

Scotland-Wales  
Food Policy and Practice  
Study Exchange

Organised by the  
Scottish Community Diet Project

14-15 June 2005



Scottish Community  
Diet Project

*Supporting local  
communities tackling  
inequalities in  
diet and health*

## **Scottish Community Diet Project**

Our overriding aim is to improve Scotland's food and health. We do this by supporting work within and with low-income communities that improves access to and take-up of a healthy diet.

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 these barriers, 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.

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## Overview

The study tour to Wales was arranged to continue and develop the relationship between food and health policy development in Scotland and Wales. Two people who work to tackle the barriers to a healthy diet in Scotland were given the opportunity to travel to Wales and find out about the Welsh nutrition strategy and plans to set up a nutrition network which will encourage those people across Wales working on food to get together and share information. In addition, visits to community initiatives in and around Cardiff were arranged so participants could understand how practical initiatives tackled barriers to a healthy diet in community settings.

The study tour consisted of a two day visit to Cardiff where the Scottish participants maximised networking opportunities by attending the annual conference organised by the Food Standards Agency Wales called *Eating for Health: Policy into Action*.

While both participants shared the aim of tackling the barriers to a healthy diet in Scotland, they were given the opportunity to participate because of their different approaches. Caroline Comerford works in a policy environment to improve the diet and health in the Grampian area, while Judy Robertson manages a health initiative in Midlothian which gives practical support to the community to assist them to access a better diet. The study tour was co-ordinated by Lucy Gillie, Networking and Communications Development Officer at the Scottish Community Diet Project. The Scottish Community Diet Project was interested to learn what Caroline and Judy thought of both the policy and practice to improve the diet in Wales.

It was agreed by the people working on food and health policy and with community food initiatives in Wales who met with the participants from Scotland that a return visit would be beneficial.

## Participants

Caroline works to co-ordinate and enable the promotion of healthy eating in Grampian through the review, implementation, monitoring and ongoing strategic development of Grampian's food and health improvement strategy and action plan, 'Food In Focus'. She works in partnership with colleagues across a range of sectors strategically, as a trainer and project manager and as a source of professional advice and support. Caroline said, *"For me this trip will be an opportunity to share with others the work that is taking place in Grampian and to learn from the work of colleagues in Wales. The local context will always influence the work that we do, but we are also addressing common themes, issues and challenges. It has been my experience that opportunities like this can enrich and enhance work on both sides through sharing of good practice and common experience. I anticipate that my experience will also be useful to those working more widely in Scotland."*

Judy is the co-ordinator of a busy health project which, in addition to health promoting activities, runs a breakfast club, a day centre for isolated elderly people, a food co-op, a food train (shopping delivery service to elderly and disabled people) and milk token initiative. Judy said, *"I am interested to see how other food initiatives operate. I see this visit as a chance to learn hands on from the experience of other people and bring back fresh ideas which it may be possible to try in our organisation. I am also keen to share experiences with other voluntary sector managers, particularly in relation to team working, motivating staff and recruiting volunteers. It will be interesting to find out if a different geographical area faces the same or different challenges. In addition, it would be good to find out how different projects are funded and how issues of sustainability are addressed. From the policy point of view it will be interesting to see how the food and health policies in Scotland and Wales are the same and where they differ and what lessons we can learn from each other. Working within a busy project can sometimes be so busy you do not have time to see the 'bigger picture', so I see this trip as an excellent networking and personal development opportunity."*

Lucy is the Networking and Communications Development Officer at the Scottish Community Diet Project. The Scottish Community Diet Project has the overriding aim to improve Scotland's food and health. It does this by supporting work with and within low income communities that improves the access to and take up of a healthy diet. Lucy said, *"The purpose of the visit is to continue and develop the relationship between food and health policy development in both Scotland and Wales. We hope to get the opportunity to find out more about the Welsh nutrition strategy and plans to set up a nutrition network as well as visiting and finding out about some Welsh food access initiatives."*

## **Programme**

### **Tuesday 14 June**

#### **12.00 Riverside Market, Central Cardiff**

This market was set up initially as a community initiative and has now turned in to a tourist attraction. The market is a social enterprise which aims to make healthy local food more available to the disadvantaged Riverside area in central Cardiff. The market brings people to the area and acts as a local meeting point, as well as providing real economic opportunities for the Riverside community. The visit was an excellent opportunity to see how the market has evolved to a bigger site, secured a permanent electricity supply and stores equipment in parked mobile vans.

#### **1.30 Park View Community Café**

Roger Edwards from the Innovative Trust explained that this was not the first community café he had been involved with. The community café helps to train people with learning difficulties and give them the opportunity to volunteer in the café, and if they wish, secure paid employment in other food outlets. The café has received funding from Europe to further its training programme. This visit was an opportunity to see how competent the trainee staff were and the high standard of food served from a simple but well thought out menu. It was clear from the visit that improved diet and health was one outcome of this project, but not the main focus.

