

issue 80
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community
food and health
(scotland)

farechoice

The newsletter for Community Food and Health (Scotland)

Special offer

Over 20 years ago, 'Fat Chance' was shortlisted as a possible title for this publication, reflecting the barriers faced by low-income communities attempting to access a healthy, affordable diet. However, the much more positive 'Fare Choice' eventually came out on top, highlighting how food has the ability to empower individuals and communities by tackling health inequalities and promoting social justice.

Food, fairness and choice remain integral to the activities of low-income communities across the country, whether in the design or delivery of policy and practice (see pages 3, 6, 7 and 10, respectively).

As this 80th edition shows, community food initiatives not only remain a key element in taking a 'whole-system approach' to much-needed change, but also bring with them a generation of experience and understanding. The challenge is making sure that the contribution of community initiatives is fully supported by, and fully engaged with, the actions of local and national partners.

Scotland's community food initiatives are looking to the future but with a past to be proud of.



B Healthy Together (see page 9)

NHS
Health
Scotland

Team talk

Hello and goodbye

We are delighted to welcome Dawn Burns, Health Improvement Officer, into the team. Dawn has several years' experience within NHS Health Scotland, most recently within the Public Service Reform team.

And we say 'haste ye back' to Frances Birch, who is now on maternity leave.

Public health reform

To keep up to date with all things public health reform and the development of the new public health body, Public Health Scotland, which we will soon be a part of, visit <https://publichealthreform.scot> or follow the Twitter feed [@phrscot](https://twitter.com/phrscot)

If you're still unclear about the public health reform process and its relevance to community-led health activity, our colleagues at CHEX have written a very useful briefing, 'Public Knowledge: an introduction to public health reform and the role of community-led health'. You can download this from www.chex.org.uk/news/article/all-you-need-know-about-public-health-reform

The briefing sets out the basics of public health and public health reform, noting that the process so far has put a strong emphasis on community and community-led approaches, and seeks to build on this. It highlights the contribution community-led health makes to tackling health inequalities, and points to the evidence of this contribution.

CFHS annual networking conference 2019

We are delighted to announce that registration will shortly be open for our annual event, which takes place on Monday 4 November at the COSLA conference centre in Edinburgh.

Check our website for further information and booking details.



Community-led research on food security, diet and obesity within ethnic minority communities

We supported Central and West Integration Network (CWIN) to carry out this research. Twelve of its volunteer researchers gathered information from 56 people from ethnic minority communities, a third of whom were refugees or asylum seekers. They also interviewed several politicians and staff from community organisations.

The researchers found a few cultural influences on diet and obesity: (1) people in this survey seemed to do more home cooking than the rest of the population; (2) eating together was considered important socially; (3) cultural food was considered healthy, but it was acknowledged that the custom of offering food may sometimes encourage overeating.

However, the main findings were that: (1) most people were well aware of the association between diet, physical activity and weight, and obesity-related health issues – this included people who considered obesity to be a sign of affluence; and (2) affordability was seen as one of the main barriers to healthy eating (and taking up physical activities). This response has come up in a previous research project by CWIN.

Full and summary reports are available on our website at www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/2019/food-security-diet-and-obesity-a-community-led-research-project



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 also 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 part of NHS Health Scotland.



Cooking skills training pilot

We have been building on our 2017 realist evaluation of cooking skills courses. Three organisations involved in the realist evaluation study have been embedding some of the learning from the evaluation into their 'train the trainers' courses. The aim was to find out how easy it is to translate this learning into local practice. Learning from the realist evaluation that cascaded well included: improved knowledge and use of evaluation methods; increased recognition of the need to adapt to individual needs; and understanding that getting a range of different positive reactions from course participants is associated with better course outcomes.

Information from a workshop we held to discuss the pilot is on our website along with a case study from NHS Grampian's Confidence to Cook project, who took part. The final report from the realist evaluation 'Chopping and Changing' is also available on our website. Train the Trainers used Chopping and Changing alongside our report 'What's Cooking in Scotland: Part Three' to support their pilot training. What's Cooking in Scotland: Part Three provides tips and ideas on how to get a range of positive reactions from course participants, and what these reactions are in more detail.

