



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

Edition 3

February 2007

Welcome to the third edition of *Food Matters*. First and foremost, I would like to thank those of you who took part in the survey conducted by Blake Stevenson, which has helped to draw a profile of food, health and homelessness provision and practice in Scotland. The study was completed in early December 2006. Copies in PDF format will be available soon on our website www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk

The lucky winner of the survey's £150 prize draw is the **Cowgate Centre** in Edinburgh.

Here is a taster of what they do by Lorna Gunn, the Project Director:

"The **Cowgate Centre** is a drop-in centre for Homeless people. It is the only such centre in Scotland open day and night 365 days a year. The centre is open to Homeless people daily from 07.00 – 16.15 and 22.30– 07.00. 07.00 –11.45 is for appointments only 12.45 – 16.30 and 22.30 –07.00 is for drop in. It provides, shelter and respite, food, laundry and washing facilities, advice, assistance, advocacy and referral to other services as well as a casework and case management service to the neediest and most complex individuals.

In addition to these in-house services the Cowgate Centre's accommodation was purpose built to host visiting services and currently hosts a variety of

agencies offering; the Homeless Outreach Project's harm reduction and needle exchange surgeries, Caledonia Youth, Citizens' Advice Bureau, and Alcohol Support Group, Follow Up's tenancy support service, and various arts workshops. These are just a sample of the ever-growing and developing partnership work the Cowgate Centre works with.

The Cowgate Centre is staffed entirely by paid, professional staff and is registered with, and inspected by the Care Commission. The service is commissioned and funded by the City of Edinburgh Council and forms a key part of the city's Homelessness Strategy. The service is operated and governed by Four Square (Scotland), a registered charity. It has robust operating policies and procedures with a strong emphasis on the safety of individuals and the legal and physical integrity of the building."

For more information please contact the Cowgate Centre at cowgate@foursquare.org.uk or visit their website www.foursquare.org.uk

1) Baseline Mapping Exercise

The findings of the baseline mapping study have helped to identify the extent and nature of the work currently being undertaken in the area of food, health and homelessness in Scotland, as well as the needs and aspirations of organisations in the field and developments at planning levels. The study report forms a crucial basis from which the national initiative will draw on to inform its work over the next year or so, tapping as it does into direct information from the field and the wants and needs of practitioners from around the country.

A number of key conclusions and recommendations emerged from the study.

The main conclusions were:

- The essential role of the voluntary sector and faith-based organisations in delivering food, health and homelessness activity.
- The growing trend and/or aspirations amongst these groups, most apparent in the voluntary sector, to develop their work into something that enables service-users to gain independent living skills.
- Recognition that valuable work in the area is being undertaken, but that no comprehensive sources of information are available at local level on the range of agencies undertaking such activity, and that very few sources of information exist in rural areas in particular.
- Knowledge/awareness of food, health and homelessness activity

is uneven across Health Boards and Local Authorities.

The main recommendations (summarised) to emerge were the following:

- The need to raise the profile of food, health and homelessness activity as a key health priority at three different levels: strategic, operational and service-delivery.
- With reference to the above, a particular need to encourage the inclusion of food, health and homelessness as a priority at the local planning level.
- The need for the national Food, Health and Homelessness Initiative to act as a catalyst for encouraging and supporting organisations to link food-related activity to the development of independent living skills, and hence to promote food as a vehicle for social inclusion.

At the recent meeting of the Food, Health and Homelessness Reference Group on 15 January, it was agreed that the issues emerging from the mapping exercise would act as a basis for discussion, and hopefully action, at policy level. We are therefore looking into setting up a roundtable discussion/seminar aiming to highlight the strategic relevance of food in terms of the health improvement agenda for homeless people. This will hopefully be an opportunity to think creatively with key health professionals and health strategists about converting the food, health and homelessness agenda into a greater imperative at the planning level. I will keep you updated on this in the next edition of Food Matters.

