

FOOD MATTERS: an update on developments in food, health and homelessness in Scotland

Edition 2

October 2006

Welcome to the second edition of Food Matters. I am pleased to say that our current network of contacts, who either work in or have an interest in food, health and homelessness issues, is growing at a steady pace. At present the number of direct recipients of our e-newsletter stands at 79, not counting those who receive it through email cascading.

The database encompasses a range of practitioners, policy-makers, development workers, etc., whose experience and expertise in the field of homelessness is varied and far-reaching, and whose knowledge of local practice can only bolster the national initiative.

In order to enhance links between the local and the national and make the national initiative a reality on the ground, I have been out and about visiting a number of projects that work around food and homelessness, and would be very keen to find out more about what your organisation/project/initiative is currently doing or aspires to do around these issues. If you would like to share information, ideas or simply have a chat around related subjects, please do not hesitate to contact me. Naturally, the wider the picture we are able to obtain of current practice in homelessness,

food and health, the more effective we are likely to be at helping to initiate knowledge-sharing, encouraging communication and disseminating good practice between like-minded projects.

With this in mind, we would greatly welcome your cooperation with the baseline **mapping exercise** that we recently commissioned from Blake Stevenson. The aim of this research is to map the nature, scope, scale and location of current practice in Scotland in relation to food, health and homelessness. Inspired by these findings, we aim to tap into existing resources and networks to develop a national programme of conferences, networking opportunities, seminars, training, toolkits and guides, etc., which will hopefully inspire and inform local practice as well as increase the capacity of local agencies to deliver effective food, health and homelessness programmes.

Blake Stevenson will be sending out a proforma to you shortly and we would greatly appreciate if you could spare a small amount of your time to complete this.

Completed surveys will be entered into a prize draw to win £150 for your project!

If you wish to be included in this study and have not yet been contacted by Blake Stevenson, please get in touch with Shelley Dorrans, Senior Consultant, Blake Stevenson Ltd, 0131 335 3700, shelley@blakestevenson.co.uk,

Opportunities for sharing

One of our central aims is to develop opportunities for people to meet and share around homelessness, health and food issues on a national scale. We are currently piloting training that will soon be offered to groups keen on developing their work around food and homelessness, devised and facilitated by the Edinburgh Cyrenians. Based on the work carried out via the Edinburgh Cyrenians' Good Food in Tackling Homelessness programme, the training aims to offer a number of interchangeable modules around such themes as the role of food in tackling homelessness; food access for homeless people; engaging with the homeless population; and improving practice and provision of good food programmes. The aim is for the delivery to be as participatory and interactive as possible and involve people who have experience of homelessness. We hope to roll out this programme shortly and will keep you updated on developments. If you have any queries or ideas regarding this piece of work please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

In a similar vein, we are exploring the possibility of developing the Edinburgh Food Forum model nationally. Food forums have taken place for a number of years now in Edinburgh. The model is based on

bringing together frontline practitioners working in food and homelessness to share knowledge, ideas and experience. SCDP is hoping to potentially promote and underwrite similar forums in other locations around Scotland. This would hopefully enable us to invest in and build on both local and national relations between projects carrying out similar and/or related work. For any further information on the forum model, please get in touch.

Reference Group

The food, health and homelessness Reference Group met for the first time on 15 September. The central purpose of the group is to guide my work and provide the national initiative with crucial links to the field of health and homelessness. Representatives from both the voluntary and statutory sectors from around Scotland were present at the initial meeting. Our current members are: Lizanne Conway, Community Programmes Manager, NHS Health Scotland; Lisa Fallowfield, Community Health Promotion Worker, Aberdeen Foyer; Tina Gibson, Public Health Practitioner, NHS Dumfries and Galloway, and Des Ryan, Director, Edinburgh Cyrenians.

We have opted for a small reference group, but I would like to stress that no initiative or organisation is excluded from influencing the work programme and is in fact crucial to the networking and wider deliberations that the group will be involved in. Regular updates on the work of the Reference Group will be provided through Food Matters and

we warmly welcome specific and/or general feedback from all on this as the work progresses.

