



foodmatters

Issue 4
May 2007

an update on developments in food, health and homelessness in Scotland

Welcome to the 4th edition of Food Matters.

Our spring newsletter sees additional features on local projects and practical information as well as more information on policy developments. To kick-start a hopefully enjoyable and inspiring read, here is a reminder of what the national initiative on food, health and homelessness would like to achieve...our mission statement, in other words.

Community Food and Health (Scotland)'s food, health and homelessness initiative aims to promote the idea that good food is fundamental to health and wellbeing, which in turn are fundamental to a life away from homelessness.

We hope that agencies working with homeless people will include, in their day-to-day services, activities around food that recognise its greater benefits and promote health, wellbeing and independent living skills in their widest sense.

We hope to support and inspire people at grassroots level to develop such food work, and demonstrate to decision-makers that approaches which use food as a vehicle for social inclusion should become common practice, that they require strategic support and that they fit into wider national objectives around health and homelessness and health inequalities.



Opportunities for learning and sharing across Scotland

'Learning and sharing around food, health and homelessness' training event in Falkirk

As part of our aim to support organisations working with homeless people, or those at risk of homelessness, to develop their food, health and wellbeing activities, we ran a training event based on the Edinburgh experience, along with the Edinburgh Cyrenians, at the Salvation Army in Falkirk on 23 April. The day focused on practical work around food and included, among other things, an introduction to nutrition and diet issues with a homeless angle; case studies based on the Edinburgh Cyrenians' Good Food in Tackling Homelessness Programme (www.cyrenians.org.uk/Edinburghcyreniansourservices/foodandhealth.html); and a workshop on adapting learning from the day to the participants' local context and areas of work.

"It has enthused the cook and project worker."

The event brought together a range of participants from across Forth Valley, who all work closely with homeless people in some way or another. The day was an opportunity for people working in similar areas to meet and share ideas. It was also a chance for them to learn from work elsewhere and to think about making practical developments to their food, health and wellbeing activities, with a particular focus on the development of independent living skills.

"Great networking for everyone."

Evaluations were recently sent out to all 14 participants. Feedback will be used to improve future pilot sessions. As far as the Falkirk participants are concerned, work will now focus on

identifying what participants got out of the day and how they used it practically, if at all, in their day-to-day work. This will help to identify the group's existing needs and aspirations with a view to possibly addressing these through further support.

We are currently exploring a similar training day in Grampian, this time based on the Aberdeen experience. The main aim will be to explore homeless-related food and health issues in Grampian, to highlight existing and future work, and possibly to pave the way for more joined up work across Grampian. This seminar will be an opportunity for Aberdeen Foyer (www.aberdeenfoyer.com) to showcase its holistic approach to health improvement for young people living in supported accommodation.

The training will be aimed at agencies in Grampian working with and supporting homeless people. It will include a nutrition workshop, and case studies based on Aberdeen Foyer's experience and workshops, where participants will be encouraged to explore challenges to improving practice and provision in their area. More information on the Grampian 'sharing and learning around food, health and homelessness' training day will be available on the CFHS website as the work progresses and in the Autumn edition of Food Matters.

If you work elsewhere in the country and feel that your area would benefit from a similar opportunity or if you would simply like more information, please get in touch.

Food Forums

We are currently promoting a series of local discussion forums on food, health and homelessness. The aim is to bring together local homelessness practitioners, NHS staff, hostel workers, volunteers and service-users etc, to discuss 'hot' topics, share

practice and explore solutions. These forums will be shaped by those involved and will explore the issues that are important to them in their organisation and their local area. We are currently supporting a forum in Dumfries and Galloway which will take place sometime in September (date to be confirmed). The focus will be very much on raising awareness of the role of food in tackling homelessness and building personal capacities/ independent living skills. Building on this awareness, the forum will explore ways of generating local activities by individuals, and voluntary and statutory organisations, to tackle food poverty and challenge the damaging effects of being, becoming or having been homeless. The forum also aims to focus on learning from groups Scotland-wide who carry out food-related work with homeless people.

