loneliness or isolation. Volunteers played a significant role in this service, offering companionship and emotional support to older adults.

Women's health support at the Jan Cutting Healthy living centre:

70 places at each session – the places were fully booked within the first couple of days – clearly demonstrating the need for this offer. Dr Jarvis delivered the medical knowledge through her personal experience, which was also complimented by guest speakers offering advice on nutrition, exercise and lifestyle choices.

My Health, My Way workshop at the Mannamead Wellbeing Hub:

Between April and July, the Mannamead Wellbeing Hub has engaged with **202** service users with long-term health conditions. This includes **65 new** referrals to the service, attendance at the four-week **My Health, My Way** workshop, supporting members of a small volunteer team who are themselves living with long-term health conditions and by providing post-course workshop support to a growing number of follow-on group members to help embed all the topics and discussions previously covered during the workshop.

Case Study

LH – joined our community gym with anxiety and depression. These gym sessions were the only time she left the house. Alongside the physical activity programme, she started working with Nicki who linked her volunteering at the compassionate café, with her confidence growing she expressed that she felt ready to explore how to get into employment. Nicki linked her to Julie in our Healthy Futures employability hub. She expressed to our colleague Julie that it was her dream to work in retail. Julie supported her with confidence building, job search, applications, interview LW has now been successful in gaining employment at Aldi.

Quote in reference to the 'Health, My Way' workshop run at the Mannamead Wellbeing Hub:

"Very satisfied, excellent engagement and resources used were very well presented. As an 81-year-old, I found it enlightening and most useful to carry forward. I feel very much in control of what health issues befall me and I enjoy what life imparts."

Hubs Network and Programme Lead

The lead organisations for the Wellbeing Hubs meet as a network monthly to support collaboration. In July, a new Programme Lead for the network was recruited. As the number of Hubs and partners grow, the aim of this post is to build the network, fostering collaboration, joint working, consistent impact reporting and ensure seamless signposting and service provision across all hubs, to improve our reach and impact.

Next steps:

Two new Hubs by March 2025

- Devonport Wellbeing Hub – co-locating services from the Wellbeing team at Livewell Southwest
- Efford Wellbeing and Family Hub – a newly refurbished site (previously the Efford Youth Centre)

Annual Report

A more comprehensive analysis, including a detailed evaluation of the impact of the hubs, will be provided in our end-of-year report once we complete this strategic process. This will allow us to present a clearer picture of the hubs' effectiveness and community outcomes.

Development of the network

With the recent addition of a number of new Hubs and the partnership with Family Hubs in the last year, the network is now in the process of reviewing and consolidating our work.

Over the next 6 months, the network will be producing:

- a consistent approach to data collection and evaluating the social impact of the Wellbeing Hubs' work, enabling measurement of service effectiveness and community value.
- a new marketing and business strategy.
- a new website (www.pwhn.org.uk) and expanded social media presence to make it easier for the community and partners to access information and support.

I.2 VCSE Capacity Building

I.2.1 Grassroots Capacity Building – Plymouth Octopus Project

Reporting period ending September 2024¹

Work Streams	Projects	Indicators	Q1	Q2
Wellbeing Hubs, Community Building and Networking	VCSE Capacity Building, Development of Networks, Supporting Community Builder CoP	Number of groups supported	7	11
		Number of hours of 1:1 support	57	59
		Number of support sessions delivered	49	48
		Number of client groups/ organisation attendees at support sessions	35	37
		Network member numbers	537	

Source: [Activity report \(softrapp\)](#) (Plymouth Octopus Project)

Narrative report

Fair Shares is investing £30k per year into Plymouth Octopus Project's (POP) role. POP provides direct support to grassroots organisations via:

- ➔ 1:1 advice and support
- ➔ Training and workshops
- ➔ Network support
- ➔ Funding

1:1 advice and support

Guidance was given on the following issues: Legal structures, constitution, funding and fundraising, business planning, cash-flow support, setting up a bank account, risk assessment, marketing, Social Enterprise, volunteering issues, premises, website development and funding grant searches.

Training AND workshops

7 training workshops were delivered which included:

- ➔ Managing events using Eventbrite
- ➔ Writing a good funding application
- ➔ Introduction to embracing Neurodiversity
- ➔ Moving away from grants
- ➔ Stop going it alone: Creating space as a leader
- ➔ Building a great team: A framework for supervision
- ➔ Winning Contracts and Commissions

WHO ARE THE GRASSROOTS?

Grassroots sit within the bigger picture of the VCSE and can be defined as a visible expression of the change people wish to see in society. Mutual aid groups during covid, voluntary care networks, childcare groups, social enterprise networks, public alliances, community-run food banks, langar (Sikh communal meals), seed swaps, friends of parks groups and others teach us how to organise in ways that we need for the next economy, for interdependence and connection.

POP defines grassroots as under £100,000 turnover. The number of community organisations and groups is very difficult to accurately assess because no register of these organisations exists. But a calculation based on a study carried out in the early nineties by Konrad Elsdon would suggest that with Plymouth's population, there is likely 5,200 organisations with 48,000 participants and the total of intangible and tangible value estimated to be at £46 billion. POP champion the insight, growth, practice and voice of Grassroots so that our approaches can benefit from and uplift their wisdom. In recent years POP have increasingly played a role in system convening (as one actor among others). This has involved cross-sector collaboration and relationship work in which the grassroots have a valued and equal voice. POP hold space for various insights from across sectors (with those of the grassroots as valued peers) to try together to shift ways of working in the city towards significantly improved outcomes.

POP suggests this more hidden section of the sector have the following characteristics:

- ➔ They are less likely to 'other' – the helped are often also the helper.
- ➔ They can be seeds of a bigger movement.
- ➔ From Elsdon's study, learning plays a keen role in the motivation to be involved.

¹ Data reported by POP is by calendar quarter: so reported period Q2 2024 is Fair Shares reporting Q1 2024/25

Grassroots VCSE Network Support

There's a growing recognition, particularly within the statutory sector, that networks can achieve better results. This has led to increased requests from statutory and larger VCSE organizations to connect with existing networks as a means of faster and more efficient linking. At the grassroots level, there's a noticeable increase in willingness to collaborate within networks. This is partly driven by funding requirements that often prioritise collaborative projects for larger grants, as seen in the food aid network.

Several new networks are emerging, both geographically and thematically:

- ➔ Discussions about establishing neighborhood networks are gaining momentum in areas like Greenbank, Mutley, and Southway.
- ➔ Theme-based networks are also forming, such as those focused on men's mental health, walking groups, and support for children and young people with special educational needs.

