

Summary report February 07
Promotion of REHIS Food and Health Course
to low income communities



Introduction

In June 2006 Community Food and Health (Scotland), or CFHS, commissioned Fiona Burrell to carry out a promotion of this course in low income communities. The funding for this promotion was provided by CFHS and the Food Standards Agency Scotland.

Fiona was engaged to:

- Strand 1** Commission the course in a number of low income areas and subsidise the course for selected groups of local people (expected to cost approximately 75% of the operational budget)
- Strand 2** Provide funding to assist existing REHIS elementary food hygiene course providers to become elementary food and health course providers (expected to cost approximately 15% of the operational budget).
- Strand 3** Promotion of the course (approximately 10% of the operational budget)

An operational budget of £30,000 was held by the Scottish Consumer Council to fund this work.

Outputs

Strand 1

38 courses were delivered across Scotland between August 06 and February 07. Over 402 people took part in the course, and all but 10 passed the exam first time round. Of those that failed, three have since passed a resit. Three other courses were organised but had to be cancelled at the last minute because participants did not turn up on the day. A wide range of participants attended the courses, for example, staff and volunteers working in community food sector, disadvantaged groups including people working in food, health and homelessness, statutory organisations working in prisons and people working with vulnerable groups with particular issues around food, for example older people. Many workers in community food initiatives took the opportunity to try out the course and find out if it is suitable for those that they work with.

Courses were allocated geographically, with at least one in most NHS regions. In Forth Valley there was no course through this promotion, but CFHS organised

a course for those involved with community cafés through a separate piece of work. See attached map for further details.

Strand 2

14 individuals received accreditation with REHIS to teach the Food and Health course. Nine of these are already working in community food initiatives and the others are working with community based organisations.

Strand 3

There was promotion of the courses to local participants, by local agencies and trainers and through Fare Choice and other national newsletters, but the budget was not required and reallocated to Strands 1 and 2, see below.

Budget breakdown and analysis

	Budgeted	Actual
Strand 1	£22,500	£23,947.06
Strand 2	£4,500	£6,055.00
Promotion	£3,000	£0.00
Contractors fee	£10,000	£10,000
Grand total	£40,000	£40,002.06

Simple calculations show

Cost per course	£630
Cost per participant	£ 60

However, the costs of the courses varied widely.

This was due to:

- The number of people that attended
- Costs for venues and catering
- Additional costs such as crèche and transport that were offered in order to increase participation from groups
- Additional costs for the trainer when they travelled to remote locations where there was no existing trainer

Therefore, it is difficult to draw any conclusions from average costs.

The costs ranged from just under £30 per participant to nearly £100 per participant.

To generalise, as expected, courses that have been arranged with close collaboration with a community food initiative have been cheaper than those

arranged with a college. Of course, there are exceptions to this, for example, Lews college ran one of the cheapest courses per participant.

Where community food initiatives have taken advantage of this promotion to have a member of staff accredited to teach the course in the future, there are significant future savings to be made by not having to pay college fees for people to obtain the certificate, as well as potential earnings if places on Food and Health courses are offered to other projects. In theory it is possible to run the course at an outlay of as little as £10 per participant if a project has a member of staff accredited to teach the course and a room in which to hold the course.

Evaluation and lessons learnt

Each tutor and participant completed an evaluation after they had taken part in a course. Generally participants were happy with the course and found it useful. One participant said, 'The course has helped me rethink my own family's and the clients I work with's dietary needs. I would recommend the course to anyone'.

Course content

Generally people were happy with the content and found it useful for them in their work and home lives.

There specific issues around the vitamin and minerals section of the course, with many finding it too 'dry' or containing too much detail.

Also, many found it difficult to take in all the information in the course.

Trainers commented that the materials provided in the training pack were useful, but potentially over plentiful. The REHIS training manager made it clear that it was not necessary to use all the slides when teaching the course and this was passed on to trainers.

Course structure

Participants seemed to prefer to take the course over two half days, and most of the courses were structured this way. One trainer added practical cooking sessions to the course and this was well received by participants.

Trainers commented that a group with between 12 to 14 participants was the ideal size.

About the promotion

There was, initially, some confusion over what was being offered, with many mistaking the Food and Health course for the Food Hygiene course.

The timescale for the promotion was considerably longer than originally anticipated. This was because of difficulties contacting people over July and August due to school holidays.

