

EPSOM PANTRY IMPACT REPORT



3 YEARS ON - MAY 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 Impact Survey evaluates Epsom Pantry's effectiveness after three years, based on responses from 91 members (59% response rate). Findings demonstrate the Pantry's growing impact on financial resilience, food security, community connection, and personal development.



There has been a statistically significant decrease in the percentage of clients who are finding it "very difficult to cope" financially, compared to 2022. In 2022, 70% were struggling financially, dropping to 40% in 2025.



National polling shows only a slight improvement in household finances across the UK over the same period. This suggests that the boost in members' financial wellbeing is at least partly due to their involvement in Epsom Pantry, not wider economic changes.



75% of members say they feel more in control of their finances since joining the Pantry, and 64% say their finances have improved. Members who joined over two years ago are more likely to feel this way (81% vs 57%), suggesting that financial resilience builds with time at the Pantry.



Regular use of the Pantry saves members approximately £30–£35 per visit, helping 67% afford essentials and 51% avoid or repay debt.

Significantly, 37% of members have begun saving up from 11% in 2022. The impact on people's ability to save is particularly marked, reinforced by the Pantry Savings Scheme.



More members can now afford leisure activities, education, and/or training opportunities, showing signs of long-term stability. These improvements show that as basic needs are met, members can focus on other priorities and start planning for the future.



I have more days out with the children. I am less anxious. I have paid off more of my IVA [debt] and am more in control of my finances.



It has reduced the stress and worry over running out of food. I can give the boys more fruit and veg as I always stock up. I feel less embarrassed about using the Pantry and feel more of a community now.



Food insecurity has declined among Pantry members: 93% of members feel less anxious about feeding their families, and three quarters report healthier eating habits. Indicators, such as skipping meals, have improved since 2023, though many members still face significant food insecurity.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beyond food, the Pantry fosters a strong sense of community and emotional support. 81% feel less isolated, and 89% more connected to the community. Members value friendly staff and the stigma-free environment. Most feel listened to (88%) and report increased confidence (73%).



It has educated me on all the support I could get. The people are so caring and attentive. It has kept me out of isolation and, most of all, given me motivation to leave my home.



Engagement in community activities continues to grow, particularly among long-standing members. Over three-quarters have participated in events like savings schemes, energy support, and cooking workshops. Members value learning opportunities and want more sessions, particularly in cooking, crafts, and wellbeing.

Members most value having access to affordable, healthy food; the friendly, non-judgemental staff; and being part of a welcoming, supportive community. They also appreciate the wider support, and having a place they can turn to during difficult times.



I feel part of something special. Bex and the team go above and beyond to make people feel welcome and happy in a non-judgemental way. So happy I found the Pantry!!



Overall, the Pantry continues to deliver on its goals—offering not just food, but dignity, hope, empowerment, and a sense of belonging.



I feel like I have people who I can talk to and that they truly care how I'm doing.



INTRODUCTION

This report assesses the impact of Epsom Pantry after three years, based on a survey of members in May 2025. All members visiting the Pantry during a four-week period were invited to complete a paper survey about their experiences.

We received 91 responses in total – a response rate of 59% of active members who have visited the Pantry within the previous three months. Many of the survey questions were repeated from similar surveys carried out in November 2022 and 2023, allowing comparisons over time.

EVALUATION AIMS

Epsom Pantry seeks to be a welcoming community hub built around food, offering affordable and healthy food, access to information and support, and opportunities for volunteering and learning new skills.

The impact survey was designed to monitor progress against four core outcomes:

1.

Increasing financial
resilience

2.

Reducing food
insecurity

3.

Building
community

4.

Learning and
sharing new skills



ABOUT THE MEMBERS

Just under half (46%) of the members joined the Pantry more than two years ago. The rest joined within the last two years – 34% between one and two years ago and 20% within the past year.

46%

Most members (82%) reported visiting the Pantry “most weeks or every week” – slightly down from 93% in 2023. This follows efforts to encourage those who can manage to come less often, to create more space for new members.

Weekly shopping is more common among members who find it “difficult” or “very difficult” to cope financially (92%) than among those who are “not comfortable but coping” (75%).

