

70

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issue
October 2015



community
food and health

(scotland)

farechoice

The newsletter for Community Food and Health (Scotland)

Many happy returns?

It is fitting that this 70th edition celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Scottish wing of the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (see p.7) and the 20th of the Food Train (see p.6), among others, as well as containing contributions from community initiatives and individuals who appeared in the first edition in 1997 (see p.5).

However, many local initiatives find themselves returning to challenges they thought they had addressed years ago, barriers long since identified and questions they feel they have already answered.

Many of the groups in this 70th edition have not only contributed generally to our understanding of food poverty and how to address it (see p.18) but have also informed, influenced and inspired hundreds of other initiatives that have developed over the years across Scotland and beyond.

The energy, enthusiasm and understanding of all those working at community level not only deserves to be celebrated but also learned from and reflected in effective and lasting change.



Food Train 20th birthday celebrations at the Mitchell Library in Glasgow.

Team talk

British Sociological Association Food Study Group

On 30 June, two NHS Health Scotland staff attended the study group's day focused on food, poverty and policy: evidence base and knowledge gaps. Nine papers were presented from academics working in the field. The research studies covered a range of topics from exploring the rise of food banks and the experience of their users and volunteers, to studies focused on the impact of poverty on particular groups' experience of food, such as young people and older people. Flora Douglas (from Aberdeen University) presented on the quantitative aspects of our research into the nature and extent of food poverty/insecurity in Scotland (see p.18).

Community-led research into food security

Community Food and Health Scotland (CFHS) will be working with a couple of local partners to support community-led research into food security and insecurity. The aim is to get a better understanding of what food security could look like and mean for people and how this would be different from where they are now. We want to explore the perceptions, aspirations and experience of people who are living day to day with food insecurity and who do not access emergency food provision. We hope to be able to share the findings from this work in mid-2016.

Development funding

CFHS is currently awarding funding to groups and agencies that successfully applied for development funding this year. As well as the usual CFHS one-year funding, we also offered funding over two years to groups who need longer to set up projects, such as new growing projects, or those aiming to engage with a wider range of participants. This has helped attract a wider range of applications.

Thanks to all those that submitted funding applications.

CFHS's Capacity Building Fund is still open for applications. Organisations running food and health activities can apply for up to £500 to run or take part in capacity building activities (such as training courses, conferences or study visits) to develop the skills and expertise of their staff or volunteers. The fund will close when all the funding has been allocated. For more details, contact anne.gibson5@nhs.net

Cooking skills study group

CFHS has recently set up an 18-month long cooking skills study group. This group of 18 organisations will build on the findings and recommendations from the CFHS cooking skills review carried out by Avril Blamey and Jacki Gordon and Associates in 2014. The group will work together to critically appraise the approaches they use in cooking skills courses, and agree to evaluation methods and follow up participants.

For more information contact kim.newstead@nhs.net



Community café networking event

In June, CFHS held another community café networking event in Edinburgh. Forty community café practitioners attended and took part in the four mini-workshops that were attended throughout the day. A short report about the event will be available soon.

Several of the cafés taking part expressed an interest in hosting or being part of a community café learning visit.



The first visit in Edinburgh on Monday 9 November, 12.30–3.30 pm, to the White House Kitchen and Café Connect is now fully booked.

The second visit is to Wellmeadow Café in Blairgowrie on 15 February. Booking details will be available soon.

Contact anne.gibson5@nhs.net for more information.

About us . . .

Our overriding aim is to improve Scotland's food and health.

We do this by supporting work that improves access to and take-up of a healthy diet within low-income communities. Major obstacles being addressed by community-based initiatives are:

Availability

Increasing access to fruit and vegetables of an acceptable quality and cost.

Affordability

Tackling not only the cost of shopping but getting to shops.

Skills

Improving confidence and skills in cooking and shopping.

Culture

Overcoming ingrained habits. We help support low-income communities to identify barriers to a healthy balanced diet, develop local responses to addressing them and highlight where actions at other levels, or in other sectors, are required.

We value the experience, understanding, skills and knowledge within Scotland's communities and their unique contribution to developing and delivering policy and practice at all levels.

CFHS is funded by the Scottish Government and is now part of NHS Health Scotland.

Team talk

New case studies on CFHS website

We have four new case studies in the 'Activity' section of our website. 'A Healthier Me' is a Borders-wide project that aims to ensure that people using the 12 learning disability services in the area receive consistent information and support with eating well and other lifestyle related activity. The project has all the services in the area on-board and the case study explains the approach they have taken, their success and challenges, and the Pathway toolkit that they use to promote the work.

