

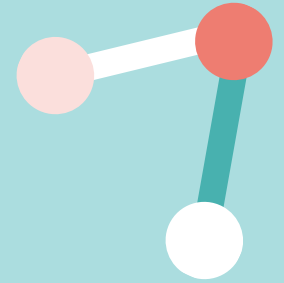
# Community Social Supermarkets: understanding how they shape access and availability to healthier foods in food insecure communities



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# Background



- Focus on SS across the North East and North Cumbria and specifically Eco-shops.
- Build on current evidence base around SS as a food insecurity intervention.
- Potential to provide recommendations that may help SS models adapt to better support those living in food poverty.
- To explore ways in which SS customers can use healthier produce, in turn having a positive impact on health and wellbeing.





# The Eco-shop model

- ▶ Eco shops – supported by South Tees Public Health via Middlesbrough Environment City to promote PH related work.
- ▶ Fundamental to ongoing work of Middlesbrough Food Partnership (MFP) and Food Power Alliance (FPA).
- ▶ Need to evaluate to progress the eco-shop model and secure financial support.







# Aim and Objectives

## Aim:

- To understanding how we can reduce food insecurity and stigma and improve access and availability to healthier foods in socially and economically deprived communities.

## Objectives:

- Explore how SS are used throughout the UK.
- Determine availability and accessibility of SS products across the North-East and North Cumbria.
- Understand how people in the North-East, specifically Middlesbrough, use and perceive SS.
- Explore ways of encouraging customers to buy and use healthier SS items.

## Objectives

**OB 1:** A scoping review - To explore *how* social supermarkets are used. To help determine what purpose they serve within a community and understand *how* they are perceived by communities.

**OB 2:** A survey - distributed across a sample of social supermarkets across the NE&NC to understand what products are available and how often customers use SS

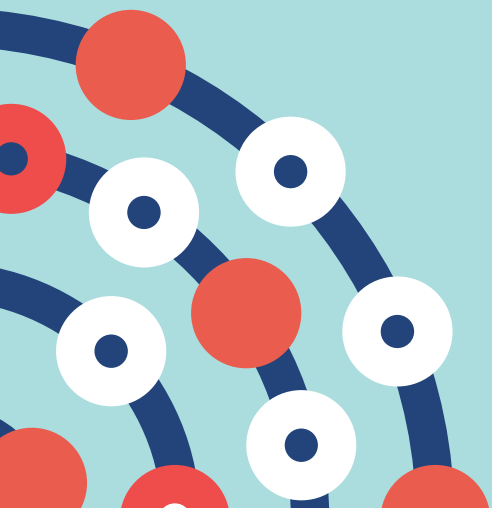
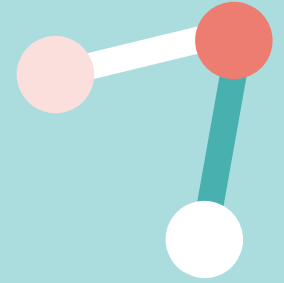
**OB 3:** Interviews - with a sub-sample of shop managers and customers will further explore purchasing behaviour and gather views and perceptions of SS.

**OB 4:** To explore ways of encouraging customers to buy and use healthier food items such as fruits and vegetables. OB4 will involve working closely with the existing Middlesbrough SS Task and Finish Group (TFG) (comprised of SS managers, local funders and MEC). Researchers will work alongside the TFG to help develop, mobilise and embed those deemed most acceptable and feasible.



## Public Involvement

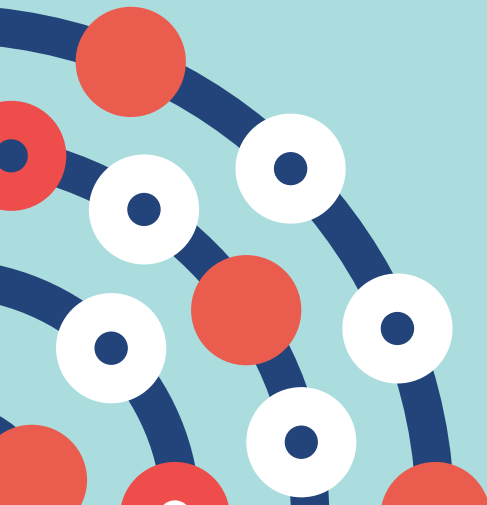
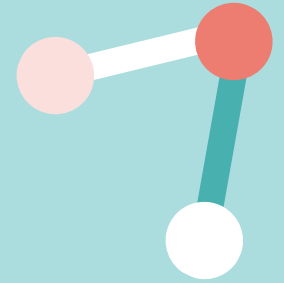
- Resource development: Within this project, we have worked alongside members of the eco shop community to develop the survey, interview questions and other project materials.
- Peer researchers: We have recruited eco shop managers as peer researchers to carry out data collection (distribution of surveys and interviews) and assist with analysis and dissemination.
- Steering group representatives: Peer researchers and other key project stakeholders (MEC, Salvation Army) are invited to Research Management Group (RGM) meetings to provide expertise and support quarterly.