CFHS Development Fund

We did not run the Development Fund in 2019. Our thanks go to all those who run community food initiatives and have achieved so much with so little over the years. We are currently carrying out a short project to explore the impact and influence these small amounts of funding have had on funding recipients. We will be in touch with a number of past recipients. If you have received development funding from us at any time in the past 20 years and are able to say how it influenced your work, please get in touch with kim.newstead@nhs.net



Cafes in communities – they are more than just a wee cafe!

CFHS and Senscot have been working with community cafes and have seen a variety of activity recently. The Borders, Aberdeen and Glasgow have all hosted networks to bring people together, share practice and, very importantly, to highlight the contribution that cafes make to the wider public health priorities.

Not surprisingly, phrases like 'addressing social isolation', 'community involvement' and not least, 'access to affordable food' were used to describe the activities of cafes.

A recent survey highlighted the range of activities, and how the cafes see themselves. Because their purposes are so very diverse, when Borders network tried to define this, it was agreed that who and what the networks are about was the key thing – 'to support and share, feeding the community' – though it was noted that some kind of definition might be important to funders.

Aberdeen network looked at the purpose of cafes to add some insight, but again it was difficult as there is no 'one size fits all' model and an ever-evolving menu to suit the communities they serve.

In Glasgow the conversation covered lots of the same issues but had a focus on surplus foods. With 'space and place' and 'creating connections' key aspects of cafes in communities.

Senscot organised a learning exchange, kindly hosted by Unity's Spoon Cafe in Glasgow, where people had the opportunity to find out their journey so far, 'warts and all'. <https://senscot.net>

If you would like to know more about any of the cafes in communities work, then contact susankennedy2@nhs.net

Lunch club guide

CFHS has been working with Eat Well Age Well on the subject of lunch clubs, and Eat Well Age Well has now published a new guide on this. The guide does not talk about how to set up a lunch club, but gives some very useful and practical tips and ideas to provide a best practice framework. The guide covers subjects such as: different models for the setup of the area; food hygiene; being dementia friendly; having appropriate menus; and being aware of the early warning signs of malnutrition.

If you run a lunch club then Eat Well Age Well would like to hear from you at www.eatwellagewell.org.uk/contactus

Community development summit

CFHS held a community development summit earlier this year, which looked at developing a strategic direction for community development in public health. Around 30 participants from different sectors came together to highlight the opportunities, challenges and shared vision of community development in public health in Scotland. This work is continuing over the coming months and a report from the event is available at www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/our-work/networking-learning-development



Policy

‘An auld maid’s family is aye the best brocht up’

Back in 1997 we used the above misogynistic old Scots proverb at the first national conference organised by the then Scottish Community Diet Project to point out a flaw in traditional methods of developing policy. While as open to criticism as ‘teaching your granny to suck eggs’, both sayings reflected the new agency’s belief in ‘the importance of basing any strategy for tackling food poverty on the experience and understanding of those living and working in Scotland’s low-income communities’ and its commitment ‘to listen to and involve Scotland’s community food initiatives and the professional staff working with them’.

This commitment to ‘listening and involving’ has continued to be a focus for CFHS activity over the past two decades as well as becoming a key feature in the development of Scottish food and health policy.

The preceding 79 editions of Fare Choice, alongside the numerous conferences, seminars, training and networking events, research reports, evaluations and case studies all still available on our creaking website, are a testament to our efforts to meet that commitment. The attendees at this year’s annual networking event in Edinburgh on Monday 4 November (see page 2) will listen and be involved more than ever. The event will follow the Scottish Government summit on community food initiatives, held around a month earlier, which has been organised with some of the country’s most established community food networks.

Nationally the current policy landscape could not be clearer in its commitment to ‘listening and involving’ low-income communities. The challenge is how policy-makers can most effectively meet that commitment alongside how best low-income communities, with their own local pressures and responsibilities, can be encouraged and enabled to contribute their invaluable experience and understanding.

The current Diet and Healthy Weight Delivery Plan (available from www.gov.scot/policies/health-improvement/diet-and-healthy-weight) recognises the need, particularly around type 2 diabetes, to support Health Boards ‘to carry out community-led engagement and partnership working as a core part of their service planning and delivery’. It also recognises the importance of ‘amplifying the voices of people and communities with the poorest health outcomes’.