2) Opportunities for sharing

Food Forums

Would your project benefit from exploring food, health and homelessness issues with other practitioners/key players etc. in your area? Would you like to improve food provision in your organisation and benefit from sharing experiences with like-minded organisations?

CFHS is keen to support you to host a discussion forum around these themes and others, in your area. This could bring together local homelessness practitioners, hostel staff, homeless centre staff, volunteers, NHS representatives, for example, to share around the issues that are important to **you**. If you are interested or would like to find out more, please contact Claire. CFHS will underwrite agreed organisational costs (hiring of a venue, travel expenses for participants, materials, refreshments etc), initially and when necessary help promote the event as well as assist you with practicalities on the day, if required. What *you* have to do is recruit participants, find a suitable venue, and be willing to take a lead in hosting the event! We would like to promote up to six Food Forums around Scotland for the time being, so if you're interested please get in touch!

Learning and sharing opportunities

Is your project keen to develop its activities around food, health and well-being? Would it benefit from the experience of practitioners running a successful good food programme for homeless people?

Then this training is just what you are looking for! Based around the Edinburgh

Cyrenians' experience of setting up and running the Good Food in Tackling Homelessness programme (www.cyrenians.org.uk), this course is an opportunity for stimulating and creative discussion inspired by tried and tested practice on the ground. The main components of the session will be: an introduction to nutrition and diet issues with a homeless angle, a session on the Edinburgh experience and a plenary session on the needs of your organisation and tailoring good practice models to your local context and area/s of work.

Initially, we would like to run three pilot training courses on a first come first served basis around Scotland. What we need is for you to find a suitable venue, recruit local participants and be willing to take a lead in hosting the event. As for CFHS, we can underwrite a number of agreed costs and help you with practicalities as and when required. If you are interested in hosting a session in your area, or would simply like more information, please contact Claire.

REHIS (Royal Environmental Health Institute for Scotland) Elementary Food and Health Course

Would your project benefit from greater learning around the health benefits of food, with a particular focus on the health and nutrition needs of homeless people?

CFHS are keen to support you to host a recently established REHIS Elementary Food and Health Course in your area, focusing specifically on the dietary needs of homeless people. The course involves six hours of training delivered by a qualified REHIS trainer and is open to anyone with an interest in the subject

of food and health in relation to homeless people or those at risk of homelessness. Initially we would like to promote up to six REHIS Food & Health courses around the country.

We are also keen to promote up to four REHIS Elementary Food Hygiene courses around Scotland. If you are interested in either of the above courses, please get in touch with Claire. What we need from you is information on why the course would benefit your organisation and a breakdown of the costs in hosting such an event. We also need you to find a suitable venue in your area, recruit participants and generally be willing to take a lead in hosting the course. CHFS on the other hand can help you find a qualified trainer in your area and underwrite a number of agreed costs. If you would like more information on the terms of this offer or would like to apply to host one of these courses, please contact Claire.

3) Update on...

FEANTSA Conference

As mentioned in Food Matters 2, FEANTSA (Federation of National Organisations Working with Homeless People) held its annual conference in Wroclaw, Poland in 12 and 13 October. This year's theme was *'The Right to Health is a Human Right - ensuring access to health for homeless people'*. The event was an opportunity for homeless organisations EU-wide to network and share practice, as well as learn about the work being undertaken in this year's host country. The two-day event consisted of a series of lectures, research presentations, project visits, a market place and plenary

sessions/workshops. A full version of the Conference Report is available at <http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/theme.asp?ID=35>.

The plenary session on health promotion for homeless people and hard-to-reach groups was of particular relevance to the national drive around food, health and homelessness. Des Ryan from the Edinburgh Cyrenians ran a stimulating session on the use of food in tackling homelessness, which you can read more about on the FEANTSA website at the address above. In addition to this, a report entitled *'Health & Homelessness: looking at the full picture'*, produced as a result of the conference, offers a Europe-wide perspective on health and homelessness issues and features three case studies from the UK. The PDF version of this document is available from: <http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/theme.asp?ID=35> (left-hand side of the webpage). For a hard copy please get in touch.