The two other case studies showcase community food initiatives that are actively using a community development approach in their work. Granton Community Gardeners in North Edinburgh is a community-run gardening project that has developed a number of neighbourhood growing spaces across the Granton area, and also organises community meals. Tullibody Healthy Living Initiative in Clackmannanshire runs a successful fruit barra among a range of other healthy living activities, all established to meet needs identified by community members. Its most recent development is the establishment of a community garden.

Meal Makers is also new. It's a meal sharing project for older people (see p.6) reflecting on the successes and challenges of its first year.



In this edition we are delighted to hear from Dr Andrew Fraser, our colleague at NHS Health Scotland, who featured in our 1st edition and reflects on food and health developments since then...



'It is a great pleasure to be writing for the 70th anniversary edition of Fare Choice and to reflect on the many achievements of Community Food and Health (Scotland). A picture appears of the youthful me in the 1st edition, alongside the even younger Cathy Steer at the launch of a year of a focus in Highland on food. Cathy remains in Highland, and I left later that year to join the Scottish Office, as it was then. In 1997 the focus was on a healthy balanced diet, and access to the means to prepare and enjoy food. Placed prominently in new Scottish health policy Towards a Healthier Scotland which came into being in 1999, there was a great deal of promise for food, nutrition and diet as we entered the new millennium. CFHS has continued to do vital work in communities, but two unpleasant surprises cropped up in the years that followed.

'First is obesity. In 1997 we knew what obesity was but it was not a prime public health issue then. In 2002 when the Wanless Review *Securing our future health: taking the long-term view* was published at the request of the UK Government, obesity as a future challenge was nowhere to be seen. But by 2007, there was a Foresight report, *Tackling obesities: future choices*, on the subject, and we have since seen the inexorable rise in prevalence in overweight so that now it is the experience of the adult majority in Scotland.

'The second has been the emergence of a startling number of food banks. Whatever the accurate facts on food banks and

while acknowledging that there are other well established sources of food provision in communities for people on very limited budgets, the trend tells us a great deal about the extent of need for something that is a basic need and a right – to have access to basic nutrition.

'So the lessons of the past 18 years and 70 editions of Fare Choice are that the work of CFHS is no less relevant than it ever was; good things are happening but they need to be available and happening at numerous places across Scotland; what and how we eat remains important for our long term quality and quantity of life. The majority of us habitually eat and drink more than we need, but some do not have enough, and struggle to provide food for those who rely on them. Reversing the trends of the past 17 years will take steady persistent action at local level, but will be sustained only if helped by action and change to tackle poverty, and across the food chain among producers, manufacturers, retailers, consumers and influencers of all sorts. Above all, Scotland needs to tackle inequality; as a nation of food consumers across numerous local communities, Scotland needs to acquire the appetite to source, prepare and enjoy food and drink moderately, sociably, sustainably.'

Dr Andrew Fraser
Director of Public Health Science
NHS Health Scotland

A number of...

groups and organisations celebrating anniversaries or important milestones

Food Train 20th anniversary

Food Train was founded in 1995 by a group of older people, including Jean Mundell MBE, who wanted to develop a service that would provide practical support to older people in need to enable them to eat well, enjoy more social contact and to live independently at home for longer.

The original service, and still the main service today, launched by Food Train is a grocery delivery service for customers aged 65 and over. Volunteers deliver and unpack shopping, put it away in the fridge and cupboards and loosen any tight bottle tops, etc. For many customers, this may be the only social contact they have all week.

Food Train has come a long way in 20 years with branches spread across 7 local authority areas in Scotland. Food Train has also expanded its range of services including the 'EXTRA' service which provides regular household and home safety support combined with a befriending element of increased social contact; 'Food Train Friends' which provides

telephone calls, home visiting and trips out for older people; and the 'Outreach Library Services'.

What's key to your success?

'Volunteers are at the very heart of Food Train, without them we'd never have achieved such success over the last 20 years for older people across Scotland. It's so humbling that so many good people share the mission and values of Food Train and give up their time in all weathers to bring fun, love, laughter and food to older people in need.'



Meal Makers 1st anniversary

Meal Makers, the neighbourhood food sharing project and newest initiative to be launched by the Food Train, reached its **first birthday** on 4 August 2015. Meal Makers connects people who love cooking and want to be active in their community ('Cooks'), with older neighbours ('Diners') who appreciate a home cooked meal delivered to them every now and then.

The project proved an instant hit, with Cooks signing up to volunteer for the project in the very first week in Dundee. Diners and more Cooks soon followed and soon meals were being shared all over the city. At the start of 2015 Meal Makers was launched in its second area, Glasgow.

Since the launch, 99 Diner and Cook matches have been made, 633 meals have been shared

MEAL
MAKERS



and Meal Makers' Cooks have clocked up over 364 befriending hours while meal sharing.