The Scottish Government’s ambition for a Good Food Nation (www.gov.scot/policies/food-and-drink/good-food-nation) has developed alongside no shortage of consultation and engagement, including with communities. It will be important this continues as a key component of the promised transparency and accountability and particularly the proposed reporting on progress both locally and nationally.

Communities continue to explore what the Community Empowerment Act (www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment) could mean for property, land and services in their area while decentralised decision-making remains high on the agenda following the local governance review (www.gov.scot/policies/improving-public-services/local-governance-review).

Communities increasingly find themselves involved in participatory budgeting (www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/participatory-budgeting) using the Place Standard Tool (www.placestandard.scot) or involved in online consultations (see page 10).

While those involved in policy design and delivery have a responsibility to engage and consult, Scotland’s community food initiatives have always been good at making their voices heard, even when they haven’t been asked, and long may that continue.

Take stock

Sustaining community food activities through the ups and downs



Sunlite cafe

As this is the 80th edition of Fare Choice, we made contact with three organisations that have been around longer than Community Food and Health (Scotland) itself! All three organisations illustrate the need to adapt to change in our society whether that be changes in the culture, the economics, the governance of a charity, or the politics. With the seemingly constant movement and evolution of community issues, how do projects and services continue to meet the needs and aspirations of the communities that they work with?

The common threads within our three examples will resonate with many projects and services across Scotland. Key features that we have identified include community development approaches, social connectedness, more positive partnerships with the local authority, the NHS and the Health and Social Care Partnerships, networks for sharing and learning and, not least, working collectively with the people affected.

Other common threads include the ever-changing food landscape which includes environmental factors and the upsurge and availability of surplus foods. Sustaining community food activities is after all about sustaining communities.

Lets Make it Better (LMiB), affectionately known as the Sunlite Cafe, is in Stirling and was set up in 1994 to support people experiencing poor mental health. Today the focus remains on preventing poor mental health and it is open to anyone in Stirling, whether to have a cuppa, volunteer or take part in a work placement. Training and skills are a key feature, including cooking skills and customer service, but most importantly the opportunity to be part of a community for the support it brings.

LMiB has adapted and evolved from a Local Exchange Trading System to the cafe as the main hub of activity. It is involved in a range of activities including the healthyliving award, gardening, external catering, making



Annexe Communities lunch club

jams from surplus fruits, outreach work with schools, environment projects and adult learning, including English as a second language (ESL).

Active partners are a key component to making things happen for local people within LMiB. Partners include Forth Environment Link, Start Up Stirling (food bank), The Food Train, Eat Well Age Well, and Stirling's School Holiday Food Provision for families.

Volunteers often stay beyond any placements, mostly supporting the cafe or being part of the committee. Keeping volunteers can be challenging so LMiB has adapted its expectations. Confidentiality is important: 'what's said in the cafe stays in the cafe'. Volunteering on a committee can be intimidating, so people take part at a pace that is most comfortable for them.

www.facebook.com/LMiBSunliteCafe

The Annexe Communities began as Partick Community Association in 1987. It changed

into the Annexe in 1996 when it became a Healthy Living Centre and is now Annexe Communities after extending activities beyond Partick. Its food activities include a lunch club, cooking groups and a community cafe that holds the healthy living award. Other activities focus on art, exercise and addressing social isolation. Some activities are funded and others have to be paid for. The centre receives around 20,000 visits per year and is supported by 30 volunteers who help out in various ways from providing a welcome to newcomers at the lunch club or leading activities, to taking part in the board. Annexe Communities aims to help local people and communities develop; particularly people with poor physical or mental health, the elderly, carers and those who are socially isolated.

The community cafe is seen as the hub of the Annexe Communities' Centre. When it opened it was hoped the cafe would be self-sustaining and bring in extra money. However, the activities are what actually sustains the cafe by bringing in funding, room rental and cafe

customers. The cafe also receives Fare Share food which reduces food costs.

Like LMiB, the cafe was originally run by volunteers using the Local Exchange Trading Scheme, and then provided supported volunteer opportunities. However, Annexe Communities has found its ideal working model and one which fits the needs of the local community. This is to have one full-time chef who manages the cafe and who supports a smaller group of regular cafe volunteers.

Like many others, Annexe Communities has thrived by working in partnership and adapting to community needs. It joined with North Glasgow Healthy Living Community to form Axis to co-deliver activities across north-east and north-west Glasgow. In Easterhouse, this has included working with a local church to provide peer-led cooking groups for newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees.