The presence of even minimal capacity support, such as someone managing basic administrative tasks like note-taking, meeting planning, and advertising, significantly reduces stress on network members. This, in turn, leads to less reliance on volunteer efforts just to maintain the network and helps prevent volunteer burnout. Networks that are not centred around a wellbeing hub appear to have greater success in attracting volunteers to organize and support the network.

However, there's a noted difficulty in effectively explaining the fluid and dynamic nature of networks. As well as this there is still a great need to be aware of network development stages, moving intentionally to more distributed structures:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/10Q8Fi4BIbhJDzKO7YoK_TAAvGRh_7Qkr/view?usp=sharing

Network resources:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kk6NbjgNkWZv7RygbCI_b0-yLuePYpi8?usp=drive_link

Funding

The types of activity funded include:

- ➔ Supporting the Ukrainian Community
- ➔ Community Events
- ➔ Mental Health and Wellbeing
- ➔ Creative Projects and Workshops
- ➔ Environmental Projects
- ➔ Supporting Neurodivergent and LGBTQIA+ Individuals

Examples of organisations supported

Chronic Pain Coaching CIC

POP ideas provided - Funding advice and support via workshops. We support those disabled with chronic pain within Plymouth and surrounding areas. We run pain cafes to connect people, provide peer support and give people skills to self manage their chronic pain condition. Each session runs for 2 hours and involves small groups of up to 15 people who are supported by one or more pain coaches.

Case Study:

NeuDice CIC and Ethical Activities CIC

POP ideas provided - Workshops and funding advice. Stu is a director of both NeuDice and Ethical Activities, both organisations are CIC's. At NeuDICE, they support neurodivergent people to develop their full business potential and we support businesses to develop neuroinclusive cultures. Ethical Activities CIC offer a range of outdoor adventure activities. Join them for a fun-filled day or session, where you can try your hand at a host of outdoor activities.

POP members under £1k turnover (i.e. completely voluntary). See all members under £100k turnover here: https://www.canva.com/design/DAGUfsDAczo/_KcLkasp7LUiUNENDST44A/view?utm_content=DAGUfsDAczo&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=editor

1.2.2 Volunteer Programme

Run by the Community Empowerment team, the Volunteer Programme consists of:

- Delivery of the Good neighbour support volunteer, Community digital volunteer schemes and the Ocean city event volunteer program
- Development and support of additional Council Volunteering opportunities
- Citywide promotion of volunteering and supporting training, development and best practice.

Good Neighbour Support Volunteer Scheme

We have 2 part-time coordinators who recruit and manage a pool of volunteers to provide low level social care support. e.g. shopping, prescription collection and emotional support for people who are clinically or socially vulnerable, who are often socially isolated.

Funded through Adult Social Care, referrals are made through:

- The Discharge to Assess team, a multi-disciplinary team forming part of the “hospital pathway” and supporting better outcomes for people coming out of hospital
- Adult Social Care, who refer people whose 6 weeks of discharge support package with Age UK has ended, yet who need ongoing support
- Plymouth Healthy Futures - Social Prescribing Service.

We are in discussions with The Red Cross, who have a presence at Derriford Hospital to offer short term support to those being discharged to look at how we can continue to support after the existing 72 hours offer.

Between April – September 2024 we received 31 referrals, resulting in 14 new volunteer/resident matches being set up, cumulating in a total of 819 volunteer visits.

We currently support an average of 35 visits per week with a cohort of 35 trained volunteers. Funded until March 2027, the aim is to increase the volunteers to 50 by the end of next year, which we have calculated is the maximum number we can support to ensure adequate safeguarding measures with the current staff levels.



Good Neighbour Volunteer Scheme Case Studies

Jo supporting SC

SC is in her 70s and was referred to us by the ASC Discharge to Assess team, due to food shopping concerns during a period of rehab following a fracture. However she also has various mental health conditions including, we understand, bipolar and agoraphobia and so daily life is a struggle for her and loneliness is a particular problem.

Jo has been visiting SC now for a year and has developed a good relationship of trust with her. We were told this week by SC's elderly sister that she believes that the Good Neighbours team is now the only team supporting her sister and she is full of praise for the volunteer, Jo, describing how the visits give her sister something to look forward to each week and that knowing Jo is visiting means that SC does actually get up in the morning, and dressed. She added that, "loneliness is a killer.....and to have someone coming in....it's the company.....someone who will listen, instead of her being on her own....". She says she "cannot believe how wonderful" the volunteers are.

Over the months she's been visiting, Jo, the volunteer, has been encouraging SC to go outside with her to the local shop, for coffee, and even recently, after weeks of encouragement, to go along with Jo to the hairdressers. We understand that SC was delighted at having achieved this.

The sister's call to us this week was prompted by her concern at not having been able to reach SC on the phone recently and wondering what might have happened to her. She told us she had been on the point of contacting the police but then thought to ring us at the Good Neighbour Volunteers Scheme, knowing that Jo would probably have seen SC in the last week. The sister was very much reassured to have our confirmation that all was fine when Jo visited the previous week and that there is someone ie Jo who visits/ checks on her sister every week.

Tracey's visits to PM

PM and his wheelchair bound, blind father for whom he cares, were referred to us about three and a half years ago by ASC to support the pair by shopping for them. Tracey has been visiting them throughout, initially weekly and more recently fortnightly. Tracey had feared she would need to step away from her volunteering due to an escalation in her own family and work commitments but, on talking with PM, it was clear that he preferred to see Tracey fortnightly than to start afresh with someone new, such is the bond of trust which had developed.

Alongside the obvious benefits of getting their shopping and paying bills for them, Tracey provides PM with a sense of being cared for and he enjoys some jovial light conversation each visit, on the doorstep when Tracey returns with the shopping. Tracey has been able to alert us on at least two occasions where she's been seriously concerned for PM's health. On the first occasion she was concerned about ulcers etc on his legs and saw him deteriorating significantly over the course of a few visits, ignoring her pleas that he should go to his GP. We were able to pass on these concerns, in this case to the initial referrer, who was able to escalate matters, resulting in successful treatment by his GP. On the second occasion, PM mentioned to Tracey that he had been without his medication for three months and she noticed him having difficulty with his breathing. Again, she was able to escalate her concerns, whereupon ASC discovered that PM had missed successive review appointments, hence the medication had been stopped, all of which was subsequently resolved.

