



**community
food and health**

(scotland)

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**Strengthening food work across minority ethnic communities.
Notes of Meeting held Thursday 25 Aug 2011 Glasgow**

Present: Neru Sharda (Mel Milaap), Kavita Aggarwal (Shanti Bhavan Day Centre), Monika Fotedar (REACH Health), Kim Sit (GAMH) Neru Hughes (GAMH), Florence Dioka (Central and West Integration Network) Sue Rawcliffe (CFHS)

Background

Sue welcomed everyone to the meeting and covered the background to the meeting:-

- The mapping study of food and health activities across minority ethnic communities commissioned from REACH Community Health Project in 2009.
- Funding of 4 healthier food pilots working on food with minority ethnic communities
- Launch of the Mapping research in December 2010
- Funding for REHIS training for organisations working with parents and young children from minority ethnic communities spring 2011.

All of these initiatives had highlighted the need for better information sharing, resources and networking to support food work across minority ethnic communities. This has now been written into the CFHS business plan for 2011-12 with some development time and resources attached to it. The aim of the meeting was to gather views on how best to use these resources to strengthen food work across minority ethnic communities.

Everyone introduced themselves and covered the work that they are involved in. Florence spoke about her network that covers from Whiteinch to the Merchant City. She has been developing work around food which has included cookery classes and the development of a recipe book. They now have funding from NHS health improvement to set up cooking classes across the whole of North West Glasgow.

Kim spoke about food work within GAMH including the Food for Recovery event which is taking place in September. In the south of the city her team has been working with Food Action South East and have recently secured an allotment in Bellahouston Park. Referrers are now aware that GAMH are working on food and are specifically asking for this to be included in support plans. Kim and Neru are aware of a huge demand for cooking classes that far outstrips what is available to them. They are interested in how to build skills in house to resource this.

Monika covered the research carried out by REACH into food and health activities across minority ethnic communities which has informed CFHS' work to date. Also the Improving Community Health through Effective Engagement programme that is currently running in Tayside, Lothian and Lanarkshire which has been working to improve access to mainstream services. In Tayside this has included work around hospital food and has resulted in an agreement to look at food procurement and what is available to patients as well as translating some of the patient information leaflets about food.

It was agreed that hospital food is a big issue across minority ethnic communities especially in the light of families not being allowed to bring food into hospitals in Glasgow.

Also the lack of understanding of different diets and the assumptions that are often made e.g. that anyone from a south Asian community will need a halal diet or that if you say you are vegetarian you will take eggs and milk.

Kavita and Neru both work in day centres which are funded by social work in the city. The food is provided by Cordia. The food provided is good quality and Cordia provide a choice of food to suit different diets. There was discussion about different day centres and the arrangements that have been made to provide food that suits people attending. In one day centre there is a separate kitchen preparing food for members from the Chinese community.

In discussion about what would best support the further development of work around food across black and minority ethnic communities the following priorities were identified:

Funding

There is a lack of funding for cooking classes and yet a high demand. There is a need for ongoing resource to support cooking classes.

Funding is also required to build knowledge and skills within different minority ethnic communities to equip them to provide information within their communities and also work as tutors. It would also be helpful to be able to offer training to people who are already involved in food work e.g. cooks at voluntary sector day centres so that they can be equipped with the most up to date knowledge and information with regard to a healthy diet.

Information

There is a need for good information about what is already happening across different communities. It would be useful to have information collate in one easily accessible place. Information would also be useful on what is happening in different parts of the country and groups would be interested to visit different projects to see their work. Some organisation would use web based resources and a bulletin board and somewhere to paste information about different initiatives, events and festivals would be useful. It would also be useful to have access to resources e.g. recipes that other organisations have used. It was agreed that the CFHS website might be somewhere to do this and that it might be useful in the longer term to explore a more formal community of practice.

Networking/ sharing practice

Everyone at the meeting was interested in meeting again to see how the ideas raised are being taken forward. It was agreed that it would be good to do this in early December and hold the meeting in one of the projects. Agreed also to invite everyone from the meeting in Edinburgh and any other organisations who are interested.

Moving Forward

Sue thanked everyone for their time and input into the meeting. Sue will write up and circulate notes from both meetings and also put them on the CFHS website for comments from any organisations that were unable to make the meetings. She will then look at how best the ideas raised can be taken forward given the time and resources CFHS currently have available.