

Community Food and Health (Scotland) Annual networking conference



community
food and health
(scotland)



Wednesday 29
October 2014
Grand Central
Hotel, Glasgow

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Background

Community Food and Health (Scotland), or CFHS, hosted a national networking conference in October 2014. This was an opportunity for participants to network with other community food colleagues. The aim of the conference was to provide a valuable day for those involved in tackling health inequalities through community food activity.

The conference allowed people to come together, learn from each other and share experience, evidence, hopes and concerns on all aspects of food, inequality and social justice. National activity as well as local practice was discussed and showcased. The day had an underlying theme of tackling health inequalities and promoting social justice through the medium of food.



Planning

Preparation for the conference began in March 2014. CFHS worked with a planning group, consisting of various colleagues and partners from the community food field, to support the planning of the event. The group met regularly and had input into many of the decision processes. Working with the planning group meant that CFHS had the opportunity to engage with the conference audience and create a day that would be of value to the community food field.



Audience

Around 180 people attended the one-day conference in Glasgow. Delegates included community workers, community growers, volunteers, NHS staff, local authority staff, planners, policymakers and researchers. The conference attracted people with an interest in food, community food initiatives, health inequalities and social justice.

Networking

The conference was a great opportunity for participants to network with one another. Table discussions, a vibrant marketplace and refreshment breaks featured throughout the day, allowing participants to converse with one another. A hashtag was advertised during the morning and delegates were encouraged to tweet and post using Twitter and Facebook throughout the day. A graphic facilitator and photographer captured the day's conversation as it progressed; their images appear throughout this report.



Conference programme

The 2014 conference was buoyantly opened by Ian Shankland from Lanarkshire Community Food and Health partnership. Highlights from the morning included a thought-provoking presentation about food poverty from Liz Dowler.

'All should be able to enjoy a healthy, pleasurable diet in a rich country such as the UK, and should be able to obtain it in socially acceptable ways.'

Liz Dowler, University of Warwick

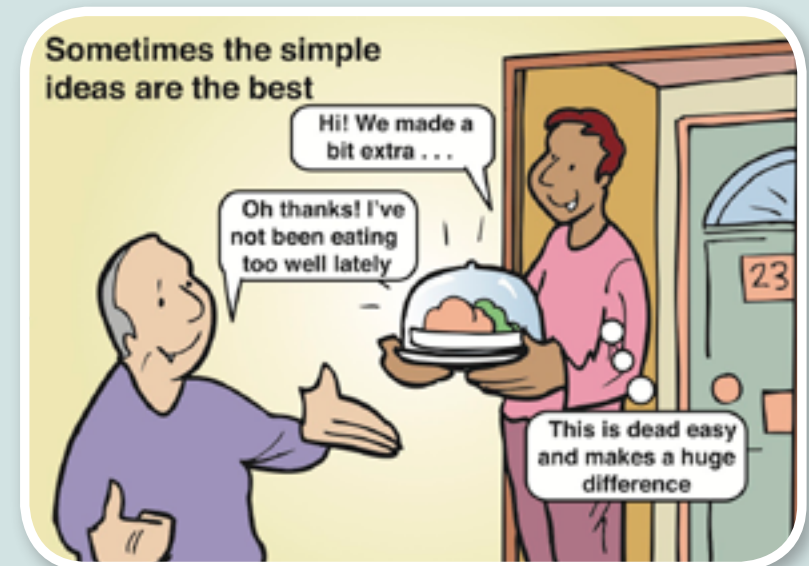
The audience then listened to an interesting and informative presentation about some developing work focused on older people. Michelle McCrindle from the Food Train and Richard Lyall from Scottish Government spoke about the Scottish Government Older People's Task Force and the recently launched Meal Makers initiative. The morning concluded with a showcase from North Glasgow Community Food Initiative.

'Cooks share extra home-cooked food with local older diners finding cooking difficult and not eating well, diners are referred locally as part of the Meal Makers initiative.'