General News

SCDP held its annual conference on 28 September in Dundee. Of the 14 workshops on offer, two were themed around homelessness and food. John Worsley from NHS Dumfries and Galloway ran a session on participatory appraisal with homeless people in Dumfries and current activities to improve cooking skills and increase local access to affordable healthy foods. For further information on this work or a copy of the PA report, please contact John Worsley, Nithsdale Public Health Team, 01387 244410, john.worsley@nhs.net.

Isobel Grigor from the Calman Trust in Inverness facilitated a workshop on developing independent living skills around cooking and food preparation based on experiences of her work with young people in temporary or emergency accommodation in and around Inverness. If you would like to find out more about the work of the Calman Trust, please contact the Trust on 01349 883388, info@calman.org

A number of delegates from Scotland will be attending the Federation of National Organisations Working with Homeless People (FEANTSA) Annual Conference in Wroclaw, Poland on 12 and 13 October. This year's conference is entitled 'The Right to Health is a Human Right: Ensuring Access to Health for Homeless People' (more information

available from www.feantsa.org). I will make sure useful information that emerges from this event on food, health and homelessness is fed back to everyone.

Other opportunities to raise the profile of food, health and homelessness will be arising before Christmas 2006, namely the Scottish Council for Single Homeless National Conference on 9 November in Edinburgh (www.scsch.co.uk) and the Annual Scottish Public Health Conference in Peebles on 16 November.

(www.fph.org.uk/policy_communication/events/conference_proceedings_and_publications/scottish_PH_conference_2006.asp), where SCDP, along with a member of the Edinburgh Cyrenians Good Food team will be doing a presentation entitled 'Improving food, health and independent living skills for people who have experienced homelessness and other vulnerable groups'.

The Edinburgh Cyrenians will be hosting an event at the Scottish Parliament on 22 November to promote their Good Food in Tackling Homelessness Programme and to demonstrate the Health and Homelessness Standards in practice. SCDP will be presenting a short piece on sharing good practice in food, health and homelessness around Scotland. More information is available on www.cyrenians.org.uk.

Feedback on all of these events will be available in the next edition of Food Matters.

Finally, as you may already be aware, the Scottish Community Diet Project runs an annual small grants scheme available to groups and agencies within Scotland's low-income communities who wish to improve access to, and take up of a healthy, varied and balanced diet. Out of the forty successful applicants this year we are pleased to say that three were from projects working around food and homelessness in Perth, Greenock and Edinburgh. If you'd like to find out more about the annual small grants scheme, please contact Kim Newstead, knewstead@scotconsumer.org.uk.

Please note that the 2007 Small Grants Scheme opens in April 2007.

Do you want more?

Last but not least, I'd like to take this opportunity to ask current readers of Food Matters if they wish to continue receiving this resource as the national work around food, health and homelessness progresses.

If you would also like to receive SCDP's quarterly newsletter, Fare Choice, which provides news and views, policy and practice information from people and projects tackling food and health inequalities in Scotland, please contact our Information Officer, Alice Baird, abaird@scotconsumer.org.uk.

I hope you enjoyed reading the second edition of 'Food Matters – an update on developments in food, health and homelessness in Scotland' and very much look forward to hearing about your work,

ideas and aspirations and in turn hope to provide you with a forum for stimulating discussion, debate and networking in the months ahead.

For more information please get in touch!

Please note that the Scottish Community Diet Project (SCDP) is in the process of changing its name to Community Food and Health (Scotland). The official name change date will coincide with the launch of our new website in early November.

Claire Street
National Development Officer (Food, Health and Homelessness)
Scottish Community Diet Project
c/o Scottish Consumer Council
Royal Exchange House
100 Queen Street
Glasgow
G1 3DN

Tel: 0141 226 5261
email: cstreet@scotconsumer.org.uk

Please note that the Scottish Community Diet Project (SCDP) is in the process of changing its name to Community Food and Health (Scotland). The official name change date will coincide with the launch of our new website in early November.