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Citation:

Coan, S and Warwick-Booth, L and Cross, R and Tharraleos, N and Suleman, T and John, S and Bamma, N and Mansfield, A (2022) Speak up about Harehills: Community Research Report. Project Report. Leeds Beckett, Leeds.

Link to Leeds Beckett Repository record:

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Document Version:

Monograph (Published Version)

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# Speak Up about Harehills Research Report

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## Contents

Community Research Project.....	2
Supermarket Project.....	2
About the Community Research.....	2
Research Aims and Questions.....	3
Survey Findings .....	3
What do you like best about living in Harehills?.....	3
What's the one thing you'd like to see change about the area? .....	4
How much do you feel you could help make this change? .....	6
Have you ever tried to raise an issue about the area? .....	6
Where would you go if you wanted information, to report something to the council or get support with an issue? .....	6
What might stop you raising a concern or raising an issue? .....	7
Thinking about other factors, what might stop you from raising issues? .....	8
What would help you/inspire you to try to make a change? .....	8
Is there anything else you'd like to say? .....	9
How often do you shop at local supermarkets? .....	10
Are you aware of anything the local supermarkets do in the community? .....	11
How do you think your local supermarkets could play a role in our community? .....	11
Demographics .....	12
General Recommendations .....	13
Recommendations for supermarkets .....	13
Limitations of the Study .....	14
Reflections on the Research .....	14
Supermarkets .....	15
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	16

## Community Research Project

### Supermarket Project

The Institute for Sustainability Leadership at Cambridge University (CISL) is carrying out research on how supermarkets can support community health and wellbeing. Supermarkets are stable businesses closely linked to their local area and rely on local residents both as customers and as employees. Many UK supermarkets employ staff as 'community champions', who act as a link between the store, the local community, and community groups. They can offer support, space for community groups, and goods donations, as well as developing networks to connect the community to funding opportunities. The research is funded by a donation from Asda, although it is completely independent, and the company has no influence over the research questions nor ownership of the findings.

The CISL researchers were keen to understand what support really looked like on the ground, and what difference it made. For this, they visited and spoke to people and organisations who had experienced support from supermarkets in 5 different parts of the UK. One of these was East Leeds, where they knew some interesting things were happening in communities supported by Leeds City Council and the Voluntary Sector. It was really important to them that the voice and experience of community members was included in the research and so a team from the Centre for Health Promotion Research at Leeds Beckett University supported a group of residents from Harehills to do a community research project.

### About the Community Research

The opportunity for community members in East Leeds to do some community-based research with Leeds Beckett University (LBU) on a subject of their choice was shared through networks in East Leeds, with community groups and through social media.

To explore their research topic, we used a peer research approach. Community (or peer) research involves training and working with people who have lived experience of the issue being researched ('experts by experience').

A group of 5 people who live in East Leeds expressed an interest in doing a project in Harehills. Leeds Beckett University ran a training session at Catch on 6<sup>th</sup> May to introduce the group of community members to research and how to do it. They decided the topic of the research: **Community Voice** and chose surveys as the research method.

The second training session was held at Leeds Beckett University on 16<sup>th</sup> May. It covered research ethics and training on designing surveys. The group of Community Researchers chose their questions and made a plan for how to share the survey. The survey had 12 questions and asked for some demographic information e.g. age and gender.

The researchers provided participants with information about the research at the start of the survey and asked them to consent to taking part before beginning. The survey was online and on paper and in some cases the researchers went through the questions with participants in person.

The group of Community and Leeds Beckett Researchers came together on 20<sup>th</sup> June to analyse the responses to the survey and discuss the findings.

This report contains a summary of the findings from the survey and recommendations for action.

## Research Aims and Questions

### Aims

The Community Researchers wanted to find out about other residents' experiences of living in Harehills: what they liked about their area, what they would like to change and how they would go about making changes.

### Survey questions

1. What do you like best about living in Harehills?
2. What's the one thing you'd like to see change about the area?
3. How much do you feel you could help make this change? (1 - not at all, 5 - could definitely)
4. Have you ever tried to raise an issue about the area?
5. Where would you go if you wanted information, to report something to the council or get support with an issue?
6. What might stop you raising a concern or raising an issue?
7. Thinking about other factors, what might stop you from raising issues?
8. What would help you/inspire you to try to make a change?
9. Is there anything else you'd like to say?
10. How often do you shop at local supermarkets?
11. Are you aware of anything the local supermarkets do in the community?
12. How do you think your local supermarkets could play a role in our community?