Project Manager Emma Black reflected on the challenges of getting the project off the ground a year ago;

'... there aren't any projects like Meal Makers in Scotland. Sometimes this made it difficult explaining exactly how Meal Makers worked because people were confusing it for the type of meal services more commonly found in the public and private sectors. The funny thing is Meal Makers is such a straight forward concept and sometimes people were looking for the catch, thinking it had to be more complicated than what it was, we had to insist 'No – it really is that simple!'

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens in Scotland on its first 10 years

It's hard to believe it's been 10 years since we opened our office in Edinburgh. Back then, we had one part-time member of staff; now, we have five staff and six freelance fieldworkers to cope with demand, dealing with an ever increasing number of enquiries. Our e-bulletin goes out to more than 800 people all over Scotland who continue to be inspired by community growing as a way to bring communities together, and tackle current problems like climate change and food poverty.

Our mission has always been to support, promote and represent community growing groups, and we actively listen to what our members want. Over the years we have branched out to establish new projects in response to this demand. For example, the Community Land Advisory Service, launched in 2011 to give technical advice on land issues, and Growing Together, a brand new project that will give advice on alternatives to grant funding.

Our partnerships have been essential over the last 10 years, helping us reach new audiences and make the most of our limited resources.

Garden for Life, the Grow Your Own Working Group, the Scottish Community Alliance...and of course, CFHS. You helped us get started in 2005, and we still work together closely now, highlighting the link between growing, cooking and eating good food. Thank you for all your support, and here's to another 10 years together!

What's key to your success?

'The key to our success over the last 10 years has been great partnerships, and staying in touch with our members. It's important that our office is at Gorgie City Farm, not a generic office block, which keeps us grounded and reminds us that grassroots projects need practical help, not fancy toolkits!'

Helen Pank,
(Former) Scotland Development Manager,
(Former) Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens

www.farmgarden.org.uk



Fife community kitchen celebrates its 5th anniversary

Nearly 1500 people have donned their aprons and got their hands dirty since Fife Community Kitchen opened in 2010, with the mandate of creating a local, non-threatening, easy-access environment, where groups and individuals could learn to cook or develop their existing skills. From six month courses, one-off demonstrations and kids cooking classes, the kitchen has been made completely accessible to all, hosting young and old, experienced chefs and complete beginners.

A number of local groups and charities have also used the facility including Fife Community Food Project, Homestart Leven, Fife Gingerbread, Fife Young Carers, and the Dalgairn Centre.

Christopher Trotter, Fife's food ambassador, was there to open the kitchen five years ago and was back to celebrate its success, 'It is just fantastic to see it doing so well,' he said. 'There are so many things happening here catering to all the different needs in the community.'

Iain Anderson, from Fife Community Food Project, run by Fife Council's Community Learning and Development department, said it was important to make the kitchen accessible for all, 'We are here in part to build positive food messages through community learning.'

We don't preach, we are never patronising, there's no right way – you just have to understand the group you are dealing with and every need is different.'

The kitchen was the brainchild of Lyndsay Clark, Senior Health Promotion Officer with NHS Fife, who had this to say about the kitchen's success.

What's key to your success?

'Passion, perseverance and persistence! The key success to the Community Kitchen is that it provides an non-threatening environment where groups can come together and learn new skills, enhance existing skills and develop friendships that often or not continue after the course has finished! The great thing is that we can see that coming to courses in the kitchen does impact on the participants and helps them consider ways of adopting healthier lifestyles... word of mouth also helps!'



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Over 750 healthy living awards now held

The team at the healthy living award has been working with caterers the length and breadth of Scotland for the past nine years, encouraging them to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

The award was set up to challenge the catering sector to think about the ingredients and preparation methods they use and make small but important changes to make their food healthier and support healthier eating.

With 750 awards now held across all types of catering outlets from private, public and third sectors, the award continues to grow every year. The award has been achieved by a diverse range of catering businesses, from mobile food vans and community cafés to high street quick serve restaurants and contract catering companies, illustrating that the award can be achieved in all types of business.

We have seen a number of positive changes since the award started. We launched the healthy living award plus in 2011 and 200 caterers now hold this higher level of award. The award is held by 98% of NHS hospital staff and visitor restaurants. In 2013 we moved to our new home at NHS Health Scotland and now have a team of 10 staff.

We remain focused in supporting caterers to help them achieve the award by reducing the fat, salt and sugar content of their food, while ensuring at least 50% of their food meets the specific healthy living award criteria. This in turn makes it easier for people to know where to go for healthier food.