Community Digital Volunteer Scheme – 15 volunteers

Launched in July 2024, we now have a cohort of 15 trained Community Digital Volunteers who offer informal advice, information and support to adults in their local community who either want to get online and learn how to use a computer for the first time or improve their confidence with the basics.

Initially taking referrals from central library and Hamoaze House, it now includes all libraries, Family and Wellbeing Hubs, this was done to support the drive to improve the uptake in free school meals.

In addition, we have two volunteers providing a drop-in service at Plymstock library. To date we have only received 7 referrals, however, all have resulted in the volunteer offering support to the resident.

Ocean City Event Volunteer Program – 161 volunteers

As part of the Event Volunteer Team, volunteers will be the first to hear about new exciting volunteering opportunities at events, in PCC and the local community and how they can support them. We have a cohort of 161 volunteers. Between April – September 2024 we placed 68 volunteers, supporting events such as: Firework Championships, Seafest Festival (NMP), Summer Sessions and Armed Forces Day.

Development of Council Volunteering opportunities - 660 volunteers

- 660 volunteers now registered with various PCC departments (including Libraries and The Box, Climate Ambassadors, Nature and Parks, NMP, Cemeteries and Crematoriums, Youth Justice and PIAS).
- New PCC volunteer projects include Bus Users Panel Volunteers and School Appeals Panel Members
- Completion of a PCC Volunteer Managers guide and volunteers' handbook

Citywide promotion of volunteering and supporting training, development and best practice

- Ongoing coordination of a quarterly Plymouth volunteer co-ordinators network – 67 members
- Volunteers Week Celebration Event at The Box in June – 130 attendees where volunteers across the Council were recognised and thanked for their contributions
- Development of an On-Course South West 'Digital Volunteer Passport' – an introduction to volunteering for new volunteers. 3 sessions completed, totalling 25 participants.
[Volunteering Passport — On Course South Wst](#)
- As part of the Ageing Well program a volunteers fair was held at the Box, with 22 organisations and 166 attendees.



2. INDIVIDUAL RESILIENCE

2.1 Income Maximisation

Delivered by Citizens Advice Plymouth, our income maximization programme supports residents with advice and support on benefits and grants, debt management and a range of other issues.

Reporting period ending September 2024

Work Streams	Projects	Indicators	Q1	Q2
Individual Resilience	Income Maximisation	Number of clients supported	122	213
		Financial outcomes for clients (income gain)	£87,900	£520,800
		Hours of live client support provided	54	67
		Return on investment	£2.49	£14.76
		Number of service providers	2	3
		Hours of training provided to service providers	43	83

Source: Public Health Team, Plymouth City Council

Narrative Report

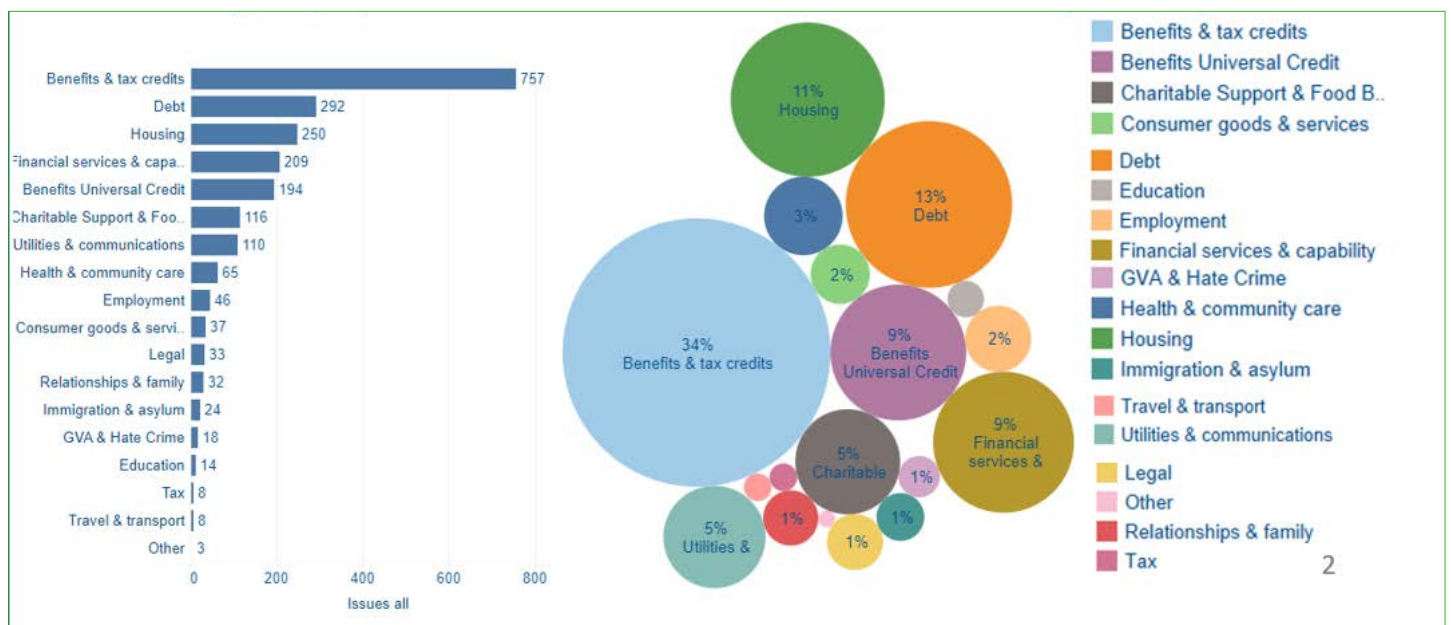
Over the first two quarters of 2024/25 Citizens Advice Plymouth have supported over 300 clients have been supported, with an average income gain of £1,600 per client.

Over 120 hours of live client support has been provided by a small team, and over 120 hours of training provided to volunteers.

There have been over 150 referrals into the service, with the remaining clients referred from other internal teams or picked up from other task lists as they fit the scope of the project. 142 clients have been seen in various communities that CAP work with across the city, via referrals and direct contact at outreach sessions. The number of clients seen organically at outreach has increased over the quarters due to stabilisation of staffing, and improved marketing by Plymouth City Council teams, Wellbeing Hubs and Community Builders.

27 clients have been seen at the Devonport outreach sessions, and 28 at outreach sessions in Estover.

In this scheme year the project has expanded to include work with food co-ops, family hubs and the community connections team at PCC. 143 clients have been supported via these initiatives, the majority (115) via the community connections team.



