



# foodmatters

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

## Welcome to the 5th edition of Food Matters

### Ideas in Action

The end of summer saw the launch of Community Food and Health (Scotland)'s **food, health and homelessness Capacity Building Fund**. The aim of the fund is to provide a practical financial boost to homeless organisations who wish to develop food-related activities, with the intention that the planned activity should involve homeless service-users; promote their health and wellbeing and provide them with opportunities to develop their independent living skills.

The application process involved two stages. Stage one offered organisations the opportunity to briefly outline the activity they had in mind. The deadline for stage one proposals was mid-October and the response from the field was overwhelming. Applicants have now been notified whether or not they have been successful in progressing to stage two. In the course of stage two, applicants are being asked to refine their idea and work on the details of its implementation, focusing particularly on the ways in which good food can be used as a tool to improve people's lives and a pathway to social inclusion and resettlement.

Thanks to additional funding from the Food Standards Agency Scotland, and NHS Health Scotland, a substantial number of applications to stage one which meet our criteria have been offered the opportunity to progress to stage two.



Thank you to all those of you who put in proposals.

## Sharing practice, moving forward

### NHS Dumfries and Galloway seminar

On 6 September NHS Dumfries and Galloway held its first food, health and homelessness seminar in Gatehouse of Fleet, with support from CFHS. The event aimed to explore different ways of supporting people out of homelessness using the medium of food.

The seminar was an opportunity for local homeless agencies, and those supporting them, to come together and find out more about local issues relating to food, homelessness and health in this mainly rural area, where homelessness is often seen as 'hidden'. It was also an opportunity for Dumfries and Galloway agencies to learn more about practice from elsewhere in the country.

The morning session focused on the crucial links between food, wellbeing and moving on out of homelessness, with John Worsley, Senior Health Promotion Officer at NHS Dumfries and Galloway. Volunteers from Christian Care for the Homeless, a Dumfries-based volunteer-run agency, spoke about their busy city-centre food drop-in which serves hot meals and provides respite to homeless and vulnerable people. The importance of establishing contact, trust and sometimes even friendship through food was greatly stressed and the volunteers from the drop-in spoke of their practical experience of using mealtimes as a way of engaging with some of the most excluded people in Dumfries.

*'Food is about much more than just subsistence; it can be a key into people's lives'* Pastor Mark Smith from Christian Care for the Homeless in Dumfries.

Following the speakers' contributions, participants were offered a choice of workshops focusing on examples from across Scotland where food is used creatively to prevent homelessness and address its damaging effects.

Carol-Anne Alcorn from Edinburgh Cyrenians ran an interactive session on the Good Food in Tackling Homelessness Programme (available to download from [www.cyrenians.org.uk/Edinburghcyreniansoursservices//foodandhealth.html](http://www.cyrenians.org.uk/Edinburghcyreniansoursservices//foodandhealth.html)) and its range of health enhancing activities.



Lyndsey Renfrew and Katy Griffiths from NHS Tayside ran a colourful session on the Cook and Carry Out project in Perth (more information available from [l.renfrew@nhs.net](mailto:l.renfrew@nhs.net)).

Lisa Fallowfield gave participants a comprehensive overview of the Aberdeen Foyer's work on promoting health, and in particular food, with young homeless clients living in Foyer accommodation (more information available at [www.aberdeenfoyer.com/index.html](http://www.aberdeenfoyer.com/index.html))

The afternoon sessions were dedicated to local action planning around food and health. Workers from each Dumfries and Galloway locality (Wigtownshire, Nithsdale, Annandale and Eskdale and Stewartry) were asked to explore and record the outline of a locality-based project which would address the key food, health and wellbeing issues of homeless people, including low self-esteem, self-worth and confidence. Ideas were recorded using colourful and creative methods inspired by participatory appraisal and were fed back by each group to the whole audience at the end of the day. The ideas generated at the

action planning sessions are due to be brought back to the Dumfries and Galloway Health and Homelessness Forum, with a view to being fed into the local NHS Health and Homelessness Action Plan.



Some of the key points drawn from this busy and informative day focused on:

- ? the importance of food as an inroad into people's lives and a way of engaging with excluded groups;
- ? the importance of making small incremental and practical differences to people's lives in terms of their food and health, and most importantly 'starting where people are at';
- ? the crucial issue of supporting and training staff to pass on health messages effectively to their service-users;
- ? the value in drawing on the experience of other projects and adapting learning to local circumstances;
- ? exploring ways of integrating 'food work' into the existing activities and services of homeless organisations.