It is also a member of Scottish Communities for Health and Wellbeing. Some members of this organisation, including The Annexe, are part of a bi-national social prescribing evaluation project involving Scotland and Northern Ireland. Social prescribing involves local GPs formally referring patients with social issues to attend community activities. The project hopes to gather evidence to find out the impact social prescribing has had on patients. The Annexe had worked informally with local GPs in the past, but it hopes a more structured way of working will help them reach people most in need of their services, as well as provide evidence for the benefit of their work.

www.annexecommunities.org.uk

B Healthy Together, previously Broomhouse Health Strategy Group, has been through many changes since it was first established in 1993 by a community health visitor who brought together three local women's groups and organised a community health day.

In 1995, the group secured the lease for a fruit and vegetable shop. B Healthy Together runs lots of activities, including cookery courses, taster sessions, walking groups, buggy groups and, in the past, did a mural project to improve the local environment. As well as these activities the fruit and vegetable shop,

which is staffed by volunteers, continued to open five mornings a week to make sure the community had access to low-cost healthy produce. The organisation is currently going through a developmental phase.

In the last year, after a community consultation, the organisation has a new name – 'B Healthy Together'. In addition, the fruit and vegetable shop is closing and the organisation is moving to new premises in the Broomhouse Centre this autumn. This has been a big decision given this was the foundation of its work, but the needs of the community are changing: there are more shops in the area and the fruit and vegetable prices are no longer competitive with other shops. The question posed currently is how to still have a window onto the community in the new premises but, as manager Jen Richards highlighted, 'in order to serve the community we need to be creative'.

One of the reasons that B Healthy Together has been sustainable is due to the establishment and maintenance of new partnerships. B Healthy Together, during this time of change, is building new relationships including with the Broomhouse Centre, local GP practices and schools as well as the Bethany Christian Trust. These partnerships will bring challenges and opportunities. In addition, the importance of volunteers has always been at the heart of B Healthy Together and again new board members are being sought. If you are interested please get in touch.

<https://bhealthytogether.org.uk>

These three examples show how different organisations have adapted to the changing environment whether that be too few committee members or a lack of funding. There are many examples of community organisations across Scotland that have adapted in different ways to opportunities and challenges.

These challenges and opportunities will not reduce over the coming years but by staying focused on the community needs and engaging with people and adapting to the changing environment it should become easier to sustain community food initiatives.

A flavour of...

community-based food and health activity in Scotland

Community participation tool

How our food is grown, processed, traded, marketed, sold and served is something few of us input into. This is a real problem. After all, we can't hope to reduce obesity, protect biodiversity or prevent climate change unless our food system is built to meet the needs of diverse Scottish communities (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA), 2019).

Thankfully, the Scottish Government's Good Food Nation intentions could well herald a new dawn for community participation in food decisions. Local food policies look set to become commonplace; and people are already debating how to meaningfully engage the public in their formation.

Today, we at Community Food and Health (Scotland) wonder whether 'Consul', a recent community participation tool, could facilitate the mass participation required for a locally democratic food policy.

Consul is an online participation platform. It was developed with the support of the United Nations and the European Union. Cities and organisations around the world are starting to use it. However, it's perhaps best established in Spain, notably Madrid, where thousands of residents already log in to allocate local government budgets, crowdsource new ideas, vote on improvements to their areas, and participate in the decisions of their council.

This year, the Scottish Government funded COSLA to test what it could mean to local governance in Scotland. Early results look impressive enough. However, we have yet to catch up with anyone who has tried to use their area's Consul pilot to improve local food. If you have encountered it, please do let us know your experience.

Madrid's consul site: <https://decide.madrid.es/mas-informacion?locale=en>



Edible Edinburgh-SFC

RSA (2019) 'Our future in the land'
www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/future-land

Developing sustainable food cities and food strategies

Edinburgh has been awarded bronze status by the Sustainable Food Cities Network at its annual conference, which took place in Newcastle in June.

The award recognises and celebrates the success of towns and cities taking a joined-up approach to food and achieving significant positive change on a range of food issues. It reflects the work of the many organisations, community groups and individuals in Edinburgh promoting healthy, local and sustainable food and growing in the city.