### Summary

- 5 Community Researchers – all residents in East Leeds, 4 in Harehills
- Supported to do a research project by Leeds Beckett University
- Designed a survey for Harehills residents
- Topic: community voice; how can supermarkets support communities

## Survey Findings

In total there were 95 responses to the survey. It was not compulsory to answer all the questions, so the number of respondents to each question is included in brackets.

### What do you like best about living in Harehills?

(Respondents = 93)

There are several things that people liked most about living in Harehills, some to do with the geographical location and some to do with the community of people. Many people said that they liked the ease of access to the city centre and green leisure space whilst Harehills itself provided a variety of highly valued services such as shops, good bus connections, places of worship and independent businesses. The housing and architecture of the area is described by some as beautiful, and the affordability (of housing and shopping) was also mentioned.

The people of Harehills are viewed as a major strength creating a real sense of community for most. The community is described as vibrant and lively, the people as friendly, respectful and neighbourly.

Some respondents especially noted those in the community that are willing to share and make it a nice area to live in. A big part of this positivity is attributed to the diversity of the community resulting in a multicultural vibe that is valued by many. Food played a big part in the positive responses with many people stating that they liked the international variety and ease of access.

*“The vibrant community, the multi-cultural nature of the area, being close enough to walk into the city centre and amenities.”*

There are some exceptions to this where a minority of people felt that there was nothing positive they could say about living in Harehills. Specific concerns centred around perceived increases in drug-taking, crime, dumping of rubbish and a lack of access to traditional ‘British’ food and products in the area.

What’s the one thing you’d like to see change about the area?  
(Respondents = 94)

Overall, the majority of responses for this question focused on the need to reduce the amount of rubbish, and fly-tipping in Harehills. Significant concerns also related to anti-social behaviour in the area including street drinking and gangs, which led to several people saying that they felt unsafe. Crime, including drug-related issues were also a concern, and several respondents (n=9) requested more police presence. Respondents were also keen to see a range of improvements including better roads, less rented housing due to negative experiences with landlords, and different shops and facilities for children. Several mentioned the need for more investment in the local area, particularly focusing on the needs of children and young people. The negative reputation of the area and a perception that local community members weren’t involved enough in taking responsibility for change were also reported.

The main changes people would like to see were grouped under the following headings:

- **People/community**

There was criticism of some community members and the lack of care they take over their homes and surrounding area which gives the neighbourhood a bad reputation. This relates to the point on housing below, with landlords also having responsibility.

*“Householders taking responsibility for their house, garden or yard and the environment of their area. Litter and indiscriminate dumping of anything they don’t want.”*

There was a call for more investment in the area, especially for young people’s services, and more collaborative working.

*“More cohesive and collaborative working to improve the different communities.”*

*“More investment esp. around youth community work.”*

- **Safety/security**

Drugs, antisocial behaviour and crime make many people feel unsafe in the area. Respondents would like to see action to tackle drug dealers and antisocial behaviour. Street drinking specifically was a problem affecting many.

“The drug dealers on the top of my street all day long and night we report to police and nothing gets done.”

“Groups of people on Harehills lane and surrounding area drinking, just hanging around being intimidating throwing rubbish about and disrespecting the area.”

Some respondents felt that the best way to improve safety was to increase police presence.

“Increase the amount of policing in the area, and make sure the laws are upheld more.”

- **Environment (roads, tidiness etc.)**

The most common issue that people talked about was rubbish – fly-tipping and littering are significant problems. People would like to see regular cleaning and a solution to fly-tipping. One person suggested a more positive use for spaces that often fill with rubbish:

“I want to see more green spaces, in the back to backs there are bin areas that aren't in use or just dumping grounds, these could easily become community gardens”



A number of people would like to see improvements to the roads, reduced traffic, traffic calming measures and better air quality.

- **Housing**

Respondents felt that absent or rogue landlords contributed to the deterioration in the area because they don't maintain their properties and are not held to account. Fewer rental houses and more regulation of landlords were proposed as solutions.