For a copy of the full seminar report, including details on workshop content and more, visit [www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/fileuploads/cfhsfoodandhomelessnessseminar6907-0944.pdf](http://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/fileuploads/cfhsfoodandhomelessnessseminar6907-0944.pdf)

A similar regional event will be taking place in Grampian sometime in the new year. More information will be available from our website.

**If you work elsewhere in the country and feel that your area would benefit from a similar opportunity, please get in touch to discuss your ideas.**

### **Clackmannanshire Health and Homelessness Conference**

On 20 November, Clackmannanshire Council held their local Health and Homelessness Conference in Coalsnaughton. This upbeat and informative event brought together a variety of organisations working with homeless people from across Clackmannanshire. The morning presentations offered participants an overview of local practice, namely the Alloa Soup Pot and Locals Against Drug Abuse (Alloa), as well as an opportunity to hear about work from elsewhere in Scotland via the Edinburgh Cyrenians' Good Food in Tackling Homelessness Programme. After enjoying some delicious home-made soup prepared by the volunteers at the Community Centre, participants were given a chance to browse stalls and network with their colleagues. If you would like more details on this event or for contact details of the participating organisations, please contact Claire.

### **Building capacity, developing practice**

#### **PA placement in Dumfries**

Sixteen very enthusiastic individuals from community food and health projects in Scotland took to the streets of Dumfries during September as part of a five-day residential training course in participatory appraisal organised by CFHS. As part of the practical training, participants were split into two groups to undertake placements on behalf of NHS Dumfries and Galloway.

One of the groups was involved in finding out more about the food choices and food access issues of homeless people using the city-centre Christian Care drop-in and of young homeless people living in supported accommodation in the area.



The group's findings were then fed back to an NHS Dumfries and Galloway representative, who in turn will feed back the information gathered to the Dumfries and Galloway Health and Homelessness Steering Group, for inclusion in local NHS Health and Homelessness Action Plan. Comments and information provided by service-users were recorded visually and put on display at the drop-in and in the supported accommodation unit.

### **CFHS annual small grants scheme**

Most of the successful applicants to the CFHS small grants scheme have now received their grants. As in recent years, the panel had difficulties choosing which of the many deserving applications would receive funding. 56 out of a total of 209 applicants were successful, and out of the 56 seven applications were from organisations working to improve the health and wellbeing of homeless people using food as a key. Recipient projects come from Ayrshire and Arran; Greater Glasgow and Clyde; Forth Valley; Lothian and Shetland. We hope to feature case studies from these projects in future editions of Food Matters.

### **Promotion of the REHIS courses**

As most of you will be aware, CFHS has been promoting the REHIS (Royal Environmental Health Institute for Scotland) Elementary Food Hygiene and Elementary Food and Health courses

since February 2007. After a successful year that will have seen (by the time the funding ends) the delivery of twelve Elementary Food Hygiene courses and five Elementary Food and Health courses to a range of homelessness agencies from across Scotland, we are no longer considering requests to fund courses, although a number of courses currently under negotiation will take place early in the new year.

*"I found the content very interesting and appreciated that it was linked back to specific client groups e.g. homeless people, young women, teenagers"*

**Participant, Food and Health course, Fife.**

The Food and Health promotion has focused on providing participants with introductory knowledge on the benefits of food for health. The aim has been, amongst other things, to equip participants with ideas on how to design more varied and nutritious menus for homeless service-users; to raise awareness of nutrition issues amongst staff and service-users; to support staff to deliver consistent food and health messages; and make the links between food and wellbeing.

The Elementary Food Hygiene course has proved invaluable to projects serving food or/and running cooking classes and has helped participants gain a recognised qualification in hygienic practice, a requirement which is essential to all those working with food, whether in a voluntary capacity or not.

In the new year Claire aims to start following participants' progress and see how they have applied the learning from the courses. She also intends to look at what opportunities there are to increase the number of REHIS accredited tutors within homeless organisations. An update will be available in the next Food Matters.