If you are interested in this free award visit www.healthylivingaward.co.uk/register or contact **Yvonne Traynor** on **0141 414 2880**.

Take stock

Recipes for success

In this Take Stock, we catch up with Edinburgh Community Food Initiative, which was featured in the first edition of Fare Choice not long after starting up and having just moved to new premises in Leith.

Eighteen years and 69 editions later, and now known as Edinburgh Community Food (ECF), this flourishing community food initiative has continued to grow and develop, recently expanding into larger premises.

We brought ECF's Chief Executive, Iain Stewart, and Sally Findlay, Food and Health Development Worker, together with Suzie Thorpe and Rebecca Jones from Building Healthy Communities (BHC), who are making plans to open a community café in Midpark Hospital in Dumfries some time in the autumn.

We met in the Café on the Corner in Edinburgh, a member of Edinburgh Community Cafés Network (supported by ECF) to see what the BHC staff could learn from the experiences of this well-established and thriving community food initiative. They had a few questions for Maxine at the Café on the Corner too...



Iain began by detailing some of the background and history of ECF. Originally set up in 1996 to supply of low-cost fruit and veg within the local community, there are now two sides to the organisation. The food and health development team work with various community groups working in health and nutrition and cooking skills, and the enterprise team works with a whole range of corporate customers, supports the community food outlets and sells directly to the public through hospital outlets. ECF recently expanded its premises, taking over an adjacent building. It plans to use the additional space to help build its sustainability.

'... changing the whole business model within the organisation and becoming enterprising has ensured that the organisation has survived, but it's been a journey.'



Rebecca, Maxine and Suzie enjoying their chat

A key development for the food and health team is supporting a network of community cafés in Edinburgh. With funding from CFHS in 2010, ECF ran a pilot project delivering a programme of training and learning, to help the cafés become more sustainable, and provide a wider range of healthier foods by increasing skills and knowledge about nutrition and food safety. From an initial key group of six cafés, there are now over 50 cafés included in the network and identified on a community café map.

The community cafés are seen as a great vehicle for delivery of activities, not just for ECF but also the local authority and Health Board.

'... we are positioning ourselves to make sure that while we are still delivering healthy eating and nutrition messages within disadvantaged and low-income communities ... we are still doing what we set out to do, but we are making sure that we are influencing the strategy, the council, and the NHS, in terms of health inequalities.'

Part of Sally's role (she also works for ECF at the Willow Project with women offenders) is coordinating and supporting the network, including promotion through social media activity (usually undertaken on the bus between appointments and visits).

'They are all different and their needs are all different and the services that they help their communities with are different too'

She spoke about the success of the breastfeeding friendly award, which has now been awarded to around 12 cafés. Promotion of the award using leaflets and social media has created a lot of interest from other cafés. She is now trying to start peer-to-peer support groups in some of the cafés, helping mums to meet other mums and support each other. The

network is promoting the need for more buggy space in cafés and has recently produced a separate leaflet about this.

Rebecca and Suzie began to speak about their own project, setting out their plans for the café in the recently opened Midpark Hospital in Dumfries. The café has been in development for a year or so. They explained that the customer base for the café will be the community of staff, patients and visitors. They want the café to become a hub for the hospital community, providing a pleasant, non-clinical, social environment, and hosting activities, like arts and crafts. There is a BHC growing project within the hospital, which they would like to link to, using the garden produce within the café.

'... there's a wee crazy part of me that likes the challenge.'

They described the challenges of setting up a community café within an NHS setting. A possible partnership with the Aroma group, which already runs cafés within the NHS, is under discussion, and they are exploring if the corporate brand and the community ethos can work together, without either being compromised too much.

'... [patients and staff] want to see the food being made, they want it fresh, they want it healthy ... they want a cup and a plate.'

'They want somewhere nice to go as well.'

Despite having very different backgrounds (catering and nutrition), both Rebecca and Suzie are keen on the community element of the project, and want to overcome any restrictions they may meet to develop this element as much as they can.

They had prepared some questions for Iain. Their first question was around funding. The café has funding for one year, which includes funding for Rebecca and Suzie's posts and they are already thinking beyond this and how to attract more funding.

Iain explained that ECF's core funding comes from the local authority and NHS, with additional funding sought for specific projects.

'We look everywhere. And there's no easy answer ... And it is getting harder and harder as funding is reducing year on year.'

His advice was to look to do something different when making an application,, recognising that many funders will only fund new activities.

Iain spoke about how ECF has become more financially 'canny', and is looking at ways of generating income and saving money through reducing waste, in addition to attracting funding. Having a supportive board that is confident about the organisation's financial sustainability is a huge 'plus'. The anticipated move to a three-year funding cycle from the local authority and Health Board is expected to help organisation with their longer term financial planning.

