



Peckham Pantry: Headline evaluation findings

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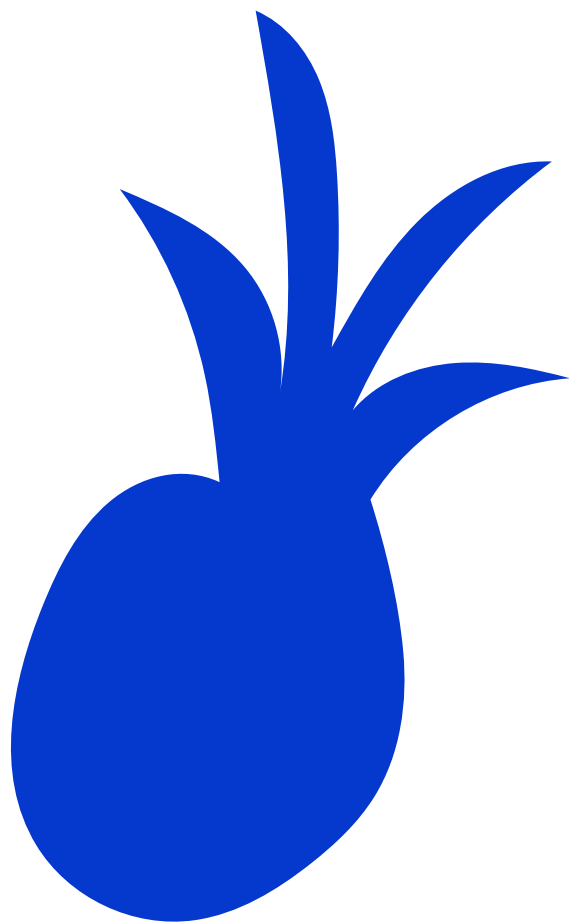

Kindness | Belief | Hope


Peckham
PANTRY

This report brings together headline findings from an independent evaluation of Peckham Pantry which took place between February 2020 and January 2022.



Executive summary



Introduction

Peckham Pantry is a membership model food store helping reduce household food costs. There are two Pantries in Peckham — one at St Luke's Church (open one afternoon a week) and another at Peckham Park Road (open six days a week). Peckham Pantry is part of the Your Local Pantry network and is delivered by Pecan, a Southwark-based charity. It is supported with funding by Impact on Urban Health.

Members pay £4.50 each visit and select their own products in the store, which include fresh fruit and vegetables, meat and eggs. Peckham Pantry aims to help people on lower incomes access affordable, healthy and culturally appropriate foods, whilst tackling food waste.

The first phase of the evaluation explored the impact of Peckham Pantry on its members and the process of setting-up and delivering the Pantry. It also looked at the social return on investment. This report presents headline findings of the evaluation and sets out the priorities for the next phase.

Headline findings

The evaluation shows a range of very positive impacts upon members. In particular, Peckham Pantry has helped members:

- Save money on their weekly shops: 95% of survey respondents agreed that their Pantry membership was value for money and made things a little or lot better in terms of household finances
- Increase their access to healthy food: 88% of survey respondents agreed that the Pantry generally had healthy food in stock

- Shop with dignity and choice: 88% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they were able to choose their own food when shopping at the Pantry
- Improve their health and wellbeing: 74% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that being a Pantry member was good for their mental health

The evaluation has also revealed the challenges associated with setting up a Pantry, particularly for Peckham Park Road as it opens six days a week and most closely mirrors a retail environment. These challenges are still being tackled and include:

- Ensuring good quality and consistent food supply given the wider dependency on free food supply from the Felix project and City Harvest
- Reviewing the retail offer to provide a flexible shopping experience alongside other types of information and support
- Supporting ambassador wellbeing to ensure a consistent and empowered volunteer workforce
- Encouraging member engagement to shape decision-making and community ownership

Additionally, whilst early analysis suggests a positive social return on investment, more work needs to be done to ensure wider financial sustainability of the Pantry, which is still reliant on Impact on Urban Health funding alongside income it receives from member shops.

The next phase of the evaluation will involve the team continuing to act as a learning partner, with specific focus on supporting the longer-term financial sustainability of the Pantry.

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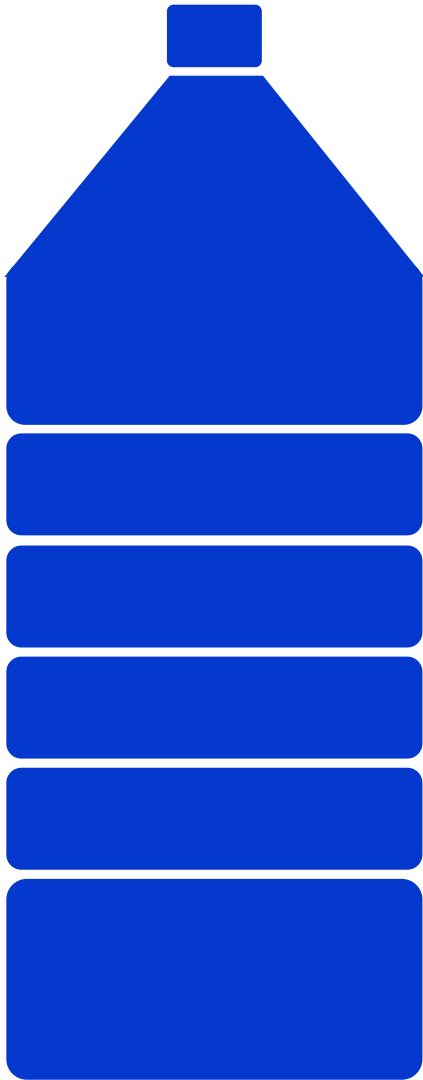
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“Peckham Pantry has been amazing, the staff can’t help enough, lots of families can now make wholesome meals [and] save money for those other things like your bills. I share stuff with neighbours and when I cook everyone can get some. I honestly can’t praise you guys enough, thank you.” — Member



Introduction



Building on the [Your Local Pantry](#) model, the Peckham Pantry is a membership scheme helping local households to reduce food costs.

For a payment of £4.50 per shop, members of Peckham Pantry buy food, including fresh fruit and vegetables and store cupboard favourites, to a value of £15 or more.

The evaluation of Peckham Pantry showed that the average value of a member basket was £30.60*. For a Member that shops once a fortnight, this equates to savings of £702 per year!

Opening daily, the Peckham Park Road Pantry intends to replicate a general retail shopping experience. As members pay for and choose their food, the Pantry model has dignity and choice embedded at its heart. And, by increasing access to healthy, affordable food for families, Peckham Pantry also aims to reduce childhood obesity in Southwark.

The Pantry is targeted at low-income families but it is open to all members of the community.

About the partners

[Pecan](#), a community development charity, have delivered a Pantry at St Luke's Church in Peckham since May 2019 and, with funding from [Impact on Urban Health](#), opened a second Pantry in Peckham Park Road in November 2020.

In 2021, Impact on Urban Health agreed additional funding to support the expansion of Pantry sites across Southwark in 2022-23.

