



community
food and health

(scotland)

What's cooking in Scotland?

A snapshot of community
cooking skills activities in 2017



NHS
Health
Scotland

About Community Food and Health (Scotland)

Community Food and Health (Scotland) (CFHS) aims to ensure that everyone in Scotland has the opportunity, ability and confidence to access a healthy and acceptable diet for themselves, their families and their communities.

We do this by supporting work with and within low-income communities that addresses health inequalities and barriers to healthy and affordable food. We are a programme within NHS Health Scotland.

Acknowledgements

CFHS would like to thank everyone who took part in our survey in 2017 or who shared information about it with others.

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About this report

CFHS ran a short online survey during the summer of 2017 to get a snapshot of cooking skills activities for people living on low incomes across Scotland for that year. A total of 85 people from across Scotland completed the survey:

- 53 practitioners (e.g. community chefs, trainers, facilitators)
- 14 managers
- 18 were both managers and practitioners.

The results in this report show the following information about cooking skills activities:

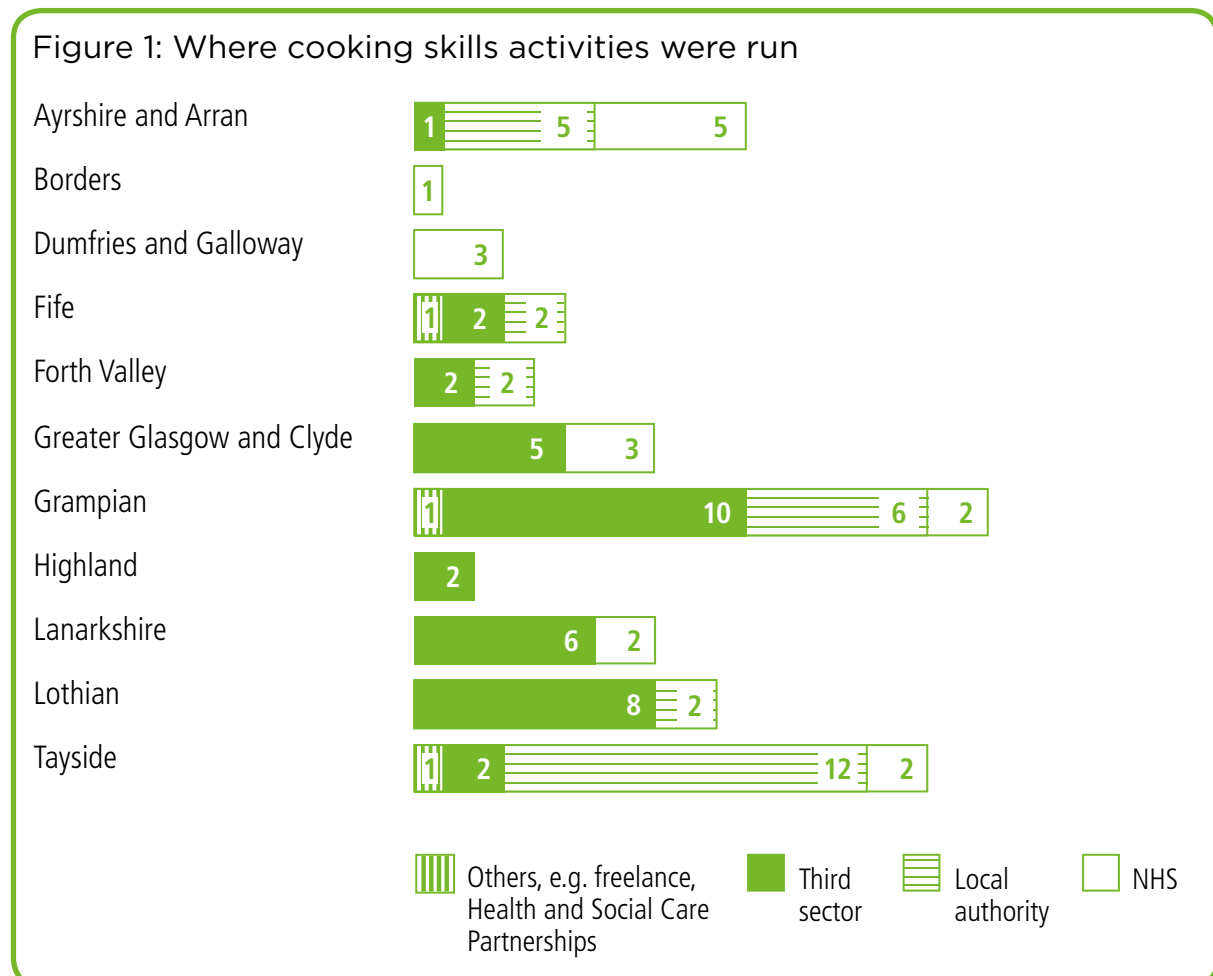
- 1** Where they were held and who was running, funding and supporting them.
- 2** How often they run, how long for and how many people completed them.
- 3** Who attended them.
- 4** What training people got to run them.
- 5** The main challenges.
- 6** The main benefits.