Its next challenge is to grow its social enterprise arm and try to generate more income through gaining new customers for its fruit and vegetable sales and training courses. It is making more direct contacts with local growers and producers and trying to 'cut out the middle man'. Funding is still required to help subsidise the enterprise arm, but it is hoped that this can become self-sustaining in time. Enterprise awards have also contributed, with ECF receiving awards from the Enterprise Growth Fund, the Santander award for enterprise, and funding from the Robertson Trust.

Susie and Rebecca's next question was around evaluation, and how ECF monitors its outcomes.

'[we're] very keen that what we do is about impact.'

Iain explained that demonstrating impact is extremely important for ECF. It now runs very few one-off activities. Instead it runs activities for at least six weeks, and some as long as one year, so that the impact of these programmes can be measured. Iain's advice to Rebecca and Susie about measuring impact was to...

'Make sure that you are building this in as part of your work and it's not seen as an add-on.'

Pre and post evaluation is undertaken, using core questions around 13 outcomes, which have been co-produced between City of Edinburgh Council, NHS Lothian and the Lothian Community Health Initiatives Forum. ECF knows the importance of collecting other data, e.g. around equality monitoring. It also produces case studies...

'We've got some really good case studies of the difference this has been making ... and that really helps with funders if you can show shift and change for people.'

Suzie added that it will be easy for the café to provide facts and figures, but more difficult to measure the 'softer outcomes' (like being able to show that it is more than 'just a café'), and other impacts it is bringing (for example, encouraging visitors to come more regularly or stay longer because they have a comfortable and welcoming place to sit, or improving patient wellbeing by providing space to sit, meet others and take part in activities 'away' from the rest of the hospital).

Suzie explained that they have been given the goal of 12 months for the café to break even. There was a good discussion about the trend of short-term thinking and funding that can accompany health inequalities projects. The funding for the BHC growing project at the hospital is coming to an end in October, but they are keen to work with the growing team going forward. They also plan to make links with another café in the area, to provide another safe environment for patients once they leave the hospital.

Rebecca then asked about volunteering.

Iain explained that ECF has very few volunteers. The community food outlets they support and the community cafés in the network may be run or supported by their own volunteers. However, their hospital stalls are run by paid staff: initially run by volunteers, ECF quickly

changed to paid staff, to ensure consistency of service and build customer relationships.

Many ECF volunteers are students looking for placements or work experience, and are involved in delivering activities that benefit both themselves and ECF. Iain's advice to Rebecca and Suzie was to remember that,

'Managing and supporting of volunteers is a job in itself.'

Finally, we asked what has made ECF successful and why it is still here after 17 years. For Iain it is,

'Being able to adapt, being flexible and up for the challenge and not being scared to change.'

Iain stressed the importance of reputation. A key action for ECF was rebranding from Edinburgh Community Food Initiative, giving the message that it isn't a short-term project, but is there for the long-term. Iain added that it's about,

' ... having a bit of vision ... looking ahead. If ECF in five years' time isn't doing more work with older people, then there's something wrong. We know the demographics ... there are needs about malnutrition for older people. We should be doing more and finding more funding.'

He highlighted the hard work put into the organisation by lots of people over the years and the trust between the board and himself as a manager when it comes to taking risks:

'Having a wee look at the future and knowing where you have to position yourself without selling your soul.'

ECF's future plans include looking for opportunities to develop other work, including the possibility of developing a training kitchen which can accommodate the needs of a range of client groups.

As more coffee was served and the conversation drew to a close, Suzie and Rebecca then had some time for a chat with Maxine, who manages the Café on the Corner.

More information about the full range of work that ECF is involved in, and about the Edinburgh Community Café Networks, can be found at www.edinburghcommunityfood.org.uk and www.edinburghcommunitycafes.org.uk

You can find out more about Building Healthy Communities at

www.healthycommunities.org.uk

We wish the Midpark Community Café all the best with their plans. Perhaps at their 1st anniversary we can catch up and see how they have got on.



A successful seminar series for SCOFF in 2015

The Scottish Colloquium on Food and Feeding (SCOFF) is beginning another academic year. Here I reflect on some of the brilliantly attended seminars from the session just gone and recognise those speakers and organisers who were instrumental in making them so successful.

Dr Stephanie Chambers of the University of Glasgow joined with SCOFF in organising a mini-symposium considering the challenges of the evaluating food interventions and their impact on health outcomes. We were so overwhelmed by the interest in this seminar that we also made the session available via video conference for the first time.

Professor Laurence Moore opened the session by discussing his work in the development and evaluation of complex interventions to improve public health. He introduced frameworks, such as the socio-ecological model of health, and discussed some of the difficulties which can emerge as research tries to capture and unpack these complex interdependencies.