*This was based on analysis of nine member baskets in May 2021

About this report

This report is a summary of headline evaluation findings gathered between February 2020 and January 2022. It complements three separate learning reports and one detailed interim report produced throughout this period.

For more information about the evaluation or this report contact Linda on ljacksonbrc@gmail.com.

Locations

St Luke's

St Luke's Church, Chandler Way, SE15 6DT
020 7277 7075

Opening Times:

Wednesday:

11:00 — 14:00

Peckham Park Road

49-53 Peckham Park Road, SE15 6TU
020 7277 7075

Opening Times:

Monday:

09:00 — 16:00

Tuesday:

11:00 — 16:00

Wednesday:

09:00 — 16:00

Thursday:

10:00 — 19:00

Friday:

09:00 — 16:00

Saturday:

09:00 — 15:00

Sunday:




Closed

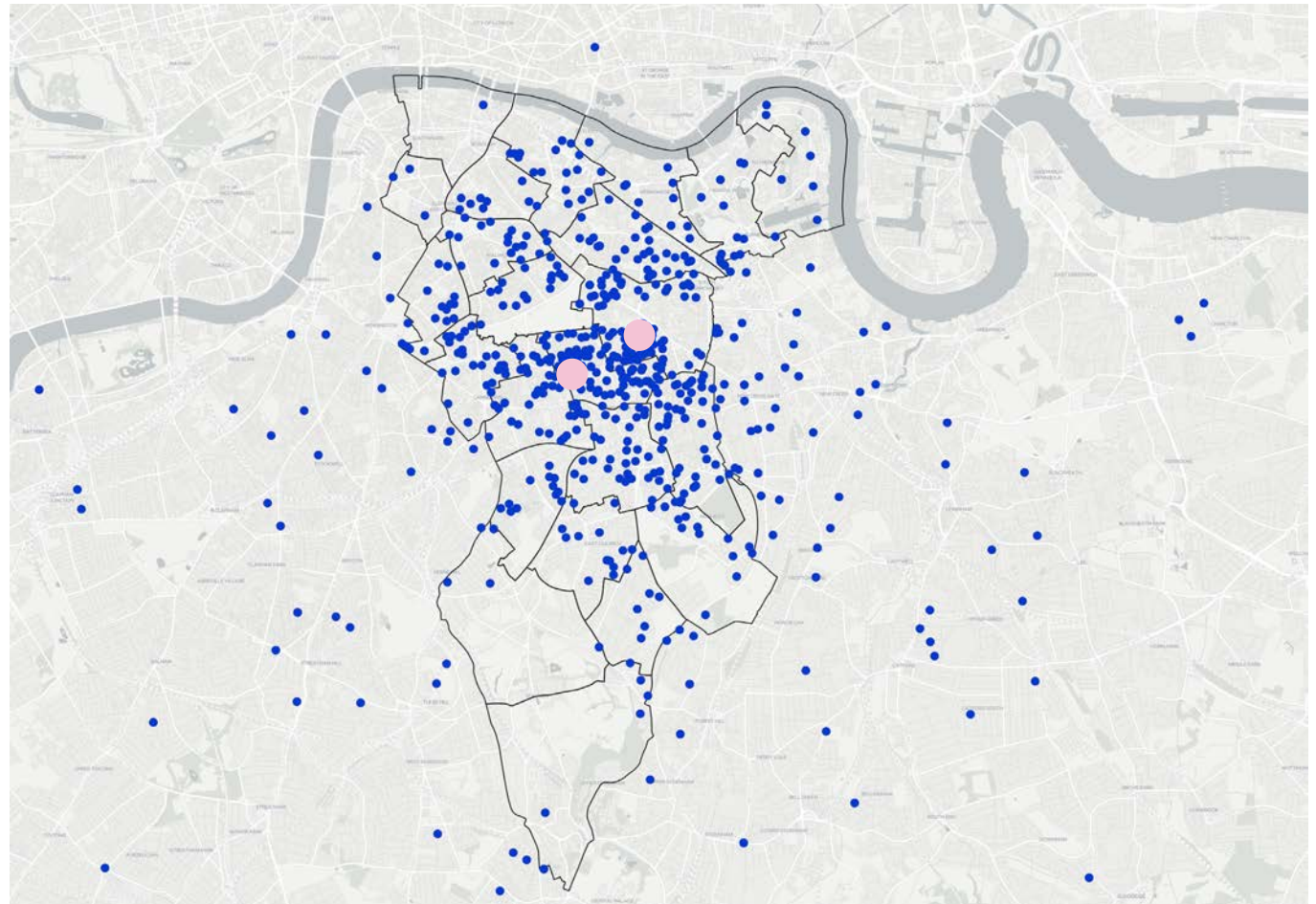
A map of most frequent members

Peckham Pantry aims to reach low-income families in Southwark. As a borough, Southwark has high levels of people with low food security. Almost 1 in 4 people in Southwark have low or very low food security and this is much higher for those with dependent children (44% compared to 18% without dependents).

This diagram maps out the 954 home locations of the Pantry members who have shopped more than 5 times. The two pink circles show the Pantry locations.

This map shows the distance that members travel to the Pantries and therefore the wider demand across Southwark (and beyond).

- Southwark ward boundaries 
- Pantry locations 
- Members (shopped 5+ times) 





The impact of Covid-19

In March 2020, the UK went into lockdown as a result of Covid-19.

Pecan was forced to close St Luke's Pantry — but offered members a free food box (delivered to their door) as a replacement. This was a 'lifeline' to many vulnerable members, although temporarily stopped any income for the Pantry through member shops. Covid-19 also delayed the opening of the Peckham Park Road site, bringing building work to a halt and incurring additional costs for labour and materials.

The evaluation team put their original plans on hold as Pecan responded to the crisis. The team reached out to members and asked them to tell their stories of lockdown, and how Peckham Pantry supported them during this unprecedented period.

Danni*: a member's lockdown story

“As a first time single mum of a baby boy, I was very scared when Covid hit. I had just dealt with a significant episode of postnatal depression and anxiety and was trying to work out how I could return to work, arrange childcare for my son and still pay rent and bills. My parents were already helping out financially, but both were now shielding, so we were more isolated than ever.

At first I had no choice but to continue to go food shopping with my son in his buggy. As the significance of the virus became apparent and other lifelines to cheaper food (such as vouchers supplied for help with fresh fruit and vegetables) dwindled, it was hard to keep going out and remain calm.

It was then that I started to limit the number of times we went to the shops, but this meant being creative with what we had in the cupboards — and a natural born cook I am not! Knowing how vital a healthy and varied diet was to my son only compounded the anxiety I felt about shopping and trying to plan meals. Not to mention the difficulty of entertaining a baby while trying to cook something healthy and edible all on a budget!

I was then informed that Peckham Pantry were doing deliveries and it was such a relief. They had already been such a lifeline — with the financial help of knowing I wouldn't run out of food as long as I could make it to the Pantry on a Wednesday.