**For more information on REHIS visit [www.rehis.org/](http://www.rehis.org/)**

## Focus on ...

### Clued-Up Drugs Awareness Project, Fife

Here is a taster of some of Clued-Up's food and health work, by Laura Crombie, Clued-Up project manager:

"Clued-Up provides a comprehensive 'youth-friendly' drug information and support service for young people under 25 in Kirkcaldy, also targeting the wider issues of general wellbeing and lifestyles. We provide many different interventions, one being a drop in service from Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm. Many of the people who access the drop in are affected by substance misuse, homelessness and have chaotic lifestyles, therefore preparing food is not a priority for them and their diets are poor. The cooking class run during drop-in times is a partnership initiative between Clued Up and Stella Stewart from the Fife Community Food Project; the classes would not have been possible without Stella's input."

"The class has given the young people the opportunity to learn: how to cook for themselves, eat healthily and cook on a budget."

"The young people have worked together every week to prepare varied dishes, some took ownership of the kitchen and others set the table and cleared up. We have seen the young people's confidence increase from week to week once the meal is prepared and they all sit down together to eat."

"We would like this service to be sustainable. Therefore, after the initial set up a core group of young people have learned these skills and gained the appropriate certificates in food and hygiene. We would like the young people to be involved in running the service themselves."

*"Cook Club was good as it taught you to cook. Some people may have found cooking a meal from scratch daunting but Stella made it seem easy. It was good as it brought people together, everybody had an input to the meal and this was good. We were also given tips on how to eat healthier but at no more expense, which can only be a good thing. Also giving young people a free meal is good because for some, that could have been the only hot meal they had all day (or week!!). Overall Cook Club is a good thing as it brings people together with a common interest and you also leave with your stomach full."*

**Young person involved in Cook Club.**



Clued-Up service-users will be participating in the REHIS Elementary Food Hygiene course in the New Year.

**For more information visit [www.cluedupdrugs.org.uk](http://www.cluedupdrugs.org.uk)**

## Clydebank Project: Eating Around the World

Blue Triangle Housing Association in Clydebank provides accommodation and support for people aged 16 and over who are experiencing homelessness. It has been running the 'Eating Around the World' Project since October 2006 with between six to eight residents on a fortnightly basis.

Here's more on what they do by Michelle McCombe from the project:

"Here at the Clydebank Project, service-users have been taking part in sourcing, purchasing and preparing different types of foods eaten around the world. This tour started in India where service users cooked an Indian curry and this was followed by Italy with spaghetti bolognese. We then travelled onto Thailand with a stir fry, and then Mexico with tortilla wraps, next destination was China with chicken fried rice. The final destination so far has been the USA, which has been the most successful; all service-users thoroughly enjoyed the healthier big mac with salad. All these dishes have been prepared and cooked within a limited budget with healthier ingredients. This has provided the service-users at the Clydebank Blue Triangle a better understanding of how different cultures prepare and cook their meals."

**For more information, contact Michelle at Blue Triangle on 0141 952 2122**

### Healthier options in Inverclyde

Barnardo's Threshold Service provide intensive support to 16-25 year olds in the Inverclyde area who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Threshold staff provide holistic support to young people to prepare for and manage their own tenancies. A significant part of this role is to encourage young people to look after and maintain their health and this includes advice and guidance in relation to healthy eating.

Threshold Service applied for and received a grant from CFHS in September 2006. Staff produced the 'Threshold Healthy Food for All' recipe book. This includes recipes for babies and children as a number of the service-users are parents. A substantial pack was provided to young people along with the recipe book which included items such as a colander, chopping boards, storage containers, wooden spoons, measuring scales and blender. A basic food pack was also provided and this included wholemeal pasta and rice, tomato/garlic puree and various herbs.

Young people were delighted with the contents of the pack and were encouraged to try healthier options. A number of young people have also asked staff to support them to source additional healthy recipes since receiving the pack.

To find out more, contact Barnardo's Threshold Service in Greenock on 01475 728493.

## Policy update

### Working together to effectively implement the Health and Homelessness Standards

On 25 June NHS Health Scotland, in partnership with the Scottish Council for Single Homeless (SCSH) organised a **national learning and support seminar** for all NHS Boards and Community Health Partnerships in Scotland. The aim of this event was to 'ensure the continued and effective implementation of the Scottish Government's Health and Homelessness Standards'.

This was an opportunity for the national work on food, health and homelessness to be highlighted and a chance to engage with NHS Health and Homelessness Lead Officers and those within Community Health Partnerships responsible for health and homelessness.