If you work elsewhere in the country and feel that your area would benefit from a forum or if you would simply like more information, please get in touch.

Eating for health in a homeless context

Would you like to know more about providing more adapted, varied and nutritious meals for the homeless people who access your services? Would you like to be able to provide basic nutritional advice to your clients? Are you keen to find out more about the links between food and wellbeing for your work with vulnerable people? We are currently promoting a series of REHIS (Royal Environmental Health Institute for Scotland) Elementary Food and Health Courses

What is the course about? The course covers all aspects of food and its benefits for health, an introduction to the function of food for health, an overview of the needs of people experiencing homelessness, eg. how life circumstances can influence food

choice, the relationship between food and feelings etc.

Who is it for? Anyone working with homeless people who is interested in learning more about the health benefits of food for their clients.

How does it work? The course involves six hours of training delivered by a qualified REHIS trainer and participants receive a recognised certificate at the end of it. The course is free for all participants.

What next? If you are interested in being involved, please get in touch for details on how to apply.

We are also promoting the **REHIS Elementary Food Hygiene course.**

This well-established course is an introduction to the basic requirements of hygienic practice when working with food. Originally targeted at food workers in the industry, this popular course is fast becoming viewed as essential to those using food in a voluntary capacity.

If you provide meals to the people who access your homelessness services, if you run cookery classes with your clients or any other food-related activity and would like to learn more about maintaining high standards of hygiene and gain a recognised certificate, then this course is for you.

What is it about? The course covers topics such as how to avoid food poisoning, food safety legislation, personal hygiene, cleaning practices etc.

Who is it for? Anyone working with food in a homelessness context.

How does it work? The course involves six hours of training delivered by a qualified REHIS trainer and participants receive a recognised

certificate at the end of it. The course is free for all participants.

What next? If you are interested in getting involved in your area, please get in touch for details on how to apply.

Here's how some recent food hygiene courses went, by Jeanie from the Edinburgh Cyrenians Good Food team.

"In March we ran our first Food Hygiene course for people working in homeless organisations. This is invaluable for projects that are serving food to the homeless population, as increasingly even volunteers are required to have undertaken hygiene training of some sort. All participants passed, including one participant who had been a service user himself.

Following on from this we decided to run a specifically tailored version of the course aimed at those who have experienced homelessness and are trying to get themselves back 'on track' and into a workplace/volunteering situation. The course was geared to the specific needs of the group (literacy and concentration levels being taken into account), and the first of these was held in May. We decided to keep the group small due to the differing needs of each participant and four were enrolled. All four had experienced homelessness. The course was split into two half days with a preliminary one hour session. One man unfortunately had to withdraw. However, the other three passed, although one member had to have a second shot at the exam. We have learnt some valuable lessons from doing this, not least learning how to handle a failed paper and the ensuing complications of self-esteem and disappointment. We hope to be in a position to run more courses both for those who work in homeless organisations and those who have experienced homelessness throughout the year."

Policy updates

Since the publication early this year of the food, health and homelessness baseline mapping exercise, the CFHS food, health and homelessness initiative and its Reference Group have been keen to look more closely at highlighting the strategic relevance of food in relation to health improvement for homeless people. A roundtable discussion on how to make a strong case for the inclusion of food and its wider social inclusion benefits into NHS Health and Homelessness Action Plans took place on 25 April at the Scottish Consumer Council in Glasgow. The focus of the seminar was to explore practical and realistic ways of encouraging decision-makers and planners to commit to making food a higher priority. A small but diverse group representing most areas of homelessness and health explored the various barriers to driving the topic of food and wellbeing up policy and planning agendas and how to overcome these barriers. The group agreed that highlighting, supporting and investing in grassroots work, and generally raising the profile of good work, was the best way forward to demonstrate the relevance of food for homeless people and to secure commitment from decision-makers at Board level.

So far we have been discussing the essential points from the seminar with the Scottish Executive, in relation to the Health and Homelessness Standards (www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/03/20774/5376) and hope to move forward on this in the next few months. More information will be available on our website as the work progresses and in the next Food Matters.