“Landlords looking after their properties properly, my house is my own and I keep it and my garden very tidy. My neighbour is the absolute opposite. Doesn't care at all!!”

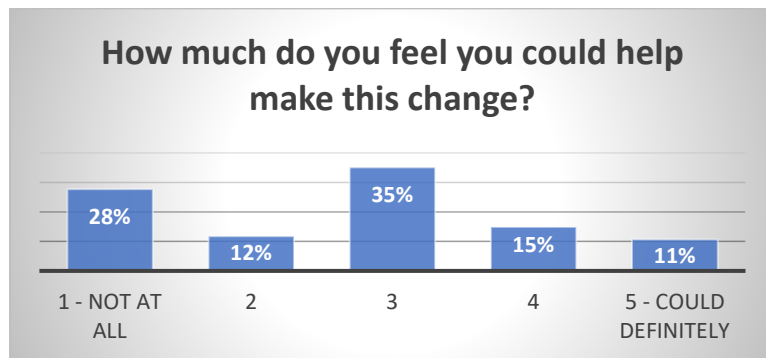
- **Different amenities/services**

Respondents want to see healthy activities and parks for children, fewer fast-food shops, betting shops and off-licences, and more places to get fresh food. Some people felt an increase in Eastern European stores had replaced English and Asian shops.

“Proliferation of betting places, off-licences/supermarkets, fast food shops (many fronts for money laundering, drug use and fake items).”

How much do you feel you could help make this change?  
(1 - not at all, 5 - could definitely) (Respondents = 94)

Over a quarter (28%) of respondents didn't feel they were able to help make changes at all and only 11% felt they could definitely help. Over a third (35%) of respondents were in the middle (selecting 3 out of 5) indicating they felt they had some power to make changes.



Have you ever tried to raise an issue about the area?  
(Respondents = 92)

Over two thirds (69%) of the respondents had tried to raise an issue about their area and just over a quarter (27%) had not tried, 4% were not sure.

Where would you go if you wanted information, to report something to the council or get support with an issue?  
(Respondents = 93)

People commonly go to the council/council website and councillors when they want to report something or get support. People often go online to get support (16%), including using social media (8%), and outside of statutory services, people go to their local community centre/libraries (15%).

Where would you go?	Number	Percentage
<b>Council</b>	23	25%
<b>Councillor(s)</b>	23	25%
<b>Online/Internet</b>	15	16%
<b>Library/Compton Centre</b>	14	15%
<b>Council website</b>	8	9%
<b>MP</b>	7	8%
<b>Police</b>	7	8%
<b>Social media (Facebook, Twitter)</b>	7	8%
<b>People active in the community</b>	3	3%
<b>Harehills Community Watch</b>	2	2%
<b>One stop centre</b>	2	2%
<b>Anti-Social Behaviour Team</b>	1	1%
<b>Citizens Advice</b>	1	1%
<b>Don't know</b>	12	13%



What might stop you raising a concern or raising an issue?

(Respondents = 87)

There were four main reasons people wouldn't raise a concern or issue: the belief nothing would happen; the feeling concerns were ignored; the fear of negative consequences; and not knowing where to go or who to speak to.

- **Lack of action – “nothing happens”**

The most common response to this question was that people didn't think anything would happen if they raised a concern or reported an issue. For many, they had personal experience of reporting things and seeing nothing change as a result.

“Frustration if it's something I've raised before and not had any feedback or seen any improvement from the last time.”

- **Concerns are ignored**

Even at the time of reporting, many respondents felt that they were not listened to, not believed or that the person/organisation they were speaking to didn't care about their situation.

“I've been ignored previously.”

- **Fear of consequences**

Another common response was that people were afraid of what would happen to them if they reported issues in their area. The main worry was around their and their family's safety with respondents fearing “violence” “reprisals” “retribution” “comeback” and “backlash.”

“Reporting things to the police because people involved know where I live.”

There were other potential personal consequences that stopped people from raising issues such as disputes with neighbours being on the record could make it difficult to sell their house and one person was concerned they would be labelled a racist.

- **Where to go/How to raise an issue**

Many respondents didn't know where to go or who to speak to if they did want to raise an issue. Additional barriers were highlighted where English was not their first language, or they did not have the digital skills required.