Visual: Breadth of issues supported with clients in Q2

Demographics

Data was provided on a total of 309 clients who were assisted by the income maximisation project between April and September 2024.

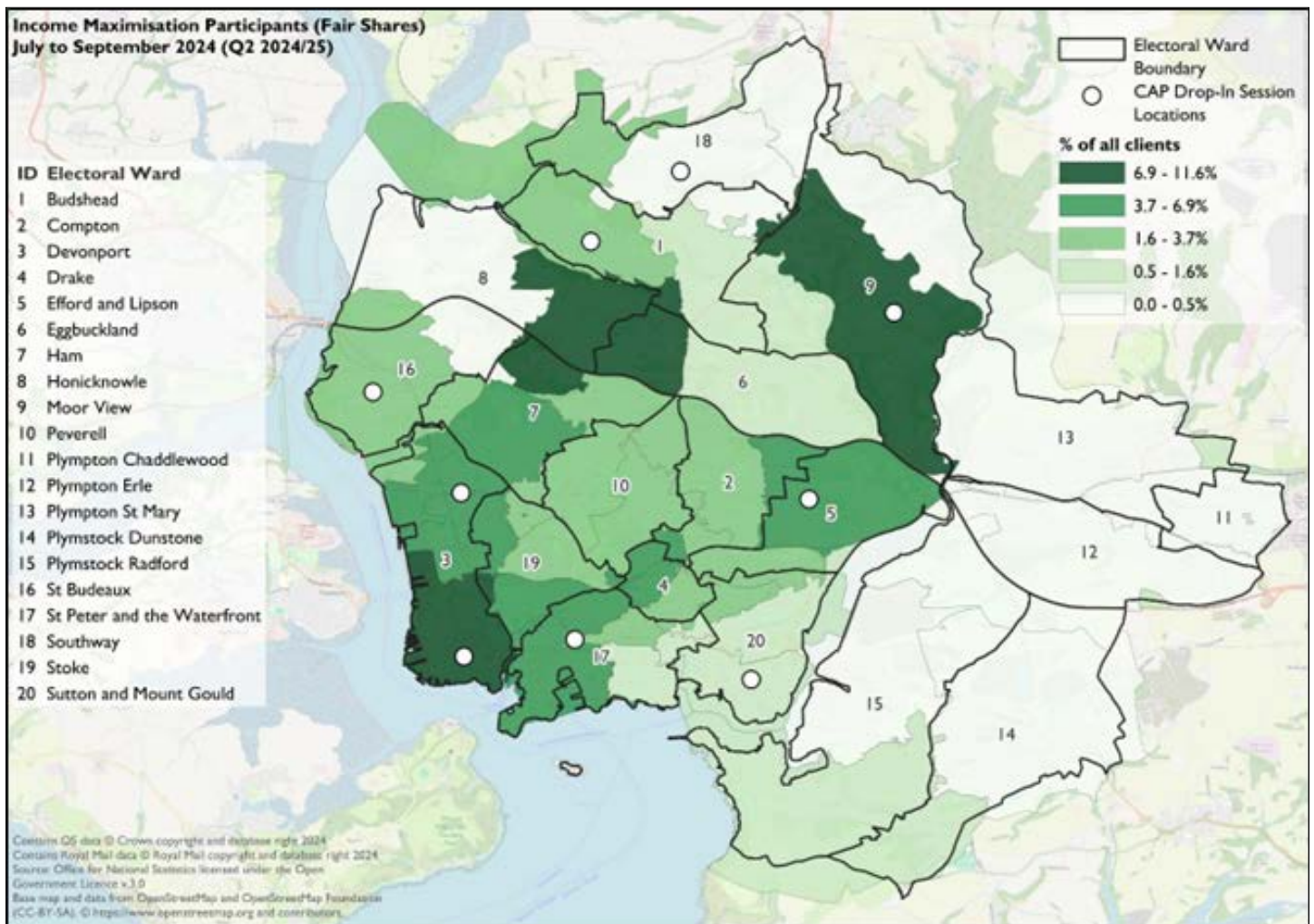
The data shows:

- The majority of participants are female (64%).
- The highest proportion are aged between 35 and 54 years (37%) with the second highest proportion aged between 55 and 64 years.
- The majority of participants identify as 'white' (87%).
- Data on employment status was only collected for a small proportion of participants. The highest proportion of respondents recorded that they were unable to work due to long-term sickness or disability (30%).

The data collected can be compared with the known data for Plymouth residents from the 2021 Census.

This shows:

- A significantly higher proportion of women are participating in the income maximisation project compared with the Plymouth population.
- A significantly higher proportion of participants are aged 25 to 64 years than would be expected from the Plymouth population.
- Although the majority of participants identify as white, the proportion doing so is slightly lower than would be expected from the Plymouth population. A much higher proportion of participants identify as black, black British, Caribbean or African, or Asian or Asian British.



Locations

A small proportion of participants recorded their home postcode sector (e.g. PL1 1). The majority of those participants came from the south and west of the city, as shown on the map below. All locations are approximate.

Income Maximisation Next Steps

We are monitoring the engagement at our outreach sessions to ensure we are reaching people in the places where the need support, identifying where there are gaps in provision.

We will supplement data on the ground with information from the Low Income Families Tracker. Through this we are also exploring opportunities to deliver more targeted work next quarter. This includes a specific project to target households who are identified as eligible for pension credit and not claiming, followed by a campaign to target households who experience poverty although are just outside of the eligibility for pension credit.

Case Study, Income Maximisation

What does the client want: Miss C was referred by a Community Builder for advice about their housing options. Miss C, their partner and 6 children were having to stay with family as they had been made homeless. They are considering private renting but don't know if it's in their budget.

What happened: Our adviser arranged an appointment to explore Miss C's situation. Miss C explained that they had registered with Devon Home Choice approximately 8 years ago however, due to their circumstances, they were now exploring affordability for private rented accommodation. Miss C has some long-term health conditions and 3 of their children have learning disabilities and they provide care for 2 of them but do not claim any benefits for this. Through exploring their situation our adviser Laura identified there were also several debts, totalling £32,596.77 and including 4 priority creditors.

Laura completed a budget with Miss C which indicated a monthly surplus of £1,565.91 after all debt repayments; this is reflective of the fact they are not currently covering housing costs or household bills. Laura was unable to complete a benefit check due to Miss C being a student but they were able to provide advice around health-related benefits that are not means-tested. Miss C's family may be entitled to Child Disability Living Allowance of £ 101.35 weekly, Carer's Allowance of £81.90 weekly and Personal Independence Payments of £72.65 weekly. After providing advice around the application process, Laura signposted Miss C to Improving Lives Plymouth for practical support completing benefit forms. They also provided debt advice around liability and recovery action and signposted Miss C to the Citizens Advice National Debtline for further support with exploring debt options in the future once their situation is more stable.