He was joined by Dr Sharon Simpson whose main research interests lie in the areas of obesity, mental health and behaviour change. She discussed particularly her work leading an evaluation of a group based intervention for obese pregnant women. Her reflections on issues such as participant recruitment and retention were particularly thought provoking and insightful.

Professor Annie S Anderson concluded the session. Professor Anderson's long career considering the relationships between diet

and health provided abundant material and wide-ranging points for thought, including how to effectively capture the nutritional profile of the meals that research participants report eating.

Also in 2015 we worked with Dr Valeria Skafida of the Food Researchers in Edinburgh group to host a seminar with Dr Wendy Wills who discussed her recent study considering young people's food and drink purchasing practices inside and beyond the school gate.

The food and drink sold in secondary schools in Scotland is regulated to help reduce levels of fat, sugar and salt. Policy attention has now turned to the 'unhealthy' food and drink available 'beyond the school gate'. Drawing upon her study of local food environments involving seven schools in areas of high, mixed and low levels of deprivation, Dr Wills shared findings suggesting that the socio-spatial characteristics of both the school and the external food environment interact with the socio-cultural nature of young people's eating and drinking practices at lunchtime. This relationship is mediated by deprivation and influences how often young people purchase food and drink in the vicinity of schools and the reasons for this purchasing.

Both seminars were marked by strong attendance and lively audience participation in discussing the implications of the research presented. I'd like to extend a huge thank you to all those who made 2015's sessions so insightful and inspiring and look forward to being able to report on an equally lively 2016.

Andrea Tonner, SCOFF Convenor

It's good to talk

A number of 'conversations' have begun over the summer which are central to generating the kinds of policies that are needed for a fairer, healthier Scotland and very appropriate for community food initiatives to consider having their say on.

The Scottish Government is inviting you to have your say on what a 'fairer' Scotland should look like in 2030 and the steps that should be taken to make this vision a reality. More information from www.fairer.scot

Early August saw the formal launch of the complementary national conversation on a healthier Scotland, which had first been announced at the start of the year. The government is working on this with the Health and Social Care Alliance and are seeking to know 'what is needed to help you live well in the future?' and 'What support do we need in Scotland to live healthier lives?' Details at www.healthier.scot

Meanwhile, very much tying in with these two conversations, and building on the successful Learning Exchange Programme covered in the last Fare Choice, a number of community initiatives are already co-operating with an NHS Health Scotland 'Conversation with the People of Scotland' around health inequalities. CFHS is helping people participate in a conversation that will inform NHS Health Scotland priorities and activities and assist the organisation, in partnership with stakeholders, in our pursuit of a fairer, healthier Scotland. Some conversation sessions have already taken place, involving people talking about existing strengths and opportunities that exist in their community alongside issues around fairness and health. These vibrant conversations are already showing an appetite for being part of the change towards fairer, better health in Scotland. For more information please contact janeoliver1@nhs.net

On commission

If you want to see what the Food Commission are talking about and how they see the National Food and Drink Policy delivering a Good Food Nation you can view minutes of their meetings at www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00476462.pdf

Chair of the Commission, restaurateur Shirley Spear, addressed a multi-sectoral audience at the latest meeting of Holyrood's Cross Party Group on Food.

Scottish food coalition

A new grouping of agencies, from a broad range of backgrounds, have come together as the Scottish Food Coalition to add their breadth of expertise to current policy debates and discussions. Core principles have been drafted, a co-ordinator appointed, support given to the Scottish Government's GM stance and a programme of activity scheduled, including a presence at forthcoming party conferences. A website is also planned. Watch out for further details.

Scottish Parliament

With the current context of proposed new fiscal powers for Holyrood, how such a responsibility could be applied is becoming an increasingly familiar target for policy suggestions. One of the latest was a suggestion, from a former chair of think tank Reform Scotland, that a tax on sugar could be used to lower income tax in Scotland. On the other hand a petitioner to the Scottish Parliament has proposed that an income tax rise could be directed towards food banks. Watch out for more policy suggestions, including in the equally important area of benefits, as the new powers and responsibilities become a reality.

www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/foodbank

Sweet talk

Sugar has had a high policy profile recently. Sustain's ongoing campaign for a sugary drink duty to create a Children's Health Fund, (www.sustainweb.org/childrenshealthfund) was joined over the summer by a BMA report, 'Food for Thought', which also recommended, among other things, a sugary drinks tax <http://bma.org.uk/working-for-change/improving-and-protecting-health/food-for-thought>

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition's (SACN) *Carbohydrates and Health* report did not recommend a fiscal response but did make a number of important public health recommendations, including halving sugar intake. www.gov.uk/government/publications/sacn-carbohydrates-and-health-report

Dr Andrew Fraser, Director of Public Health Science at NHS Health Scotland responded to the report by saying that,

'Tackling any particular recommendation or disease group on its own will not be sufficient to address the challenges that the report highlights. Communities whose diets are poorer are much more likely also to face problems in other matters that determine their health such as opportunities for work and leisure. Availability of food and drink, cost on a limited budget, the influence of friends, family, media and wider society will shape our patterns of consumption. The answers lie with a combination of measures.'