Long-standing members, who joined more than two years ago, are also more likely to visit weekly compared with newer members (93% vs 73%), regardless of their financial situation. This suggests that habits and expectations of usage become more fixed over time and are more easily shaped when people first join.

Looking ahead, only 7% of members expect to use the Pantry less often, whilst 13% expect to use it more. There is little difference between members in different financial situations or by length of membership.

Although I don't visit every week, it helps me to know I have support when I need it, especially with bills going up e.g. water, gas. To get essentials is a great help. Thank you.

The socio-economic profile of the membership is largely unchanged from previous years:

- When including other household members, 37% of those who are supported are children – significantly higher than the proportion in the whole of Epsom & Ewell (20%).
- 10% of members are pensioners, up from 4% in 2022 (compared with 18% locally).
- Majority of Pantry members are in paid work; 8% self-employed, 24% part-time, and 23% full-time, similar to previous years.
- Among non-working members, 29% are carers, 24% are retired, 20% are stay-at-home parents, and 22% have a long-term illness or disability.



MEMBERS' FINANCIAL SITUATION



Around 4 in 10 members said they were finding it “difficult” or “very difficult” to cope financially. [This is a notable improvement from previous years](#), when around 7 in 10 members in 2022 and 6 in 10 members in 2023 said they were struggling to cope – see Chart 1 below.

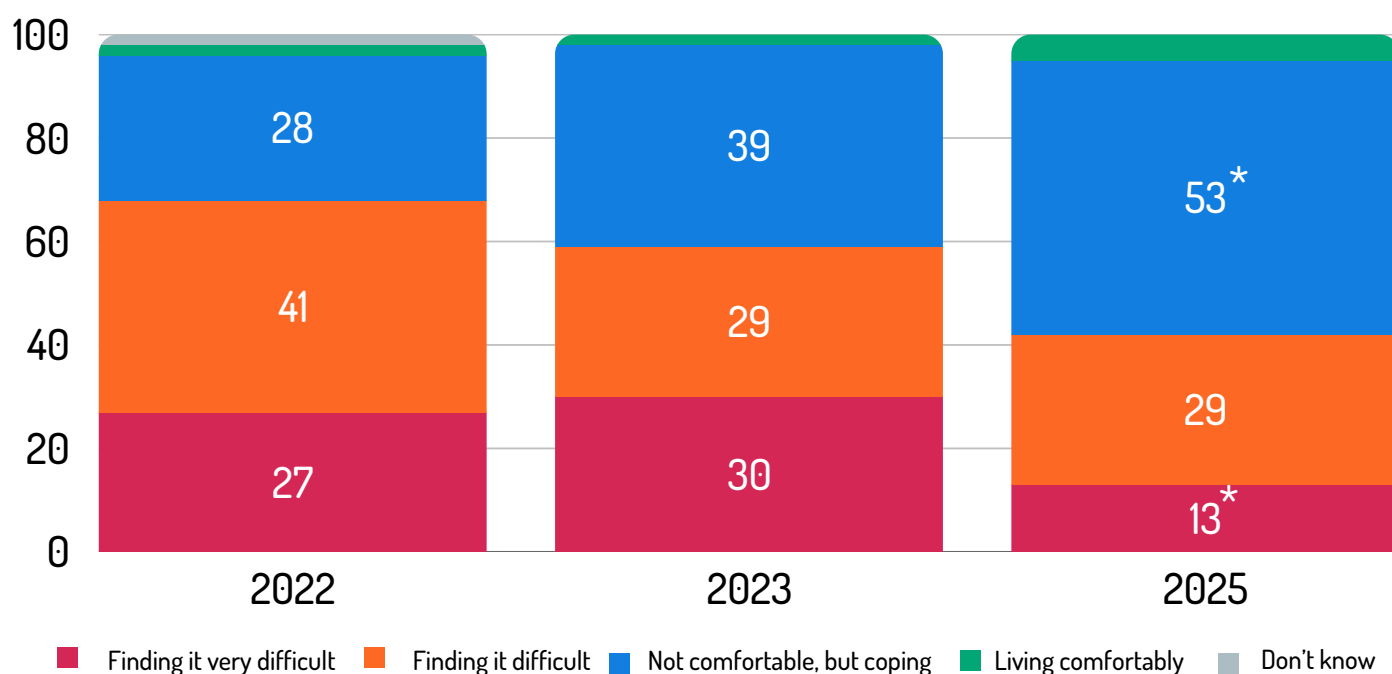


National polling shows only a slight improvement in household finances across the UK over the same period. [This suggests that the boost in members' financial wellbeing is at least partly due to their involvement in Epsom Pantry, not wider economic changes.](#)