At first I felt that perhaps I should say no to the deliveries, so that someone who was unwell or physically unable to leave their home could have our share. I'm so glad that I didn't though! The contact with people dropping off the deliveries and variety in food it gave us became such important parts of our week. My son was craving contact with the outside world and loved waving at the delivery people and then get so excited about unpacking the box. The treats (like Easter Eggs and cookies) were such lovely surprises and it was such a weight off my shoulders to know we'd be getting some fresh fruit and vegetables. This was especially true when we had to self isolate for 7 days.

Since then, I have managed to arrange a nursery placement for my son and return to work. I would like to say a massive thankyou to the Pantry for being our lifeline”.

*Names and some details have been changed for anonymity.



The impact of Peckham Pantry

As the country came out of lockdown, Pecan re-opened St Luke's Pantry and opened the second Pantry site on Peckham Park Road in November 2020. The evaluation explored the different impact of Peckham Pantry including:

- Saving money
- Access to healthy food
- Increasing wellbeing
- Dignity and choice
- Connections to the community

The research included 'shopalongs' in May 2021 (where the researcher joined members as they visited the Pantry) and an online survey which took place in November 2020 and November 2021. The survey findings are very positive but show a slight dip year on year across all impact areas. This is likely to be at least partially explained by the difference between the contexts; the first survey followed a period of free food deliveries and the opening of Peckham Park Road Pantry, while the second survey followed a period of London-wide issues with surplus food supply. However, the dip in results also suggests that there are some areas to improve.



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Saving money at the Pantry



Members make substantial savings on products bought at Peckham Pantry

In a survey of 286 members (November 2021), 95% of respondents felt that Pantry membership was value for money and 95% said it had made things a little or a lot better in terms of household finances. This is broadly similar to the response rate in November 2020 (based on 99 member responses).

Analysis of a sample of nine member baskets in April 2021 suggests that the average cost of purchasing the same goods in a supermarket would have been £31.60 compared to £4.50 cost at the Pantry.

For a member who used Peckham Pantry once a fortnight, this represents a financial saving of £702 per year.

Members who saved money through the Pantry described how it helped them towards paying off debt or rent arrears, contributed to paying for educational opportunities for their children, or even helped save up for a holiday.

Other members described how they weren't 'saving' money, but it allowed them to afford food after paying other bills, in the context of the wider cost of living crisis.

“Since being introduced to the Pantry it has helped me to be able to survive better as it has been a very difficult time for a while now, and I am able to at least put food on the table during this difficult time, many thanks.” — Member

“I’m saving a lot of money and I’m being able to allow my daughter to go on a camping trip with school.” — Member

“Peckham Pantry has been amazing, the staff can’t help enough, lots of families can now make wholesome meals [and] save money for those other things like your bills. I share stuff with neighbours and when I cook everyone can get some. I honestly can’t praise you guys enough, thank you.” — Member

“Because of the savings, I have less worries about shopping for food.” — Member

“Peckham Pantry has helped me with my finances [as when] there’s no money left after paying bills it’s enabled me to buy nutritious food.” — Member

Greater access to healthy food

The Pantry has increased access to healthy food for members — who are also eating more healthy food as a result

In 2020 and 2021, 88% of survey respondents agreed that the Pantry generally had healthy food in stock. In 2021, 43% of survey respondents agreed that their household was eating more or a lot more fresh fruit and vegetables as a result of the Pantry membership (reflecting a drop from 53% survey respondents who agreed with this statement in 2020).

Around two-thirds of respondents said they were eating ready meals or processed foods less or a lot less since becoming a member of the Pantry. Additionally, members described how they were widening their diet at the Pantry, with 58% survey respondents agreeing they had tried new things they'd not tried before, encouraged by ambassadors and the range of food on offer.

Members highly value the fresh fruit and vegetables on offer, and have reported that they would like a more consistent supply of these. The reliance on surplus food has meant that supply has varied. There have been some instances where members were prevented from choosing multiples of healthy items, like apples, to ensure supply and choice for everyone.

More work is taking place to improve and manage the range of food on offer to ensure a consistent supply of healthy food available.

“Attending and being part of the Pantry has enabled me to increase my cooking skills and be more adventurous with meal planning” — Member

“My child is very fussy, don't eat any veg but since coming here he now eats runner beans and carrots” — Member

“At my recent shop I was not allowed to choose more than two kinds of fruit and veg which I found disappointing and so I ended up choosing sweetened biscuits instead” — Member

53%

of Pantry users eat more fresh fruit and vegetables

58%

of Pantry users choose food they've not tried before

23%

of Pantry users eat more fish, meat and eggs

67%

of Pantry users eat less ready meals or processed foods

Data from survey of Pantry users taken in 2020

Tara*: a member's story

Member fieldwork involved a researcher accompanying members on a 'shopalong' at the Pantry in April 2021, to observe and talk through their journey, experience in the shop and to record the items they chose. Two months later, they had a follow-up call to see how things had changed. This is one of the stories.

Tara lives very close to the Pantry with her husband and large family. She is a 'super-shopper' at the Pantry, shopping several times a week. She works part-time and her husband full-time, meaning they aren't eligible for a lot of government support, but bringing up a large family is expensive. Having the Pantry so close means she feels more relaxed and doesn't get stressed about needing to get to the shops, as she always knows there will be a staple item and some fresh vegetables at the Pantry which she can make a meal around.

Tara loves to cook and cooks things from scratch, which she feels is the only way to feed the family economically. She cooks Caribbean food and also loves to bake. She likes the fact that the majority of food available there is healthy, with the odd treat. They tended to eat healthily as a family anyway, but having easily available fresh fruit and vegetables helps maintain this.

The Pantry has made a huge difference to them financially, almost cutting their food budget in half. With the money they've saved, this has allowed them to go on a trip to the seaside and to visit family in the UK, and also to send one of the children on a school trip, which otherwise would not have been possible. It's also allowed her to try a few new foods, because it doesn't feel like so much of a financial risk if she or her children don't like it — celeriac, parsley and buttermilk so far.

Compared to shopping in other places, like the budget supermarkets she sometimes goes to, she finds the Pantry to be a friendlier environment. She has even brought the ambassadors some things she's baked. She hasn't been connected to other support (she doesn't feel she needs it) but would be interested in hearing about courses or social activities nearby.

Living so close, she knows when the shop gets deliveries and times her visits to make sure of getting the best choice. Since she goes so often, she normally finds items she wants, but sometimes ends up stocking up on tins if there's not much in the way of fresh fruit and vegetables available that day. She is a very quick shopper, and so she sometimes finds it frustrating to have to wait in a queue due to the small shop size and Covid-19 social distancing in place.

*Names and some details have been changed for anonymity.



