

Increasing choice of fruit and vegetables in diets of the UK disadvantaged communities through a co-created household voucher scheme



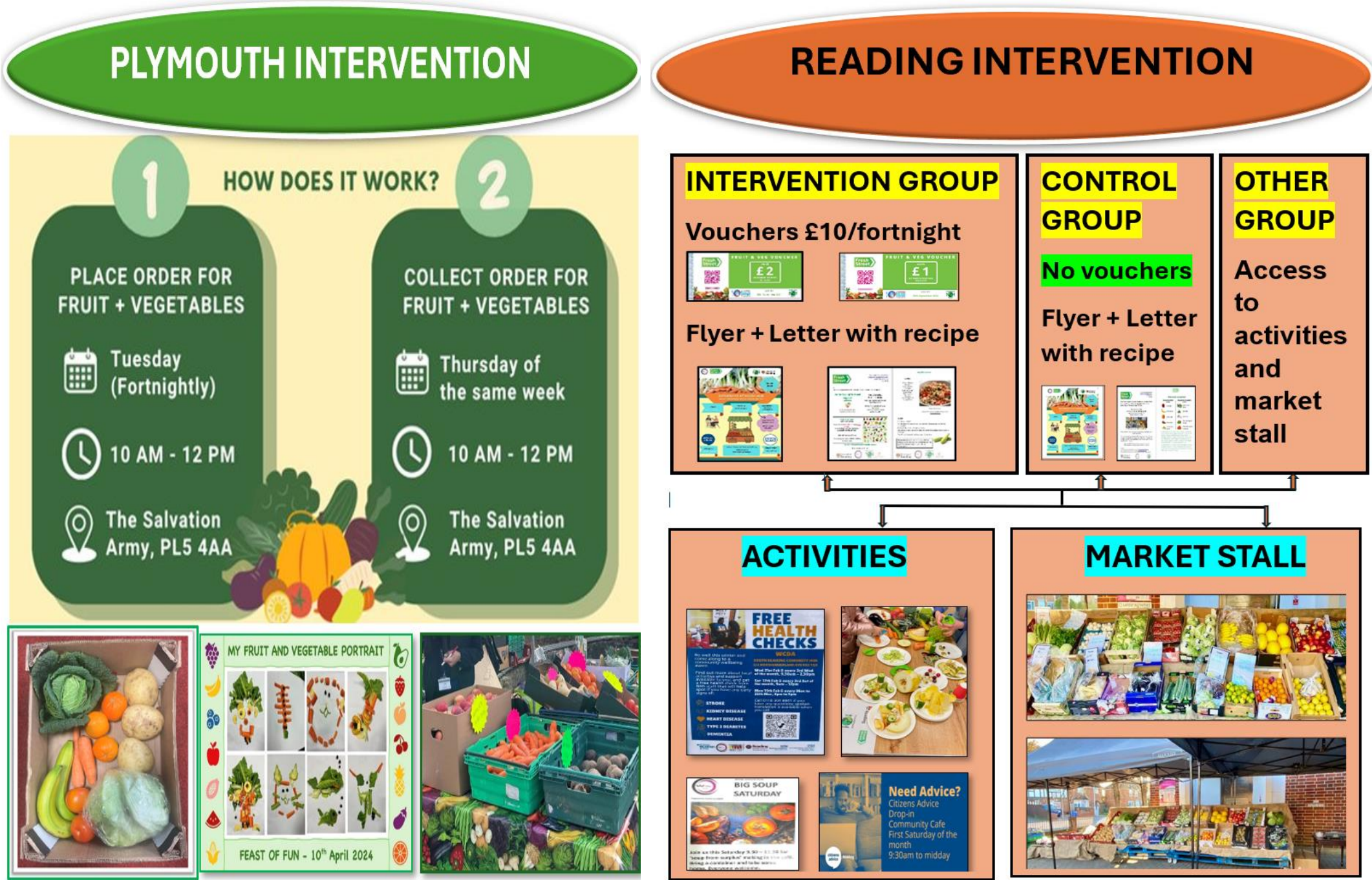
Manik Puranik, Lisa Methven, Clare Relton, Clare Pettinger, Michelle Thomas, Trisha Bennett, Paridhi Garg, Lisa Howard, Jang Pan, Carol Wagstaff

Introduction

Fruit and vegetables (FV) are generally unaffordable, inaccessible or unavailable in disadvantaged communities leading to a higher intake of cheap high-fat, high-sugar low-fibre foods resulting in poorer health¹. A couple of FV schemes currently exist in the UK, however, households need to prove eligibility criteria which can be a barrier and create stigma. This project aims to enable the incorporation of fresh FV into the diets of disadvantaged communities by improving the accessibility, availability, and affordability of fresh FV.

Intervention design

All households received £10 FV vouchers fortnightly (150 households/location). Engagement & support activities were co-developed. Self-reported FV consumption data collected at the start and end (F2F conversations). FV stall & voucher use data collected weekly, with qualitative feedback through informal conversations.



Feedback & Observations

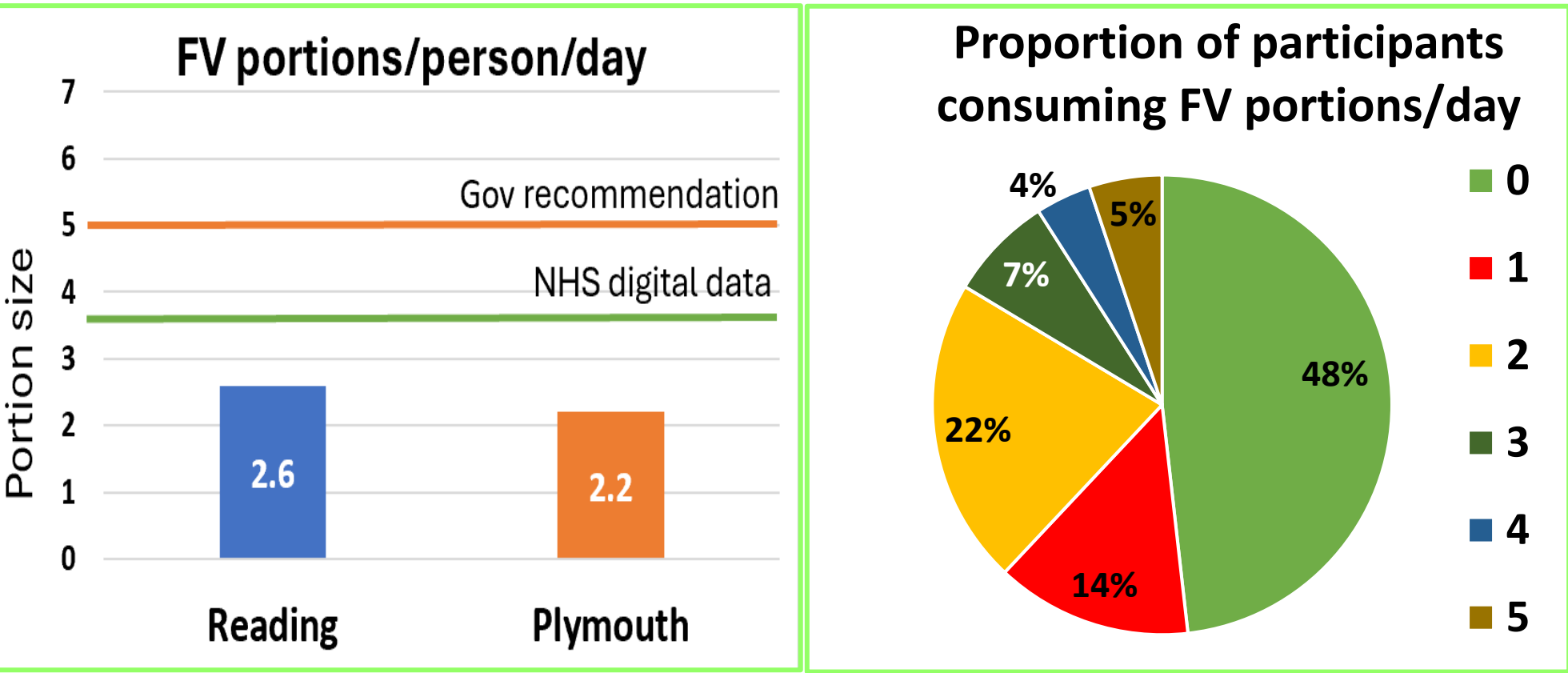
- "I want to get to a point where price comes after my nutrition needs"*
- "This is great and it's on my doorstep, really enjoy the atmosphere"*
- "I will be there every Saturday"*
- ❖ Greater diversity of ethnicities attending the community centre.
 - ❖ People who initially handed back vouchers are now using them.
 - ❖ More exotic veg (mooli, okra) being requested.

Acknowledgements



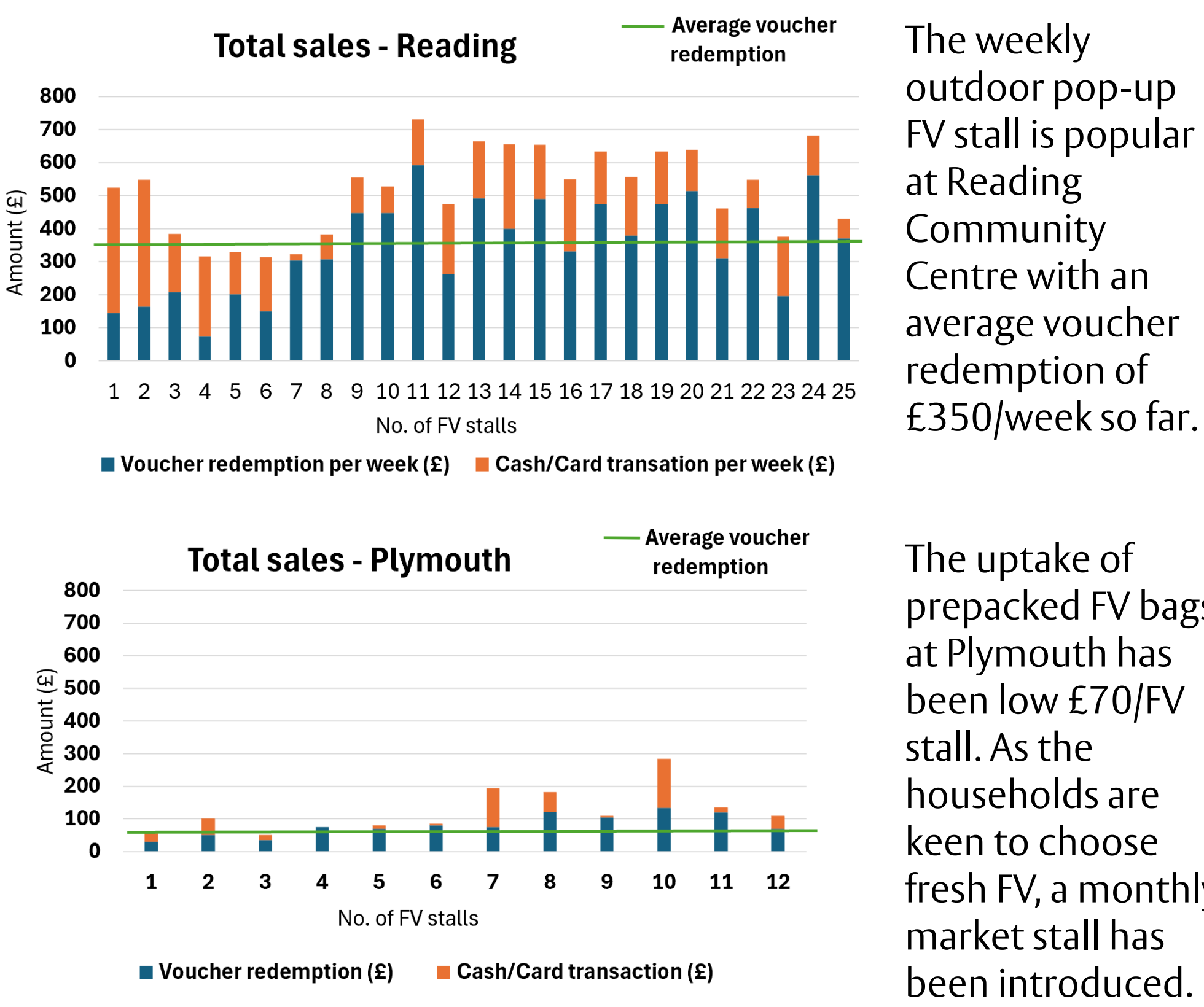
Preliminary results

BASELINE FRUIT AND VEG CONSUMPTION



An average baseline FV portions/person/day was 2.4 compared to the UK Gov recommendation (5 portions/day) and NHS digital data (3.7 portions/day). Almost half (48%) of households reported eating **no fruit or vegetable** the preceding day.

VOUCHER USAGE



Conclusion

The baseline FV consumption was significantly below the UK Gov recommendation (5 portions/day) at both locations. Data collection will continue until December 2024. FreshStreet Community enables households to choose their FV, supports local suppliers, and makes FV more affordable and available for everyone in the community.

References

- Woodside, J. et al (2023) 'Fruit and vegetable consumption as a preventative strategy for non-communicable diseases', *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 82(2), pp. 186-199

Contact information

- Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences, University of Reading, RG6 6AH
- Email: m.p.puranik@reading.ac.uk | www.reading.ac.uk