“Not knowing how or who to go to when wanting to raise the issue.”

“If it had to be done online because it can feel overwhelming and disconnected.”

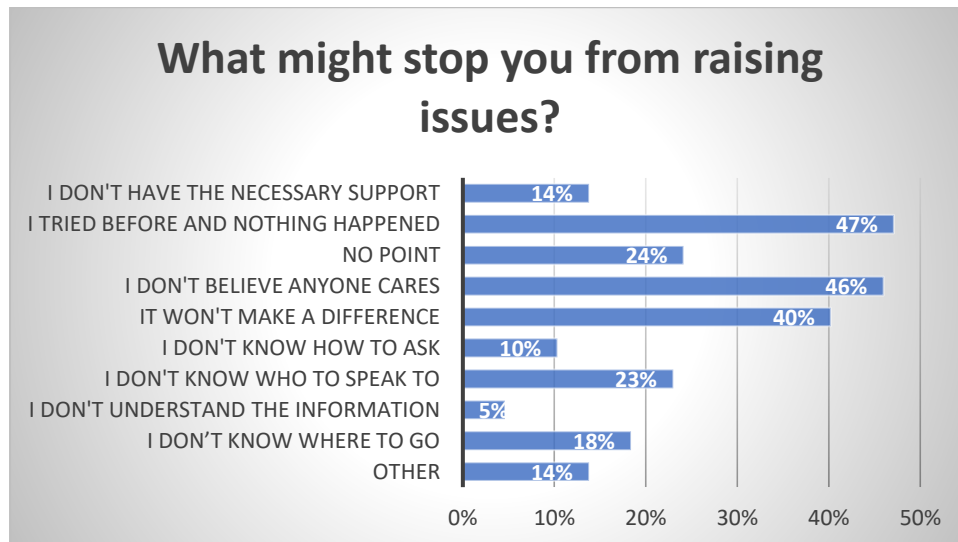
- **Other**

Other reasons given by several respondents were that reporting issues was time-consuming, not having the confidence, public resources being limited, and apathy. For around 10% of respondents, there was nothing stopping them from raising issues – one added, they could do it anonymously.

Thinking about other factors, what might stop you from raising issues?

(Respondents = 87)

The main factors selected that stop residents from raising issues were 'I tried before and nothing happened', 'I don't believe anyone cares' and 'It won't make a difference' which also came out strongly in the open text responses. Almost a quarter of respondents (23%) didn't know who to speak to.



Under 'Other' respondents repeated issues of time, a lack of resources, a feeling of hopelessness and one person said 'racism' would stop them raising issues.

What would help you/inspire you to try to make a change?

(Respondents = 84)

- **Effective Systems - action and results**

Around a third of the responses to this question were connected to systems, a desire to see action and positive change led by public institutions. Although being listened to and having councillors and other public servants engaged in community discussions were a key priority, there was also a call for action not just words. Some respondents would like to see more police presence and support.

*"If those in positions to make change listened and supported local groups with actions not just words."*

Respondents requested:

- People in positions of power listening and being part of dialogue
- Active, committed, engaged councillors
- Proactive work from the council
- Funding/investment – especially for housing
- Clearer direction
- Quicker responses
- Easier reporting channels
- Resources from all stakeholders
- Creative new approaches to tackle issues

- **Collective community action**

Harehills residents were not just calling for the Local Authority or the police to act, many respondents were/would be inspired to be part of the change by seeing residents join together to be involved in the solutions.

Respondents talked of residents coming together to organise groups, plan family events, and encourage each other. As a collective, many thought they would be in a better position to put pressure on “the powers that be” to solve issues in the area.

“Encouragement by others and like-minded groups/people coming together would inspire me to try to make a change.”

- **Seeing a difference**

Related to the theme of collective community action, for a lot of people, seeing that others are taking action and there is noticeable change for the better is something that will inspire them to be involved. Also, seeing action led by Leeds City Council would also motivate people to be involved in making change.

“Seeing change actually happen. To see communities supporting any effort for change.”

- **Signposting and support**

By removing the barrier of not knowing where to go or how to raise issues, people could feel empowered to make change happen in the area. A number of respondents felt they needed more support to be able to make changes, whether that was information on who they could contact for different issues, a website sharing what was happening in the area, or through a local community centre.