Increasing wellbeing

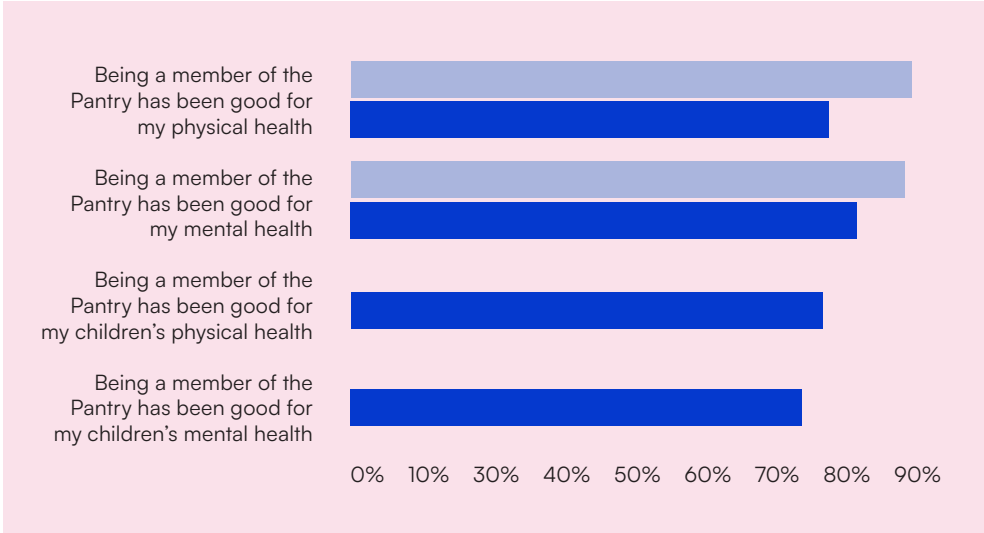
Being a member at Peckham Pantry has had a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing

Almost three-quarters (74%) of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement ‘being a member of the Pantry has been good for my mental health’ and around three-fifths (62%) of respondents with children strongly agreed or agreed with the statement ‘being a member of the Pantry has been good for my children’s mental health’.

There are various ways in which Pantry membership helped members’ wellbeing. Members reported how they found it reassuring to have food in the cupboards, and (for those with children) felt satisfied that their children would not go without. Members also valued being able to get a decent amount of food at one time and, being able to freeze food, generated confidence that they would have food available in the future.

“It does make you feel as though you can get through the week, you’ve got plenty of food and you’re full. I’m not worrying now with the Pantry being there, not thinking ‘have I got enough food after I’ve paid the bills, to feed us?’ It just gives you that little bit of security.” — Member

Changes in state of health



Note: There are no scores for 2020 against the first two indicators as these were only included in the 2021 survey

2020 A lot more/more ■
 2021 A lot more/more ■



Providing dignity and choice

The Pantry provides members with dignity through choice and control over what they buy, but food supply is patchy and unreliable which can hinder this

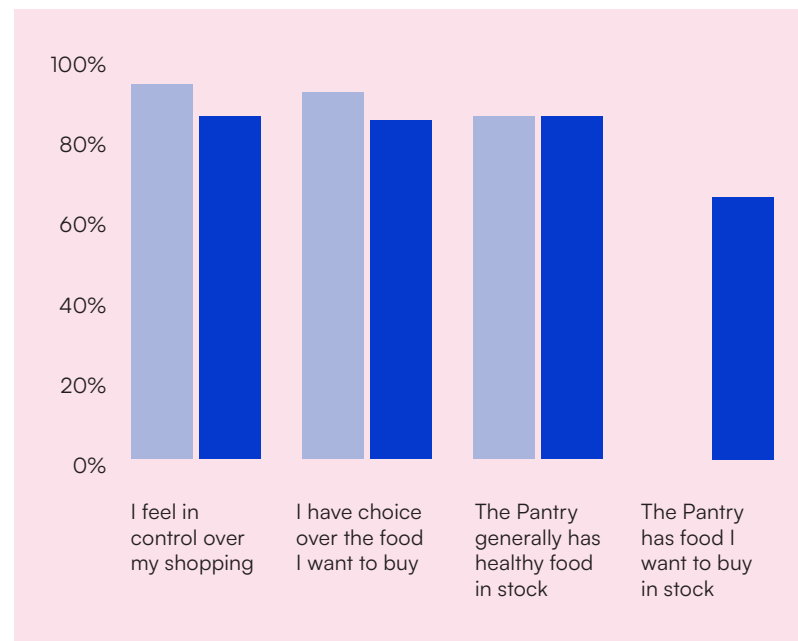
Alongside financial savings, choice, access and variety of food scored highly in the impact survey as key motivating factors for Pantry membership. Indeed, 99% of survey respondents agreed it was important or 'very important' that they were able to choose their own food through their membership, and 88% of respondents agreed they were able to do so. There were also examples when the Pantry gave members the opportunity to buy things they wouldn't normally be able to buy for themselves, such as their favourite food items, brands they perceived as high-quality or even non-food items like cut flowers. Members described these as luxuries and pick-me-ups that gave them joy. However, reliance on surplus food leaves the

Pantry exposed to the whims of supply and gaps in availability. This had an impact on the extent to which members felt there was a choice of food they wanted to buy, and there were some examples of near end-date food offered. These fluctuations also drove changes in perceived value, which could be unsettling and disempowering for members.

“The Pantry is a great way to shop. High quality food from some of the best supermarkets. [It’s] shopping with dignity. Very helpful and friendly staff.” — Member

“At the Food Bank people don’t have choice [but] at the Pantry they do have choice and that’s all part of Pecan’s ethos, is treating people with respect. I don’t think it’s ever been written down...that’s the way people do it actually. It’s like an unwritten constitution” — Ambassador

Choice and range of food



Carla*: a member's story

Member fieldwork involved a researcher accompanying members on a 'shopalong' at the Pantry in April 2021, to observe and talk through their journey, experience in the shop and to record the items they chose. Two months later, they had a follow-up call to see how things had changed. This is one of the stories.

Carla is a sporadic shopper at the Pantry and shops along with her adult daughter who is also a member (and sometimes accompanied by her young granddaughter). Sometimes they go every week and other times not for a few weeks. Carla's daughter is a single parent and receives a Healthy Start voucher; she likes to use this at the Pantry because it can be converted into more items that she'd be able to get in a supermarket.

Carla and her family were originally reticent about using the Pantry, feeling that they should leave it for others who they considered more in need. However, things have been difficult financially for them during the pandemic because the industry in which Carla works has been closed a lot of the time due to Covid-19 restrictions. Carla is also recovering from serious illness which has made it more difficult for her to work, and knocked her confidence. Now they use other community food projects in the area as well, such as community fridges. They find that the Pantry makes them feel welcome and not to be ashamed that their circumstances have changed.

“It's being part of a community. I'm not alone and that there's no shame.”

Shopping together but doing two shops allows them to share and swap items, giving them greater flexibility from the Pantry system of 'red' and 'blue' items which they sometimes find restrictive. For example, they find it can be tricky to stretch their allocation of one fresh meat item per shop. They have also noticed the value of items at the Pantry fluctuating, meaning they sometimes compare to supermarket prices to work out how to get the greatest value in their Pantry shop. However, knowing they can get the basics affordably at the Pantry means they can plan and budget more easily. Sometimes Carla brings items from the Pantry to share with her friends and elderly neighbours too.

The Pantry is helping enormously financially. Carla used some of the money she has saved to go on a training course in the career she wants to get into. She also finds it makes a difference in being able to afford to get the bus and travel around the city more, which helps her confidence and self-esteem. Her daughter is using the money she has saved at the Pantry to get driving lessons and to support her and her daughter while she studies for a profession in the health service.