Laura provided housing advice covering the different options for private rented accommodation, taking into consideration their credit history concerns. They advised Miss C if they needed support in obtaining a guarantor, there were specialist housing organisations who may be able to support with this such as Plymouth Access To Housing. Laura also signposted Miss C to their university's student services for further support with cost of living and funding opportunities.

Client comments/feedback: We invited the client to contact us again if they would like support if/when their circumstances change. Miss C thanked us for our time and indicated they would consider and act on the advice provided.

Outcomes: An annual income gain of £ 12,825.80. Child DLA: £5,270.20 annually, PIP Daily Living: £3,777.80 annually, Carer's Allowance: £4,258.80 annually.

2.2 FOOD RESILIENCE

The food resilience programme of work aligns with the Food Plymouth Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2026 led by Food Plymouth. This delivers delivering against the Sustainable Food Places six-strand framework, including Healthy Food for All: Tackling food poverty, diet related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food, with Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) as a cross-cutting priority.

Areas of work:

Supporting the Sustainable Food Places Gold Standard

Led by Food Plymouth, this is a cross sector, multi-stakeholder approach to improving food systems. Plymouth currently holds Silver and we aim to achieve Gold by December 2026.

More information here: *Introducing Sustainable Food Places -*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zhe857AyD38>

Between April and September 2024, key elements of Sustainable Food Places coordination work included: Local and Regional Networking and engagement:

- 30 participants at the Food Farming and Countryside Commission Food Conversations and Fairtrade 30th Anniversary Celebrations event
- 2 Food Plymouth Partnership and Network meetings (over 20 participants at each) and 5 Devon and Cornwall Peninsula regional food partnership meetings
- Formulating a Food Plymouth food partnership response to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) draft consultation
- Contributing to a national Sustainable Food Places webinar on engagement with candidates in the UK general election
- 7 Food Plymouth e-mail bulletins created and mailed out (~800 mailing list subscribers); Food Plymouth website and social media engagement (Facebook 2,476 followers; Twitter / X 3,542 followers; Instagram 968 followers)
- Support for Co-ops Fortnight 2024 with a dedicated blog post highlighting the work of food co-ops in Plymouth
- NHS procurement meeting with Torbay and South West Devon NHS
- Working with the Diversity Business Incubator (DBI) on the Sustainable Food Places (SFP) Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) programme



Delivery of new local programmes:

Roll out of our new **Best Food Forwards awards scheme** supporting caterers to provide healthy food that is good for people, place and planet at:

<https://foodplymouth.org/best-food-forward-awards-for-caterers/>.

We will report on progress in the next quarter.

Targeting Plymouth Market hospitality outlets, Livewell Southwest workplaces, and care homes, ideally aiming for an initial cohort of 50 in this first phase by the end of the year. One application already in from a Plymouth nursery.

Household Food Security

In line with the Food Plymouth Strategy and Action Plan, the programme takes a three-pronged approach to addressing issues of household food security in the Plymouth Area.

- 1 Alliance/Network:** Moving the network of organisations involved in food support to ensure provision that goes from food aid through to food access and agency
- 2 Collective:** Creation of a collective food buying organisation for the city, enabling bulk-buying, storage and redistribution – working alongside and in co-operation with the FareShare Southwest redistribution charity.
- 3 Connections:** Development of food co-ops and social supermarkets, piloting small scale manufacturing and providing educational workshops within communities.

The Collective and Connections work has been made possible through levering in over £250k additional funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

We also support resilience through a fourth provision:

- 4 Resilience:** Providing educational workshops and courses around food growing, healthy eating and cooking skills.

Using the food ladders model of community food provision, the aim is to build capacity to deliver a range of support across the city. Recognising that people will need different types of support at different times in their lives, this allows for a community response which still provides for crisis, but has the ability to move people through to resilience. This is achieved through capacity building and self-organising, alongside promoting a 'cash first' approach, more dignified food support and providing appropriate wrap-a-round support wherever practicable.



[Introducing Food Ladders: A way of seeing community food provision youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=community-food-provision)

I PFAN Alliance/Network

Updates:

Led by Food Plymouth, the network is transitioning from PFAN (Plymouth Food **Aid** Network) to 'Plymouth Food **Access** Network' - PFAN now has 181 members on the mailing list, including frontline food support providers, support services and wider stakeholders.

Over the past six months the alliance has:

- Worked with 40 frontline food support organisations and six wrap-a-round support service organisations across the city and the surrounding area to develop a more resilient approach to food security.
- Supported services in Plymouth to promote a 'cash first' approach, via continued distribution of the 'Worrying About Money?' leaflet in digital and hard copy form, linking local food banks and other food support providers with Citizens' Advice to promote early advice for those struggling with debt/finance. The leaflet content has been refreshed and 1,000 extra hard copies have printed and distributed during the reporting period.
- Facilitated six monthly PFAN meetings – Four online and two face-to-face averaging around 15 participants (the online meetings being recorded, the recording being shared with the members so that those unable to participate 'live' in the meeting can still stay informed via this 'catch-up' feature)
- Maintained and enhanced the PFAN website and online provision mapping system www.pfan.org.uk; facilitated the PFAN Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/plymouthfoodaid/> which has 944 followers; run the PFAN WhatsApp Group (56 members) providing frontline food support organisations with instant access to offers, opportunities and requests.

Continued collaboration with food support groups working with vulnerable groups - such as Plymouth Soup Run - to ensure that those for whom a cooperative model approach is not feasible can continue to access vital food.

2 Collective

Led by Four Greens Community Trust, in partnership with Food Plymouth this has involved the creation of a collective food buying organisation for the city, enabling bulk-buying, storage and redistribution.

Over the last 6 months, FGCT and partners have established the Plymouth Food Security Collective CIC (the public-facing name of which is 'The Bridge') to ensure we can bring surplus food into the city for storage. This will create cost efficiencies through bulk-buying and provide storage for smaller community organisations who don't have the space.

- A warehouse has been secured in Burrington Industrial Estate to store ambient food required for any community food providers in the city.
- We have set up a partnership with one of the biggest distributors of surplus food in the UK to supply the warehouse.
- An Operations Manager for the CIC has been employed, overseen by a Board of Directors. The next steps include creation of a volunteer network to help run the warehouse, which is expected to be up and running by the New Year.
- The aim for the Collective is for it to be financially self-sustaining within a year of operating.