This is backed up by another survey question: nearly two-thirds of members (64%) said their financial situation had improved since joining the Pantry, and just 7% said things had got worse. [The longer members have been with the Pantry, the more likely they are to report a positive change](#) – 68% compared to 61%.

Chart 1: How are you coping financially at the moment...?



*=statistically significant to 2022, at the 95% confidence level.

IMPACT OF THE PANTRY

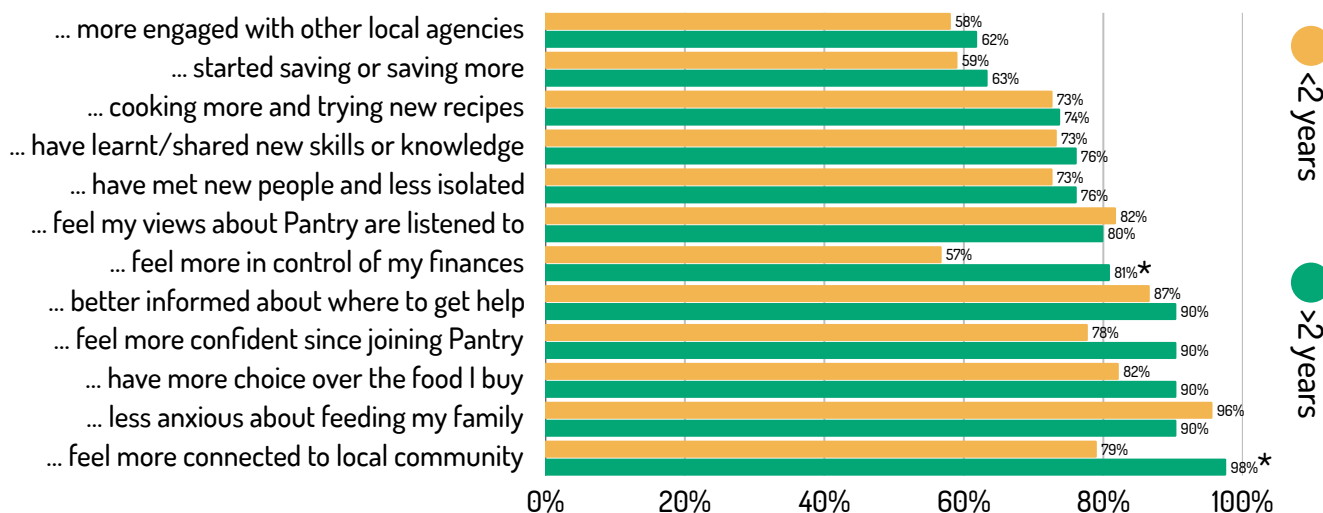
Epsom Pantry seeks to be a welcoming community hub built around food, offering affordable and healthy food, access to information and support, and opportunities to volunteer and learn new skills. Our impact survey was designed to measure progress against these core outcomes.

1. INCREASING FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

The Pantry helps prevent members from falling into crisis, reducing the need for the Foodbank. Members save around £30-35 per shop – or around £1,500 per year – which can go towards housing and energy bills, paying off debts, or building a savings pot to protect against future shocks:

- 75% of members say they feel more in control of their finances since joining the Pantry.
- Members who joined over two years ago are more likely to feel this way (81% vs 57%), suggesting that financial resilience builds over time, as do a range of other positive outcomes – see Chart 2 below.

Chart 2: Impact of Pantry membership on key outcomes, by length of membership



*=statistically significant to members who joined less than two years ago, at the 95% confidence level.