For a copy of the Briefing Paper highlighting the seven key issues raised during the seminar, visit [www.healthscotland.com/documents/2131.aspx](http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/2131.aspx)

The full report can be downloaded from [www.healthscotland.com/documents/2132.aspx](http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/2132.aspx)

### **Health and Homelessness – Raising the Standards**

The learning and support seminar was also meant as a forerunner to the September **Health and Homelessness Conference**, also organised by SCSH and supported by NHS Health Scotland, which took place on 26 September.



The conference saw a new impetus for the topic of health and homelessness; which had been, in the words of Robert Aldridge director of SCSH, somewhat ‘off the boil’. Stuart Maxwell, the Minister for Communities and Sport, made a strong commitment to the delivery of the health and homelessness agenda in the context of the 2012 target. An emphasis was put on the need to fully embed health and homelessness into wider planning agendas, namely within Community Health Partnerships and Health Boards. The work of CFHS on food, health and wellbeing was commended, alongside other projects, as key to achieving durable resettlement for homeless people via a holistic approach to health and wellbeing. Finally, the Minister linked the national drive around health and homelessness to the Government’s major consultation on health and wellbeing

inequalities ‘Better Health, Better Care’ (available at [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/Action-Plan](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/Action-Plan)) and to the Ministerial Task Force on reducing health inequalities headed up by Shona Robison (available at [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/inequalitiestaskforce](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/inequalitiestaskforce))

Workshops covered a wide range of topics, and food was given an emphasis via the Edinburgh Cyrenians’ workshop on the Good Food for Tackling Homelessness programme.

**For more information on the conference, visit [www.scsch.co.uk/events/2007/heath\\_homelessness.htm](http://www.scsch.co.uk/events/2007/heath_homelessness.htm)**

### **Working together to raise the profile of food, health and homelessness work across Scotland**

As you may remember, the 4th edition of Food Matters drew attention to the need to highlight, at strategic level, the relevance of food for the health and wellbeing of homeless people.

Since then, we have been working with the Scottish Government Primary Care Division to encourage, develop and/or consolidate commitment to food and health in relation to the NHS Boards Health and Homelessness Action Plans and compliance to the National Health and Homelessness Standards. In July, Primary Care asked NHS Boards to comment on how a concern for food and its wider social inclusion benefits had reflected in their respective Health and Homelessness Action Plans.

An update on the responses made will be in the next edition of Food Matters.

As a result of this strategic push, the profile of food in relation to tackling homelessness has hopefully been raised. Claire has had opportunities to engage with certain Boards and their Health and Homelessness Leads and/or Health and Homelessness Steering Groups on this subject, and looks forward to consolidating these links and supporting the development of the work with Boards.

## Publications

### New CFHS guide: 'A taste for independence: using food to develop skills for life'

This new CFHS guide is based on the experiences of 21 organisations who have used food activities (such as cooking and food shopping) to develop the life skills of those they work with.



The guide will be particularly useful to those who work with people who are learning (or relearning) to live independently, such as people who have experienced homelessness, people with mental health support needs or learning disabilities. It has information on how organisations developed their activities, such as how they encouraged attendance and involvement and how they decided what to cook. There are also ten case studies from

a variety of organisations including those working with young homeless people and another working with prisoners preparing to leave prison. The guide also has a section on where you can find other useful resources, such as cookery club guides and healthy eating information. The guide can be downloaded from the CFHS website or call Alice for a copy.

### Food poverty and homelessness in Northern Ireland

The Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland (FSANI) has published a study on food poverty and homelessness 'Homelessness and Food Poverty Report'. The research looks into the impact of poverty and social exclusion on the diet of homeless people in Northern Ireland. For a copy of the report visit [www.food.gov.uk/northernireland/researchni/ninutritionhomeless](http://www.food.gov.uk/northernireland/researchni/ninutritionhomeless) (scroll down for the link to the PDF file)

### 'Better Health, Better Care' – a discussion document

The Scottish Government will be publishing its Action Plan for Health and Wellbeing at the turn of the year. In the meantime 'Better Health, Better Care – a discussion document' has been launched to inform the development of the forthcoming action plan. For any developments visit [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/Action-Plan](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/Action-Plan)

**Thank you for taking the time to catch up with what's going on in the field of food, health and homelessness across Scotland.**

**If you would like to tell us more about *your* project in the next edition, please get in touch!**

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