3 Connections

Aiming to address cost of living issues and deliver other health and social benefits this area of work connects closely with the Wellbeing Hubs and Community Builders and other community based assets to maximise the health and wellbeing impacts and covers:

- Creation of Food Coops and Social Supermarkets
- Resilience including food education and cooking courses and a social housing supported local veg scheme

Narrative report

Food Coops

Based on the Cooperation Town model Food Co-ops are small neighbourhood buying groups, providing their members with affordable groceries, sourced in bulk and from surplus they are distributed at a very low price. Food co-ops are run on these principles:

- **Open to all** – anyone can be in a Food Co-op (open membership).
- **Run by its members** – everyone has a role in the food co-op.
- **Working in cooperation with others** – food sharing / resource sharing / being respectful of our individual and collective voices.
- **Concern for our community** – understanding what is needed in our community and working together to make a difference. Every Co-op in Plymouth is different.
- **Education and training** – volunteer training / PEC / Citizens advice / Livewell / Food is Fun / Food hygiene training / Adult maths courses.
- **Member economic participation** – we all pay in, and the money raised goes back in towards paying for food (not for profit).
- **Autonomy and Independence** – every Co-op looks different and will be run differently depending on what the members decide.

Managed by Four Greens Community Trust, 7 Food Co-ops have now been established as part of the aim to set up a thriving network of food cooperatives across the city with the Cooperation Town movement. Whilst the Coordinators role is to support with securing a venue and the set-up costs (such as buying food), the aim is for each co-op to be self-sustaining after one year. Each coop has a maximum of 20 members. In order to grow the network Four Greens have had to employ a van driver to collect the food from Fareshare (a surplus food redistribution charity in Plymouth).

Food Coops at:

- Mayflower and St James the Less Coop, Ham
- Southway Family and Wellbeing Hub
- Riverside School, Barne Barton
- The ELM Wellbeing Hub, Estover
- Plymouth University, City Centre
- Cattedown Social Club, East End
- The Beacon, North Prospect

As well as getting food, the members have benefitted from training in maths, food hygiene, nutrition and Working with the community builders in 3 of the 6 areas has made the process of finding members far easier. conflict resolution and are developing social networks and new life skills. We have also provided tickets for families to access local food festivals, trips to farms and foraging courses.

Work streams	Projects	Indicators	Q1	Q2
Individual Resilience	Food Coops	Number of participants/additional participants	100	140
		Number of food coops established	5	7
		Number of volunteers	100	140
		Hours of volunteering provided	1-2 hours pp pw	1 hour pp pw

Southway – The members have agreed to set up a Christmas savings scheme where everybody contributes a weekly amount. There are periodic payments and in September all members got their first payout of an £80 gift voucher for a supermarket that they chose as a group.

Phil, our food co-op delivery driver is a great member of the team, he works so well with our partners at Fareshare and each co-op ... all members like Phil and the feedback has been great. He's a real success story as he was a volunteer looking to get back into paid work when we met, he's worked on his mental health and taken all feedback onboard.

Kelly Fritzsche - Cooperative Food Project Manager

The network of co-ops is now enabling us to do food sharing on a larger scale. For the first time in September we did joint buying between 6 of the co-ops to bulk buy pallets of non-food (cleaning products and toiletries) and it worked so well.

The introduction of the food transport truck has been a critical enabler for the coops and supermarkets. We are pleased to have been able to employ a local resident who was originally a volunteer and visitor to Four Greens, who, with training and support has now been able to move into a valued paid role within the team.

Moving forward, to progress to more sustainable models of funding, with the support of Cooperation Town we are investigating the option of setting up a CIC which would support the existing network as well as the delivery of future Coops.

Social Supermarkets

Whilst social supermarkets have been trialled across the UK for a while, Plymouth's first Social Supermarket opened for trial in Four Greens in August of this year.

Social supermarkets provide surplus food to members at a reduced price. They aim to subsidise a weekly shop, relieving pressure of the cost of food for local people. They also provide wrap around support such as access to energy and debt advice and courses. They can have up to 100 members who can buy a limited number of items for a weekly agreed membership fee. This allows equal food sharing for all members.

Four Greens already have a large number of members without the need for advertising and the retention rate is high. A member of the community who previously accessed the food larder has now been employed by Four Greens to manage the market on the opening days as well as carry out stock control.

We have learnt a lot from this first trial and are using this knowledge to progress our second Social Supermarket at the Millfields Trust building, in the Stonehouse neighbourhood, which is due to open in the New Year.

Mark Rowles, CEO Four Greens Community Trust

Mayflower Co-op Case Study, Ham

This is the longest opened Co-op which enables us to show the longer-term impact of supporting this model. Mayflower Food co-op started in July 2023 working in collaboration with the local church and the local School 20 parents/grandparents and parishioners came together to form this food co-op these 20 people did not know each other; they meet once a week and all pay in £3, they source Fruit and Vegetables from Fareshare the food redistribution charity and go shopping each week buying in bulk to save money, they then share this food equally.

Every member of this Co-op has a role to enable the co-op to run from treasure and co-treasure, buyers to members who work on a rota basis to accept and sort the delivery everything is covered.

Mayflower members over the last 12 months have:

- Attended local free cookery courses together often helping each other out with transport and attending together makes it less daunting
- Attended volunteer days at Fareshare depot packing food for other charities, gaining valuable experience and said I really enjoyed giving back and seeing how this all works I will absolutely come back
- 4 members attended the Adult basic maths skills course together held at the local school. 'I would not have felt confident enough to go on my own, but I really wanted to attend the course I am so pleased we could do this together' feedback from member
- 2 members have passed the level 2 food hygiene course paid for by the Food Co-op
- The members asked the church if they could use the space for longer on the day they meet and sort the shopping, so they now have a space that the members meet and have tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits making this a community coming together, friendships have been made
- Many members have attended the drop in from Citizen's advice and have been able to get help around money maximisation
- In the 12 Months Mayflower has been running 10,590kg of food has been rediverted from landfill to these members.

Feedback from the members:

Being on a pension this really helps me as I struggle a bit –

Chris.

It has helped me make friends, it has helped me in the Kitchen, and it has helped me massively with my shopping bill. You will never know the difference it's made and the confidence it has given me –

Nina.

It's a lovely chance to meet new friends, amongst all the food which is the really helpful part –

Rosalie.