Glasgow is also making a commitment to becoming a sustainable food city. A food summit in June, which was co-hosted by Glasgow Centre for Population Health and the Glasgow Food Policy Partnership and attended by over 150 delegates, brought a range of people together to focus on developing a food strategy for the city. Presentations from this day and a report will be available to view at <http://goodfoodforall.co.uk>

A number of the food summit participants were from Glasgow Community Food Network, who had held its own event a few weeks earlier looking at resilience in food systems. The report from this event is available at <https://glasgowfood.net/about-us>

Meanwhile, the work continues in other parts of the country, with South Lanarkshire and Stirling councils also in the process of having their own dedicated food strategies in place, all giving communities a chance to contribute to local policies, and have them to refer to when looking at their outcomes.

The practice of kindness

Some of our readers may remember that the then Chief Executive of the Carnegie UK Trust, Martyn Evans, presented at our 2016 conference about the beginning of its work to engage with people who want to explore and talk about kindness in their lives, work and communities.

Three years on, its report, *The Practice of Kindness: Learning from the Kindness Innovation Network and North Ayrshire*, explores the practical implementation of kindness in both communities and organisations.

The report brings together what was learned through two collaborative projects – the Kindness Innovation Network and its partnership with North Ayrshire Council – and reflects on the conversations and activities of hundreds of people who have contributed to these projects over the last 12 months.

It presents some practical examples of ways to create the conditions for kindness and also highlights the barriers to relationships within organisations, some of which are discussed in an accompanying short film.

The report and film are available on the Carnegie Trust website at www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk and there are ongoing conversations about building a coalition of people committed to embedding kindness in what they do. Contact ben@carnegie.org

Stay in touch

Just a reminder that you can still hear from us between the Fare Choice editions in March and September.

Visit our website www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk to sign up for our regular e-bulletin, receive publication alerts, and access a wealth of information on community food and health activity, such as good practice guides, case studies, funding information and our regular blogs.

Follow us on twitter

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and like us on Facebook

 [@likeCFHS](https://www.facebook.com/likeCFHS)

If you have anything you would like to share on any of these platforms, please contact us on nhs.healthscotland-CFHS@nhs.net



Kindness tree

Recipe

Vegetable chilli with boiled rice (Serves 2)



Ingredients

1 onion (chopped), 1 clove of garlic (crushed),
¼ teaspoon of chilli powder, 30 g of wholemeal flour,
1 green pepper (diced), 2 carrots (diced),
30 g of lentils (soaked), 290 ml of vegetable stock,
1 tin of chopped tomatoes, ½ tablespoon of vegetable oil,
thyme and cumin to taste, ¼ mug of rice per person

Method

- Heat the oil, fry the onions and garlic until tender, then add the chilli powder.
- Gradually blend in the flour, then add the stock, mix well and bring to the boil.
- Add the peppers, carrots, lentils, tomatoes and herbs. Season to taste and simmer until cooked.
- Bring the water (one mug of water to ¼ mug of rice) to the boil, then add the rice and give it a quick stir.
- Bring it back to the boil. Cook until the rice is just soft (10–12 minutes for white, 30–35 minutes for brown).
- Drain in a sieve or colander. Rinse with boiling water to stop it from sticking.
- Serve vegetable chilli on a bed of boiled rice.

The end of summer is here. With autumn near it will be simple to pick up these seasonal, fresh ingredients – happy cooking!

We would like to thank community projects in both Greater Glasgow Health Board and NHS Norfolk for this recipe.

Please get in touch with your favourite recipe for a future issue of Fare Choice.

Contact us

Alice Baird
Health Improvement Officer
0141 414 2890

Frances Birch
Health Improvement Manager
(maternity leave)
0131 314 5391

Dawn Burns
Health Improvement Officer
0141 414 2772

Fran Eatwell-Roberts
Senior Health Improvement Officer
0141 414 2890

Bill Gray
Organisational Lead, Community
Development
0141 414 2836

Susan Kennedy
Senior Health Improvement Officer
0141 414 2852

Kim Newstead
Senior Health Improvement Officer
0131 314 5427

Community Food and Health
(Scotland)
NHS Health Scotland
Meridian Court
5 Cadogan Street
Glasgow G2 6QE

0141 414 2890
nhs.HealthScotland-CFHS@nhs.net

Find us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/likeCFHS
Follow us on Twitter @NHS_CFHS