



community
food and health

(scotland)

All on one plate



National networking conference evaluation report

31 October 2013

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Introduction

Community Food and Health (Scotland) hosted a free national networking conference in October 2013. The event was for people keen to share experience, evidence, hopes and concerns on all aspects of food, inequality and social justice. The following report will give background information about the conference, conference content and the results from an online evaluation survey.

Background and aims

The conference was called 'All on one plate' and aimed to:

- provide a motivating and inspiring day for those working in the area of community food
- discuss how community food initiatives can address inequalities through their activities.

Community Food and Health (Scotland) wanted:

- participants to hear from speakers reflecting on experiences within and outside Scotland
- plenty of opportunity for discussion
- workshops to be participatory, led by experienced practitioners and to reflect practical challenges and key policies
- a vibrant marketplace, full of information from groups and agencies around the country.

Conference date and venue

Community Food and Health (Scotland) chose CoSLA Conference Centre in Edinburgh for the venue. This decision was based on cost, location (close proximity to train station), number of available smaller rooms as well as the high quality of the venue. The conference date, Thursday 31 October, was determined due to the conference usually being at this time of year and venue availability.

Conference planning

The conference planning process was started earlier in 2013 by the Community Food and Health (Scotland) team. The team discussed the theme, aim and objectives of the conference along with speaker ideas, conference format and venue. As planning continued, the venue booking was secured, some speakers were confirmed and the format was being discussed. A conference flyer was produced and disseminated in September through relevant networks. The initial advertising aimed to let potential delegates know about the event, date and location. Online registration was successful through relevant networks and the website.

By October all speakers and workshops were confirmed along with the marketplace. The team met once more to go over the programme and the logistics on the day. The most challenging aspect of planning was organising a video interview with a speaker in Canada. IT issues made this process

difficult and resulted in the interview being re-recorded. Despite the challenges, the interview was successful and shown on the day.

Conference format and programme

Highlights of the morning included the inspiring video presentation about a community food initiative in Canada called 'The Stop'. This was followed by an insightful interview from its executive director, Rachel Gray. There was also an interesting and informative presentation about the health initiative, Healthy Valleys in South Lanarkshire, from Julia Miller.

The conference ran workshop sessions in the morning where delegates could discuss innovative approaches and good practice. Workshop themes included emergency food aid, older people and cooking classes. A vibrant marketplace ran throughout the conference, showcasing work from across Scotland, where delegates were able to learn about other people's excellent work.

In the afternoon the conference ran a 'braw blether' session which gave delegates a chance to join or create a number of interesting discussions. Discussion themes included the tools for play and learning with food for the under 5s and the role of credit unions in addressing food poverty. 'Braw Blether' along with other sessions in the day generated a lot of thought and discussion for participants.

CFHS staff feel that the conference was a huge success, with great feedback from delegates. The day enabled people from across Scotland to come together to learn from each other and each other's practice. The conference allowed people to debate some of the key challenges in continuing to address health inequalities and barriers to healthy, affordable food.

Conference audience

Approximately 140 people attended the one-day event, with very little non-attendance from those registered. The event was oversubscribed on the run up to the conference. People requested a place via the conference organiser regularly in the run up to the event. Delegate numbers were capped due to the conference being set with round tables and the break-out room capacity.

Delegates included community food initiative workers, people from community gardens, volunteers, NHS staff, planners, policy makers and researchers. The conference was an excellent opportunity for people with an interest in food, community food initiatives, health inequalities and social justice.

Social media

The conference was a chance for Community Food and Health (Scotland) to launch its new Twitter account. A hashtag was advertised during the conference and delegates were encouraged to Tweet. The CFHS Facebook page was also utilised before and after the conference with photographs and information about the conference.

Online survey results

After the conference took place, an email was sent to all delegates asking them to fill out an online survey in order to gain feedback and inform future events. The online survey was accessible for approximately five weeks, with a reminder being sent during the month of October. In total 75 people completed the survey (54% of delegates).

Delegates were asked for their overall evaluation of the event along with their opinion about certain aspects of the day. Below is a summary of the main findings.

Gained useful knowledge	Strongly Agree or Agree	98%
Will change working as a result	Strongly Agree or Agree	70%
Made new work contacts	Yes	87%
The conference was relevant to me and my work	Strongly Agree or Agree	96%

'The presentation on the Canadian food bank allowed me to see how a service such as this can be linked with a community café or growing project to help the local community on a wider scale.'

'The conference reminded me about the importance of dignity.'

'It is good to see others out there doing similar things as well as sharing and learning from each other's experiences.'

'I will be looking at how to incorporate community cafés in Glasgow into the Commonwealth Games Final Mile project.'

'I am now taking much more seriously the benefits of networking, and am building up some very worthwhile links.'

Overall evaluation of the event	Excellent or Good	93%
Rating of programme content	Excellent or Good	83%
Rating of event organisation	Excellent or Good	96%
Rating of venue	Excellent or Good	94%
Rating of food	Excellent or Good	89%
Rating of marketplace	Excellent or Good	77%
Opportunities for questions and discussion	Excellent or Good	91%
Opportunities for networking	Excellent or Good	93%

'CFHS events are always enjoyable and productive. It is a great opportunity to catch up with developments at a national level as well as meet with colleagues from across the country.'

'Toronto's "The Stop" was inspiring, as an indication of how a long-term goal can develop.'

'Good example from Lanarkshire where emergency food distribution is linked to supporting people with other aspects of lifestyle/food issues/addressing food poverty.'

The morning session	Excellent or Good	96%
The table discussion	Excellent or Good	85%
The workshop session	Excellent or Good	84%
The workshop discussion	Excellent or Good	78%
The braw blether session	Excellent or Good	62%

Within the survey delegates were asked whether they thought having a workshop session added value to the day, **89% of those answering saying yes.**

'Well-organised, useful event - made new contacts and gave me ideas about developing new activities.'

'I hope this will continue to be an annual event, maybe encouraging participants to share with others their favourite/most useful resource, so that we can all benefit by providing the best possible service to our local communities.'

Constructive feedback

Feedback is essential for enhancing future events. Some people commented that there was not enough food at lunchtime. CFHS will make sure that enough food is ordered and supplied at future events. There was also a suggestion that the conference had too much discussion activity and participating in discussion was difficult at times. CFHS will explore a more structured format with presentations around current topics for the afternoon as well as the morning.

'This conference had just a bit too much discussion based activity.'

'During the Braw blether session it was quite difficult to understand the ongoing discussion if you had missed the beginning.'

'Even though I really appreciated that there was no food waste at all, there was almost a bit too little food.'

Learning for future events

Overall the CFHS networking conference, all on one plate, was thought successful by those who attended and by CFHS. The presentation from the Canadian project, The Stop, was very well-received by delegates, as was the opportunity to network.

To ensure subsequent successful events CFHS will take on board the results from this evaluation survey, including any constructive comments.

For further information about the planning or the evaluation of the conference please contact Jane Oliver.

email: janeoliver1@nhs.net

phone: 0141 414 2792

