



Food, Health and Homelessness Capacity Building Fund

How did everyone get on with their planned activities?

In 2006, Community Food and Health (Scotland) or CFHS launched a food, health and homelessness initiative, supported by the Scottish Government's Health Department. The aim of this initiative was to champion food as a powerful means of promoting the health, wellbeing and social inclusion of people who are homeless. It was also intended to highlight how work around food and health can support those who are homeless to move to permanent accommodation.

As part of this initiative CFHS, with support from Foods Standard Agency Scotland and NHS Health Scotland, provided funding through the Food, Health and Homelessness Capacity Building Fund in 2007. This fund was for food and health activities that considered the needs of people who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless. In total this fund offered £90,000 for food and health activities across Scotland.

This report has been prepared to tell you about some of the activity that has happened as result of the capacity building fund and also to share some of the successes and lessons learnt. In addition to sharing current activity, it is hoped this will support others who may carry out work around food, health and homelessness in the future. Much work continues and a number of projects are planning future activities as a result of the work which was stimulated by the capacity building fund. Look out for more information in the future in CFHS's free quarterly newsletter, Fare Choice and on the CFHS website www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk

Although all the projects that were successful recipients of the Food Health and Homelessness Capacity Building Fund addressed cross-cutting issues, they have been considered within the following four broad headings of **having a place at the table, knowing what's healthy – knowing what to do, growing your own menu and can cook, will cook!**.

Having a place at the table

Using food as a vehicle to create a 'social place' was one of the key themes that came through from the work of projects undertaking activities around food, health and homelessness. Some of the projects used the funding to host cooking sessions with groups, focusing on the social benefits of coming together and sharing a meal.

The Bridges Project in East Lothian used its grant to provide cooking and social sessions with young mums and young homeless people. The project used cooking facilities in several venues in order to carry out the cooking sessions and has now invested in its own cooking facilities, which will allow the project to continue. Throughout the project the times for the group to meet were changed, as members were not keen to travel in the evenings when the dark winter nights drew in. As such the project was flexible, and adapted to meet the needs of those involved. The project has been very successful and members have developed their cooking skills and grown in confidence.

having a place at the table





Knowing what's healthy, knowing what to do

Supporting people to know more about healthy eating, and developing their cooking skills to be able to put this into practice, was another key theme that came through from applications for the capacity building fund. Some of the projects used their money to purchase equipment and resources, such as the **Grassmarket Mission** and **Randolph Crescent Hostel** in Edinburgh. This gave them the cooking facilities they needed to work with people to prepare healthy meals. The purchase of equipment also allows groups to continue with their activities in the future.

One group, **Lothians and Edinburgh Abstinence Programme**, hired a chef/trainer to prepare lunchtime meals for people recovering from substance misuse. Participants assisted the chef in the kitchen, receiving tuition on planning and preparing healthy meals on a budget as well as learning nutritional skills. In addition to preparing lunchtime meals, time was taken to support people to plan nutritious evening meals, which they then prepared themselves. This provided education about healthy eating and an opportunity to work as a team, resulting in social inclusion through eating together and realising that food is fun, as well as nutritious.

The **Willow Project** in Edinburgh used its money to develop cooking classes for women who are offenders. The project creates an opportunity for women to cook for themselves and others attending the group. This allows women to learn new skills, socialise and develop their confidence and self-esteem. The project is also supporting women to develop their literacy skills through compiling recipes for the cooking classes, as well as a booklet they can use themselves. This project is not yet complete but so far they are 'delighted but not surprised' at the success of the cooking project.

Other projects used their money in ways which incorporated food into wider lifestyle issues. For example, the **Scottish Association for Mental Health Outreach Service** in Glasgow used the money to fund eight healthy eating workshops in conjunction with complimentary workshops such as storytelling, drumming and walking. More information about this project can be found in Issue 48 of Fare Choice. **Blue Triangle Housing Association** used its funding in various ways across five different Glasgow-based projects, all with a focus on introducing healthier alternatives. One project introduced a weekend breakfast club that supported people who were experiencing social exclusion to realise healthy options for breakfast such as poached egg instead of fried; wholemeal bread; and different fresh fruits. This club has been so successful that it is going to be continued.

Instant Neighbourhood Charity in Aberdeen chose to use its funding to train two members of staff, which enabled it to work with individuals on budgeting and menu preparation. In addition to this, cooking utensils and parcels of ingredients were distributed to individuals.

