



foodmatters

Issue 6
June 2008

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

Welcome to the 6th edition of Food Matters

Update on the Food, Health and Homelessness Capacity Building Fund

All 32 successful applicants to the food, health and homelessness fund have now received, or are in the process of receiving, funding towards developing food activities that enhance the confidence, life skills and independence of their homeless service-users.

The quality of the applications we received was impressive and we were enthused by the wealth of activity planned, some of which is already underway.

Welcoming the awards, Minister for Public Health, Shona Robison, said

“Improving access to and take up of a healthy diet can improve the long term health of everyone in Scotland. It is particularly important that we accelerate improvements in deprived areas as these communities may be more likely to have a poor diet.”

“We are delighted to support this initiative by Community Food and Health (Scotland), which will help people understand better what makes a healthy diet and enjoy the health benefits that come with balanced, nutritious food.”

“This is one of the many issues that our National Food Policy may seek to address, by bringing together government policy on every part of the food chain from farm gate to plate.”



“Our recent national discussion aimed to ensure the future policy is as inclusive as possible, taking into account all views and highlighting the importance of the most vulnerable in our society accessing healthy, affordable, fresh produce.”

Activities funded are hugely varied, ranging from the development of a growing project in Fife and promoting peer education with young people at risk of homelessness in Edinburgh to developing cooking sessions with young families fleeing domestic violence in Dundee and promoting social inclusion among elderly homeless men in the Western Isles.

Evaluation of the activities will take place later on in the year and we look forward to sharing information from the recipient projects both in Food Matters and the CFHS quarterly newsletter, Fare Choice. **To subscribe to both or either of these, please get in touch.**

Building capacity, sharing practice

Would you like to become a qualified REHIS elementary food and health tutor?

Following the enthusiastic take-up of opportunities to attend Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS) courses in autumn and winter 2007 and the growing activity around food and health in homeless organisations across the country, we would like to offer a limited number of Food Matters readers, who work in frontline homeless organisations, the opportunity to become qualified REHIS elementary food and health tutors.

This is a unique opportunity for an organisation to acquire its very own elementary food and health tutor, allowing organisations to carry out in-house food and health training with staff, to deliver courses with service-users and generally to strengthen the knowledge and capacity of their project to deliver food and health promoting activity.

For more information and an application form, please get in touch. **Please note that places are limited.**

Community Food and Health (Scotland) Small Grants 2008

The Community Food and Health (Scotland) annual small grant scheme is now open. Groups and agencies are welcome to apply for funding (£500 - £3000) to develop new or existing activities that will improve food access or take up of a healthy balanced diet with or within low-income communities. In the past, grants have been awarded to a range of groups for a variety of activities, including: cookery sessions with people experiencing homelessness; sessions on weaning with young mums, and vegetable growing with children.

Information on the grant scheme and downloadable application packs are available on our website www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk

Application packs are also available from Alice or Rita, telephone: 0141 226 5261

Closing date for applications is 5 pm 27 June 2008 (faxed, emailed or late applications will not be accepted)

Sharing practice, moving forward

Grampian seminar on food, health and homelessness

On 26 February, NHS Grampian and the Aberdeen Foyer, supported by Community Food and Health (Scotland) held a food, health and homelessness seminar. This upbeat and informative networking event brought together a variety of homeless organisations from across Grampian that were interested in exploring how food could be integrated into their work, with a view to possibly setting up a forum for workers to access more information and resources on this subject.



Participant feedback suggested that the event was an excellent networking opportunity and that awareness was raised both about what already exists in Grampian to support food and homelessness work, and also what gaps need to be addressed in future.

The morning presentations offered participants an opportunity to find out more about useful local resources, such as food skills/literacy courses, Confidence to Cook and Training for Trainers, Community Food Initiatives North-East (CFINE) and the NHS Grampian Health Information Resources Service, as well as an overview of nutrition issues and

homelessness and finally an outline of national support available through the national food, health and homelessness initiative at CFHS.