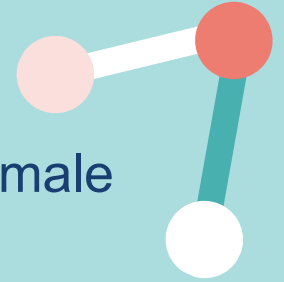
## Scoping review

- Limited evidence in the UK
- 39 Studies (14 grey literature)
- Terminology/description of SS differs
- Variation in SS models
- Inferences difficult to make given heterogeneity of studies



## Survey findings

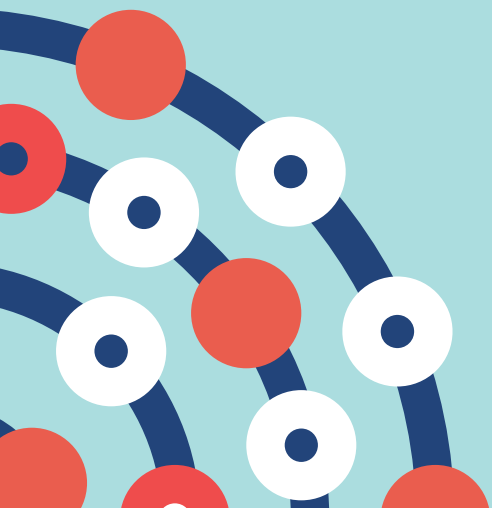
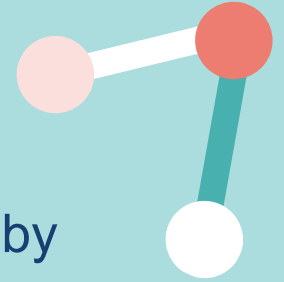
- Seventy-nine survey responses were collated of which 73% were female
- Sixty-seven percent of participants visited SS at least once per week and 10.5% visited twice a week
- Milk, bread, cereal, rice, pasta and tinned foods were the most popular items purchased
- Eighty-eight percent of participants stated that products purchased influenced meals cooked at home
- Approximately 79% expressed they would like a wider variety of products





# Interviews

- Peer researchers trained in November 2022 (Materials developed by Imperial College London, delivered on campus at Teesside University)
- Interview questions developed and refined in collaboration with peer researchers
- Interviews were carried out across five eco-shop sites
- Interviews carried out with a sample of eco shop managers, staff and customers (n=24).
- Thematic analysis is currently underway



*"Maybe if it was open another day or something because it's only open once a week. So maybe if it was open like twice a week or more than that it might be a bit more accessible for all the people" (ID1)*

*"Yes I think it is mixed opinions on the Eco-shop because I think a lot of people think it's just for poor people or kids in school and it's not, it's for anyone. It's good" (ID1)*

*"I was struggling financially and that's how I was introduced to the EcoShop...it's really like helped when we needed it and we still use it to support the EcoShop now..." (ID11)*

*"It would be good it was open longer and I could go after work, I could get there then rather than only be able to go once a week because that's sometimes not enough" (ID8)*

*"...Everything has gone up, your gas, your electric, do you know what I mean, it just helps a little bit, it helps to fill your cupboards" (ID5)*

*"I usually go for the breakfast cereal because breakfast cereal is so expensive now and with it only being classed as one of your ten items" (ID3)*