This policy debate will no doubt continue in the coming months and those involved with community initiatives should contribute their knowledge and experience to the discussion.



Malnutrition summit

'To become a Good Food Nation we need to change the way people think about food. We need to make it easier for people to make healthier food choices. And we need to ensure that everyone in Scotland has the opportunity, ability and confidence to access a healthy diet for themselves and their family.'

Maureen Watt MSP,
Minister for Public Health

Participants from groups and agencies across the country came together at a Malnutrition Summit held earlier this year in Edinburgh and highlighted a number of policy and practice areas where addressing this key area could be boosted. Organised by the Scottish Government, with support from NHS Health Scotland, a report on the event is available from the Scottish Government and CFHS websites.

'It has been estimated that three million people are malnourished at any one time in the UK ... we must seize this opportunity to demand change.'

Michelle McCrindle,
Chief Executive at the Food Train

Moving on

One person who may well have read every edition of Fare Choice is Janet Muir, whose work with the Community Health Exchange and Scottish Community Development Centre, and previously with the Poverty Alliance, has been greatly appreciated by Scotland's community food initiatives over the years. We're hoping Janet stays in touch as she enjoys her well-earned retirement.

Another person whose work has been covered by Fare Choice on numerous occasions has been Ian Shankland. Ian has recently retired as manager of Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership (LCFHP) and long-time Fare Choice readers may also remember his time before that with Edinburgh Community Food. Ian is staying on the board at LCFHP and hopefully his experience and understanding will continue to be tapped both locally and nationally.

Resources to help maximise your influence

Do you struggle to get your message heard by policy makers? Are you unsure of how to pitch things or how to use evidence to make your case?

Check out the tools and websites that the Knowledge Translation (KT) Network has put together. There are links to useful guides and websites on using evidence, where to find it and how to use your own research and evaluation data to influence policy makers or funders. The KT Network is a collaborative group with representatives from funders, the Scottish Government and agencies with an interest in supporting the creation and use of evidence to inform policy and practice. The resources can be found on the Evaluation Support Scotland website

www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk
or just google The Knowledge Translation Network.

The nature and extent of food poverty/insecurity in Scotland

A team of academics, covering a range of disciplines and led by the Rowett Institute in Aberdeen, has recently completed a very timely study into food poverty, or household food insecurity, in Scotland. Commissioned by NHS Health Scotland, through CFHS, the study highlights the need to think 'beyond food banks' when it comes to definition, measurement and responses in this key area. The study uses both quantitative and qualitative evidence and CFHS would like to thank all those practitioners from community food initiatives who gave up their time to contribute.

Dr Flora Douglas, who headed the research team, noted,

'There were a number of issues that emerged that made a lasting impression on me. Firstly, even from the limited data we were able to use, it is clear that people who are living in food poverty are spending less on food and fuel than their wealthier counterparts, but spending a considerably larger share of their income on these essential items and this has been the case for some time. Related to these observations there was a widely held view amongst our study participants that people living in food poverty in Scotland had little choice but to buy cheap, highly processed food - sadly so in a country that aspires to be a good food nation.'

Flora went on to say,

'Secondly ... people are refusing to go to food banks when offered referrals by health and social care professionals indicates that there are more people experiencing severe food poverty/food insecurity than food bank figures suggest, and such figures are not a good indication of the extent or nature of food poverty in Scotland. There was also widespread concern about the extent to which young people and families are affected by food poverty. Our findings also suggests to me that many people find it very hard to use a food bank, and are likely to be making that decision out of necessity, and not through choice. Finally, the lack of a proper measure of food poverty makes it difficult to know to what extent people are affected by food poverty, and for how long. This also makes it difficult to tell if steps to reduce food poverty are working. All in all, the picture, as a public health scientist and fellow citizen, was deeply concerning with the long term health and well-being of an unknown number of people in Scotland of particular concern.'