*Names and some details have been changed for anonymity.

Peckham
PANTRY

Blue



Connecting to the community

The Pantry is increasing social connections and connecting members to the community — but more could be done to increase member ownership.

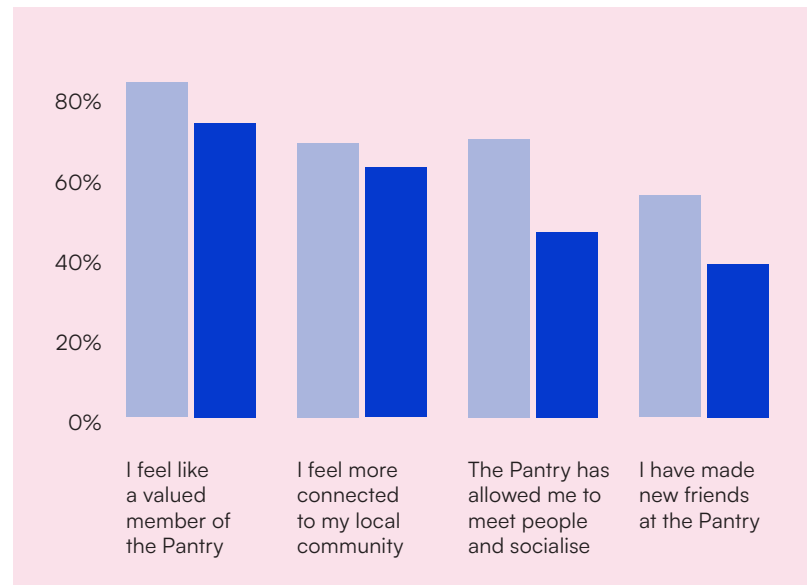
In the impact survey, 98% of respondents said that a sense of community was an important or very important reason why they joined the Pantry, with another 81% of respondents that said that ‘making friends with others in my local community’ was important or very important. When looking at the impact on members, 73% members agreed they felt like a valued member of the Pantry, with another 62% that agreed that they felt more connected to their community. There has also been a slight drop in results between 2020 and 2021. These findings suggests that there is appetite and potential to increase connections between the Pantry, members and the community in future. Members have ideas of how this could take place and this process could help increase member-ownership of the Pantry.

“The reason that I got in touch to [volunteer] was partly I wanted to do something kind of productive and useful with the time off that I had, but partly I just wanted to feel kind of connected to the area. And I’ve been living in Peckham for about five, probably almost six years now and this is kind of the first time I’ve felt sort of properly connected...in the community...in any city, it’s quite easy to get kind of stuck in your own small bubbles and this has kind of opened it out a bit more for me, which has been really nice.” — Ambassador

“Everyone’s so lovely, like the staff and stuff there they were always really helpful and lovely and asked lots of questions and made you feel really, really, really welcome” — Member

“I really love coming to the Pantry, the staff are always welcoming, polite, patient, kind and a pleasure to talk with. Being a carer for my autistic son I don’t really get out much so my visits to the Pantry are more than just my weekly shop.” — Member

Feeling connected at the Pantry



2020 Strongly agree/agree ■
2021 Strongly agree/agree ■

The Social Return on Investment

The analysis of Social Return on Investment considered the costs of delivering Peckham Pantry to regular members each year against the social benefits gained:

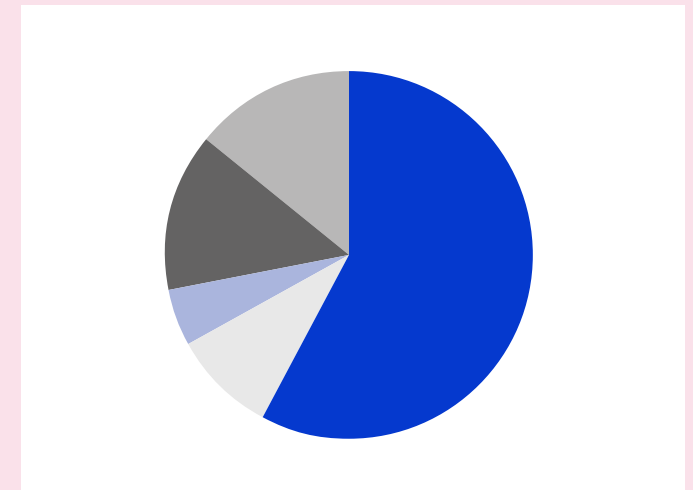
- Value of basket of groceries to regular members per year (£700)
- Health benefits — diet (£110)
- Health benefits — mental health (£60)
- Retention of employment (£175)
- Gaining employment (£170)

The analysis suggests a positive social return on investment. Given an estimated cost per regular member of £280 per year, and revenue per regular member of £110 per year, this implies a net cost per regular member of £170 per year. This is outweighed by the social benefits, which we estimate at £1215 per regular member per year.

The indicative assessment is that each £1 in net costs returns £7.16 in social value, of which £1.41 goes directly to savings for public services.

However, whilst this is a positive result, there are still questions around the extent to which the Pantry delivery model can be self sustaining in the longer-term. Phase 2 will continue to refine the social return on investment analysis alongside a more detailed assessment of financial sustainability.

Estimated social benefits per regular member per year



- Savings on food price (£700)
- Health — diet (£110)
- Health — mental health (£60)
- Employment — retain jobs (£175)
- Employment — find jobs (£170)



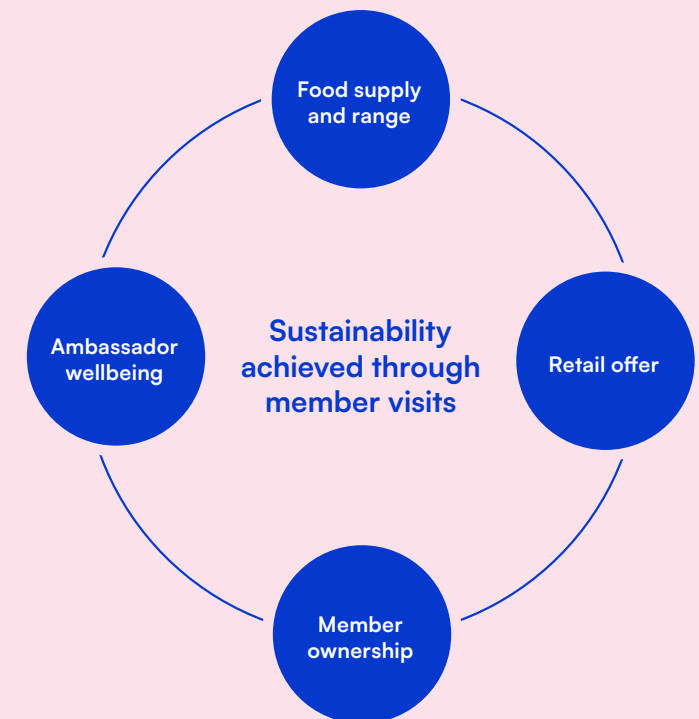
Financial sustainability of Peckham Pantry

Peckham Pantry's longer term ambition is to become self-sustaining, and not reliant on any external funding in the future.