Michelle McCrindle, Food Train

'We feel it is very important that we aim to be a good food nation. However, the key driver must be the consumer/local residents, not so much the food producers and food industry.'

Greig Sandilands, NGCFI



During the morning session the audience were asked what they hoped to gain from being at the conference. This was an opportunity for people to talk to one another and for the planning group to understand what people value from a conference. Discussion centred on networking, finding out new information, making contacts and sharing best practice.

'Opportunities to knit together food and health with environmental sustainability and global justice issues.'

'Promote and gain new ideas through networking.'

'I am looking forward to hearing from keynote speakers talking about the current issues.'

'I am here to promote my organisation through the marketplace.'

'I am new in post, so to hear what's going on will be beneficial.'

'Some better understanding of contexts and frameworks surrounding poverty and food.'

'I am fully aware of national and local activity; these events are great networking opportunities.'

A busy and vibrant marketplace ran throughout the conference with dedicated marketplace time after lunch. This allowed various organisations from across Scotland to showcase their work and delegates to learn about work in different areas.

‘It was a great opportunity to speak to like-minded people about community food and health. Particularly the marketplace, as I came home with lots of reading material and made contacts for the future.’

Delegate

‘As a community food worker, I enjoyed chatting to the representatives in the marketplace about their work. I also found the breakout sessions really informative and can apply what I have learned to my own cookery sessions.’

Delegate



Conference programme

Venue: **The Grand Room**

09:30	Registration and refreshments
10:15	Chair's welcome and setting the scene Ian Shankland, Manager, Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership
10:30	Table discussion – an opportunity for introductions
10:45	Food poverty now: how can we get to a more just food society? Liz Dowler, Professor in Food and Social Policy, University of Warwick
11:20	An appetite for life: encouraging eating well as we age Michelle McCrindle and Richard Lyall from Scotland's Older People's Food Task Force
11:40	The work of North Glasgow Community Food Initiative Greig Sandilands, Manager, North Glasgow Community Food Initiative
12:00	Lunch
12:45	Marketplace – explore, learn and share
13:30	Breakout session(s)
15:15	Healthy eating social marketing programme 2015 – sustainability and links with community food initiatives Susan Solomon, Public Health Social Marketing and Research Coordinator, Scottish Government
15:30	Conference closing remarks by the Chair Ian Shankland, Manager, Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership
15:40	Conference ends with tea, coffee and refreshments

Conference breakout session

The conference ran breakout sessions in the afternoon where delegates could learn about and discuss innovative approaches and good practice. Breakout themes included:

- Evaluation
- Social media
- BME work
- Cooking skills
- Health inequalities and food poverty
- Community growing
- Community cafés
- Partnership working in a rural area
- Partnership working with vulnerable groups

'The conference helped reassure me that I am doing a good job using resources and teaching techniques supported by others in community work.'

Delegate

Some of the audience were able to hear about and discuss a recent Healthier Scotland Cooking Bus evaluation. The workshop was also an opportunity to look at different methods of evaluation. Those attending the social media workshop had the opportunity to consider three key elements: figuring out social media objectives, identifying audience and defining key messages.

Both REACH Community Health Project and Scotia Clubhouse discussed their work in relation to BME communities, which aims to explore participants' understanding of a healthy diet and healthy cooking. The recently launched REHIS Elementary Cooking Skills course was the focus of the cooking skills workshop. Course presenters from local community groups/organisations shared their experiences of running cooking classes.



'Keep up the good work and keep the community focus. It is important that small and local community organisations who are out there in the frontline are supported to keep it all going.'

Delegate

Those attending the health inequalities and food poverty session heard how Aberdeen University has been working with young people at the Foyer, an Aberdeen-based community project looking at food choices and addressing inequalities through community-based interventions. The audience also heard about the research recently commissioned by CFHS to explore the wider context of food poverty in Scotland.