In response to a separate question:

- 67% of members said that the money they have saved has helped them afford the basic essentials.
- 51% said that it has helped them avoid or repay debt.
- 37% said it has helped them save for the future, up from 11% in 2022 and 25% in 2023.

These indicators show that Pantry membership is having a positive impact on people's financial health. It also plays a vital role, in supporting members through difficult times in their lives:

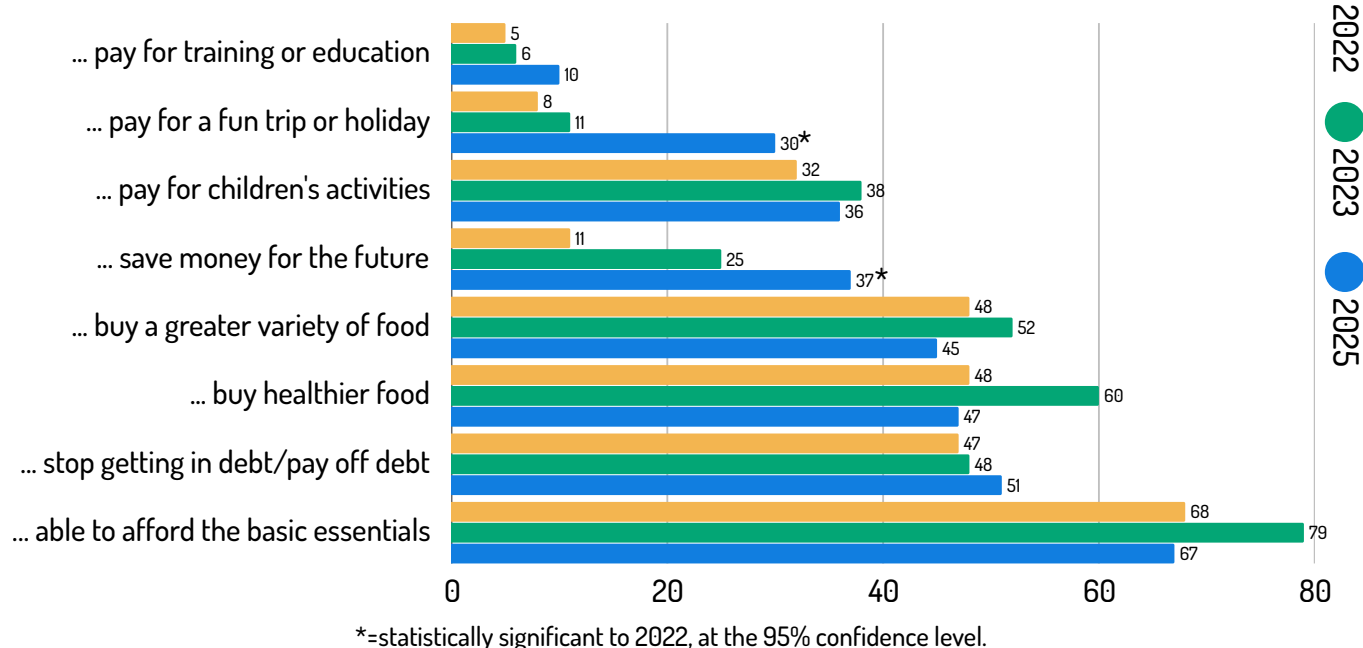
I have recently been moved to universal credit so rather than weekly, I'm paid monthly which I've found very difficult to master. The Pantry helps me top up my fridge and cupboards when money is tighter towards the end of the month.

After a divorce and being left with covering the majority of the costs and the caring responsibilities, this impacted my ability to work as the children have additional needs. For the first time, we faced food insecurity, and the Pantry was a safety net to nourish us when in need. The warm and welcoming environment meant there was no stigma or shame here. It feels like a safe and kind space during harsher times.



The impact on people's ability to save is particularly marked, reinforced by the Pantry Savings Scheme, which incentivises members to save regularly to reach a target annual amount of either £100 or £200.

Chart 3: How has the money you saved by coming to the Pantry helped you...?



Other signs of growing financial security are:

- 30% of members can now afford fun trips or holidays (up from 8% in 2022).
- 10% can now afford to pursue education or training (up from 5%).

These improvements show that as basic needs are met, members can focus on other priorities and start planning for the future.

2. REDUCING FOOD INSECURITY

By giving members access to affordable and healthy food, the Pantry is helping to tackle food insecurity and support healthier diets:

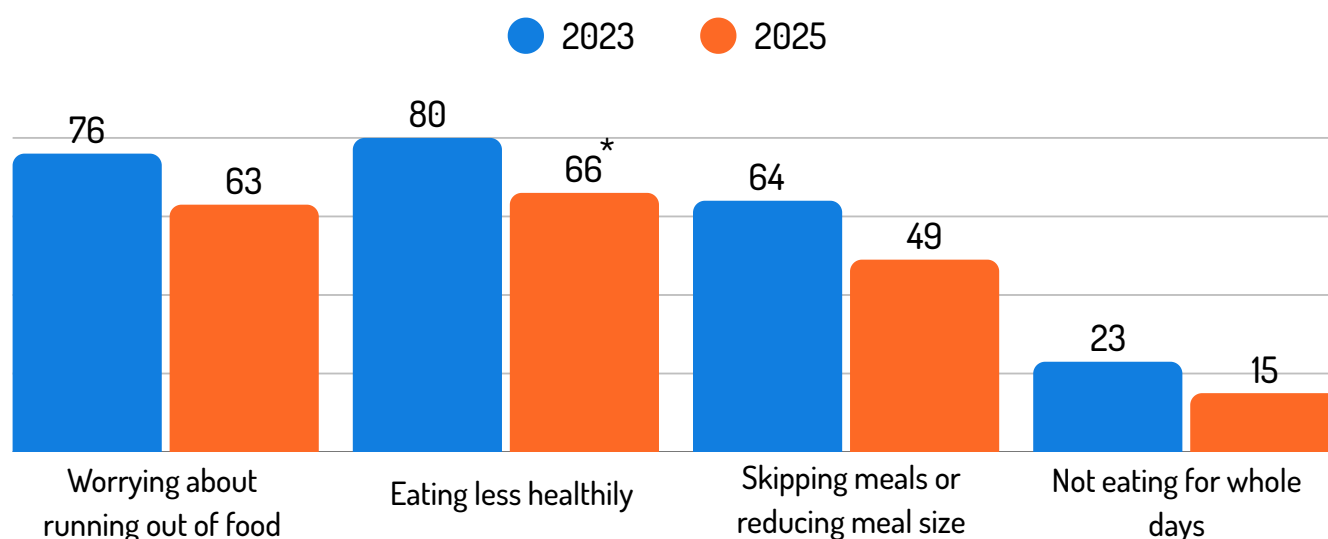
- 93% of members feel less anxious about feeding their family (unchanged from 2023).
- 86% say they now have more choice over the food they buy.
- 76% eat more fresh fruit and vegetables, whilst 61% eat more fish and meat.
- 74% are cooking more and trying new recipes – likely encouraged by our cooking workshops.
- 58% are eating fewer ready meals and processed food.

Levels of food insecurity among Pantry members are still relatively high:

- 63% still worry about running out of food.
- 49% have skipped meals or reduced meal size.
- 15% have gone without food for a whole day within the past three months.

However, all these indicators of food insecurity have improved since the last survey was carried out in 2023 – see Chart 4 below. Alongside members' testimonies, this suggests that the Pantry is easing the financial pressure and improving food security.

Chart 4: Indicators of food insecurity over previous 3 months



*=statistically significant to 2023, at the 95% confidence level.

“Being a Pantry member has made life a lot easier in terms of putting filling meals on the table for my daughter and me. We have become more adventurous with food and have picked up lots of useful tips. I feel like part of a club and community, and I get a lot of emotional support from the team.”

3. BUILDING COMMUNITY

Epsom Pantry fosters a strong sense of belonging by welcoming people as members, not customers. Shopping sessions, community events and informal interactions help reduce isolation and build trust:

- 81% say they have met new people and feel less isolated (up from 71% in 2022).
- 89% feel more connected to the community (up from 78%).
- These benefits are most strongly felt by long-standing members.