4 Resilience

Complementary to the other approaches and working in conjunction, this area of work provides a range of initiatives to support awareness and skills in growing, cooking and healthy eating.

Grow Share Cook (GSC) /New Home, New You (NHNY)

This project focuses on providing support to people experiencing food insecurity and is match funded by and works in partnership with Plymouth Community Homes' New Home New You scheme.

Participants are referred onto the project through various routes, including Community Builders, Plymouth Community Homes and GP surgeries (Pathfields Primary Care Network).

The PCH Wellbeing Coordinator makes contact with all new NHNY new starters and the Tamar Grow Local Co-Ordinator makes contact with all Grow Share Cook new starters, to have a chat, complete a survey and explore any additional wellbeing areas where support may be required, which helps us target the work effectively.

Tamar Grow Local provide free weekly, seasonal veg bags sourced from local agroecological growers, every fortnight, for a period of 3 months to participants, alongside cookery sessions. These sessions focus on maximising the number of meals from their veg bag, alternative ways of preparing their veg, reducing costs (energy and ingredients), smart shopping, reusing waste ingredients and adding protein whilst bulking out food to go further.

As GSC/NHNY participants are coming up to their 6th veg bag delivery TGL send them a review survey. If the participant is engaged and finding benefit from receiving the veg bags, deliveries are extended or they are transferred onto GSC. For a number of participants where it's been identified that they are in food crisis, we have been able to provide access to free food every week, rather than fortnightly through the Tamar Valley Food Hub customer donations.

In August we trialled a family session at The Beacon in North Prospect, where children could also attend, which proved very popular.

Working with the BAME Community Builder, TGL were also able to host a visit of over 30 refugees at their Farmstart project in Tamar Valley. The visit was subsidised by the TAMARA project that TGL are working on with the rail partnership contributing to the rail fare from Plymouth.

Working with Plymouth University illustration, design and publishing students, we launched a recipe book of favourite participant recipes at Leadworks on July 24. This book has been gifted to 30 participants.

“The session was amazing. Have learnt new ways of using vegetables and how I can re-use as well. All the team members were very knowledgeable and aware of allergies and even made different food for my son. Thank you so, so much for today. We loved it.”

Parent at Family session at The Beacon

“What a wonderful day everybody had with you last Tuesday. I just wanted to thank you for providing such a fantastic opportunity to young people who might not otherwise have a chance to learn about where fruit and veg comes from and how it grows. It was really appreciated by all of the group.”

Mel Rawles, Four Greens Manager

Table: Grow Share Cook in numbers – Apr to Sept 2024

Work streams	Projects	Indicators	Q1	Q2
Individual Resilience	Grow, Share, Cook	Number of participants referred to GSC	34	54
		Number of participants completed an entry form	-	51
		Number of participants currently on the project	-	36
		Number of participants voluntarily left the project	2	5

Food is Fun

Food is Fun CIC provides a range of lengths of cookery courses from demonstrations at events to 4-week courses, flexible according to needs and interests of the groups. Some examples of our work this year to date include:

Working closely with the Food Co-ops, delivering cookery clinics and workshops to teach skills to make best use of the food supplied

- Referring people to our courses from Livewell's Tier 2 and 3 Weight Management courses, who are keen to develop confidence and skills in healthy cooking to support their weight loss journey
- Specific targeted courses at Wellbeing Hubs and Community Centres, including Men's Cookery and Family Sessions at Poole Farm in the summer holidays, working closely with the Community Builders
- Developing new partnerships such as a new 8-week course with Headway Charity which supports people with head injuries (50% match funded by Headway); and a course at Gloucester Court, LiveWest social housing
- Recruiting at various events including the Feel Good Friday run by the NHS at Mount Wise Community Centre

"I suffer from short term memory loss and have the memory of a newt. The sessions have helped me to plan meals and recipe cards are perfect for helping me remember what I need to buy and how to prepare the food."

Headway participant

Table: Food is fun in numbers Apr-Sept 2024

Work streams	Projects	Indicators	Q1	Q2
Individual Resilience	Food is fun	Number of participants	25	69
		Number of sessions delivered	3	9

Men's Cookery Course at Poole Farm

One gentleman had been on a Weight Management cookery workshop (that we deliver as part of **Livewell's Weight Management Programme**), had enjoyed it so much, and was eager to attend a course to improve his skills further. He is considering bariatric surgery due to the fact he doesn't know how to eat well.

The course showed him there are other options than surgery. We are inviting him to attend further courses to embed the cookery skills he is learning in the hope he will decide not to take the surgical route, but to have the confidence and ability to lose weight by eating bet.

"I attended the two days Men's cooking sessions a few weeks ago. What can I say? It was fantastic. The instructor and the volunteers were very helpful and knowledgeable, as well as everyone attending being friendly and welcoming. I went along, thinking I know how to cook, but still learnt so much from the experience. It wasn't just about cooking it is about buying the right food, what to look out for when shopping to get the best deals, how to shop smart and sharing great tips with each other. It was a great way for me to link in with other people and learn from them as well. All men were welcome from all walks of life, it was great hearing their stories and how they have adapted to live with their experiences. To top it off I also came away with a book of recipes that are easy to do at home. I could not recommend more."

Starting in October, we are running a 4-week course in **Mount Wise Community Centre**, a 3-week course in **City College** for young people aged between 14 and 25, who have a variety of special educational needs and disabilities, and a 4-week course in **Barne Barton**.

The successful partnership with Headway will see us continue with monthly workshops to meet the demand.

“Came onto the course via Weight Management and I have to say that this has been the most “helpful element” of the whole course. If you don’t go down the surgery route this is definitely the next best step as it encompasses everything we need.”



