



factsheet

www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk

The contribution of community food initiatives to national food and health programmes

In 2013, Community Food and Health (Scotland) provided funding totalling £12,000 for eight community food initiatives to build on their current work with one or more of the Scottish Government food and health programmes.

Main achievements

- Sixty-three volunteers and trainees completed training on food hygiene or healthy eating.
- Eight community food initiatives improved their standards by providing better facilities, equipment and resources for those using their services.

The Scottish Government food and health initiatives

The **healthyliving award (HLA)** is a national award working with the catering sector in Scotland, including community cafés and lunch clubs, to promote the use of healthier ingredients and cooking methods. The aim is to keep salt, fat and sugar to a minimum and to ensure that water, low-fat dairy products and fruit and vegetables are always available for consumers. To qualify

for an award, a site must ensure that at least 50% of the food items available meet the specific HLA criteria. To achieve the HLA plus – the higher level of award – at least 70% of the food items available must meet the specific award criteria.

www.healthylivingaward.co.uk

The **Scottish Grocers' Federation Healthy Living Programme (SGFHLP)** is an industry-led programme to support convenience stores in low-income areas to promote healthier foods by providing staff training, marketing materials and resources, including fruit and vegetable display stands. It also works with CFHS to support community shops, co-ops or fruit and vegetable 'barras'.

www.scottishshop.org.uk/sgfhlp

The **Healthier Scotland Cooking Bus (HSCB)** visits schools and communities across Scotland for a period of several days and provides cooking workshops to pupils, teachers and community participants. It aims to address health inequalities as part of its work to develop cooking skills. Schools and communities are provided with a 'Cookit' after they have organised a visit, in order to support cooking activities afterwards.

www.focusonfood.org/scotland

Background

All the community food initiatives had already been involved in arranging a HSCB visit in their community, completed the SGFHLP training or had held the HLA. All deliver their activities in low-income communities or with vulnerable people, making them ideally situated to ensure that national programmes reach the most vulnerable. The community food initiatives received between £400 and £2300.

About the activities funded

The funding was used for a variety of activities, such as trying out new recipes in a cooking course or in community cafes, paying for volunteer training and buying equipment. These activities had a positive impact in several ways:

Improved facilities and equipment

Seven community food initiatives used the funding to improve facilities and buy better equipment. **North Glasgow Community Food Initiative (NGCFI)** hosted a HSCB visit in 2012. It used the funding to upgrade the equipment it uses to deliver cookery courses across the north of Glasgow. NGCFI delivers over 20 cooking courses each year using venues which might have little or no cooking equipment; it therefore has to transport all the equipment. For several years it used portable gas stoves. Although these require no electricity, and are light and easy to carry, they can be difficult to clean and the whole appliance becomes hot to touch when in use. NGCFI used the funding to buy portable induction hobs, which, although more expensive, are safer to use, particularly when working with children. Feedback on the use of these from trainers and participants has been positive.

Urban Roots is an environmental organisation based in the Southside of Glasgow. Its work includes community gardens, environmental courses and cycling promotion. It has expanded its cooking sessions following a HSCB visit in 2011. The visit helped the organisation to build further links with local schools, where it now delivers more cooking sessions and gardening activities. It recently moved to new premises with access to a catering kitchen. This is being developed into a community café and will be used to run additional cooking classes. The kitchen required upgrading and the funding was used to buy equipment for this. The upgrading work is almost complete; meanwhile, it continues to develop its cooking activities. It recently started to teach the new Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS) accredited Elementary Cooking Skills course, which will add a further dimension to its food work.

Other community food initiatives that upgraded their facilities include **East Dunbartonshire Food Co-ops**, who used the funding to buy price labels to improve the display of prices of fruit and vegetables at its co-ops in Lennoxton and Hillhead. **Dr Bell's Family Centre** bought a catering-sized food processor to speed up the preparation of vegetables when demonstrating to cooking course groups. The **Annexe Communities café** bought a catering-sized juicer for its community café in order to expand the range of drinks sold in the café.

New recipes or resources

Annexe Communities is a healthy-living centre in the Partick area of Glasgow. Its café holds the HLA and it planned to develop recipes and juices in order to work towards the HLA plus. The centre developed a range of recipes and juices that met this criteria, were affordable for café customers and easy to make in a busy catering kitchen. These were tested with volunteers and staff at events for feedback before inclusion in the café menu. The centre continues to work towards the HLA plus and to expand both its food and social enterprise activities.