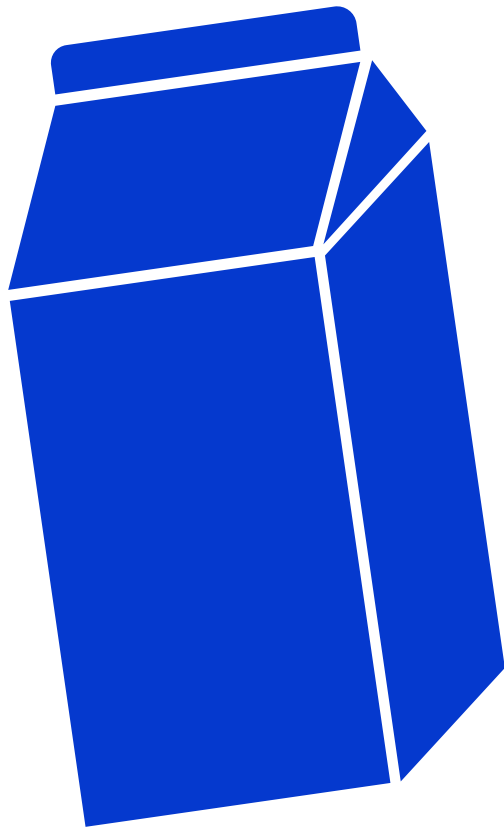
A key driver of sustainability is increasing the number of member shops.

The evaluation — and a recent external review of operations — suggests that there are four pillars of the Pantry which need constant review to ensure a high quality shopping experience, and therefore increase member visits in future. These include:

1. The range and consistency of food supply
2. The retail offer
3. Member engagement and Pantry ownership
4. Ambassador wellbeing and empowerment in their volunteer role



The range and consistency of food supply



The two Peckham Pantry sites handle an average of 2,100kg of free food per week, supplied through four deliveries from the Felix project and two deliveries from City Harvest. Pecan supplement this by paying for other staples including that supplied by Tropical Sun, Nando's chicken and donations from Glengall Wharf Gardens (a local community garden).

Food range is an important component of shopping with dignity, as familiar brands help perceptions around the quality of the offer. When Peckham Park Road Pantry first opened, Ambassadors reported surprise and appreciation from members about the brands which are stocked in the Pantry, particularly Tropical Sun which helps to meet a strongly-expressed need for African and Caribbean foods.

However, the Pantry's dependency upon surplus food distribution has led to inconsistency in supply and range. Whilst almost two-thirds (65%) of survey respondents agreed that the Pantry had food they wanted to buy in stock, this was one of the lower rated indicators. Follow-up calls with members who took part in shoppalongs identified this as a particular and growing issue.

These factors lie outside the Pantry's control to some degree - but members felt the impact and reported that this could lead to gaps in their shopping, selective shopping to maximise value, or even prevent them from shopping more frequently. Peckham Pantry are exploring ways to provide a more consistent food range offer, to guarantee high quality food and key staples for the community.

“There used to be a great variety and it was easy using up red/blue codes — but recently it has been a struggle to find enough (without duplicating) food to use up codes” — Members

“I think they get less stuff given to them sometimes [...] Things that are popular like cooking oil [...] they don't have but then again [...] probably people get there before me and take it. So that's the way it goes.” — Member

“We just need more different items for the Black Africans so as to balance the food we eat sometimes.” — Member

“My son has a few allergies, and allergies-free-things are normally expensive so it would be nice if you post more photos on Facebook as to what you have in stock.” — Member

“Tropical Sun [products are] a hit... not just for cuisine but the branding — people trust, know and feel familiar with it — they feel like those are high price quality products, so [it adds] another layer of dignity. [members are] not just getting the essentials, which is what the Pantry is doing over a food bank” — Ambassador



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The retail offer

A key objective of Peckham Pantry is to replicate a regular retail environment, with members paying for familiar brands and the products they need in a dignified shopping experience. As already described, issues with food supply and range could undermine attempts to pitch the Pantry as an attractive retail offer but other aspects of the Pantry system are also relevant to this.

For example, the lack of flexibility within the red/blue item allowance system could sometimes be a barrier to use for some members, who felt it infringed upon their freedom to choose. This raises the question of whether the Pantry system could be more flexible, potentially with 'trade-ins' for members e.g. using three of their blues to get an additional red. Additionally the system worked better for some members than others based on household size, so an extra red for families might help encourage more shopping visits.

Providing access to healthy foods might not alone be adequate to improve all members' diets and some members would like additional routes to healthy diets e.g. opportunities to learn cooking skills, or healthy ready-prepared meals.

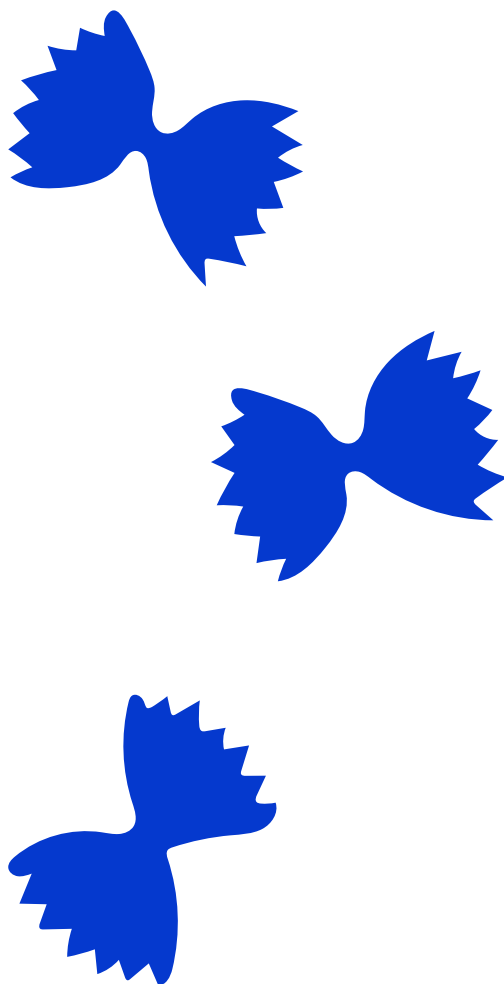
Finally, members felt that the layout of the unit could be reconfigured, to give members the opportunity to see what was available before paying for their shop, and to create more space for navigation, particularly for those with children in buggies. Members also suggested protected shopping slots for families, particularly those with children who had sensory needs.

"I don't like the way that members are not informed that once you pay the fee, if you don't buy anything that's tough as non-returnable. And it's wrong that the halal products (when available) are priced higher than other products."
— Member

"Would be better if the things in the fridges were kept to one fridge for red and one fridge for blue. Also have things that are '2 for 1' are labelled to make it easier and not have to ask."
— Member

"When I went there, I wanted to look and to make my selections [but a] I cannot take two red or three red [of] the same item [...] So, that put me off" — Member

"My son has autism and can become overwhelmed when waiting or in busy/noisy environments." — Member





EXIT ONLY

WAY SYSTEM
↑
TERMINATION

Meal Ideas

3 for Blue

RS - chilli-ganic
sauce 140 g
Item no. 200413

Increasing member ownership

In January 2022, Peckham Pantry had 3,803 members, of whom 954 have shopped more than five times. Across all members 53% had children in their household and 49% lived in social housing (although another 11% of members have their housing recorded as 'other', so it is likely that the actual figure of those living in social housing is higher than represented here).

