



Achieving Healthy and Sustainable Food in Edinburgh's Universities and Colleges

Event Report



**A two-part event exploring challenges and finding solutions took place on 12th
November 2015 at the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church**

**38 people attended, from Universities and Colleges as well as partner
organisations and interested parties.**

**Thank you to all who attended or supported the event including
delegates, speakers, venue management and catering staff.**

Achieving Healthy and Sustainable Food in Edinburgh's Universities and Colleges

Venue: City of Edinburgh Methodist Church, 25 Nicolson Square, Edinburgh

Date: 12th November 2015



Thank you to the external speakers below for their time and valuable contributions to the discussions. Their presentations are available separately.

- Dermot Gorman, Consultant Public Health, NHS Lothian
- Robin Gourlay, Food and Drink Policy, Scottish Government
- James Mills, Senior Lead, Education, Brakes Group
- Julian Ankers, Executive Chef, Lancaster University
- Professor Judy Orme, Professor of Public Health and Sustainability at the University of the West of England, Bristol

Event Structure:

1. Three sets of speakers with two facilitated discussions.
2. Discussions (in groups arranged by delegate's field of expertise):
 - a. Identifying our own barriers to healthy and sustainable food.
 - b. Exploring solutions based on speaker's information.
3. Sharing ideas to wider group with dissemination via report.



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Key challenges and solutions identified in group discussions:

Challenges / Barriers	Solutions
<p>Cost and Competitiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can it be profitable to be healthy and sustainable? • Commercial / competition pressure (limits ability to drive change) • Perception of cheap vs healthy (i.e. either/or, not both) • Limited buying power (framework) • Choices in private sector (burgers, nuggets etc.) do not support the agenda. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff skills development / recruitment policies to help with: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Creative, talented chefs to achieve healthy and sustainable menus (e.g. meeting Catering Mark standards) at little cost. b. Food waste c. Portion sizes d. Seasonality training e. Balancing menus over time to manage costs 2. Create a strong Food and Drink Strategy. 3. Develop the right environment within the catering settings. 4. Range of products 5. Focus on quality. 6. Engage private sector (e.g. Sustainable Food City) 7. Recognise role of universities and colleges as leaders of this agenda – cannot always be led by commercial context.
<p>Customer attitudes, awareness, behaviours and assumptions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student/staff/visitor preferences. • Staff and student demand (not 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accreditation (e.g. Food for Life Catering Mark) 2. Recognise and address different demands / markets (differentiate the catered offering to include high end,



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<p>always healthy).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education/knowledge among consumers (students and staff) as well as policy makers and catering teams. • Healthy Vending – is it even achievable? 	<p>grab & go etc. with Food for Life Catering Mark accreditation as appropriate across the offering – doesn't need to be all).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Better understanding through research. 4. Marketing – including scare tactics as employed for drink-driving, smoking campaigns. 5. Employ skilled chefs – focus on recruiting local restaurant chefs and sell benefit of better work/life balance 6. Engage customers through events, masterclasses, cookery demonstrations etc. 7. Create a “champion” within organisation (e.g. senior representative such as vice-chancellor level).
<p>Lack of Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of creativity – willingness to try new things, explore ideas. • Lack of joined up thinking (procurement, policy makers, academics etc.) • Contradictory policy goals within organisations and across Scotland (e.g. economic growth vs sustainability). • Limited appetite among organisations for choice editing (i.e. restricting certain 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Top down policies needed. Not to replace bottom up initiatives but to ensure buy-in at strategic level. 2. Clear food and drink policies with objectives, targets etc. (e.g. sustainability targets). 3. Food and Drink Strategy – within organisation, linked to local & national policies. 4. Buy-in <u>across</u> an organisation. 5. Whole settings approach (evidence shows it can and does work across a range of metrics).



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<p>types of product).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outsourced (or in-house) caterers lack motivation to source food locally or provide healthy options. • Sustainability is complex. • How to define what is healthy / sustainable etc. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. High level endorsement within organisation for efforts towards healthy and sustainable food. 7. Organisational decision to work towards accreditation (e.g. Food for Life Catering Mark). 8. Better understanding through research. 9. Bias towards action – we basically know what needs to be done.
<p>Supply Chain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SME engagement difficult for distributors • Quality Assurance hard for SMEs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meet the buyer events. 2. Procurement policies / requirements.
<p>Other issues highlighted during group discussions or presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paradigm shift required in what we're eating. • Conflict between food and health in Scottish society. We celebrate whisky, Irn Bru, Tunnocks etc. but many of us should be consuming less of these kinds of foods and drinks. • Public sector catering still undervalued and marginalised. • Paradox between what we eat as a nation and the food 	<p>Other solutions highlighted during group discussions or presentations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tertiary sector in ideal position to demonstrate leadership. 2. Staff skills must be continually improved to allow good quality dishes to be served within budget. 3. Engagement to keep students on campus, engage about issues etc. 4. Engagement with relevant student groups (enabling the enabler). 5. Institutional Champions. 6. Thorough, honest audit of own organisation, to shed light on good and



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Scotland produces.