Finally, we intend to approach key players at NHS Board level directly, following a systematic review of each

Board's Health and Homelessness Action Plan.

Full notes from the seminar are available from our website or get in touch for a hard copy.

What's new?

Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE) FareShare launch

Aberdeen's Lord Provost John Reynolds launched CFINE's FareShare scheme at its warehouse in Aberdeen on Wednesday 25 April 2007. This is the third scheme in Scotland, the others being run by the Cyrenians in Edinburgh and Dundee.

CFINE is developing a FareShare scheme in Aberdeen whereby supermarkets' and food producers' surplus foodstuffs are collected and distributed to people experiencing food poverty, for example, facilities for people who are homeless, women who have experienced domestic abuse and in the regeneration areas.

The FareShare Scheme is an additional strand to CFINE's work on tackling food poverty and increasing food access. CFINE aims to improve health and wellbeing, and contribute to regeneration in disadvantaged and excluded geographical and interest communities by promoting the consumption of fruit, veg, pulses and other healthy products. It also encourages and supports volunteering, which brings a range of personal, family and community benefits. CFINE supports 37 Community Food Outlets in Aberdeen's poorer geographical and interest communities and supplies fruit and other produce to over 70 nurseries, schools and community organisations.

If you would like more information on any aspect of the work, please contact

CFINE on (01224) 596156 or cfine@btconnect.com

Aberdeen Charities launch Sunday food service for homeless people

A group of local charities and churches in Aberdeen have come together to provide a food service for people affected by homelessness. The group, *Aberdeen Food Aid*, is taking another step in filling the gap in food provisions at the weekend in the city. *Aberdeen Food Aid* was launched on Sunday 28 January, national Homelessness Sunday, and operates out of the Aberdeen Cyrenians' drop-in centre. After identifying that there was no local food provision over the weekend for people affected by homelessness, and recognising that on a Monday many homeless people were very hungry because they had not eaten all weekend, these organisations came together to create *Aberdeen Food Aid*.

Project Manager for the Aberdeen Cyrenians' project that runs the drop in, Julie Sim, who is also one of the founders of *Aberdeen Food Aid*, commented, "*We are really pleased that this service is up and running. While there are many food services locally for people affected by homelessness which operate Monday to Friday we recognised that there is nothing available at the weekend. This Sunday service is excellent news for local people who don't have a home or are at risk of losing their home. We have plans to open on a Saturday as well in the future.*"

For more information contact Amy Grant, Fundraising and Communications Manager at Aberdeen Cyrenians, 01224 572877 or 07766 954 923 outwith office hours. amy.grant@aberdeen-cyrenians.org

Scottish Drugs Forum and Drumchapel Life Nutritional Report

In early April the Scottish Drugs Forum and Drumchapel LIFE Healthy Living Centre launched their peer-led

research report **Nutrition and Diet of Problem Drug and Alcohol Users in Drumchapel, Glasgow**. The report reviews existing processes of assessment for looking at the nutritional needs of problem drug and/or alcohol users in Drumchapel, and includes findings and recommendations on how services could work better to break down the barriers that clients face when trying to improve their diet and manage their health through diet. Although not necessarily homeless, many of the respondents in the report share similar issues to the clients some of you may work with, who have addiction issues in addition to experiencing homelessness.

For a copy of the report please contact Kenny Macdonald from Drumchapel LIFE on 0141 9446004, kenny@drumchapellife.co.uk or April Shaw from Scottish Drugs Forum on 0141 2211175 april@sdf.org.uk

www.drumchapel.org.uk
www.sdf.org.uk

European Network of Homeless Health Workers

ENHW is the newly created European Network of Homeless Health Workers. It aims to bring together all persons working with homeless people in a health capacity EU-wide, across all areas of mental and physical health. The network operates through a newsletter and an online forum. The first issue of the newsletter is now available online.