“If there was a designated place/website just for Harehills related issues.”

“A lot of information, support and guidance. I am ready to help but don't know, where do I start?”

- **Nothing will change**

For a minority of respondents (n=7), there is nothing that could help them to try to make a change, either because they were disillusioned after trying in the past, they felt the problems were too big for them to tackle or there wasn't an issue they were interested in changing.

Is there anything else you'd like to say?  
(Respondents = 57)

In response to this question, some people reiterated requests for more support from Leeds City Council and the police, and one person wanted to see an increase in diversity of community role models and support for project leaders.

The other responses focused on the barriers to change, expressed a sense of hopelessness or highlighted the potential of the area.

- **Barriers to change**

National issues such as central government funding, the impact of austerity, policy change and the difficulties of the post-Brexit landscape were listed as barriers to long-term solutions, even if small scale community action could make small changes. One area of policy several respondents felt strongly about was regarding the regulation of landlords and rented accommodation.

At an individual level, respondents restated the difficulty of knowing how to get involved or where to get information, and digital exclusion (not having access to the internet/data on phones) was mentioned as a further barrier.

- **Hopelessness**

A number of respondents felt the situation was out of their control and talked about the decline of the area over the last few decades. With the council seen as uncaring, people don't know where to turn.

*"The council appear not to care. There is no proactive approach. Residents are exasperated."*

- **Potential for the area**

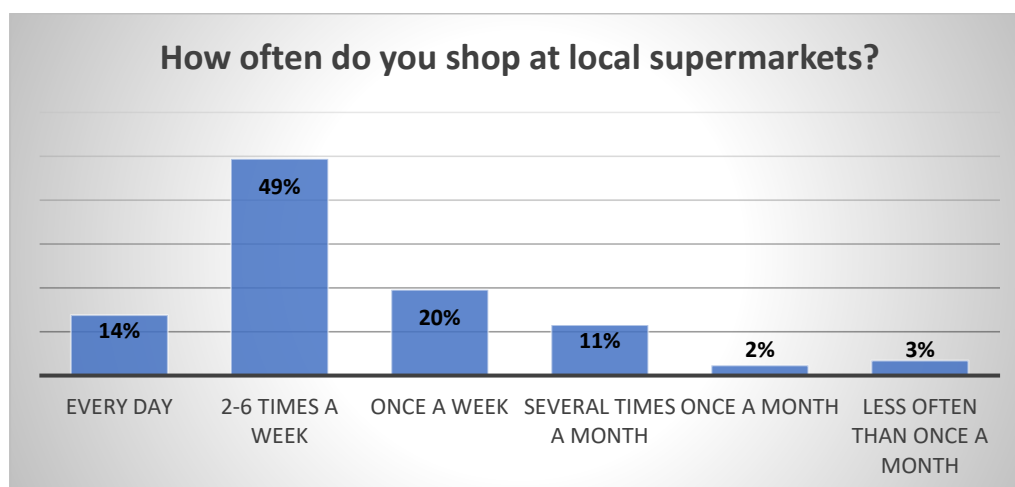
Of the 56 responses to this question, 10 focused on the potential of the area and some shared existing positives of living in Harehills. Several people criticised the fact there is a lot of bad publicity about Harehills but the positive work going on is not reported, this contributes to the stigma the area and residents face.

*"Harehills gets a very bad reputation and there are lots of decent families that live in this area. There is a stigma and it is only in the news for bad things. There are lots of fantastic volunteers and projects going on!"*

How often do you shop at local supermarkets?