A survey of members (November 2021) revealed that 40% were finding it very or quite difficult financially with another 42% just about getting by. As the cost of living crisis escalates, this picture is likely to worsen. Whilst member numbers have increased significantly there is a question over frequency of member shops, which is a key component of longer term sustainability.

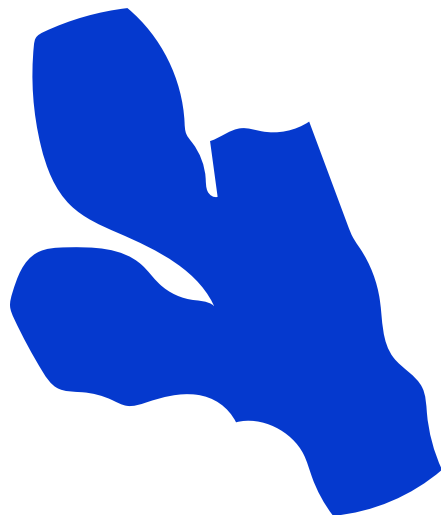
As already described, making new friends and feeling more connected to the local community are two key reasons why members join up to the Pantry, although fewer members believe this has happened in practice. This suggests a desire amongst members for the Pantry to be more of a social hub. However, the Peckham Park Road Pantry space is small and the time spent inside the shop is short so creative solutions are needed, and members themselves have lots of suggestions.

Pecan and the evaluation team plan to meet with members in Spring 2022 and revisit the overarching vision from their perspective, with the ultimate aim of creating a member steering group. This process will help generate a wider range of suggestions on how the Pantry can increase its role as a social hub and improve the offer, and potentially encourage more members to volunteer as ambassadors. It will also harness the energy of the 72% of survey respondents who said they would like to have a say in Pantry decisions in future, although lower-level forms of interaction will also help members with less capacity to engage in the steering group.

“I believe the Pantry is doing a great job. I tell others about it and pass on their flyers. Two families I told have [said it] made such a difference to their children’s diets.” — Member

“Information on cooking classes would be great.” — Member

“It would be nice to have more posters/leaflets in local services; many of them were halted when the pandemic began, it’s hard to know what is available now some restrictions are lifted.” — Member



“I would suggest that the Pantry organises community events (where everyone brings a dish created from Pantry products). [It could also set up] a Work fair; a “Each one teach one event (show someone a skill you have that will help someone with work/ school etc); Community Tutoring; and cooking classes.” — Member



Ambassador wellbeing

Peckham Pantry relies on volunteer ambassadors to run the shop on a day-to-day basis alongside a small staff team. Many ambassadors are also members, playing a dual role at the Pantry. In January 2022, there were 27 ambassadors supporting with an average of 64 hours per week alongside a core team of Peckham Pantry Manager and Assistant Manager, overseen by Pecan CEO and back office staff.

Ambassadors play an important role in setting the atmosphere of the Pantry, creating a positive, friendly and collaborative environment. As well as sorting food deliveries and displaying food, ambassadors help members with purchasing decisions and offer informal tips to preparing different foods or encouragement to try new things. In the survey, 98% respondents agreed that ambassadors were helpful and supportive, although there was a request to increase Ambassador understanding on how to support families with children with autism or other sensory processing needs.

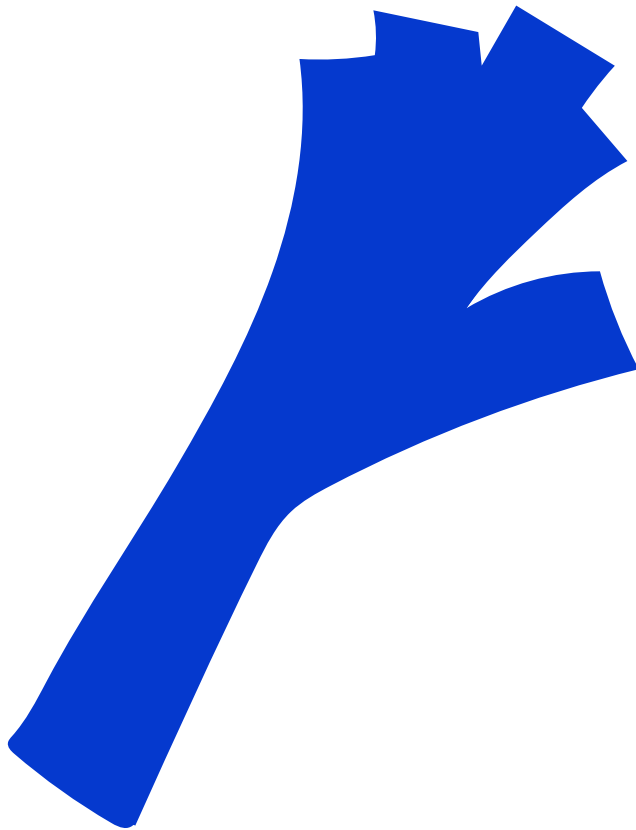
Ambassadors enjoy the social role of volunteering and the chance to contribute to and be part of the wider community. This was a particularly strong motivation during the first year of Covid-19 restrictions, when fieldwork was carried out with ambassadors. Since then, a review of operations has suggested a drop in morale. Ensuring ambassadors enjoy their volunteer experience, and have the knowledge they need to support members is a critical component of the Pantry and needs to be addressed in future.

“I remind members of how it works and help them with choosing products. Because sometimes they might not know what they want. So you have to let them know what’s there. For example, because of the variety thing, it’s good to point out certain things that are there and they think “Ah yes, I hadn’t realised that!”. [...] in a way recommending certain things for them...” — Ambassador

“It’s also been really helpful having an ethnic mix of volunteers... When clients come in they see people who they know in the community.” — Ambassador

“I really like it when the volunteers help with the shopping, offering suggestions and helping with advice on cooking tips for new food groups” — Member

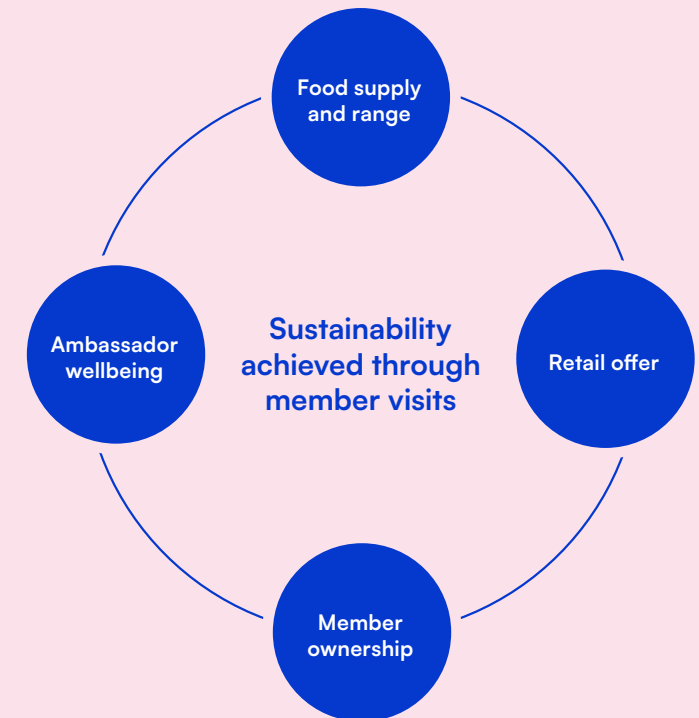
“It’s a happy atmosphere. They’re already like “Hi!”. They’re happy to see you and because now we’re like [...] a little community”. — Member





Recommendations

The evaluation team have shared a series of recommendations with Peckham Pantry through four learning reports. These recommendations have sustainability at their heart and so can be broadly categorised against the four pillars.