Some groups chose to use their funding to develop resources. **Aberdeen Foyer** developed a nutrition workbook designed to be used by people at their own pace, focusing on self-reflection on eating behaviours; setting goals to make small changes; recipe challenges; and self-evaluation. Upon completion certificates are awarded, along with a healthy goody bag and a voucher to be used in the local food co-op. So far the workbook has reached 114 individuals (well beyond the intended 40!). Many of the workbooks are still with people but this project will continue and more workbooks will be distributed and completed.

knowing what's healthy

North Ayrshire Community Health Partnership also produced a toolkit. This was for hostel staff, to build their capacity to do practical interactive sessions around healthy eating. This toolkit was designed in consultation with hostel staff and homeless people to ensure that it was fit-for-purpose. The toolkit is still to be evaluated to show how it is being used in practice, however, at the launch event for the resource, feedback from hostel staff and residents was very positive. Also, due to the pictorial nature of the resource, other people are interested in using it, such as community nurses and those who work with people with learning disabilities.

Two projects used the funding to provide support to homeless people through the provision of food and cooking utensils. After adapting its plans to

the needs of the target group, **Cearns Community Development Project** in Stornoway used the money to promote a 'hot meal' voucher scheme to people living in bed and breakfast or other temporary accommodation. During February and March 101 vouchers were exchanged for hot food and drink and feedback from representatives of this target group in Stornoway highlights that this project has been successful so far. The project is currently sourcing additional funding to continue its activities and to host an event in summer for all those who have benefited from the initiative. The Burnside Mill branch of the **Salvation Army** in Dundee also provided food for homeless people through the provision of fresh fruit and vegetables. In addition, it provided starter packs of cooking utensils for people moving into accommodation to help them begin to cook their own food.

Growing your own menu

Growing activities are becoming increasingly popular and there were two such projects funded through the Food, Health and Homelessness Capacity Building Fund. **Move On** in Glasgow received funding to develop an unused allotment that was in a poor state and had suffered from vandalism. The before-and-after pictures shown below highlight the amount of work that was involved. The project was fortunate to receive additional donations in the shape of expert advice, tools, paint, fruit canes and seeds, and the allotment was ready for a full growing season this year. This will play a big part in Move On's peer education service and will hopefully stimulate an interest in growing produce and healthy eating.

BEFORE



AFTER



growing your own menu . . .

Can cook, will cook!

Even when people have the knowledge and skills to cook healthily, they often need to develop confidence in order to put this into practice. Promoting the independence of homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless was another key theme from the applications for the capacity building fund. **Barnardo's 16+** in Edinburgh has worked with young people to develop cooking skills and confidence as well as additional essential skills for independent living, such as budgeting. Through one-to-one cookery sessions young people had the opportunity to plan, budget and prepare healthy meals. Recipes that have been tried and tested by the young people will be included in a recipe booklet, which will reflect the skills and ability of the target group. In addition to this, 'store cupboard starter packs' with essential ingredients for the meals included in the recipe booklet will be prepared for young people moving to their own independent living.

Similar to this approach, **South Ayrshire Community Health Partnership** delivered training to develop the cooking skills of homeless people in South Ayrshire. This training covered issues such as cooking skills, budgeting and healthy eating. Starter packs were also made up for those who completed the training course. Evaluation from the courses delivered so far has been positive, with participants learning 'portion control and budgeting for shopping' and 'cooking at home – eating less take-aways'. Some people who successfully completed the course are now interested in supporting the delivery of the next sessions.

The **Homeless Outreach Project** in Edinburgh provided one-to-one intensive support to individuals who were, or had been, homeless with multiple and complex needs, especially those with addiction issues. On average it provided support through six one-to-one sessions and enabled individuals to develop confidence in the process of planning, budgeting, shopping and cooking. This intensive support created a new dynamic between individuals and project workers, allowing new issues to be discussed and addressed.

Through the CFHS Food, Health and Homelessness Capacity Building Fund, a wealth of work has been undertaken and this has led to more plans for the future for some projects. The work undertaken has allowed some projects to explore working in new ways with homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless.

The lives of people who are homeless are often very chaotic and therefore their needs are very different. Some projects have shown how being flexible and adapting to the needs of homeless people has supported them to engage with groups and has provided an opportunity for them to commit to taking part, eg. **Bethany Christian Trust** in Edinburgh delivered a five-day course three times. The final course it delivered had more interest and more people signed up than any other course, however, on the day only one person attended. This will inform future plans for Bethany Christian Trust, who intend to meet up with individuals prior to delivering future courses, in order to develop the trust and confidence of homeless people.

The Rock Trust in Edinburgh, who delivered a peer-education and training programme for young homeless people, ran drop-in sessions that allowed participants to attend when they could and this did not impact on their overall learning. Having young people train other young people also proved to be a big success.

There is still a lot of work going on as a result of the Food, Health and Homelessness Capacity Building Fund. Some groups are still midway through their projects and have still to pull together all their results; others are planning more detailed evaluation to highlight the impact of their work. Watch out for more information in Fare Choice and on the CFHS website.



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