(Respondents = 87)

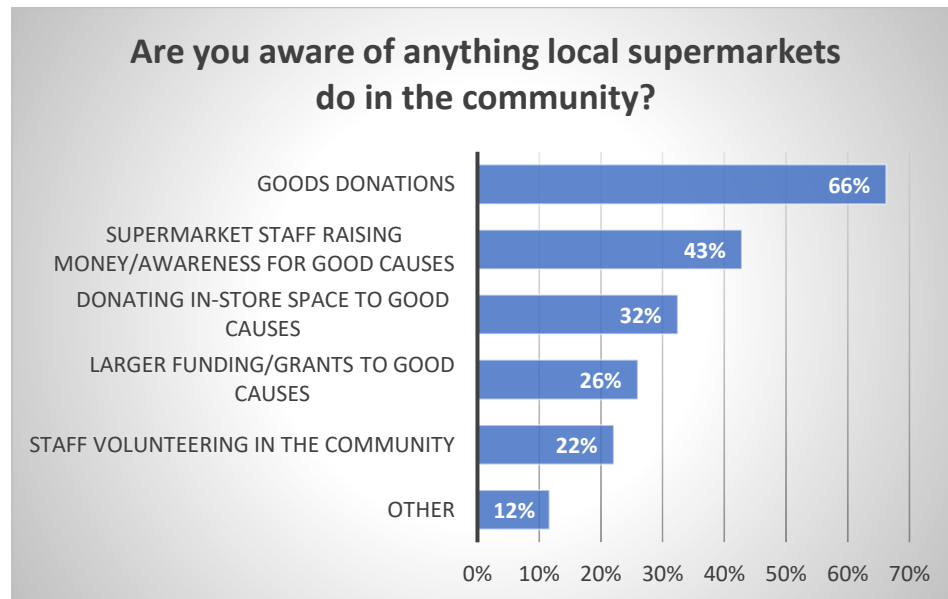
The majority of respondents (63%) go to the local supermarket more than once a week, a fifth (20%) go once a week and only 5% go once a month or less.



Are you aware of anything the local supermarkets do in the community?

(Respondents = 77)

People were most aware of goods donations from supermarkets and fewer respondents knew about larger grant funding or staff volunteering. Most responses under 'other' (n=7) were not aware of anything supermarkets do to support communities. One person referenced Tesco's feminine hygiene product donations.



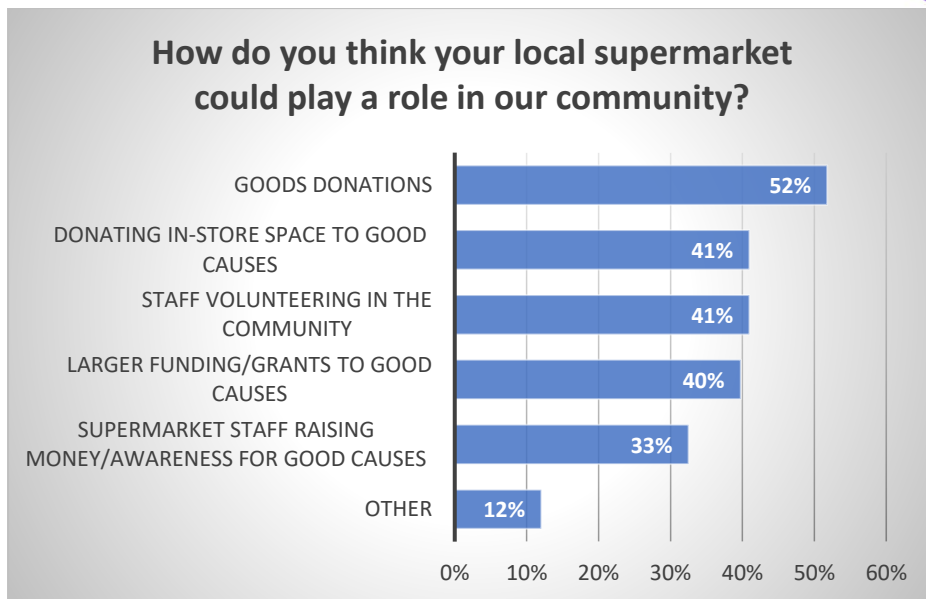
How do you think your local supermarkets could play a role in our community?

(Respondents = 83)

Over half (52%) of respondents thought goods donations should be part of the supermarkets' role, although that is lower than the number who were aware of this activity in the previous question.