Please also note that Scotland on Sunday's Spectrum magazine featured a stimulating, in-depth article on the Good Food Programme back in December. To view it, follow this link <http://living.scotsman.com/people.cfm?id=1862892006>

SCSH (Scottish Council for Single Homeless) National Homelessness Conference

SCSH held its annual conference on 9 and 10 November in Edinburgh. The event consisted of a series of plenaries, workshops and 'market stalls'. Several workshops covered health-related issues and CFHS attended a session

entitled 'Access to Health Services – prioritising for homeless people'. For links to this workshop as well as all other presentations, workshops leaders' details and other resources see: www.scsh.co.uk/Conference2006/PostEventIndex.htm

Parliamentary event

The Edinburgh Cyrenians held their Health, Homelessness and Food Event at the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 22 November. This was an opportunity to bring together MSPs, the project's key funders, members of both voluntary and statutory bodies etc. to promote the Cyrenians' Good Food in Tackling Homelessness Programme and the national initiative. Guests were invited to watch the 'Good Food' dvd; following this there was an opportunity for speeches by a cross-section of MSPs and then general networking. To find out more about the Cyrenians' food work check out www.cyrenians.org.uk We still have a few copies of the dvd available. To order one (first-come-first-served basis) please contact Alice.

4) News

Support for health and homelessness initiatives

The Rayne Foundation, a grant-making organisation based in London, wishes to alert organisations working with homeless people that it has a particular interest in supporting projects which address the health needs of homeless people, in particular, projects which seek to increase the active participation of homeless people in their health. Potential applicants should note that they must be able to demonstrate how they meet each of the Foundation's aims.

Full details of the Foundation's aims, the grant-making criteria and how to apply can be found by visiting www.raynefoundation.org.uk or by contacting the Rayne Foundation's Grants Manager, Susan O'Sullivan, on 020 7487 9630 for brief guidance (please note that due to limited resources, they are unable to discuss applications at length before submission.)

Recent activities

Recently CHFS, along with practitioners from the field, delivered a series of workshops on improving food, health and independent living skills for homeless people and other vulnerable groups.

The first event took place in Cardiff on 7 November at the second UK Liaison event of Sustain's Food Access Network, and involved two interactive workshops on the use of food in developing independent living skills for homeless people and other vulnerable groups. On this occasion Sam McBain from the Aberdeen Foyer shared her experience as an Assistant Support Worker at one of the Foyer's supported accommodation units in Aberdeenshire, and namely her 'food work' with young people.

For more information on Sustain's Food Access Network, follow this link <http://www.sustainweb.org/page.php?id=50>

And for more on the Aberdeen Foyer see www.aberdeenfoyer.com. Finally, if you would like a copy of the report on our workshops at the Sustain event, please get in touch.

The second workshop/presentation took place at the Annual Scottish Public Health Conference in Peebles on 16 November and involved a presentation on using food for the development of independent living skills, with examples from a variety of settings. Jeanie Collier from the Edinburgh Cyrenians spoke about her work with the Good Food in Tackling Homelessness Programme and Kim Newstead from CFHS discussed examples of independent living skills work with other vulnerable groups in the community.

5) Tell us more!

We would like to begin featuring a regular case study in future editions of Food Matters to highlight the quality and variety of work being undertaken on the ground. If your project undertakes food and health activities with homeless people or those at risk of homelessness, and you would like your work to feature as case study in forthcoming editions of Food Matters, please get in touch and I will send you a case study template.

I look forward to hearing from you!

I hope you enjoyed reading the third edition of Food Matters and I look forward to hearing about your work, ideas and aspirations and in turn hope to provide you with a forum for stimulating discussion and networking opportunities.

For more information or if you would like to sign up to any of the activities in the 'Opportunities for Sharing' programme, please get in touch!

If you would also like to receive CFHS'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.ork.uk

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*Please note that the Scottish Community Diet Project (SCDP) has now changed its name to **Community Food and Health (Scotland)** or **CFHS**.*