The afternoon was dedicated to group work based on case studies from Aberdeen Foyer. The key messages from this session was that food can support people to make significant steps towards a healthier life, and that food activity is a great way to gain confidence, improve self-esteem and engage with people, all essential to moving on from homelessness and living independently.

The discussion on how to take issues forward in Grampian, which followed the workshops, was an opportunity for participants to pull together learning from the day and start to focus on how to move forward. Wider awareness of activity in the area, as well as a need for more partnership working, were identified as priorities as was the need for a network or forum to share ideas, support and information between like-minded workers.

More information on this will be made available as the work progresses.

Also highlighted was the desire for skills sessions specifically on microwave cooking, particularly for families staying in bed and breakfast accommodation.

If you work with homeless people who live in temporary accommodation with very limited cooking facilities (kettle, microwave), we would very much like to hear from you and possibly share your experience with other groups across Scotland. Please get in touch.

A similar event to the Grampian seminar will be taking place on 9 June in Elgin bringing together all those involved in food, health and homelessness in Moray. More information on this will be available in the next edition of Food Matters.

For more information:

Aberdeen Foyer

www.aberdeenfoyer.com

Confidence to Cook:

<http://snipurl.com/confidencetocook>

CFINE: www.cfine.org

Health Information Resources Service:

www.nhsgrampian.org/inforesources

Study tours

Organisations are always telling us how much they value hearing about the experiences of other groups, and how much this helps them reflect on their practice and draw inspiration to develop their own activities. This is why we are offering Food Matters readers the opportunity to take part in one of two study tours that we are organising with partner organisations.

The study tours will take place in **Aberdeen on 17 September** and **Edinburgh on 25 September**, and will offer participants a unique opportunity to learn more about innovative projects that are providing services for homeless people while operating as social enterprises. It is hoped that participants will come away from the study tours inspired and enthused, with practical ideas about developing food activities and an increased understanding of the role that social enterprise is playing in the delivery of services to homeless people.

Who are the tours for?

Organisations involved in work with homeless people and/or wanting to find out more about social enterprise from social enterprises themselves.

Each study tour will take place over one full day with an overnight stay for those travelling from outwith Edinburgh or Aberdeen. Travel and accommodation expenses will be covered by CFHS.

For more information and an application form for either of the study tours, please get in touch. Please remember to state which study tour you are interested in. **Please note that places are limited.**

Focus on ...

Edinburgh Cyrenians Good Food in Tackling Homelessness Programme

Edinburgh Cyrenians' projects make a lasting and significant difference to peoples' lives – often taking months or years of hard work to help them build a safe, secure and fulfilling life away from homelessness. The range of inter-connected services all aim to enable people to progress to a better life.

Edinburgh Cyrenians believes that good health and wellbeing are essential steps on the path away from homelessness. People are able to build up their physical, mental and emotional health through the variety of services provided by Edinburgh Cyrenians, namely its 'Good Food in Tackling Homelessness' programme, which offers a refreshing approach to tackling ill health and poor nutrition.



It is the experience of Edinburgh Cyrenians that people who are nourished on their road to recovery by a combination of good healthy food, meaningful occupation and care can take their first steps as contributing members of the community. The Good Food Programme delivers both good food and volunteering opportunities to 70 individuals who have experienced homelessness, some of whom have the added challenges in their lives of associated issues such as addiction, mental health, repeat offending etc. These individuals make up the dedicated team at the Cyrenians Jane Street depot, working daily to collect, sort and quality check surplus food and deliver to hostels and day centres in and around Edinburgh and West Lothian using two refrigerated vans. Volunteering provides an element of stability, and along with the sense of camaraderie, aids an individual's journey to taking steps away from homelessness and related issues. Training is also provided, and for some volunteers this leads to employment and further training opportunities.



Last year the Cyrenians Good Food Programme delivered 118 Cooking at Home Classes. The Classes were held both at the Good Food Depot and other homelessness projects around Edinburgh and West Lothian. The graduates of the Cooking at Home Classes all receive a Certificate and the further option to increase skills in joining the monthly Italian Cookery Class or one of the Advanced Classes that are delivered several times a year. The Cyrenians were successful in their application to the CFHS Small Grants Scheme for funding to pilot the provision of a 'store cupboard pack' for all Cooking at Home Class participants.

Individuals have been delighted to have this pack and it has been a real incentive to develop their newly acquired skills and develop confidence in their own home. The Cyrenians Good Food Project is all about a 'hand up and not a hand out'.

As an integral part of the Edinburgh Cyrenians' activities it has recently embarked on three Social Enterprise Initiatives:

- **Teaching Centre:** It has recently been approved by REHIS (Royal Environmental Institute of Scotland) and is now delivering Elementary Food Hygiene and Food and Health Courses. These courses are available to individuals and to organisations that have specific requirements for groups of staff. There is a new Training Room and a regular programme of courses available. It has also delivered the Cooking at Home Classes (small group teaching of basic kitchen skills, hygiene, budgeting and nutrition) to agencies working with homeless and vulnerable people as part of their Social Enterprise portfolio of activities.
- **Membership Scheme:** The Good Food Programme now operates a Membership Scheme and this is available to organisations working with people who are homeless or socially excluded. The Membership package includes the delivery of fresh food, discounted courses, food safety and hygiene information and emergency packs for individual clients and an Annual Food Conference.
- **Study Tours and MindShift Experience:** There is now an opportunity to visit the Project and be actively involved in a Study Tour that will make a major contribution both to understanding how the project works and to the development of ideas on how the good food experience can make a lasting input into people's lives (see page 3 for more details). The MindShift Experience is a unique opportunity to gain an insight into the real world of homelessness as seen through the eyes of people who have been homeless. This 'hands on' experience will include joining the Food Redistribution (FareShare) delivery team as a van assistant. This will provide an insight into the logistics of the service and how this 'common sense' approach to food waste creates a positive impact within the community and changes the life of individuals through a 'hand up and not a hand out' approach.

A selection of quotes from the Cooking at Home Class participants:

"Eating healthily, learning new recipes, meeting new people, getting out of the house, getting used to being in a group. Getting confident about cooking by myself" - comments from a young mum attending a Cyrenians Cooking at Home Class (22 years old, living in supported flat)

"To learn how to cook something simple for myself will be great" - a man who came along with his support worker to discuss the possibility of joining a Cooking at Home Class. (48 years old, living in own flat)

For further information, please contact Carol-Anne Alcorn, Programme Manager, Edinburgh Cyrenians, Good Food in Tackling Homelessness Programme, 84-86 Jane Street, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 5HG

Telephone: 0131 554 3900

Email: carol-anne@cyrenians.org.uk

Health and Homelessness information in Grampian

The Aberdeen Health and Homelessness Directory - www.healthandhomeless.org - is an online service directory for professionals working with and for homeless people.

It contains detailed information on all services in Aberdeen that support the homeless, and those in danger of becoming homeless, with a focus on services assisting with health issues.

The aim is to allow professionals in the city to find all the information they need on homelessness services with one easy-to-use resource.

The directory highlights all services which promote healthy eating to their clients and allows users to quickly find services where food is the primary focus.

If you go to the homepage of the Directory you can either click on 'Practical Help', then 'food' and all the services with food as a primary focus will appear.

You can also carry out a more specific search by clicking on 'search services' on the right-hand side of the homepage and use the drop-down menu to search for a more specific service or project.

You can find everything from where a client(s) can drop in for a healthy meal to projects that provide healthy food to individuals and organisations that help clients to learn to cook healthy meals on a budget.

This is not to mention the countless services providing advice and practical help, regarding healthy eating on a budget, in conjunction with their accommodation, drugs/alcohol work and mental health services.

For more information on the Health and Homelessness Directory visit www.healthandhomeless.org or contact David Young, dyoung@acvo.org.uk.