Under 'other', respondents suggested a range of ways supermarkets could support communities:

1. Making their community role more visible
2. Attending more events
3. Reducing food waste
4. Sanctions against unethical suppliers
5. Supporting staff to get involved with local projects
6. Ensuring the same organisations/groups are not just the ones to benefit
7. Community gardens
8. Lower prices

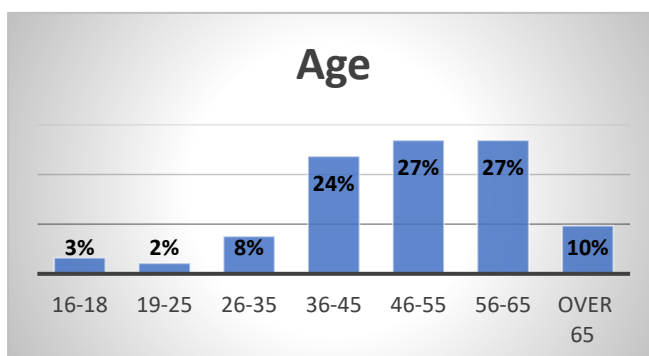


### Summary

- **83% of residents** who completed the survey are in stores **at least once a week**
- They are most aware of goods donations from supermarkets
- After goods donations, respondents felt donating in-store space, staff volunteering, and larger grant funding were equally important
- There is a lack of awareness about community champions and what supermarkets do for communities

### Demographics

(Respondents age = 93; gender = 93; ethnicity = 78; Disability = 89)



**Age:** The majority of respondents were aged 36-65, only 13% were 35 or under.

**Gender:** The majority of respondents were women (70%), 27% were men and 3% preferred not to say.

**Disability:** 70% of the respondents did not have a disability, 25% had a disability and 5% preferred not to say.

**Ethnicity:** The majority of the respondents identified as White British (42%), although this may be higher because 12% identified as simply British or English and 6% as White. Asian/British Asian residents made up 22% of respondents, African 5%, White European 5%, Afro-Caribbean 3%, the remaining 5% were mixed heritage.

## General Recommendations

The respondents to this survey would like to see much more investment in Harehills and also policy change to support improvements in the area. There are also some recommendations for the council, councillors, the police from this research that could be implemented in the short-term:

1. **Provide clear information** about where to go and who to speak to for different issues.
2. **Have a presence** in the area and be involved in **dialogue** with the community – attend events and groups. Being visible and making sure community members know where they are and when is important. Go to welcoming spaces where people feel comfortable and use clear language ('surgery' doesn't have positive connotations for many). One LCC councillor has a clear, accessible poster which gives all the key information about her and specific times she will be in a community café (a pleasant, neutral environment). Visibility can include social media to share updates and opportunities for community members to be heard.
3. **Give feedback** on action that has been taken/why action hasn't been taken/when something is planned to happen – this could help people feel they are being heard. One LCC councillor sends a summary at the end of the year of the work they have been involved in. There could be a template from Leeds City Council asking all councillors to do this.
4. **Raise awareness** of changes that have been made – seeing change inspires residents to be involved.
5. **Support people** to believe they can create change. Many feel disheartened after not succeeding in the past or not knowing where to start. A 'Community Voice Course' could offer training to link like-minded residents and provide information on how to make change.

## Recommendations for supermarkets

1. Raise awareness of what supermarkets can do for the communities around them – promote the community champion roles.
2. Find out what the community would like supermarkets to do e.g. reducing food waste.
3. A large number of people visit stores in person at least once a week – use stores to share information and connect people. Supermarkets can make more use of their community notice boards and include local information.
4. Leaflets/magazines - these are currently generic, could they dedicate a page to the area in which they are distributed in/or insert an additional flyer?
5. Think about where community boards are, how big they are and what they contain.
6. Some stores have stalls where services can present/chat/be available because it is somewhere most community members visit.
7. Staff have expertise in a range of areas. Supermarkets could support community groups more broadly, for example, technological or social media training from the IT or communications/marketing teams.





### Limitations of the Study

The survey was only available in English. This affected the demographics of the people it reached; we would expect the proportion of respondents who identified as Eastern European, Roma, Asian/British Asian and Black African to be higher if it was representative of the area. The researchers considered ways of making it available in other languages but there are additional literacy challenges in some communities in their first language that may be a barrier to completing a survey. It was decided to pilot the research in English, with the hope of having a second phase in the future using focus groups with support to include speakers of other languages. The majority of respondents were women (70%) so future work will seek to involve more men and different gender identities.

The project was time-limited, with data collection taking place over 4 weeks. The response was good (n=95) for a community research project, and while the researchers do not claim that the findings represent the whole of Harehills, they do give a flavour of residents' experiences.