The Broomhouse Centre café in Edinburgh holds the HLA. Its community café serves as a training project for adults or young people wishing to enhance their employment opportunities, and for people with learning disabilities. It used the funding to build on this work by arranging for trainees and volunteers to complete the REHIS Elementary Food and Health course. This course provides a basic background in nutrition, and can help build the skills and knowledge of trainees to further understand the HLA criteria. The centre also used the funding to develop recipes that are in keeping with the award and used these within cooking courses and in the production of a recipe book.

A new hospital service for patients and staff

The Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) (formerly known as the Women's Royal Voluntary Service or WRVS) received funding to develop a new trolley service for the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Renfrewshire. The RVS already had a shop in the hospital that sold meals, snacks, newspapers and other items, and wanted to extend part of this service to the hospital wards. It planned to ensure that the trolley would meet the standards set out by the HLA, i.e. 50% of the food items available meeting the specific HLA criteria. However, the hospital stipulated that 100% of food and drink items available from the trolley meet these criteria. The RVS arranged to try out the trolley service on a selection of wards in the hospital, and developed a training programme for RVS volunteers. Fifty-five volunteers completed the training on food hygiene, data protection and basic nutrition to support them in providing information to customers about the food and drink on sale. Feedback from volunteers, hospital staff and customers has been positive. The trolley sells £250 of items per week. Only a few customers and volunteers have expressed disappointed at the lack of less-healthy items on sale. The RVS has recently responded to requests from other wards to expand the service and has purchased another trolley to support this. Furthermore, RVS groups in other parts of the UK are considering implementing similar trolley services in other areas.

Developing the links between food activities and national programmes

Dr Bell's Family Centre in Edinburgh provides support services to families in north Edinburgh. It runs a café that holds the HLA plus, has a cook school and has provided cooking activities in local primary schools. It planned to use the funding to further develop links between these food activities. It used recipes that were in keeping with the HLA criteria and similar to those used in the café, running cooking sessions for 31 parents and four classes for children in a primary school. These recipes were simplified and the trainer ensured that the recipe ingredients were affordable and easy to source locally. The classes for parents were attended by a wide range of people, including some from low-income backgrounds and some from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Lochgelly Sunflower Nursery is a local authority nursery which provides support for families in the local area. The nursery sells bags of fruit and soup packs, including ingredients and recipe ideas, for £1. The nursery staff have received training and support on selling fresh fruit and vegetables from the SGFHLP and have developed this work by holding a series of cooking sessions where parents have learned new skills and how to cook on a budget. Previous funding provided the nursery with new cooking equipment, so that all participants had the necessary resources. The nursery has been running the cooking programmes on a regular basis with six parents attending a six-week block.

The parents who have attended these programmes have given positive feedback and stated that it has made a difference to how they provide healthy meals for their families.

Conclusion

These groups used the funding to build on and improve their existing work or to develop a new service. It allowed them to improve the knowledge and skills of staff and volunteers, or to buy equipment and upgrade facilities. These basic activities support community food initiatives to continue their work and can improve the experience for participants.

Websites of community food initiatives

The Broomhouse Centre

www.broomhousecentre.org.uk/

Dr Bell's Family Centre

<http://drbells.co.uk>

North Glasgow Community Food Initiative

www.ngcfi.org.uk/

East Dunbartonshire Food Co-op

[www.facebook.com/pages/
East-Dunbartonshire-Food-Co-ops/184846768260334](https://www.facebook.com/pages/East-Dunbartonshire-Food-Co-ops/184846768260334)

Lochgelly Sunflower Nursery

[www.fifedirect.org.uk/atoz/
index.cfm?fuseaction=facility.
display&facid=F90A1E30-3B01-46D1-
9AB4BE7958C40A13](http://www.fifedirect.org.uk/atoz/index.cfm?fuseaction=facility.display&facid=F90A1E30-3B01-46D1-9AB4BE7958C40A13)

Annexe Communities

www.annexecommunities.org.uk/

Urban Roots

www.urbanroots.org.uk/

Royal Voluntary Service

www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk