



## EVALUATION – CFHS ‘SUMMER PROMOTION’ FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY FOOD RETAILERS, 2011

### Introduction

The evaluation of previous funding programmes run by Community Food and Health (Scotland) or CFHS indicates that awarding very small amounts of funding to community food retailers can enable them to deliver activities that make noticeable differences to their levels of sales. This report summarises feedback from organisations awarded funding from CFHS through a funding scheme run in summer 2011.

### Background

Providing support for community food retailers continues to be a fundamental part of Community Food and Health (Scotland)'s (CFHS) work. For several years this support has included working with the Scottish Grocers Federation's Healthy Living Programme<sup>1</sup> (SGF HLP) to roll-out the programme's training and resources to community food retailers. To date, around 40 community food and health organisations that sell fruit and vegetables have taken part.

In January 2011, the SGF HLP ran a 'January Promotion' event with some of convenience stores included in the programme. The aim of the event was to increase sales of fruit and vegetables and other healthier produce in the stores. To complement this event, CFHS ran a funding scheme, inviting community food retailers that had taken part in a SGF HL training session to apply for a small amount of

funding to promote their sales of fruit and vegetables during January. This programme proved to be very successful, with 19 community food retailers awarded between £150 and £900. A factsheet<sup>2</sup> about the impact of this funding is available on CFHS's website.

The 'January Promotion' was such a success with the convenience stores participating that the SGF HL ran a second event in the summer of 2011. CFHS again offered funding to community retailers to promote their services throughout this period.

### The funding scheme

Twenty four organisations were invited to apply for between £100 and £400 depending on the number of community food outlets they ran, supplied or supported. The amount of funding awarded to organisations was less than for the January promotion, reflecting the smaller budget available. The total amount awarded was £3,200. The intention was the funding would be used by the organisations to run promotional activities up to end September.

Fifteen organisations (all that applied) were funded. This report is based on feedback received from twelve.

### Activities run

The funding was used for very different purposes, as outlined in appendix one (attached). The range of activities run once again demonstrates the creativity and ingenuity used by community food retailers to promote their services.

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<sup>1</sup> The SGF HLP is a Scottish Government-funded programme that aims to increase availability of good quality, affordable fresh fruit and vegetables, and other healthier food products, in convenience stores. The programme provides training and resources for stores that are taking part in the programme.

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<sup>2</sup> Factsheet: The impact of investing small amounts of funding in community food and health organisations. [www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/fileuploads/fact-sheet-jan-promo-6777.pdf](http://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/fileuploads/fact-sheet-jan-promo-6777.pdf)

The most popular promotional activity was subsidising the cost the fruit and vegetables sold, in order to encourage their customers to buy more or a bigger range of fresh produce. Seven of the community food retailers used some or all of their funding for this.

**Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre** runs a food store and café. It used part of its funding to provided free fruit pots for two weeks in its café, starting end of September. The Centre wanted to encourage people using its services, including the adult day care and out of school care services, to buy, and eat, more fresh fruit. Fruit pots are still for sale in the café, the costs being partly subsidised by the Centre.

**Broomhouse Health Strategy Group** used some of its funding to subsidise the costs of half-price fruit bags and soup packs sold during three weeks in August. The remainder of the funding was used to provide refreshments for its 'Street Café' day, run to increase awareness locally about the Group's shop. In total 200 soup packs and fruit bags were sold, a third of these during the 'street café' day.

In addition to running a half-price week in the co-ops they support, Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership promoted locally-grown pumpkins, providing its customers with recipes.

Six of the community food retailers stated that they had incorporate health promotion messages into their activities. All had run food demonstrations or taster sessions, and provided healthy eating advice or distributed health promotion materials.

**East Lothian Roots and Fruits** ran health promotion sessions with seven food co-ops and in two community cafés. Between 10 and 40 people attended the taster sessions run in the co-op, and 30 to 40 people at both café sessions, which focused on healthy packed lunches. A range of health promotion information was available for participants at all of the sessions.

Two organisations used the funding to promote local produce:

**East Dunbartonshire Food Co-op** bought banners which are displayed outside the premise of the four co-ops that they run and support.



**Tullibody Fruit Barra** purchased branded fleeces and tabards for the barra's staff and volunteers to wear when working on the

barra and at outside events.

Local events – gala days, family fun days – were used by four of the community food retailers to promote their activities.

**Cumbernauld and District Community Food Co-op** used part of



its funding to hire costumes which were worn at two local gala days.

One community retailer, **Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre**, used some of the funding to set up a fruit and vegetable stall in a local amenity housing complex for older people.

### **Difficulties or constraints**

Several of the community food retailers ran their activities later than anticipated. Some chose to do so because of fewer customers using their services during the summer (especially the school holidays). Others had staffing issues. Two had difficulties with suppliers.

Because of staff changes and moving premises, one community food retailer is only now intending to run the promotional activities they had planned.

Two community food retailers were unable to use the funding as intended, but used it to support other activities.