For many members, the Pantry has become an important part of their social life — a place where they feel supported, both emotionally and practically. The staff's friendliness, which many members mention, goes a long way in breaking down any feelings of stigma or embarrassment about needing help or facing financial difficulties.

Members are encouraged to get involved, by volunteering, joining the Pantry Steering Group, and taking part in focus groups:

- 88% of members say that their views about the Pantry are listened to.
- 73% say they feel more confident since joining.

This shows that when we build a caring community, listen to people's views, and involve them in how the Pantry is run, it makes a real difference to our members — and helps the charity too.

The Pantry has made me feel safe and looked after. I have a chat and feel a part of the community. When I first started coming, I felt a failure as I have always been able to manage, but I don't feel like that anymore.

Chart 5: Impact of Pantry on core outcomes (% agreeing with each statement)



4. LEARNING AND SHARING SKILLS

Once the Pantry's food supply was stabilised, more energy has gone into expanding the range of community workshops and events – a key part of the Pantry model.

Over three-quarters of members have taken part in one or more community activities:



Participation has grown in the last two years and is particularly high among long-standing members [e.g. 63% of long-standing members took part in the Pantry Savings Scheme vs 38% of newer ones].

Feedback on these activities is very positive; as well as developing new skills and knowledge, members appreciate the chance to get out and meet other people:

- 69% of members say they have learned new skills (up from 55% in 2022).
- 84% say they are now better informed about where to get help if needed (up from 74%).

It has helped me to better plan my finances. I have also learnt different ways of cooking (with slow cooker/air fryer), which has increased my confidence

We attended the Christmas Party and it was amazing - everyone coming together as a community and enjoying time and making new friends.

We also asked members what community activities they would like more of. The most popular options were:

- Cooking workshops (51%).
- Art & craft workshops for adults (35%) and for children (32%).
- Community events (34%)

Members shared their own ideas for future workshops, including simple woodworking classes, music therapy, meditation, English classes, and a clothes/school uniform swap shop.

CONCLUSION

Epsom Pantry continues to make a measurable, positive difference to members' lives: improving financial resilience, reducing food insecurity, fostering community, and sharing new skills. Survey results show members are saving money, eating more healthily, and feeling more in control of their finances. The welcoming, stigma-free environment builds confidence, reduces isolation, and encourages skill-sharing. As basic needs are met, members are able to focus on future goals, from saving to education. These achievements are a testament to the Pantry's holistic approach, where access to affordable food is the starting point for improvements in people's wellbeing, support networks, and opportunities.

I feel like I have people who I can talk to and that they truly care how I'm doing.

ELLIE'S STORY

Ellie was referred to Epsom Pantry by the support work team at the foodbank after recently becoming a single parent to newborn twins. Facing financial difficulties, she was referred to Stripey Stork who provided essential baby items and clothing.

At first, Ellie kept to herself. She would quickly do her shopping and leave, not wanting to engage. One day, a volunteer offered to watch her babies while she shopped, sparking a friendly conversation. That small act of community became a turning point. Over time, their chats became a regular part of her visits, and with each one, Ellie's confidence began to grow.

She started sharing ideas for the Pantry, and a volunteer encouraged her to join the Steering Group. Ellie accepted and soon brought forward the idea for "Donate a Diamond", a creative initiative that has since been adopted by other Pantries in the network.

As her twins grew older, Ellie found a new job and no longer needed the Pantry's support.



THANK YOU

We extend our sincerest thanks to those who have funded Epsom Pantry and, in doing so, have helped us build a space that offers dignity, hope, and a foundation for long-term change.

We are especially thankful to:

The Mee Family

Community Foundation Surrey

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council

Raven Housing Trust

We would like to thank the volunteers who continue to support our mission of a poverty-free future for our community. Your generosity and compassion has meant that the Pantry has become a place of comfort and hope for so many.

A special thank you to our Pantry members. You've created a community built from kindness, where everyone who walks through our doors feels supported, respected, and welcomed.



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