



Evaluation of community-based mental health organisations training in food, nutrition and health funding 2010

Findings

- The total cost of this programme was £4676.00.
- As of October 2010 the total number of beneficiaries is 46, with the potential for 10 more once the final programme runs.
- 43 people completed the REHIS Elementary Food and Health course, with 42 successfully completing the exam.
- All but one person reported benefits from the course in terms of increased knowledge and awareness of what constitutes a healthy diet, confidence in sharing this information with others, and using this information in relation to their work, as well as to make personal choices.
- There is some evidence of changes in diet and the food available within organisations as a result of the course and additional benefits in terms of informal networking, confidence and self-esteem.
- Five people completed the RSPH Certificate in Nutrition and Health course. Three passed with honours and two are planning to resit the exam. All described an increased understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet and increased confidence in using this information to offer advice to others.
- All of the organisations funded have plans to use the learning from the training both in their existing or new activities.
- Two organisations have secured additional funding for food and health work since receiving the training funding.
- Two people have subsequently undertaken the RSPH Diploma in Nutrition and Health. Both their organisations are now approved REHIS centres with plans to offer Elementary Food and Health courses in-house.
- One person who was a volunteer when they started the training has now moved into employment.
- The funding was offered to community-based mental health organisations. While all of the organisations funded have a clear element of work in relation to mental health and

Background

In January 2010, Community Food and Health (Scotland) made funding available to support community based mental health organisations to provide training to their staff and volunteers in food and nutrition.

wellbeing, increased targeting may be required to ensure that capacity is built among organisations specifically working with people affected by mental health issues. Funding was available for REHIS Elementary Food and Health courses and also for the RSPH Certificate in Nutrition and Health. Given the overall amount of funds available restrictions were placed on the number of courses each organisation could apply for. The funding was offered as part of work to increase the reach of the work with community based mental health organisations as well as to build capacity around food, nutrition and health.

Applications were received from seven organisations, all of which received some funding.

The organisations were:

Broomton Road Community Shop – Glasgow
Cambuslang and Rutherglen Community Health Initiative
CHANGES Community Health Project – Musselburgh
Falkirk Association for Mental Health
Healthy Valleys – Rigside Lanarkshire
Salvation Army - Kilmarnock
Turning Point Scotland

What was funded?

Funding was awarded for a total of 47 REHIS Elementary Food and Health courses and four RSPH Certificate in Nutrition and Health courses. At the time of writing 43 Elementary Food and Health courses have been completed and five Certificate in Nutrition and Health courses.

Funding was provided to train staff and volunteers. Eleven members of staff attended courses, 24 volunteers and 11 users of the various services. Of the certificate courses – three were taken by members of staff and two by volunteers.

Forty-two participants sat the REHIS exam and all passed. This included one person who needed ESOL support to take the course and three people with physical disabilities. Of the five people who took the certificate course, three passed, all with honours. The two people who failed the exam will resit in November.

What they did:

Broomton Road Community Shop

Broomton Road Community Shop is a community gathering place with a café. Funding for one certificate course and four Elementary Food and Health courses was used to fund one staff member and one volunteer on the certificate course. It was felt that the higher level course would be more beneficial. Both people are really glad they did the course and report benefits in relation to increased knowledge of a healthy diet and encouragement to make small changes. Both failed the exam but are determined to resit when they can in November. The Community shop will fund the fees for this.

An unexpected benefit from the training has been a successful application for housing association Wider Role funding (£16,000) to deliver healthy cooking work with young

people.

CHANGES Community Health project

Eighteen people attended REHIS elementary food and health training – three staff, 13 volunteers and two participants on the walking programme. CHANGES added funding to that provided and contracted the Nutrition Company to provide the course, as it was unable to find a local tutor. The course was high quality and everyone gained a lot from it in terms of new knowledge, awareness and confidence. One participant has thought about their diet and made a change from white to brown bread. Information from the course will be included in the next walking programme in the autumn and the impact of this will be evaluated as part of this.

One member of staff took the certificate course and passed with honours. It was felt that the course was well-presented and although there was a lot of information to take in, it was fairly straightforward. Participants found it a 'good starting point'. The course provided increased knowledge in terms of healthy eating and increased confidence to discuss healthy eating and nutrition with people using the project. As a direct result of the course, the staff member will offer a healthy eating and exercise course starting on 2nd November. One of the volunteers who attended the REHIS course will help facilitate this.

Falkirk Association for Mental Health

Ten people, one member of staff and nine people who use the services, attended REHIS Elementary Food and Health training provided by Forth Valley community food workers. Course content and delivery was excellent and the REHIS materials were described as 'good plain reading'.

As a result of the course, participants have new knowledge about what constitutes a healthy diet and are keen to make changes and pass ideas and information on to others. As a result of the course, fruit, juices and smoothies are now offered at meetings rather than tea, coffee and biscuits. Healthier recipes are being tried at the regular drop-in lunches and course participants are putting together menus for social events such as a pot luck supper. The organisation has also secured funding from health promotion to offer a course on practical cooking skills.

Healthy Valleys

Ten people were offered the REHIS Elementary Food and Health course. All are volunteers across a range of Healthy Valleys programmes including Clydesdale food market, Ready Steady Get Cooking course, Feeding the family, Healthy weaning, Cooking for teenagers, and three are involved in one-to-one support for vulnerable young women. All report finding the course very interesting and very relevant. They enjoyed getting together to do the course and describe benefits from networking and learning together as well as benefits to their health, confidence and self-esteem. All ten passed the course; including one volunteer who needed ESOL support to attend the course.

One volunteer went on to do the RSPH Certificate in Health and Nutrition course. The content was 'totally focused on health and nutrition with very current issues and guidelines'; the tutor was 'excellent, professional, very well informed'. While it involved a lot of time in studying, the course has made a difference both in terms of being well-informed, more able to offer advice on health and nutrition and more able to play a useful role within healthy valleys. This volunteer subsequently went on to complete the Diploma course and as a result on 17 August Healthy Valleys became a REHIS approved centre.

The first Elementary Food and Health course is planned for November. The volunteer is also now employed by Healthy Valleys on a part-time basis.

Turning Point

Five staff attended REHIS Elementary Food and Health courses – four project workers involved in cooking with people in services and one cook from one of Turning Point's residential homelessness services. Three of the project workers found the course very useful and spoke about it assisting them in group cooking activities. One spoke about now feeling more confident to give advice and information and feeling that the advice they were now able to give was validated advice, while another found that it offered them nothing new.

The courses were offered as part of an ongoing programme of work on food and nutrition within Turning Point. In-house nutrition training is now offered on its training calendar, but this competes for time and resources with mandatory training.

Salvation Army

One member of staff undertook the certificate course and completed the course with honours, describing the both the course and the trainer as excellent. Having a background in food science and food hygiene, the course provided a more rounded understanding of nutrition and what constitutes a healthy diet. The course materials were felt to be a good balance of oral presentation and written materials.

Having completed the certificate, the organisation provided funding for the member of staff to undertake the Diploma Course, and are now charged with providing training in-house to all staff. A first Elementary Food and Health course covering 10 staff will take place in the autumn, Thereafter the plan is to cover 50-60 people per year, with refreshers being offered every three years.