**Healthy 'n' Happy** intended to promote the food co-op at local youth events. When these were cancelled, the promotional activities were run at a local family fun day instead.

One community food retailer's plans were hindered by the poor summer weather:

**Getting Better Together** in Shotts used its funding to promote Scottish-grown summer berries, selling 153 punnets of strawberries half-price. However, because of the weather, fewer Scottish strawberries were available, and these tended to be of poorer quality. They were unable to source other Scottish soft fruits. When they had to, they sold berries from elsewhere, but not at the discounted cost.

One organisation that supports food co-ops across part of a local authority area was originally funded to run activities with three co-ops. Two closed before the activities took place. The funding was used by the third co-op, but not until much later than first planned.

### Impact of the funding

*“Due to summer events being so popular, we have now advertised our services to other community groups if they would like us to attend local events.”* Tullibody Fruit Barra

While too early to identify any long-term impact on sales, some of the community food initiatives reported additional sales or attracting more customers following their promotional activities.

**Sauchie Active8** has had 'a lot' of new customers at its fruit barra since attending the local gala day. Some of the people attending the gala commented that they did not know that the barra was running.

**Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership's** 'half-price' week worked well, promoting more sales from the co-ops.

**Edinburgh Community Food's** soup promotion at Richmond Food Co-op, which provided customers with free soup packs and recipes, encouraged the customers to buy other produce.

One community food retailer commented that feedback from customer was 'ok' and that heavy discounting by supermarkets had meant the prices of the co-ops' discounted produce were similar to the prices in local

supermarkets.

Several stated that they were planning to make changes or additions to their services as a result of running their promotional activities.

**Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre** is investigating opening a fruit and vegetable stall in another sheltered housing complex.

**East Lothian Roots and Fruits** is using feedback from customers at its health promotion sessions to identify what changes and improvements it can make to its services.

**East Dunbartonshire Food Co-op** wants to promote cooking classes alongside its food co-ops.

Customers at the three food co-ops where **Edinburgh Community Food** ran promotional activities have asked for more in future, including more health advice.

The **Sunflower Nursery** in Lochgelly is planning to extend the range of soup packs sold, in response to suggestions for customers.

### Other outcomes

Two of the respondents noted other outcomes, in addition to, or instead of, increased sales.

The **Sunflower Nursery** commented that parents and children were making soup together at home as a result of its 'Soup in a Bag' promotion.

**Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre** stated that some of its customers in the amenity housing complex were now ordering other food and non-food items from the Centre's food store.

### Conclusion

CFHS's 'summer promotion' funding scheme again demonstrates the positive impacts that small amounts of funding can make to community food retailers.

## Appendix One

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES RUN</b>	<b>WHAT FUNDING WAS USED FOR</b>	<b>AMOUNT AWARDED</b>
Broomhouse Health Strategy Group	'Summer Special' half-price promotion on soup and fruit bags, and Street Cafe.	Subsidise cost of the soup and fruit bags, and refreshments for Street Cafe.	£100
Cambuslang and Ruherglen Community Health Initiative	Intended to use funding to meet costs of resources needed to run activities linked with youth programmes.	Youth programme was cancelled at very short notice. Funding was used for promotion at local family fun day.	£100
Cumbernauld and District Community Food Co-op	Promotional stall at local gala days.	Purchase of food for tasters and hire of fruit and vegetable costumes.	£100
East Dunbartonshire Food Co-op	Purchase of three promotional banners.	As in application	£150
East Lothian Roots and Fruits	Produce and resources for health promotion sessions.	Purchase of fresh fruit and fruit juice; plastic cups; kebab sticks; fruit baskets (prizes for quiz).	£400
Edinburgh Community Food	Purchase of resources and produce for promotional events in three co-ops.	Purchase of promotional items for one co-op (Lochend); produce for taster and smoothies in 2 <sup>nd</sup> co-op (Balerno); subsidise cost of soup promotion at 3 <sup>rd</sup> co-op (Richmond in Craigmillar).	£400
Getting Better Together Ltd	Half-price promotion of Scottish summer berries.	Purchase of berries.	£150
Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership	Half-price week in up to ten food co-ops, promoting local produce.	Purchase of produce.	£400
Sauchie Active8	Promotional stall at the local gala day, end of August	Purchase of fruit and vegetables	£100
Tullibody Fruit Barra	Part fund purchase of branded work clothing, tabards and a banner	Branded fleeces and tabards purchased. Insufficient funding to purchase banner.	£100
Uttheo Ltd	'Taster' packs offered in Centre cafe & set up a stall in neighbouring amenity housing complex.	Purchase of fruit & vegetables; promotional materials; volunteer expenses; food containers.	£100
Volunteer Centre Fife	Purchase of produce for promotional events in three co-ops in West Fife	Two of the co-ops ceased operating. Funding used at the third, in Sunflower Nursery in Lochgelly, to re-launch 'Soup in a Bag' promotion.	