Where they were held and who was running, funding and supporting them

The majority of people managing or running cooking skills activities worked for third sector organisations (e.g. charities, faith or community groups, social enterprises) or local authorities. Here's who they worked for:

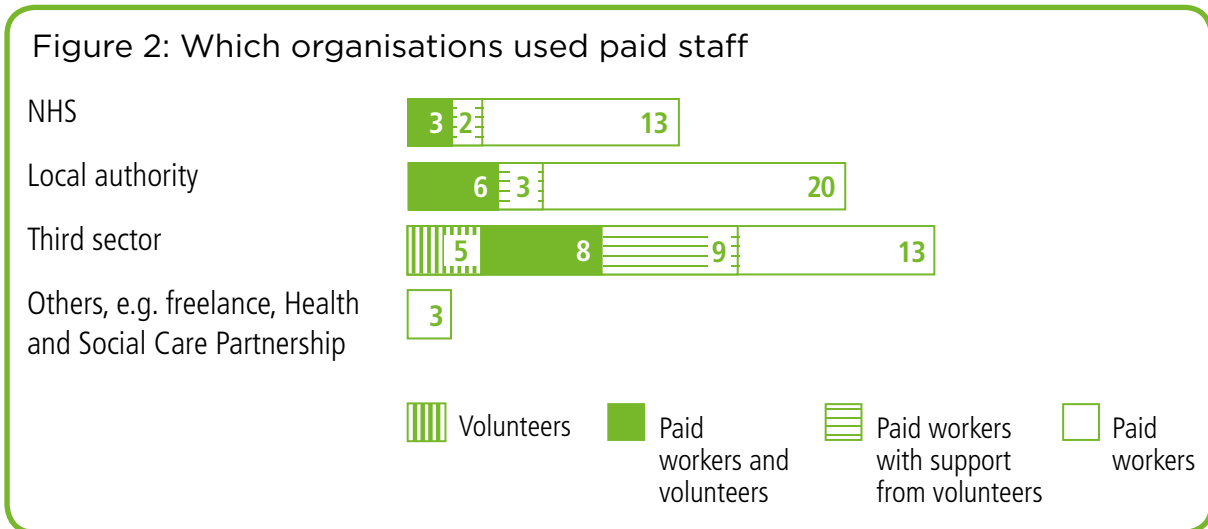
- 35 third sector
- 29 local authorities
- 18 NHS
- 2 self-employed
- 1 Health and Social Care Partnership.

Figure 1 shows in which NHS Health Board areas cooking skills activities were held and which organisations ran them. Note: three people worked across more than one NHS Health Board area.



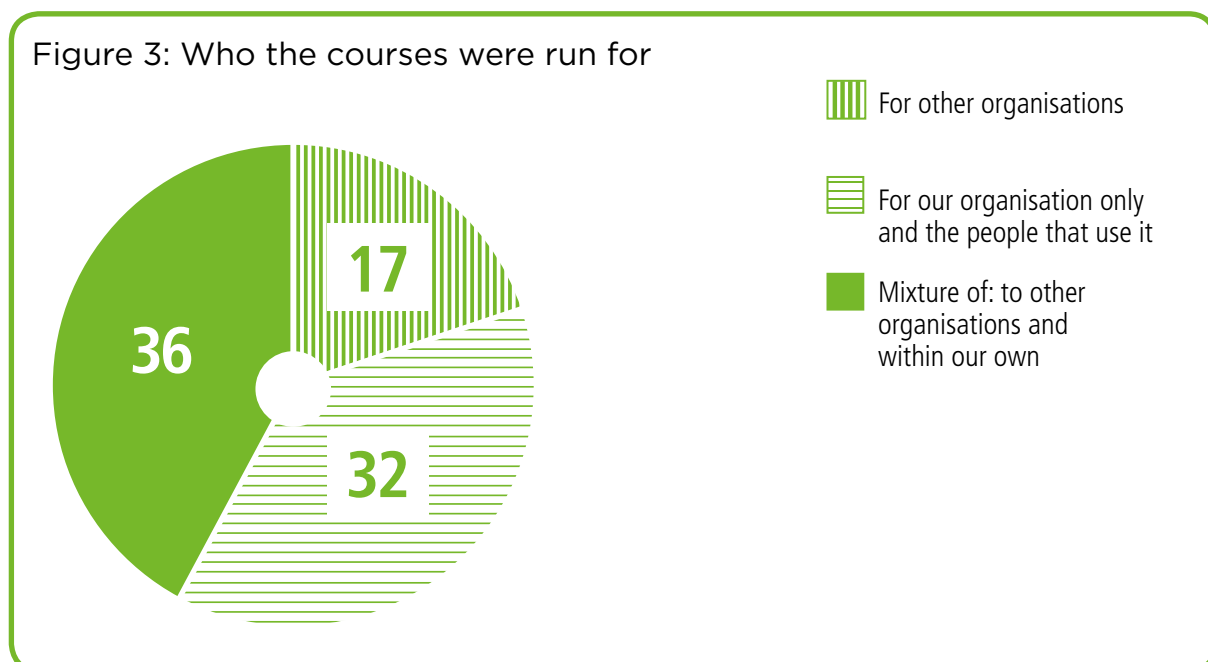
Paid staff or volunteers?

Figure 2 shows which organisations paid their staff to run cooking skills activities and those that sought help from volunteers. Third sector organisations were more likely to rely on volunteers to run or support cooking skills activities compared to other organisations.



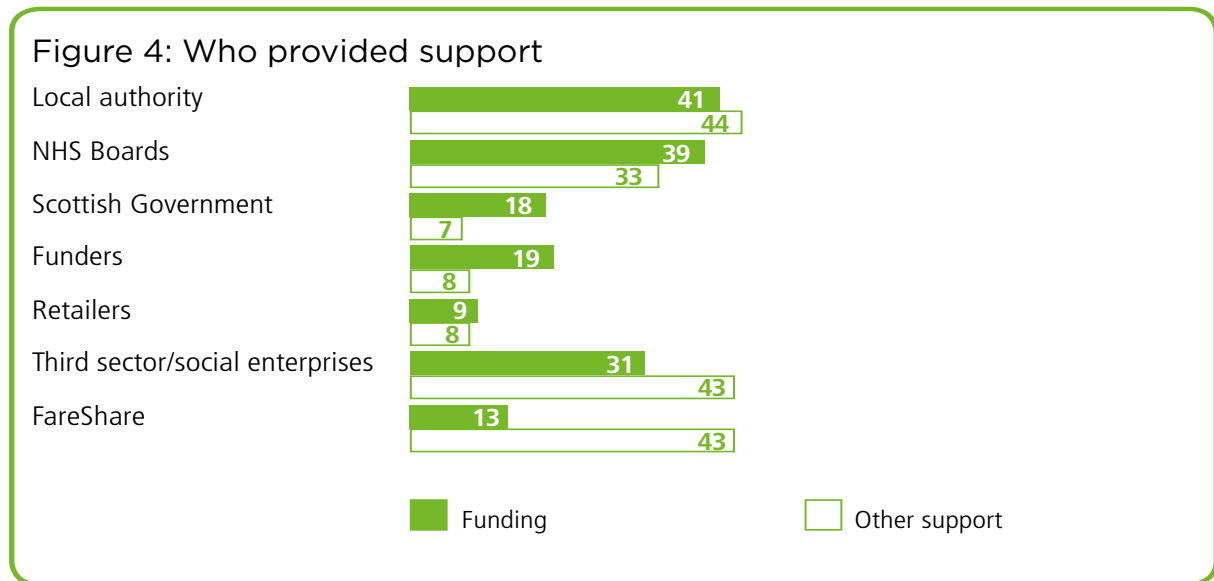
Who they were run for

Figure 3 shows that 32 of those responding to the survey ran activities solely for those within their own organisation and for those using it, such as community centres or youth clubs. The majority ran activities for both those within and outwith their own organisations.



Who funded them or provided other support?

