

# Net Zero Transitioning: Redefining Assumptions Behind Access to Low-Carbon Food in Resource-Constrained Communities

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## Project Aim

Examine how access to Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) for food-insecure households can facilitate a fair and equitable transition to net zero agrifood systems.

## Objectives:

- 1. Assess changes in diet and wellbeing;
- 2. Identify barriers to engagement with sustainable food systems;
- 3. Develop guidelines to scale initiatives.

## What is the Planet Card?

**How did it start:** Scheme co-created by Sustainable Food Places Cardiff, Cardiff Farmers Market, and Sustain’s Bridging the Gap Programme. The Planet Card was co-designed with members of the local community and is one the Bridging the Gap pilot schemes.

**Aim:** To make organic and planet-friendly fruit & vegetables more accessible and affordable to low-income and marginalised communities.

**How does it work:** Over 20 weeks, participants have a weekly £11 credit to spend at Cardiff Farmers Markets. This credit can be spent on fruit and vegetables at participating vendors. To make a purchase, members simply provide their unique membership number to traders. Unspent credit does NOT roll over to the following week.

**Who can take part:** Participants can apply and are selected based on a brief screening questionnaire. In total, 120 people can take part.



## Inequality in the current food system

The current food system is broken, perpetuating inequality, ill-health, biodiversity loss, and climate change.

Current food system fails to meet net zero goals and perpetuates inequities, leading to food insecurity and ill health among disadvantaged communities. In 2022/23, 7.2 million people in the UK experienced food poverty, with numbers expected to rise (Francis-Devine et al., 2024).

Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) offer a multifaceted solution including shortening supply chains, improving resilience, and localising food production, supporting local economies, addressing social equity – crucial for a resilient, net zero agrifood system.



## Approach

### Evaluation Methods

**Survey Planet Card holders** to evaluate the impact of the Planet Card on their health, wellbeing, and diet.

**Interview Planet Card holders** to get a deeper understanding of impact and gain insights into barriers.

**Projective workshops** to examine systemic barriers & experiences.

## Preliminary Findings

### Interview & workshop insights

Based on interviews with 14 Planet Card Members + two workshops

**£11 was seen to ‘go a long way’**, providing enough fruit and vegetables for the week.

Fruit and vegetables from the market perceived **higher quality** as **lasting much longer** than supermarket equivalent.

Many participants are **trying new foods** and **learning new recipes** based on the produce available.

Many participants **feeling empowered** by the Planet Card to **buy healthier vegetables**.

**But** many feel intimidated by the market:

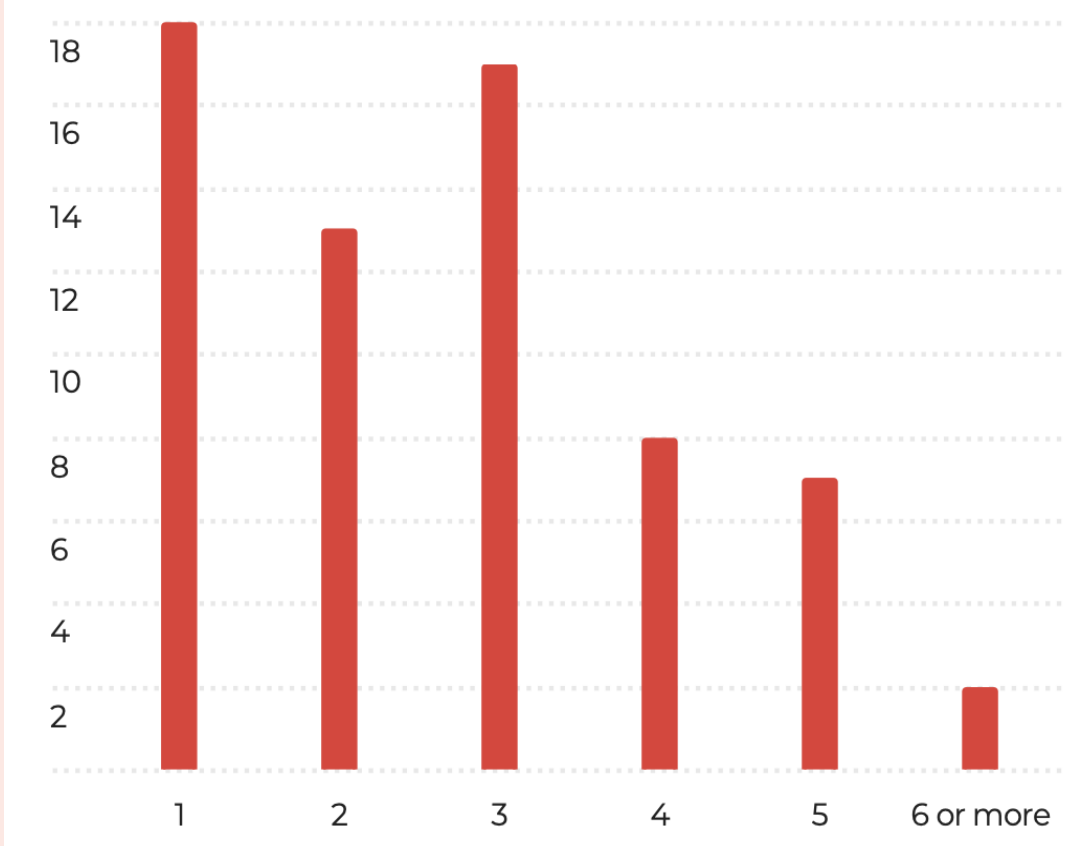
- Long queues and no price tags on produce making them feel “othered” when asking price.
- Transport to the market is costly.

### Survey insights (pre-Planet Card)

Based on survey responses from 71 Planet Card members.

- **Cost** is the **biggest barrier** stopping people from eating fruit & vegetables.
- Most participants **don’t eat the recommended daily amount of vegetables**.

How many **vegetables** do you eat in a usual day? An example of a portion could be 1 x cup of leafy raw vegetables or salad, half a cup of root vegetables like carrots, potatoes, celery, beetroot.



N = 70; Note: These are preliminary findings of ongoing data collection

Q6.5 - What do you feel are the **main reasons or barriers** that **stop you from eating plenty of fruit and vegetables**? Please tick all the boxes that apply to you

Field	Choice Count
Cost	56
Distance from food shop	13
Time to shop and cook	10
Not enough variety	9
Quality/ freshness	33
Storage (e.g., kitchen space, fridge, freezer)	14
Equipment (e.g., pots, pans, stove)	4
Cooking knowledge (e.g., how to cook a wide range of fruit and veg)	7
Health conditions make shopping or cooking difficult	11
Other pressing needs	5

## Project Partners:



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