For more information contact Dearbhal Murphy, Policy Officer at the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless or FEANTSA, tel: 0032 (0)2 534 49 30 www.feantsa.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=760

University of Oxford Online Postgraduate Certificate in Provision of Health Care to People experiencing Homelessness

The University of Oxford is currently offering a unique academic qualification, the **online postgraduate certificate in provision of health care to people experiencing homelessness**.

The course is designed for people involved in providing healthcare to homeless people. It is delivered online and allows for long-distance learning. Its content arose from interviewing people who had experienced homelessness and various professional groups about the kind of education they felt would be helpful and worthwhile in this area.

For more information visit www.conted.ox.ac.uk/homelessness

New CFHS publication – Fruitful Participation

CFHS has a new publication, which is available FREE to those in Scotland. 'Fruitful Participation' is a publication that gives readers a snapshot of how getting people involved in decision-making and taking action can lead to more effective food and health activities. Fruitful Participation is based on the experiences of over 26 people who have attended a CFHS 'Participatory Appraisal' (PA) course and then gone back to their communities to use what they learnt. PA is an approach which helps people explore issues that are important to them. PA methods are very visual and help people get involved in decision making processes. The methods are particularly useful for reaching those who are usually excluded. To receive a copy of Fruitful Participation, contact Alice, abaird@scotconsumer.org.uk or visit our website.

PA training course

CFHS is running a free residential training course for those wishing to learn more about PA approaches and methods. The course will be held between 17-21 September in Dumfries. Closing date for receipt of an applications is 23 July. To find out more about the PA course, contact Claire.

Share your expertise!

Are you using food to help people develop independent living skills?

Over the next month or so CFHS will be gathering information from projects involved in running life skills activities such as cookery sessions, shopping or growing with vulnerable groups, e.g. those with mental health support needs, young homeless people etc. We are aiming to put together a good practice guide during the summer. If you are running these types of activities with any vulnerable groups and would like to share what you have learnt, please contact Kim
0141 226 5261,
knewstead@scotconsumer.org.uk

Dates for your diary

CFHS Small Grant Scheme Funding available for healthy eating activities (£500 to £3000)

The CFHS annual small grant scheme is open to groups and agencies who wish to develop new or existing activities that aim to improve food access and tackle inequalities in diet and health. Last year, grants were awarded to a range of groups for a variety of activities, including cookery sessions with young homeless people; family lunch clubs; volunteer-run fruit and vegetable stalls; and vegetable growing projects for people with mental health support needs. **The closing date for applications is Friday 5pm**

29 June, 2007. (Faxed, emailed or late applications will not be accepted).

More information on the grant scheme and downloadable application packs are available on our website
Application packs are also available from Alice or Rita.

National Health and Homelessness Conference

26 September 2007 Apex Hotel, Grassmarket, Edinburgh

The Conference in Scotland will focus upon the implementation of Scotland's national Health and Homelessness Standards and the exchange of good practice. It is the fourth national Health and Homelessness Conference to be held north of the Border and will be a joint Scottish Council for Single Homeless (SCSH)/NHS Health Scotland event. Full details of the programme will be available shortly at www.scsch.org.uk

Oxford Health and Homelessness Conference – including a European Network of Homeless Health Workers (ENHW) event

25th September 2007

The University of Oxford Department for Continuing Education is holding its second Health and Homelessness Conference in September 2007. The theme this year is: *“Planning together, working together: delivering health and wellbeing for homeless and insecurely housed people”*

The conference in Oxford will also host a small ENHW event. Full details about the conference, including programme, costs and the ENHW event will be available in the next issue of the ENHW newsletter mentioned above <http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=760>

I hope you enjoyed reading the 4th edition of Food Matters. If you would like us to include a feature about your food and health related activity in the next edition of this newsletter, please get in touch. The next Food Matters is due out in early Autumn.

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For more information about anything that you have read, or if you would like to enquire about anything in the 'Opportunities for Learning and Sharing' programme, please get in touch.

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

Finally, CFHS has an exciting new range of free promotional items on offer to groups around the country who work in food and health.



Contact Alice, our Information Officer, for an **order form**, abaird@scotconsumer.org.uk

www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk