

# Food security and insecurity in Scotland and community-led research – empowering, enlightening, easy?

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## Background

This poster is based on research done by community researchers from Central and West Integration Network (CWIN), supported by NHS Health Scotland, into food security and insecurity in migrant, black and minority ethnic communities in Glasgow. Community-led research is not new, however it is little used in public health.

Our objectives in preparing this poster are that delegates will:

- understand the key ingredients needed to facilitate community-led research
- know about people's experience of food security and insecurity in a first world country.

## Main messages

Community-led research is an effective and empowering approach to explore people's lived experience of nuanced and sensitive issues like food security and insecurity. It means investing in building community researchers' capacity to do the research, trusting them to own the process, and respecting, valuing and acting on what they find.

### Our partner and their community

The Central and West Integration Network (CWIN) is a Scottish charity which supports asylum seekers, refugees, black and minority ethnic communities and migrant workers across Glasgow. They work to alleviate poverty, improve people's standard of living and actively promote their settlement and integration within the wider community. CWIN help destitute individuals and families in times of crisis and hardship where they may often have no other support available.



## Approach

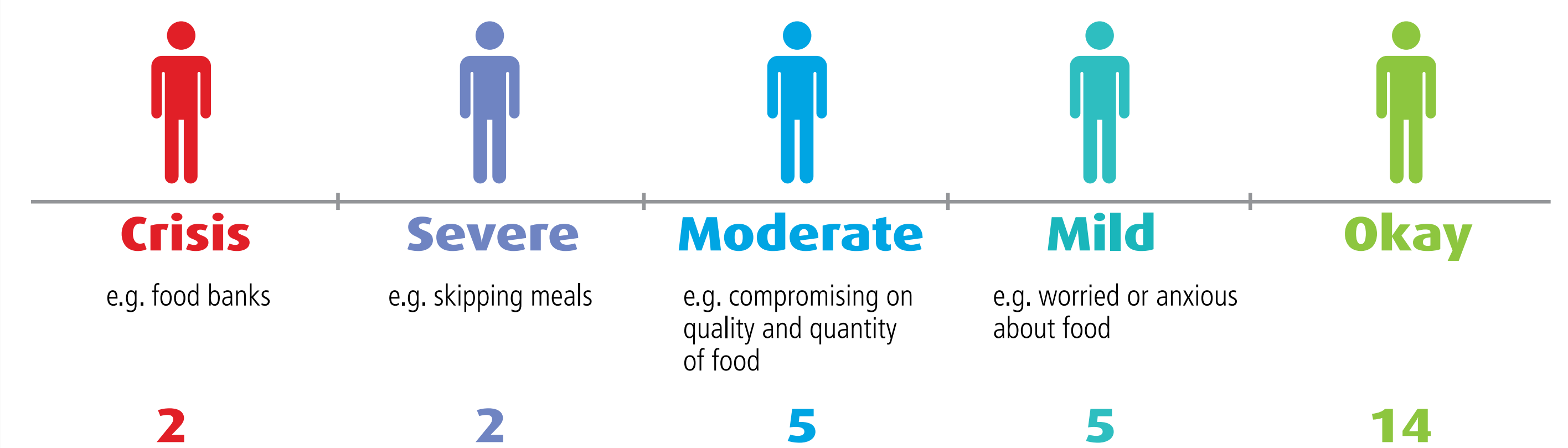
- CWIN targeted the recruitment of existing volunteers or participants as community researchers.
- The research targeted existing groups that CWIN run or are involved with and included 28 respondents.
- The research was framed in affordability, accessibility, acceptability and adequacy.
- Training took place over a few Saturday mornings (in a child and family-friendly environment with lunch).
- After a pilot, researchers revised the questionnaire and created the food insecurity scale, taking by-hand notes.



## Findings

The research found that people felt healthy food is their cultural norm, and 'part of our identity'. However, it also found people are not eating healthily because it is not possible for them to afford to do so.

### Where are you on the food security line?



Although half of the people interviewed put themselves at the **okay** end of the scale, during further discussion many mentioned tight budgeting, limited choice and even having food sent to them, which really places them in the **mild** or **moderate** category.

### Successes

- ✓ Empowering – community researchers were involved in all aspects and were enthusiastic to do more research.
- ✓ Good learning was taken from the pilot; for example, around the revising of questions and the targeting of respondents.
- ✓ CWIN community researchers could speak the language (literally).
- ✓ CWIN used their findings to secure Scottish Government and other funding.
- ✓ Enlightening – the research has informed policy discussions on food insecurity and community-led research in other communities.

### Challenges and limitations

- ! Researchers had to fit around what groups were already doing, build trust and earn consent.
- ! Taking notes by hand meant some data may have been missed.
- ! Everything took longer than planned or anticipated, despite working to maintain momentum.
- ! Ethical issues and timeframe meant no children or young people were involved.
- ! Sample sizes were small and from, at times, quite a restricted range of the population and groups in the community.

## Take-away learning

- Investment in the early stages is crucial; deliberative recruitment and clarity on roles and purpose are needed.
- Participative, practical learning activities – for example, being on the job in sessions, plus piloting – pay off.
- Researchers taking ownership of all aspects including analysis and write-up is vital and improves the quality of the research.
- Governance is important, especially being flexible and adaptable.
- It is essential to follow through, to make the most of the findings in policy and practice, for example, funding projects that act on findings and dissemination.

### Report and other material:

- [www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/2016/communityled-research-food-security-insecurity/](http://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/2016/communityled-research-food-security-insecurity/)
- [www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/advice-resources/making-a-difference/research/communityled-research/](http://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/advice-resources/making-a-difference/research/communityled-research/)