

# FRESH STREET Project

## Area based vouchers for *local* fresh fruit and veg

## Background

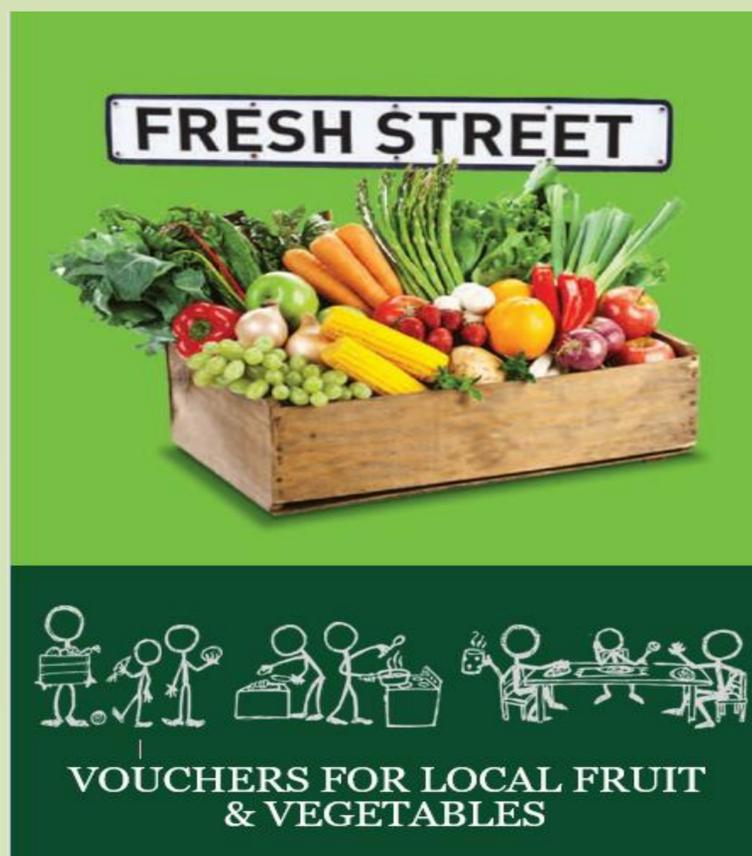
The healthiest diets are high in fruit and veg and very low in processed food. Yet most people in the UK eat diets high in processed food (most of which are high in fat and sugar) and low in fresh fruit and veg, particularly in areas of high deprivation. Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) has identified low fresh fruit and vegetable intake as a key risk factor contributing to high rates of mortality in Barnsley. Although there is a statutory scheme which offers vouchers for fruit and veg (Healthy Start), this is only available to families in receipt of certain benefits. Healthy Start vouchers can be exchanged infant formula as well as fruit and veg thus contributing to sub-optimal diets for infants and the UK's low breastfeeding rates. The Healthy Start voucher scheme does not take into account the social nature of healthy eating or the resilience of the local food system. The Rose Voucher scheme offers vouchers for *locally supplied* fresh fruit and veg. These vouchers are being offered via Children's Centre's in Barnsley to vulnerable families who are in receipt of Healthy Start vouchers. The FRESH Street project is adapting the Rose Voucher scheme for areas rather than individuals in order to promote healthy diets in areas with low fresh fruit and veg intake.

## Purpose

To develop and test an area based cash transfer scheme.

The purpose of the voucher scheme is to:

- Increase consumption of fresh fruit and veg ....from local suppliers (not supermarkets)
- encourage new purchasing, food preparation and eating patterns in the short term, .... and in the longer term
- reduce food poverty and improve health outcomes
- increase social cohesion & strengthen the resilience of local sustainable food systems



"I know how to cook, but I'm on my own so I can't be bothered. When I'm around other people I do..."

Male aged 50+  
from Athersley

### KEY 'INGREDIENTS'

- ❖ Area based (rather than individuals)
- ❖ Vouchers are for HOUSEHOLDS (rather than individuals)
- ❖ Redeemable only from LOCAL suppliers of fresh fruit and veg (shops and market stalls)
- ❖ Not redeemable at supermarkets

### ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

- ❖ Promotes social aspects of healthy diets: buying, cooking and eating together.
- ❖ Easy to join scheme
- ❖ Avoids stigma of 'being on benefit'
- ❖ Helps local economy and local food system

## Methods

The project will use Rapid Ethnographic Assessment in both the development and feasibility testing stages. Once the intervention is developed then we will conduct a feasibility cluster randomised controlled trial with data collection provided by an ongoing NIHR CLAHRC approved project (Yorkshire Health Study). We will test the feasibility of the intervention and the methods we propose to evaluate the impact of the intervention.

## Progress to date (1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 – 5<sup>th</sup> February 2018)

We developed the voucher scheme with local people, the Public Health team at BMBC and local area councillors who selected Athersley North – an area of high deprivation in Barnsley made up of 48 streets, 4 of which were selected at random for the voucher scheme.

We then held an **INFORMATION SHARING AND DECISION MAKING EVENT** in Athersley with 14 local stakeholders including elected councillors and representatives from BMBC North Area Council and BMBC Public Health team, leaders of services commissioned by Barnsley CCG (Social Prescribing - My Best Life in Barnsley), and BMBC (Be Well Barnsley, Roundhouse Learning Centre), local social enterprises (Community Shop) and the Alexander Rose Charity CEO etc.

At this event the following **KEY DECISIONS** were made: Voucher amount: £5 per household per week (for at least 6 months) starting w/c 26th February 2018.

Recruitment: the FRESH Street team will visit every household to tell them about the scheme and collect information using the Yorkshire Health Study Health Questionnaire plus eating pattern questions (1. Most recent main meal? home-cooked, processed/ ready-meal, takeaway, other; 2. Eaten alone or with others?)

Criteria for joining the scheme: At least one adult in the household must complete the Yorkshire Health Study Health Questionnaire. This collects information on self-reported health and health-related behaviours (smoking, alcohol, diet, exercise) and health-resource use (visits to GP, hospital etc.).