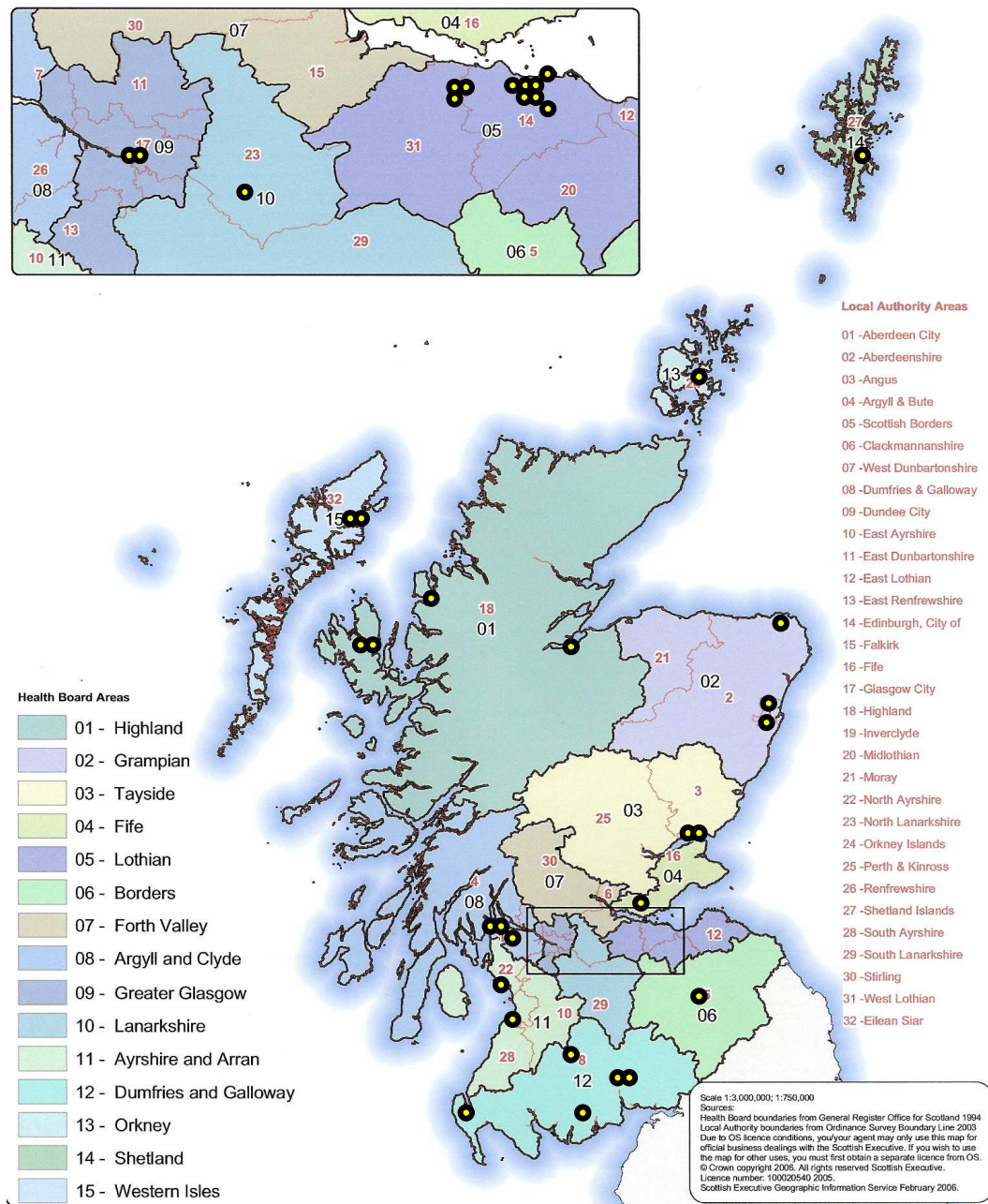
Next steps

CFHS intends to follow up this work by carrying out an impact assessment with those trainers that received the Food and Health training pack through this promotion.

CHFS continues to promote this course through its work. For example, Claire is currently offering free courses to support work around food, health and homelessness.

CFHS sits on the REHIS food and health working group and will support any work by the partner agencies to promote the course and is currently involved in the development of an advanced Food and Health course.

Location of REHIS Elementary Food and Health Courses



Map from the report produced by Fiona Burrell.