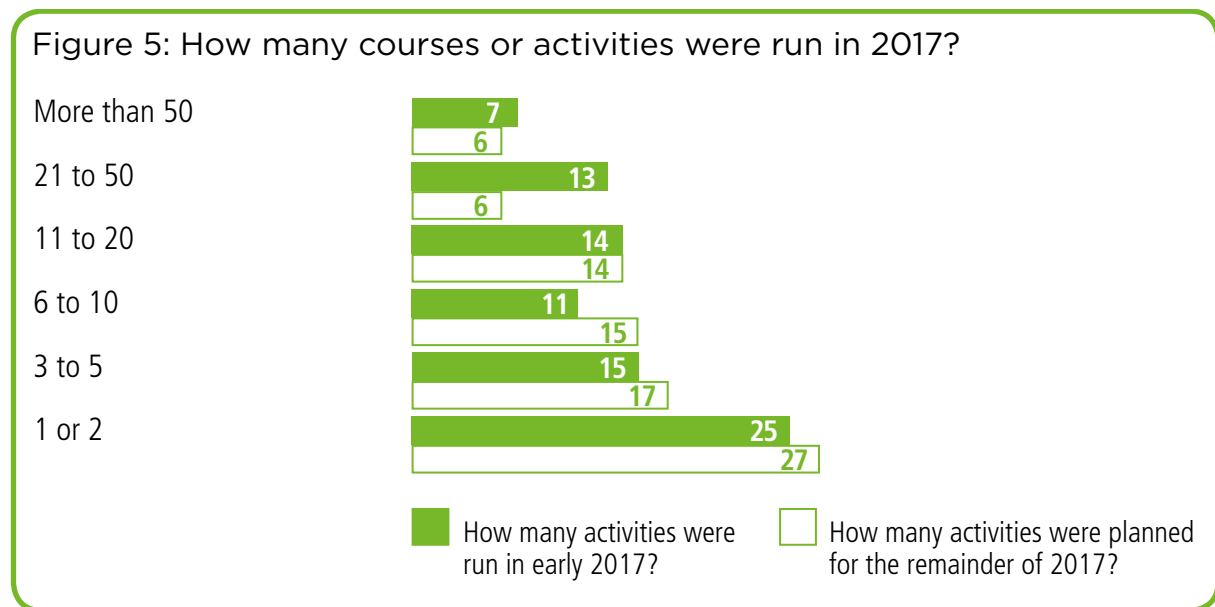
Figure 4 shows which organisations provided funding or other types of support (such as venues, equipment, food, training) to run cooking skills activities. Local authorities provided more funding and support than any other organisations, which may indicate they are more likely to have resources such as suitable venues available. Third sector organisations and food re-distributors such as FareShare also provided support for over half of the organisations running cooking skills activities.



How often did they run, how long for and how many participants completed them?

How often were cooking skills activities run?

Figure 5 shows how often those completing the survey were running cooking skills activities in 2017.

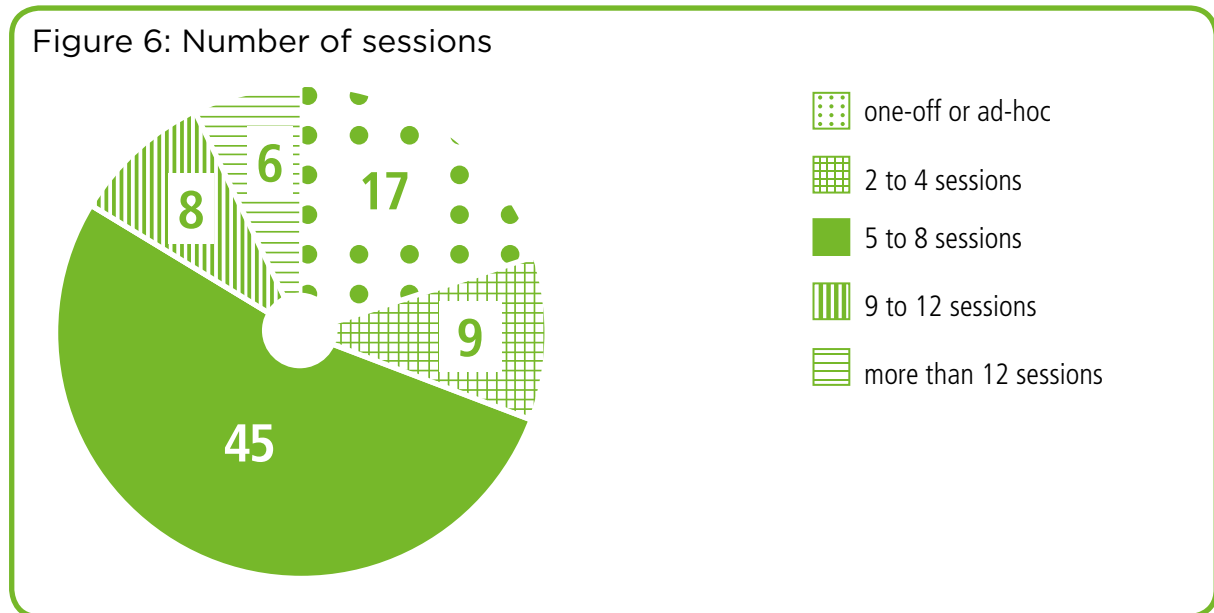


The majority of people who completed the survey were running a few courses or activities in 2017. Six organisations were each running over 100 courses and activities in 2017 – all were local authority or third sector organisations.