Growing Resilience

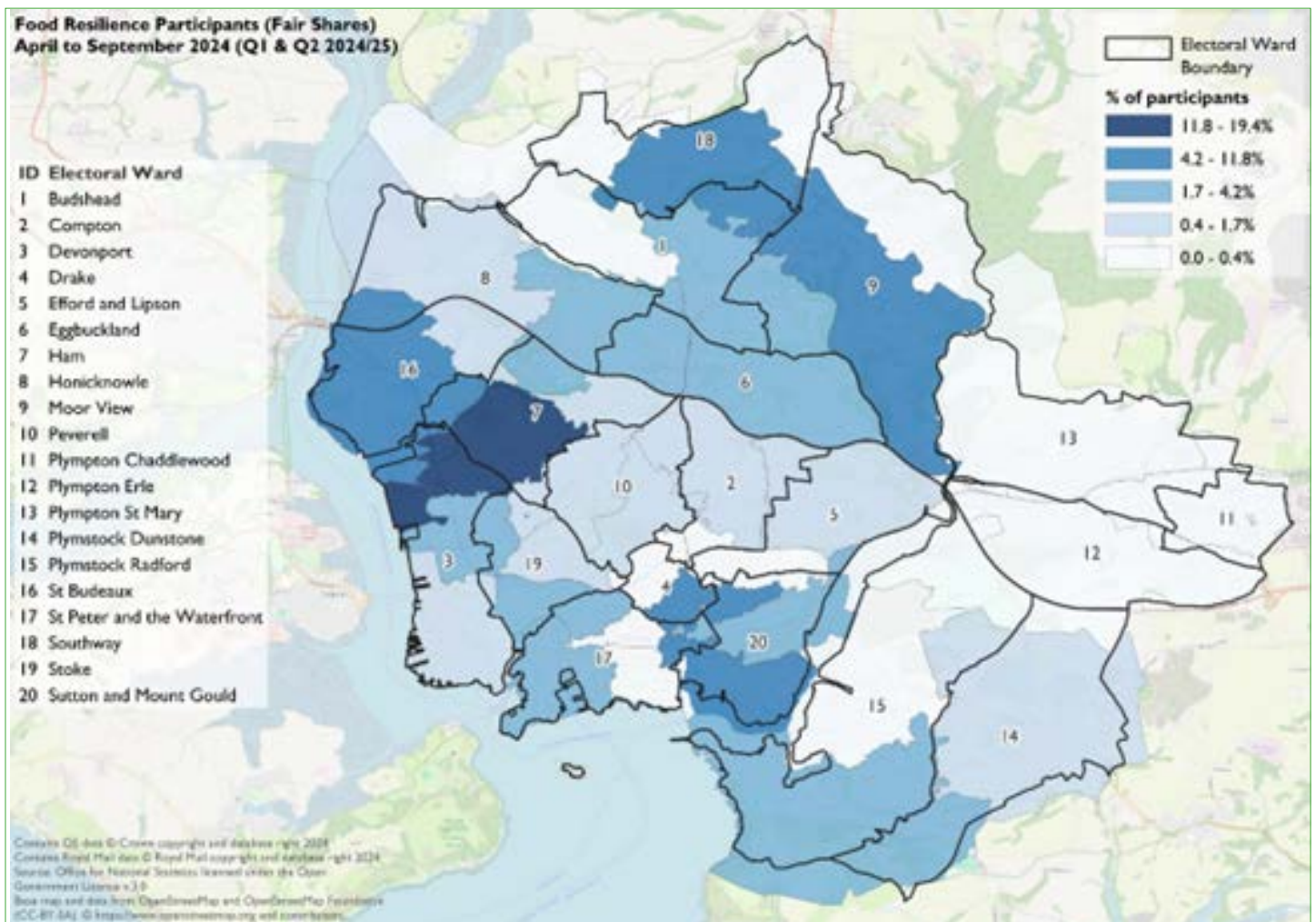
This project provides community events, training and mentoring for local residents and organisations interested in nature and food growing. From April to September, we have had:

- 662 adult and 280 children and young people engagements total (some of which will be with the same people on multiple occasions)
- Delivered activities at 32 public facing community events
- Worked with 31 different organisations**
- Provided 5 x 2 hour mentoring sessions and 5 x 4 hour training sessions
- Provided specific support to the Sustainable Food Places (SFP) Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) initiative including: Facilitating a Blossom Walk with The Womens' Collective (Plymouth Race Equality Council); Three Days of support for the Diversity Business Incubator (DBI) presence at FlavourFest 2024 in Armada Way; support for Plymouth HOPE Festival; and providing an activity for one of the DBI Bazaar at The Box events.

Survey responses completed by course and workshop participants show that the majority of respondents agree that they feel more connected to their community, they are more willing to volunteer, they have more awareness of community resources, and they are more likely to be more active.

Growing Resilience has also developed 'Growing with Nature' through accessing additional funding

Growing with Nature supports a network of 236 members sharing knowledge and exchange around environmental initiatives. This year we have secured match funding from Hubbub / Starbucks to deliver a community led Nature Hub at Zoo Field Central Park with PCC Green Communities Team. It includes community led composting trials to enable us to deliver closed loop system where food compost can be collected through park business contribution and materials waste from Grounds Maintenance, enabling it to go back into the park for use. Next quarter we will carry out similar trial with communities in Keyham Allotments, and Devonport Park.



Monitoring and evaluation

In Q1 and 2 data was provided on a total of **370** participants who either attended events run through the four programmes. A small proportion of participants recorded their home postcode sector (e.g. PL1 1). The majority of those participants came from the west and south of the city, as shown on the map right. All locations are approximate.

The data collected can be compared with the known data for Plymouth residents from the 2021 Census. This shows:

- A significantly higher proportion of women are participating in the food resilience projects compared with the Plymouth population (66%)
- A significantly higher proportion of participants are aged 35 to 74 years than would be expected from the Plymouth population. (34% between 35 and 54)
- Data on employment status was only collected for a small proportion of participants. The highest proportion of respondents recorded that they were retired (37%)
- Although the majority of participants (77%) identify as white, the proportion doing so is lower than would be expected from the Plymouth population. A much higher proportion of participants identify as black, black British, Caribbean or African, or identify as being of mixed or multiple ethnic groups (23%).

Research

Led by Dr Rebecca Carter Dillon (HDRC Researcher in Residence), this is looking at the impact of food-focused initiatives and services in Plymouth, such as food banks, food larders and food clubs, focusing on the perspectives of service users.

Food Coops: We are collating relevant quantitative data, such as the number of people engaging with the food co-ops and social supermarkets and the amount and value of the food saved from going to waste, plus interviews with key stakeholders, and ripple effects mapping to capture the full food co-op journey and wider impact over the last 18 months. A full evaluation will be delivered by March 2025.

'Is Food All We Need': The aim is to capture the voices of communities of identity and potentially marginalized social groups, for example BAME communities and refugee and asylum seekers, young people (16-24 years old), older people (over 60 years old), people with disabilities, people with mental health difficulties, and people from the LGBTQ+ community in Plymouth. It is anticipated that people in these communities are likely to experience additional barriers to food security, and this contributes to health inequalities. Data collection will be compiled in the next six months, with a short English version available in the Autumn and a full academic paper completed in March 2025

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