Policy update

National Food Policy for Scotland

In January of this year the Government launched a National Food Policy discussion 'Choosing the Right Ingredients', which invited input from all sectors of society to the concept of a national food policy for Scotland. On 18 March CFHS organised a national discussion seminar to enable community and voluntary projects, especially those in the most disadvantaged areas, to feed their views into the national discussion. We were particularly heartened by the enthusiasm with which organisations working with homeless people responded to this invitation; one of the discussion tables on the day was entirely dedicated to homelessness and food issues, with both homeless project workers and service-users taking part in a very lively discussion.

The report from the event has been sent to the Government and we are now awaiting an indicative Government statement on the National Food Policy at the Royal Highland Show in June. We very much hope that the voices of some of the most vulnerable members of our society on the crucial topic of food will have been heard and that the final National Food Policy will reflect some of the concerns of groups tackling food and health inequalities nationwide.

To read the full report of this event, follow this link or get in touch for a copy. <http://snipurl.com/nationalpolicy>

Please note that this is an independent report that reflects solely the views and opinions of the participants and not those of CFHS.

In addition to the national discussion seminar that we held in March, we have also been keen to support local and regional meetings on the future of a National Food Policy for Scotland. Twenty local meetings have taken place, two of which focused on homeless families in East Lothian. An in-depth report from these discussions produced by East Lothian Council is available from www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/plug-ins/publications/

Or you can contact Stephanie Kerr, Health Liaison Officer (Homelessness) at East Lothian Council, sk@eastlothian.gov.uk

Publications

Shelter capacity building project in Argyll and Bute - small basket of goods survey

The Shelter Capacity Building project is working with support organisations and professionals across Argyll and Bute (A&B) to improve practice and outcomes for homeless families. The 'Small Basket of Goods Survey' examined whether there are price differences between A&B towns that may impact on a homeless family's ability to make healthy choices in food purchasing. This was seen in the context of benefits paid to families being the same wherever they lived in A&B, and therefore living in one town compared to another could be financially (and potentially nutritionally) disadvantageous.

Existing research suggests that there is a difference of over 6% in food prices between A&B and metropolitan areas, but this survey showed that in the same supermarket chain in three towns, (Dunoon, Oban, Lochgilphead) the exact same basket of goods (special offers and deals were excluded), had substantial differences in prices. The basket included staples (bread, rice, potatoes) and other goods promoted as healthy eating choices (eg various fruits, cereals, meat and vegetables).

Of note was that where a price difference existed, this was on average 23%. However, the price of staples varied significantly, with these showing the greatest disparity (own brand wholemeal bread – 37%, rice 35%, and potatoes 32% more in some towns). The overall basket cost ranged from £15.94 to £16.93.

The overarching conclusions of the study were:

1. Disparities in the costs of basic foodstuffs are likely to have an impact on the choices that a family are able to make in their food shopping (dependent on the town lived in).
2. Living in one town compared to another in Argyll and Bute may effectively limit not only the choice of items available to purchase, but also the quantity and quality of foodstuffs able to be purchased on a fixed and low income.
3. That such disparities in price are likely to affect the ability of the most disadvantaged (and specifically targeted for healthy living) sections of the population to eat healthily, and potentially the nutritional status of a family.
4. Compromising the ability of parents to purchase healthy food may impact adversely on the future purchasing habits of today's children, as well as their health, educational development and general wellbeing in the present time.

For further information, please contact Trevor Lines, Development Officer, Shelter Scotland, Trevor_Lines@shelter.org.uk

Dates for your diary

- 16 September 2008** University of Oxford Continuing Education CPD 3rd Health and Homelessness Conference, Oxford
For more information visit
<http://cpd.conted.ox.ac.uk/healthsciences/courses/homeless/researchconf.asp>
- 30/31 October 2008** Scottish Council for Single Homeless Annual Homelessness Conference, Edinburgh
For more information visit www.scshe.co.uk/index.htm
- 11 November 2008** Community Food and Health (Scotland) Annual Networking Conference, Thistle Hotel, Glasgow
For more information visit
www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/about/currentwork.php



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