The report can be downloaded from
www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/publications-library

Minority ethnic older people and food

Having supported the preceding consultation, CFHS was delighted to be present at the launch of *Healthy Diet and Lifestyle for ethnic minority older people*, produced by the Older People Services Development Project, which is made up of Trust, Hanover and Bield Housing Associations with support from the Big Lottery Fund. The dozens of minority ethnic groups that participated in the consultation were all well represented at the very well attended and lively launch in Dollar, which was also supported by the Scottish Government.

The publication, available in seven languages, and the consultation report, can be downloaded from

www.equalityscotland.com/6/12/Publications/Publications.html

Living in the Gap

Voluntary Health Scotland's excellent report, *Living in the Gap*, which looks at the work of the third sector in tackling health inequalities is now available as a poster from

www.vhscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/VHS_Living-in-the-Gap_A0-poster-NHSScotland_2015_final1.pdf



Hard Choices

Hard Choices: Reducing the need for food banks in Scotland, published by the Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland in association with Oxfam and the Trussell Trust was launched last month. The report builds on UK-wide research and focuses on six in-depth interviews conducted with families in central Scotland. More information available from www.cpag.org.uk/scotland

Health inequalities: What are they? How do we reduce them?

A series of briefings are being designed by NHS Health Scotland to support stakeholders to take the action needed to reduce health inequalities and improve health. The first can be downloaded from www.healthscotland.com/documents/25780.aspx



CAN toolkit update

The NHS Ayrshire & Arran CAN (Cheap and Nutritious) Food and Health Toolkit was produced in 2008, in partnership with CFHS.

Initially, the toolkit was developed for those passing on budget cooking skills to low-income groups and it was shared across Scotland, proving useful for other groups as well. Last year, the games section was reviewed and updated to reflect the reductions in fat, sugar and salt in some processed foods. In addition, more one-pot recipes and games provided by NHS Tayside were included.

The Nutrition and Dietetic Health Promotion team then began looking at devising Simple Meal Idea cards using commonly used store cupboard/food bank items, such as canned and packet foods. These simple basic recipes have been tried and tested by the team and local community projects.

They are available in hard copy and poster format and can be downloaded from Resources online NHS Ayrshire & Arran



Take a look at our very first edition from 1997. We've come a long way since then ... 70 newsletters, 2,500 newsletter recipients, seven members of staff, one name change (in 2008), umpteen conferences, at least two website redevelopments, 47 e-bulletins, 434 Twitter followers, and 688 Facebook likes so far.

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April 1997

Issue No 1



Fare Choice

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SCOTTISH COMMUNITY DIET PROJECT

**Welcome to the first edition of
Fare Choice
the newsletter of the Scottish
Community Diet Project.**

WHY WE WERE SET UP

Last year the Scottish Diet Action Group, set up by the Scottish Office, produced "Eating for health - A diet action plan for Scotland" designed to achieve the dietary targets already adopted by the government in 1994. An important aspect of the action plan was a recognition that "for many people in less well off areas, there are a number of real practical obstacles to healthy eating. The plan went on to highlight "four, main but interlinking, barriers to progress:

- Limited availability of healthy foods, such as fruit and vegetables, of an acceptable quality and cost.
- The difficulty and expense of travelling on public transport to large retailers.
- Lack of basic cooking skills and equipment.
- Long established dietary habits and reluctance to experiment with new foods.

One of their conclusions was the need for a Scottish Community Diet Project (SCDP) designed "to pursue a strategic approach to tackling the problems of people living on a low income, including a responsibility to gather and disseminate information on community initiatives and good practice; to develop ideas for new

Copies of all the audits findings are available free, while stocks last, from Bill or Jacque at the SCDP.

initiatives; to identify the development potential of existing community action such as food co-operatives; to identify training needs; to work with the retail sector to identify opportunities for action; and to encourage dialogue between Health Boards and local authorities about a strategic approach to food within their areas.

Anyone who still has not seen "Eating for Health - A Diet Action Plan for Scotland" can get a copy free from the Stationery Office by phoning 0131-479-3141 or from Bill Gray, National Project Officer, Jacque MacIntyre, Admin Assistant, at the SCDP (address/phone no/fax no/e-mail address on back page of this newsletter).

Another report that has influenced the remit of the SCDP was an audit on "Community Food Initiatives in Scotland" commissioned by the Health Education Board for Scotland (HEBS) and published last August by the MRC Medical Sociology Unit and the Department of Human Nutrition at Glasgow University. One of its conclusions was that "a central co-ordinating body or clearing house would be helpful in providing information exchange on funding sources, business skills, models of good practice, and practical issues of stock control, storage and transport."

Shopping List

- Page 2 Community Food Initiatives Database and Funding
- Page 3 Food Matters
- Page 4/5 Food for Thought Conference
- Page 6 Breakfast in Inverness
- Page 7 Lunch in Leith
- Page 8 Information Exchange

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