Those completing the survey were asked if the number of activities they ran in 2017 was similar to the number they ran in 2016. Around half had run a similar amount, the remainder gave mixed responses. On the whole, this indicated that the number of activities being run by all survey respondents was similar across 2016 and 2017.

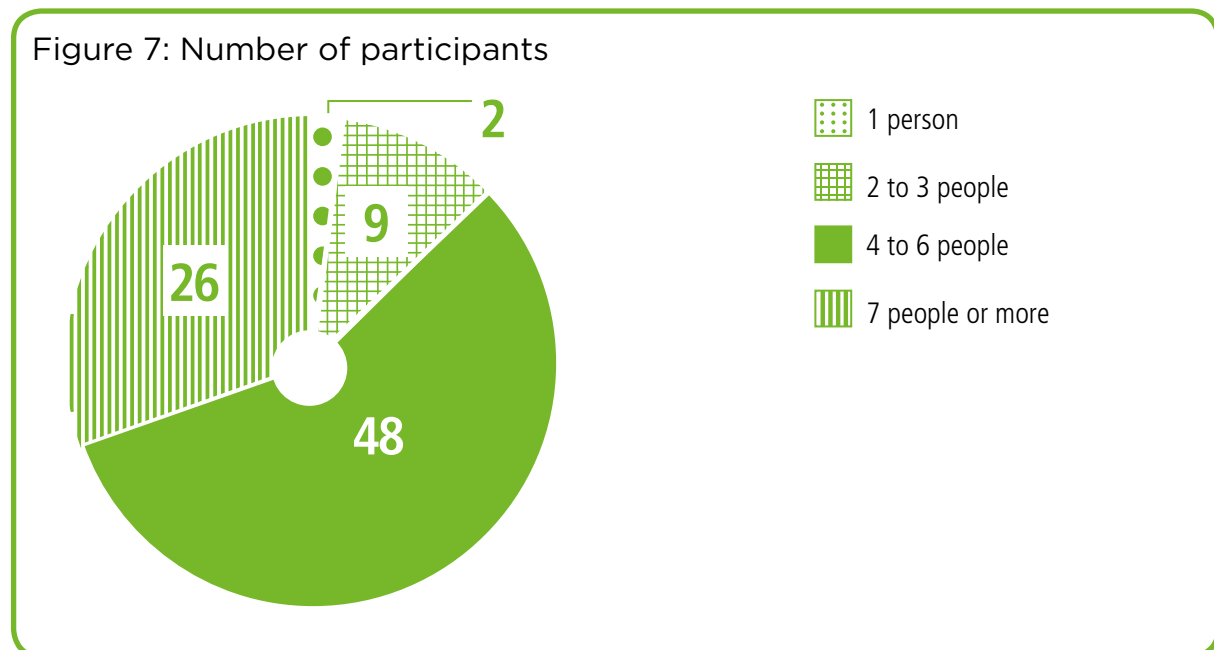
How long were cooking skills courses?

The majority of cooking skills activities were courses that lasted between five and eight sessions.



How many people took part?