### Reflections on the Research

The Community Researchers were invited to share their reflections on the findings.

The Community Researchers who carried out this research live in East Leeds (four of the group live in Harehills) so they have lived experience of the challenges in the area as well as the positives.

Some of the respondents to the survey put the blame for the deterioration of the area and littering/fly-tipping on other residents not taking responsibility for their homes and their areas. One Community Researcher reflected that there is a wider context: due to changes in how and where waste is collected, many large households simply don't have enough bin space to contain their rubbish. Also, landlords are frequently found to be responsible for dumping rubbish rather than tenants.

Rather than attributing blame to residents, they can be supported to understand how to create change and contribute to their street/community. This could be through education at school on different issues to empower young people to contribute to change. Promoting the role of key community spaces such as libraries can help.

*"I always think take more responsibility can sound like locals are being blamed for not doing enough when lots are and it's soooo hard to make change when the big systems push people back all the time."* [Community Researcher]

Regarding crime, a Community Researcher comments that many would like to see a public health approach, not criminalisation of those struggling most with life and poverty. In relation to this, they question whether an increased police presence is what is needed, and whether they have the appropriate training to deal with some common challenges; there is perhaps a need for other services.



At a recent PACT (Police and Communities Together) meeting, people expressed a need for improved policing (more culturally and gender sensitive, more diversity on the teams, better language in how they speak to people) and improved systems of reporting, rather than just more officers.

*“We need far more services that we have, especially ones that allow us to solve our own issues such as clear accessible information, stronger regulations for bad landlords, more community spaces and a council tip!” [Community Researcher]*

## Supermarkets

### Community champions

The Researchers have questions about the support Community Champions receive in different supermarkets:

- Who supervises and motivates the champions?
- How much is the role valued and supported?
- What training and development is given?
- What other support do champions feel they need?

Community champions need to be given protected time and supported to build their skillset and confidence in the role so they can understand their local area, and network on all levels in the community to create maximum impact with their resources. Management should support champions to have an evidence-based practice to ensure the sustainable use of resources a supermarket invests in the community.

The roles differ greatly from one supermarket chain to another (from the number of hours worked to the size of the budget they have) so it is important that the offer is clear.

### Notice Boards

The Community Researchers visited all of the main supermarkets to compare their notice boards. They found several to be in areas where most people won't see them, and some were blocked by crates and cleaning materials.

*“Supermarkets seem to have very low expectations of who will look at them [notice boards] and our local ones Tesco and Morrisons have shrunk drastically in the last 10 years.” [Community Researcher].*

They recommend supermarkets think about where community boards are, how big they are, what they contain, and what's in front of them. How visible and noticeable are they? Why do they get blocked?

### Space

Space is vital for helping people get together and create change so offering space inside or out is useful. Many supermarkets do have a community room they can offer but very few people seem to know about them. More could be made of outdoor space e.g. events in car parks which are not full even at peak times.

Outdoor space could include more plants/trees and a sensory garden to combat emissions in this high pollution area. There could be benches and a free herb garden.

A recycling centre could help to reduce some of the rubbish dumped in streets because there isn't one elsewhere in Harehills now.

A family-friendly café in a local supermarket could support residents coming together and also be profitable for the store.

### **Staff**

Supermarket staff could be supported to volunteer on local projects. There should also be efforts to think beyond typical forms of support to communities, for example, providing guidance on organisation setup, admin, HR, tech skills, social media/website/marketing which community groups can benefit from. This could be online/remote or in person. It could be a live or pre-recorded course. If the supermarkets don't deliver it directly, they could offer funding to access it from third parties.

### **Conclusion**

The Researchers recognise that making positive change needs the involvement of the community and they saw a clear desire to be involved in the survey responses. They are keen to share these findings and feed back to those who gave their time to complete the survey, as well as work with key relevant people in the area who can support community action.

“Through the findings, I also understood on a new level that more people care deeply about the same things as each other including things such as safety, environment and the sense of community (this is evident across ethnicities, gender, age etc). This furthers my confidence in the fact that there is more that unites us, than that separates, and in the possibilities of working together and creating long lasting positive change.” [Community Researcher]