In the Food as a Tool workshop people heard how you can use growing and eating food as a fun and engaging tool in your particular setting. Space and time was also dedicated to discussing running a café, the benefits of the healthy living award and the importance of networking with café colleagues.

Projects based in the Borders and the Western Isles that have successfully engaged with hard-to-reach groups, and also worked in partnership with other services, spoke of their work. Some of the audience also heard from the Cyreniens, a project encouraging people to enjoy all that food can offer, make independent choices and take ownership of their diet.

'I picked up lots of information on pieces of work and research that we are exploring further in Highland, e.g. the development of cooking skills courses and the cooking bus.'

Delegate



Evaluation results

The event was generally evaluated very positively by those who attended. This included the overall organisation and programme content. The vast majority of those who attended agreed that the conference was relevant to them and that they gained useful knowledge as a result of attending. The majority of those who attended also reported that they had made new work contacts on the day. People felt there were enough opportunities for questions, discussion and networking.

‘Liz Dowler’s presentation gave lots of useful facts. And I got ideas for approaches I could use in my work from most of the other sessions.’

Delegate

‘It was good to hear some examples of practical projects working in areas of high need and also hear from volunteers involved with this work.’

Delegate

‘Conference was great, more than happy with what I got from the day and looking forward to putting the learning into practice.’

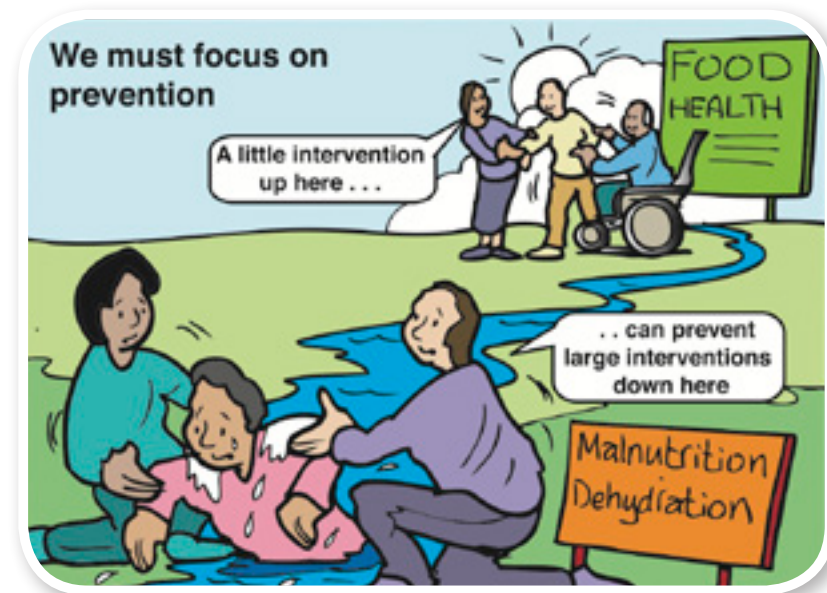
Delegate

There was some critical feedback regarding some PowerPoint slides being ‘too busy’ with ‘small and detailed’ text. This made viewing difficult for some of the audience. Owing to the morning session running over there was limited time for discussion and

questions from the audience. From feedback it is clear that people would have appreciated the agenda keeping to time and for there to have been more time dedicated to questions and discussion. There was also feedback regarding poor lighting in the venue; again this had a negative impact on people’s experience of the conference.

‘Most of the presenters used slides that were far too busy - no-one could see them. It would help if the conference agenda and the chair made clear right at the start whether the slides would later be available on line.’

Delegate



Learning for future events

Overall, the annual networking conference was seen as a success by delegates and conference organisers alike. The presentation on food poverty from Liz Dowler was very well received, as was the opportunity to network. To ensure subsequent events are equally successful, conference organisers will take on board the feedback from the evaluation survey, including any constructive criticism.

For further information about the planning or the evaluation of the CFHS annual conference please contact Jane Oliver:

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