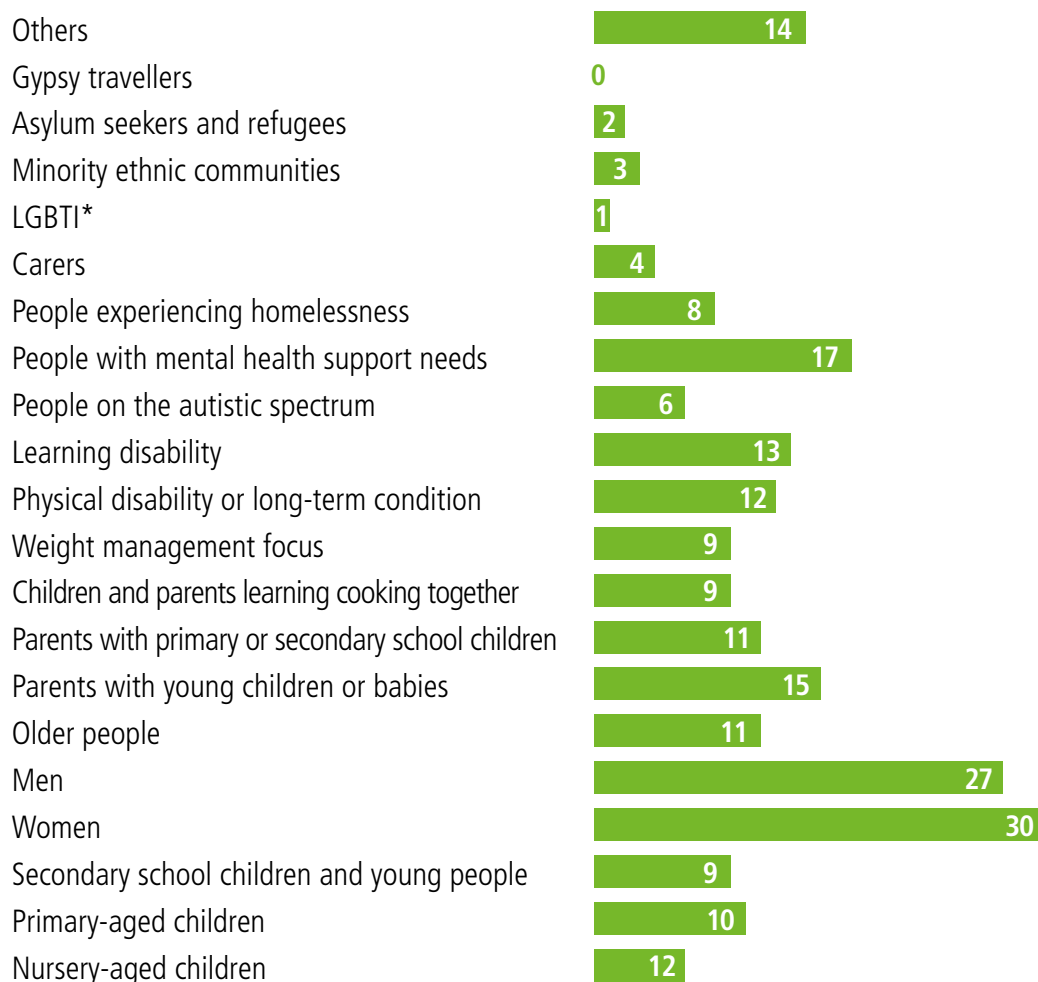
Figure 7 shows how many participants usually completed cooking skills activities. The majority were completed by between four and six people, however, 26 were completed by seven or more people.



Who did cooking skills activities reach?

The survey was aimed at practitioners and managers who were running activities within low-income communities or with vulnerable people. Over half of those responding to the survey ran these for anyone managing on a low income (45 of those responding to the survey ran these for anyone on a low income). However, the other respondents indicated they often aimed to work with participants from specific population groups (40 of the courses were run for a mixture of people or specific groups). The chart below shows who these groups were. The majority were men and women, but others included people with specific issues, such as people with mental health support needs or learning disabilities. Gypsy or traveller communities were the population group that was least likely to be reached.

Figure 8: Who the courses reached



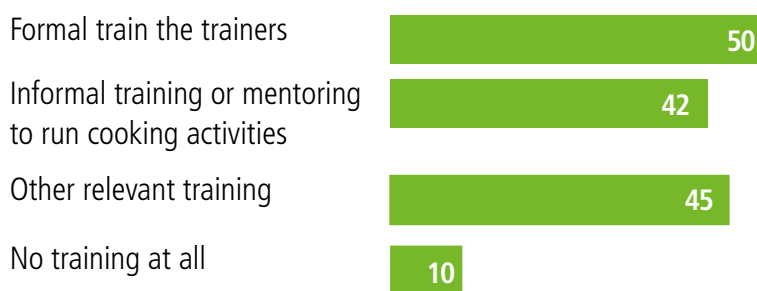
* lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex

Those not shown in the chart (the others) included: people or families within the criminal justice system; those with literacy issues; parents receiving support; and young people within the care system.

What training do managers and practitioners get?

Figure 9 shows that most people received some sort of training to enable them to run cooking skills activities. Over half had taken part in formal training specifically suited for running cooking skills activities. Additional, or alternative, training included mentoring or informal support, and/or other relevant training such as facilitation skills or catering. Most people responding to the survey used online or other resources, such as guides or recipes, to help prepare them to run cooking skills activities.