- Catering staff are not sufficiently empowered.
- Catering Mark very successful but more so in plated meals. Opportunities to expand this.
- Local suppliers are not the same as local sourcing.
- Affordable farm assured chicken remains an issue – Scottish chicken industry could be better supported.
- Current procurement does include consideration of social, environmental, ethical and economic impact.

bad.

7. Policies and procedures necessary but must also be about more than this.
8. Embedding the ethos – normalising the values.
9. Share good practice and case studies.
10. Whole areas can work together on the issues (e.g. Sustainable Food Cities)
11. Whole settings approach can and does work – cannot be only a catering, facilities, academic or sustainability initiative – requires interdisciplinary approach.
12. Research remains important.
13. Little point buying fresh meat that isn't local. Frozen makes sense
14. Major suppliers pledging to increase amount of food sourced from Scotland.
15. Catering Mark has increased footfall in some areas.



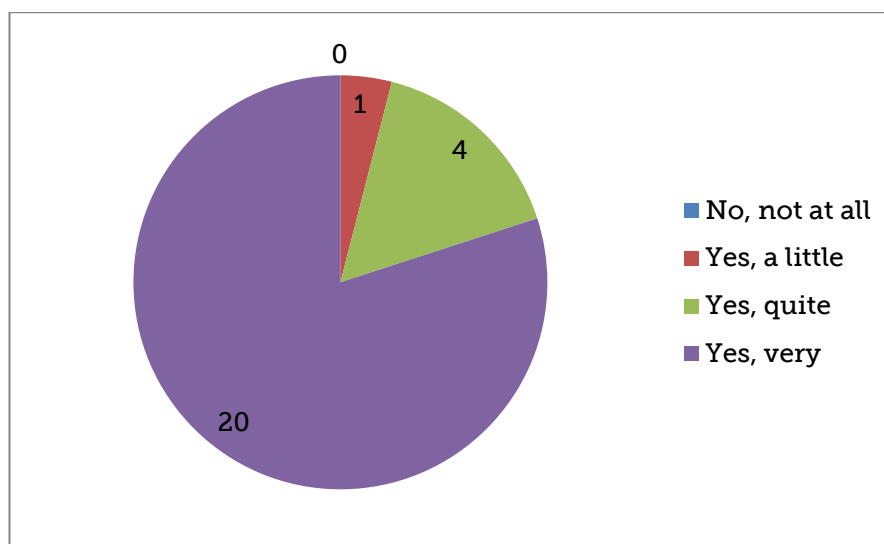
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Feedback

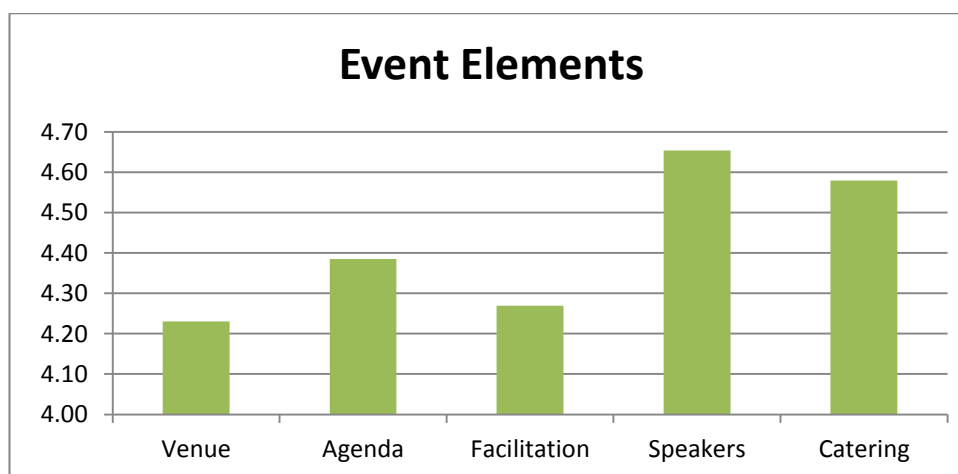
38 people attended the event. 32 for the whole event and 6 just for the second session. 26 people filled in feedback/follow up forms.

1. Number of people who reported that they found the event useful:



2. Average ratings for the different elements of the event (1 = Poor, 3= Average, 5 = Excellent)

No respondents scored any element of the event below 3.



3. 22 people said the event had stimulated their interest in healthy and sustainable food in Edinburgh's colleges and universities. Nobody suggested it had not.
4. 20 people said the event had increased their understanding of how Edinburgh's colleges and universities may achieve more healthy and sustainable food. One person suggested it had not.

Next Steps

The event was intended to be just the beginning of a wider conversation about healthy and sustainable food in universities and colleges within Edinburgh and beyond. It is therefore positive that 22 of the delegates signed up to receive further information about a Food for Life Scotland Focus Group exploring a whole settings approach within their organisation. They will be contacted separately by Food for Life Scotland to arrange this.

It is also positive that eight people signed up to receive further information about how to achieve the Food for Life Catering Mark award within their organisation's catering service, as that could be transformative for the food served within the tertiary sector.

Contacts:

Should you wish to contact any of the event organisers, please use the details below:

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