Recommendations

Findings from the evaluation have been used to make recommendations to shape delivery and maximise the impact of the Pantry. The key themes and recommendations are presented below. Several of these recommendations have been taken up and some are in the process of change, although there have been delays due to staff turnover, Covid-19 and other external factors.

The range, consistency and quality of food supply

1.
Review food offer and identify a core range that members expect during every visit

2.
Target food purchases to avoid gaps in the core food range and create consistency of supply

3.
Review stock rotation systems to ensure fresh, quality food is on offer every time members shop at the Pantry

Retail offer and management

1.
Explore more flexible shopping experiences, from a different offer for larger families or slots for families with children with sensory needs

2.
Review layout and navigation so that members pay after they have selected their products and to give more space for families with buggies

3.
Introduce wider forms of support or information for members at the Pantry e.g. around financial advice, children's dietary advice etc

Ambassador wellbeing and retention

1.
Encourage volunteers to have ownership over their volunteer experience by allowing them to define the roles they do and their volunteer slots

2.
Ensure volunteers contribute to a friendly and collaborative working environment by giving them the skills and knowledge they need to support member questions and decision-making around food

In addition, during phase 2 of the evaluation, the evaluation team will create the space and systems for members and ambassadors to submit ongoing feedback about their volunteering and shopping experience as part of a sustainable feedback loop

Member shopping experience and ownership

1.
Work with members to revisit and co-produce the Pantry vision and intended outcomes

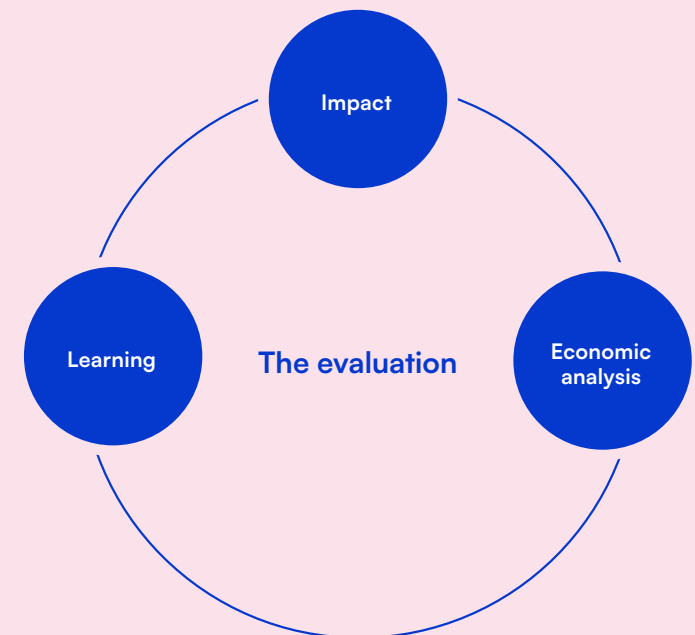
2.
Create the space for members to identify and lead social activities and create a community around food

Approach to the evaluation

Pecan commissioned a team of independent consultants — [Linda Jackson](#) (evaluation lead) [Sophie Reid](#) (food researcher and anthropologist) and [Neil Reeder](#) (economist) - to act as evaluation partners. The evaluation aims are to:

- Explore the impact of Peckham Pantry on members, ambassadors and the wider community
- Generate learning to improve and adapt the day to day delivery of Peckham Pantry
- Assess the financial sustainability of Peckham Pantry and analyze the social return on investment

The evaluation was commissioned in February 2020. It was originally intended to run until September 2021, but delays to opening Peckham Park Road Pantry (due to Covid-19) extended the first phase of evaluation to January 2022. In addition to this final report, three learning reports and one interim report have been produced as part of the formative aspect of the evaluation. These reports are all published at www.pecan.org.uk/our-impact



Methodology and outputs

Method/outputs	Details
Ambassador qualitative fieldwork	<p>Ambassador diaries: five Ambassadors kept diaries about their volunteering (including responding to prompt questions) through Whatsapp over the initial four weeks of opening at Peckham Park Road</p> <p>After Action Review: three of the Ambassadors involved in the diary project attended a virtual 1.5 hour workshop, and a further took part in a follow-up telephone interview</p> <p>Participant observation: site visits to Peckham Park Road and St Luke's Church</p>
Member qualitative fieldwork	<p>Shopalongs: 10 members took part in shopalongs, for which they received two free shops</p> <p>Follow up interviews: 8 of the members who previously took part in shopalongs had a follow-up interview, for which they received an additional free shop</p> <p>Counterfactual interviews: 5 interviews were conducted with members who had not shopped at the Pantry for a while</p>
Impact survey	<p>2020: 99 participants over the period 25th October to 10th November</p> <p>2021: 286 participants over the period 1 November to 12 November</p>
Social return on investment analysis	<p>For all categories except basket of goods analysis (which is set out in row below) we determined improvement in given outcomes and then multiplied against value of unit improvement in that outcome. There is a full SROI research note which contains greater detail about the approach and analysis.</p>
Basket of goods analysis	<p>Using data gathered through shopalongs, nine real-life baskets of shopping were price-checked against tesco.com</p>
Outputs	<p>Submitted three learning reports (Sept 2020, Jan 2021, Oct 2021), interim report (June 2021) and SROI research note (Jan 2022).</p>

“The Pantry is a valuable and essential part of the community. I’m from Greenwich and really wish we had one in our borough. In the pandemic it literally saved me as a single parent. My money was very limited then and going here weekly meant I could provide a healthy diet for my child. I now want to volunteer with them and train for future career opportunities. I’ve not been work for 17 years as a lone carer to a disabled child. This could be a valuable route back to paid employment. Our government should subsidise this initiative and more like it. I pray for The Peckham Pantry Team, Amen!” — Member

For more information

For more information on this report, or the Peckham Pantry evaluation, please contact Linda Jackson on ljacksonbrc@gmail.com

For more information on Peckham Pantry or to become a Pantry member, contact pantry@pecan.org.uk or 020 7277 7075.

For more information about Pecan visit Pecan’s website: www.pecan.org.uk or email welcome@pecan.org.uk.

With special thanks to [Impact on Urban Health](#)

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