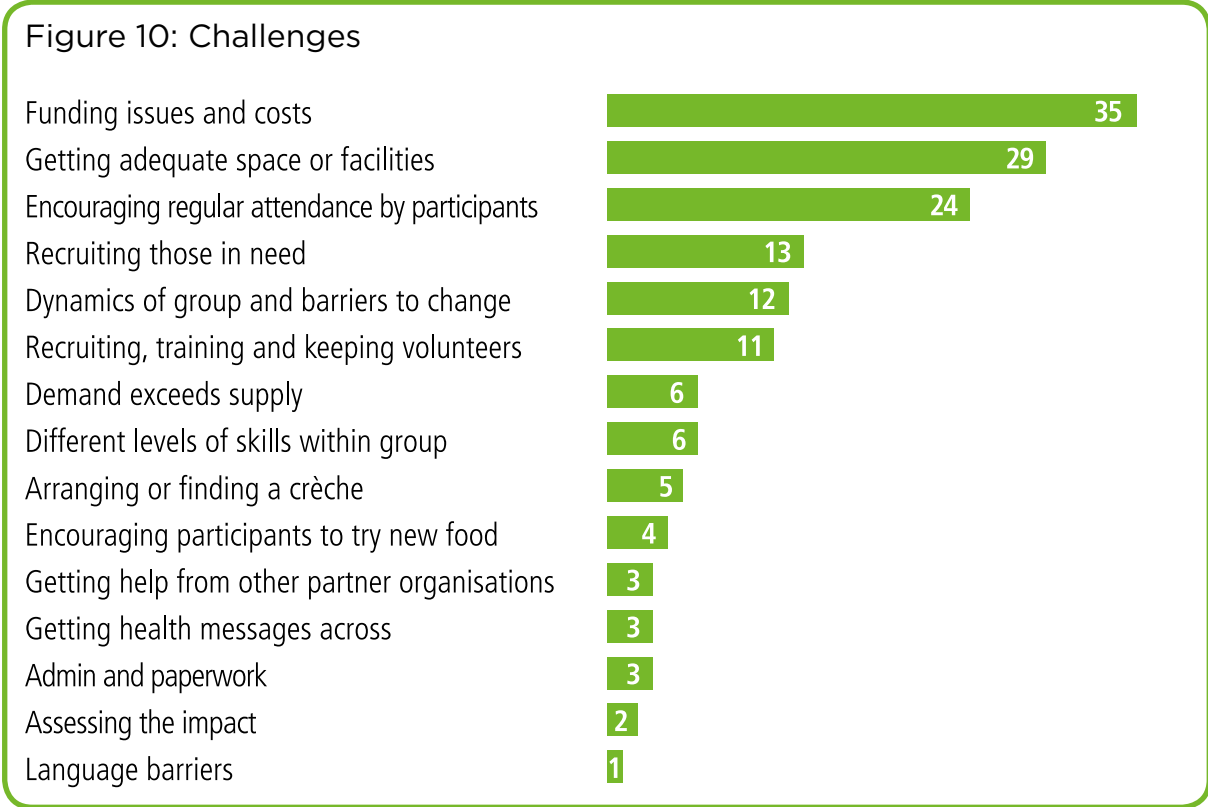
Figure 9: Training



The challenges

Those responding to the survey were asked (in an open-ended question) what their three main challenges were when running cooking skills activities. Funding and costs was mentioned by 35 people. Issues with the availability of suitable premises and facilities to run courses (and sit and eat together) was also a common problem. This is not surprising as many courses seemed to be aimed at four people or more – this size of group is likely to require either portable hobs and cookers to be brought in, or venues with large kitchens and multiple cookers.

