



## Preventing and mitigating child poverty world cafe session, August 2017



### Children In Scotland

Children in Scotland is the collective voice for children, young people and families in Scotland and organisations and businesses that have a significant positive impact on children's lives.

We are an influencing and membership organisation, comprised of representatives from the voluntary, public and private sectors. Our vision is that Scotland will become a world leader in securing the wellbeing of every child and improving the quality of every childhood.

We are working on a range of diverse thematic projects, including **Food, Families, Futures** to address a major social issue: food poverty and its links with wellbeing, learning and attainment.

### Food, Families, Futures (FFF)

Through our work we are aware of the levels of poverty in Scotland and throughout the UK and the direct or potential impact this has on children and families.

Head Teachers report on the sometimes profound and often complex needs of families. Food is one challenge faced by many, especially during school holidays.

The aims of FFF are:

- Improve the health and wellbeing of children (and their families) living in and around the partnership areas, including increasing nourishment, reducing hunger and improving nutrition
- Improve the engagement and confidence of parents in their children's learning, resulting in improved early development, social inclusion, aspiration and attainment of children
- Increase support and commitment from the wider local community offering their time, energy and expertise to ensure the success of the programme, making it sustainable

Academic evaluation of summer holiday clubs across the UK, including those run under the FFF banner, is currently being led by Professor Greta Defeyter, Director of Healthy Living at Northumbria University. Professor Defeyter states: "Research from Northumbria University has shown that holiday clubs afford a number of benefits to families and children. For example, holiday clubs help to reduce social isolation, provide a structure for family engagement in physical and social activities, provide free, healthy food, and bring communities together. We know that many children suffer from educational learning loss across the summer and we are currently investigating whether holiday clubs help to attenuate this loss."

In collaboration with businesses and funders that share our values (such as food supplier Brakes -**Meals And More**, Asda, Gannochy Trust, STV Hunter), the project combines the knowledge, expertise, values and national networks of the third sector, business and industry and facilitates successful local partnerships to tackle food poverty.

### Year 1 (2016)

We identified local authorities to work with - Glasgow, Eastern Perthshire and North Ayrshire. The **Cost of School Holidays Literature Review** (2015) identified that 38.8% of primary school pupils and 29.8% of secondary pupils in Glasgow are in receipt of free school meals (FSM). Ibrox and Dalmarnock primary schools have two of the highest rates of FSM entitlement in Scotland and were identified as pilot schools.

Different areas identified different needs and partners, thus a variety of approaches were taken. Ibrox and Dalmarnock ran summer holiday clubs, Eastern Perthshire October holiday clubs and North Ayrshire breakfast/after school clubs.

#### Successes:

- New partnerships were formed (education, community, industry, health, third sector, funders)
- Good numbers of children and families attended the clubs and enjoyed them
- Food was a central focus for all of the clubs
- A variety of activities were available, including free play and arts and crafts
- Schools were in use as community hubs
- Positive impact was felt in schools outwith the clubs (e.g. parental engagement)
- Northumbria University's interim report

#### Challenges:

- Accessing and using school kitchens
- Ensuring food was of the highest possible nutritional quality and appropriate to diverse school communities

#### Learning:

- More time required to plan and develop
- Engaging children and families more in the food aspect

### **Year 2 (2017)**

This year we have expanded the FFF project into West Dunbartonshire (two summer clubs) and increased the numbers in Glasgow, North Ayrshire and Perthshire. Funding has increased - Glasgow City Council identified a significant amount of money to support the development of the summer holiday clubs, aiming to reach more communities who may benefit from the co-ordinated approach.

A significant difference this year has been the introduction of chefs at many of the clubs (often through partner Brakes). This has improved the variety and nutrition standard of the food provided and improved children and family engagement with food in the clubs.

#### Successes:

- The numbers - around 4000 places were taken up this summer
- The positive feedback from children, families and practitioners
- The food - a huge improvement on last year (Gary Maclean, winner of MasterChef: the professionals visited Dalmarnock!)
- Parents gaining food-related qualifications
- Northumbria University's research continues

#### Challenges:

- Practicalities of the food/chefs aspect (food ordering/delivery etc)

#### Learning:

- More time required to plan and develop - involving all partners (including children and families)
- Diversity and additional support needs are two areas identified as needing a focus
- Dealing with sensitivities around media coverage of the projects, which tend to focus on the poverty aspect and proved difficult for some of the families involved

### **What next?**

We are currently completing the evaluation work for the summer clubs and this will inform our plans and next steps with partners. Certainly we will want to share our successes and learning with the wider community. We believe we will have an ongoing role in supporting the Year 1 and Year 2 partnerships, to varying degrees and hope to develop new partnerships in new areas.