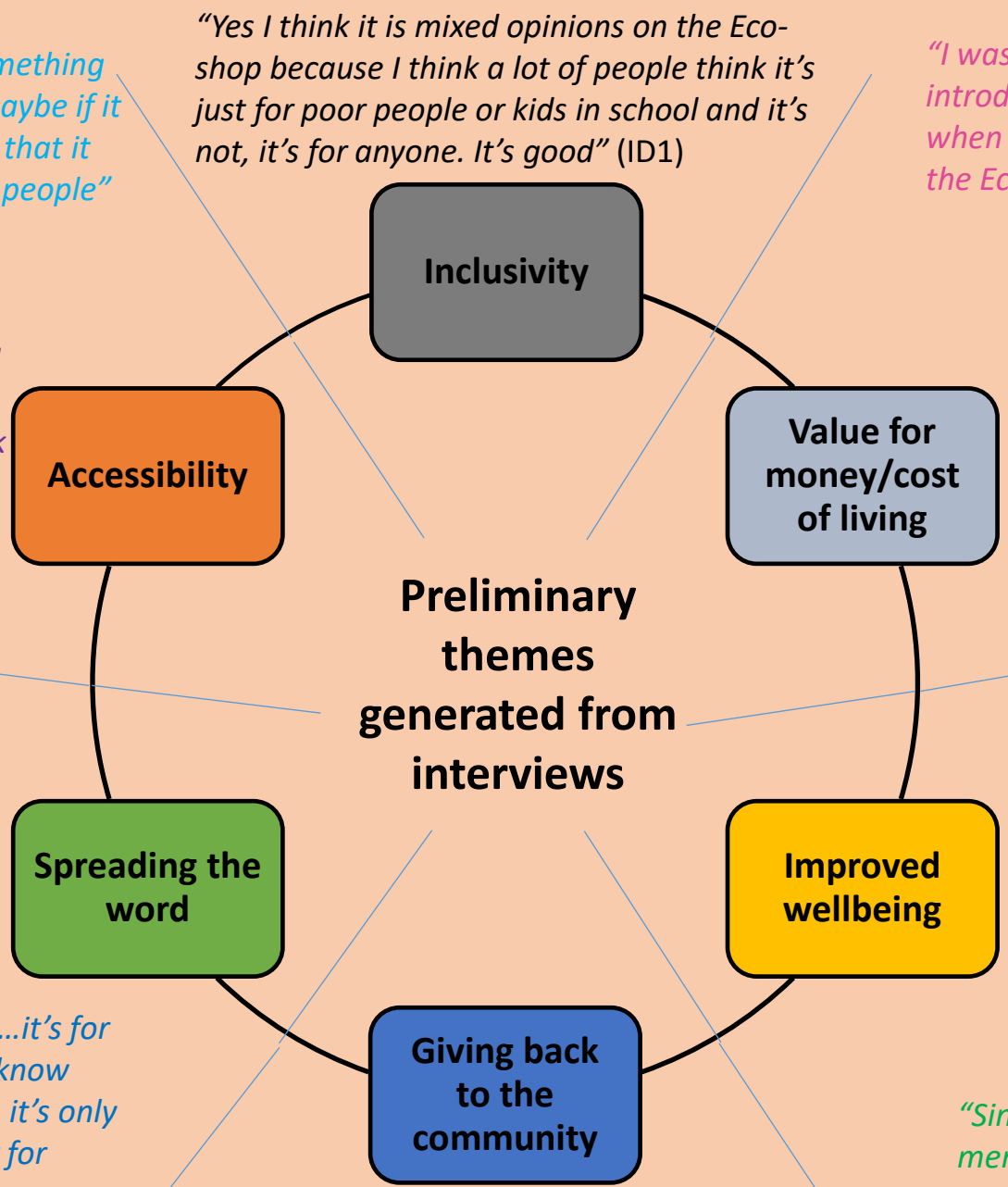
*"I tell my friends, you know the ones who need help like me too and some of them see me in queue so will come along sometimes. Its important to let people know as lots don't" (ID9)*

*"But I have done it and it's given me a lot more confidence and boosted me up a lot more to talk to other people that I would never normally talk to...and I honestly couldn't do without it now because it's done me the world of good". (ID2)*

*"And we are just trying to get it out there...it's for everybody in the community. And if they know anybody that we can help by telling them it's only two pounds for ten items, then the better for them, we can help other people" (ID2)*

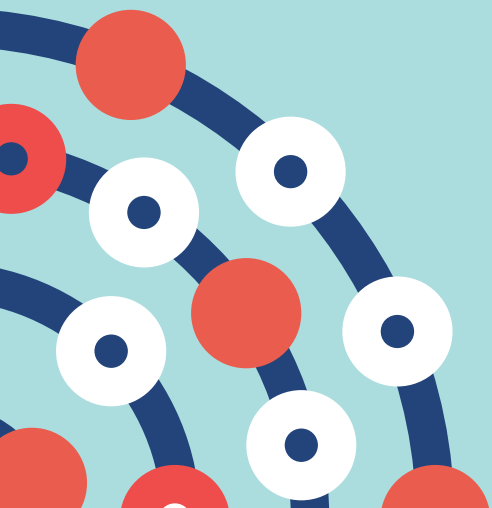
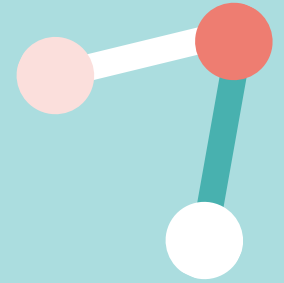
*"they always say how friendly we are...we always welcome them, we are never just sat around, if they need help we are always there" (ID10)*

*"Since I have been coming it's helped my mental health because I am coming in, I am meeting new people" (ID5)*



## Important findings

- Dietary improvements
- Reduction in food waste
- Improved mental health
  - Connectedness
  - Belonging
  - Purpose
- Maintaining dignity and reducing stigma





## Next steps.....

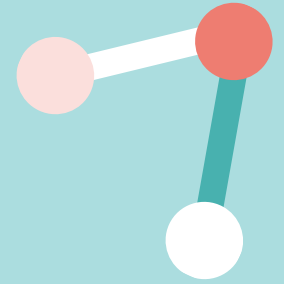
Development of the SS/Eco shop model

Core model components

Flexibility

Positive health changes

Working alongside communities



## Impact and dissemination strategy

- Project report
- Journal article: *academic and policy audience*
- Summary of results for stakeholders
- Infographic
- Lay summary for service users/ss community
- Fuse blog/podcast
- Presentations and other dissemination activities