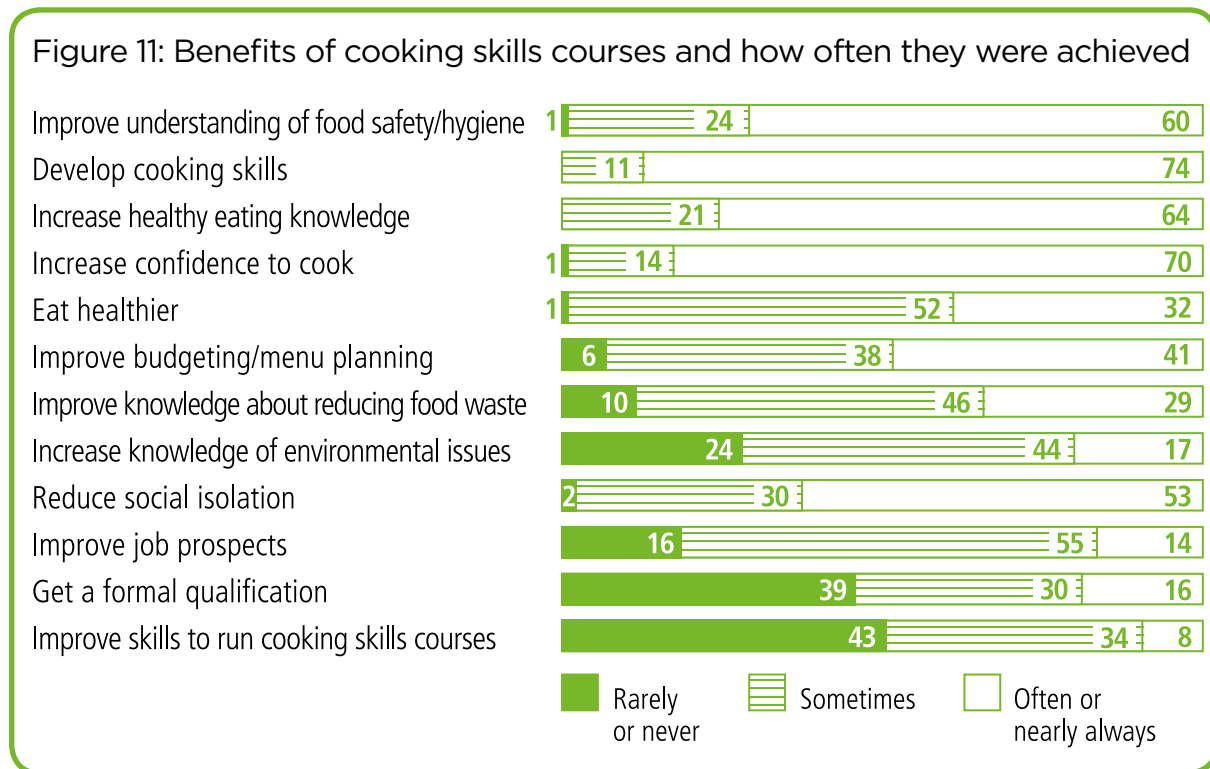
Many practitioners or managers experienced issues with participants’ irregular attendance or not turning up to the first session. Some acknowledged this may be due to the participants’ level of vulnerability or having more chaotic lives. A few also explained what they did to try solve this. Their solutions included: participants’ support workers attending the first few sessions, running drop-in style sessions so that people can attend when they are able to, and keeping engaged and in contact with people before the course starts.



‘We take all our shopping, cooking kit to local community and church halls to do our courses. This is a challenge in itself – hard manual labour’ Practitioner

The benefits

Practitioners and managers were asked to indicate what difference they thought cooking skills activities made for participants.



Practitioners and managers were also asked what additional benefits they thought the cooking skills activities had for participants. Answers included:

- for those experiencing food insecurity – dignified support or signposting to financial support advice or services
- confidence to cook
- benefits to their friends and family, including children getting more involved in cooking activities
- participants moving onto volunteering roles in community cafes, lunch clubs, etc.
- trying new foods and new recipes
- many also expanded on the social benefits of the activities.

Some people responding to the survey also said they used the activities to reach and engage with people.

‘Cooking skills activities are an excellent tool for engaging with people who do not traditionally engage in community activities.’ Practitioner

Learning

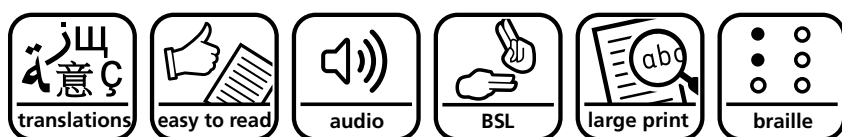
Our survey was completed by 85 people, however, there are probably a lot more cooking skills activities being run in communities that we did not capture information about. This survey did, however, show that:


- A variety of organisations are running cooking skills activities and are reaching a wide range of people, but some population groups may be being missed, particularly gypsy travellers.
- Those responding to our survey seem to be well trained to deliver cooking skills activities, but our survey may have attracted these practitioners as the survey may have been circulated across local training or informal networks.
- Those running activities have to address challenges. Funding and participant attendance may be issues in common with other community activities. Finding, hiring and keeping suitable space for running group cooking activities is a particular problem.
- Practitioners and managers agreed there was a range of health benefits for participants completing the activities but the benefits they highlighted in an open-ended question reiterated and expanded on the social benefits of cooking together.

This report gives a snapshot of cooking skills activities for people living on low incomes across Scotland in 2017.

www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk

This resource may also be made available on request in the following formats:



 **0131 314 5300**

 **nhs.healthscotland-alternativeformats@nhs.net**

Published by NHS Health Scotland

1 South Gyle Crescent
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