#### **2.30 Amelia Trust Farm**

This farm is situated in the Vale of Glamorgan, not far from Cardiff. The community café purchases produce from this farm and some of the café volunteers also work on the farm. There is a shop where the public can buy the farm's produce. The farm also has woodworking, pottery and a music studio which can be used by the local community.

#### **7.45 Networking meal**

The Food Standards Agency Wales, the Welsh Assembly, the Welsh Nutrition Network, the Welsh Consumer Council, the Food Standards Agency Scotland and the Riverside Market all attended the meal (see page 6 for contact details).

### **Wednesday 15 June**

#### **All day conference**

'Eating for Health: Policy into Action', the 2005 FSA Wales 'Food and Well Being' nutrition strategy implementation conference at the Angel Hotel, Cardiff.

## What did the participants find out?

The visit was an opportunity for everyone to make connections and learn from each other. Not only did the participants from Scotland get to meet both policy makers and practitioners working in Wales, but both Welsh and Scottish colleagues made connections within their devolved administrations.

It was noted that the Food Standards Agency Wales has a more direct relationship with the public and community initiatives than the Food Standards Agency Scotland. It was noted that Scotland had more established agencies and organisations with a role to work with the public and communities so the Food Standards Agency in Scotland had evolved in to a different role.

Participants valued having one-to-one time with some of the policy makers at the networking meal to quiz them on how structures and dynamics are different, as well as the challenges of working within devolved and UK remits.

Caroline, who works in a predominately policy environment, particularly valued visiting the community initiatives while Judy, who works in community settings on a day-to-day basis valued being able to think strategically. As with the Scottish Community Diet Project's experience of other study tours (see page 8 for list of study tours conducted) participants found it useful to reflect on their own work though understanding other approaches.

*"I made connections both at the community visits and at the conference. It was also good to meet colleagues from the FSA Scotland in Cardiff."* Judy

*"I was impressed by the can do positive atmosphere at the conference and the celebration of food work through awards for achievement."* Caroline

*"Wales faces many similar challenges to Scotland. From a policy perspective they seem to be tackling this head on in a integrated way with considerable drive and energy."* Caroline

*"The Welsh approach seemed less formal and more accessible to the voluntary sector."* Judy

*"Helped me to think about policy and strategy from a community perspective and to work out what purpose it serves and how does it help."* Caroline

*"It was clear from visiting the community initiatives that health was not the only outcome. It was useful to focus on the detail and challenges faced by local initiatives. I felt the trip helped to keep my strategic feet on the ground."* Caroline

## **Contact details for those who contributed to the study tour**

Ken Moon  
Riverside Market (RCMA social enterprise limited)  
[www.riversidemarket.org.uk](http://www.riversidemarket.org.uk)

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## **Further reading about food and health in Wales**

*Food and Well Being: reducing inequalities through a nutrition strategy for Wales.* Available from the Food Standards Agency Wales.

*Find: Funding for Initiatives on Nutrition and Diet.* Available from the Food Standards Agency Wales and based on Source: Guide to funding for Community Food Projects produced by the SCDP.

*Eat Well: A guide to healthier eating for the over 60s.* Available from the Food Standards Agency Wales.

*Healthy Nosh for Less Dosh.* Available from the Food Standards Agency Wales.

*Health Challenge Wales Action Pack.* Available from Health Challenge Wales ([www.healthchallenge.wales.gov.uk](http://www.healthchallenge.wales.gov.uk)) a Welsh Assembly initiative.

## **Other study tours the SCDP has organised....**

The Scottish Community Diet Project has a history of taking people tackling the barriers to access and take up of a healthy diet in Scotland to places where they can learn from other people's experiences to tackle similar problems. Reports from SCDP study tours are listed below and are available to download from [www.dietproject.org.uk](http://www.dietproject.org.uk) or contact us for a hard copy.

### **Study tour to Dublin**

Report of a policy and practice study tour to Dublin. December 2003.

### **Combined Agency Study Tour**

Report of a study tour which took place in three different areas in central Scotland: North Lanarkshire, West Lothian, and Edinburgh, involving representatives of several agencies working in food and health. April 2003.

### **Community Study Exchange between Glasgow and Newcastle**

Report of a two-way exchange between people working with and within low-income communities on food and health inequalities in Glasgow and Newcastle. November 2002

### **The Finnish Experience: Helsinki and Joensuu**

An insight into the Scottish Community Diet Project's study tour to the National Public Health Institute of Finland and North Karelia. September 2001.

### **Northern Exposure**

Description of a study tour of the North of Scotland giving volunteers from community food projects in the South of Scotland the opportunity to network with similar groups in the Highlands and Islands. September 2001.

### **London Study Tour**

An account of the study tour undertaken by volunteers from community food projects around Scotland, looking at some of London's community food projects. July 2000.

### **Southern Exposure Rural Study Tour**

Looks at a study tour taken by volunteers from the Highlands and Islands, giving them an insight into community food projects in the South of Scotland. October 1999.

### **Crossing Borders**

Food and Agriculture in Toronto, Canada. Study tour June 1999.





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healthy living