

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Food for Thought with Queens Cross Housing Association, February 2019.

**WHAT:** Food for Thought is a free engaging and informative talk series on research which is relevant to people's lives followed by dinner and discussion in community venues in North Glasgow.

**WHERE AND WHEN:** Community venues in Maryhill and Westercommons in North Glasgow, February 2019.

**WHO:** Community partnership between CPE and Queens Cross Housing Association (QCHA), Social Regeneration Team managed by Jamie Ballantyne. Researchers from across the University have been involved. Between 15 and 30 people usually attend each talk; a combination of tenants and other members of the public from the local community and sometimes from further afield depending on the topic. Our regular attendees have helped shape the project and the feedback has been really positive.

**WHY:** QCHA's own research highlighted stark findings around the challenges caused by poverty and inequality. Food for Thought was designed to offer QCHA tenants and the wider community new learning and social experiences to reduce social isolation. Attendees are offered a hot home cooked nutritious dinner from QCHA's community café, Flourish House and although they are an evening event, the talks are always in an environment without alcohol to provide an alternative for people. Food for Thought take place from 6.30pm - 8.30pm on the last Thursday of the month over a few months in the academic year in a few QCHA community venues. Our message is that everyone is welcome along and everyone's contribution to the discussion is valued.

**OUTPUTS:** Food for Thought in February 2020 was with GCU Community Partner, Gathering the Voices and we were

joined by 19 members of the public and the QCHA team and our first online FfT was in July 2020 with the HEADS:UP Mindfulness and Stroke Research Team at GCU with 3 members of the public and links were made between the Mindfulness group within QCHA and the researchers. Recruitment for their new study is going to be shared within the Older People's services.

**OUTCOMES:** At February's Talk 'And Then I Came to Live in Glasgow' by Dr Angela Shapiro, GCU Honorary Fellow, GCU Emirates Professor and Gathering The Voices Association, from the feedback we know that:

- 32% were tenants of QCHA.
- 53% from immediate G20 (Maryhill) postcode; 84% from a Greater Glasgow postcode.
- 42% of attendees had been to a Food for Thought talk previously.
- 58% heard of the event through word of mouth.
- The personal stories was a key theme that came out of the feedback in terms of what new information people learned and the resilience of refugees.
- Most were already familiar with the topic but many added that the talk had made it more personal, had given them more insight with comments such as

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"The talk put some detail to knowledge I had of it but that was very valuable and thought provoking."

- 47% strongly agreed and 37% agreed that this type of event enables the public to have a better understanding of university research (5% strongly disagreed although the rest of their feedback was very positive about the event and the rest chose not to answer).
- All of the comments were positive about the talk, presenter and food such as

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**"Food for Thought is a nice way to bring people together. I enjoy the talks and the food too!"**  
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**"Very important topic to have a talk on."**  
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**"Thank you for having us. I will be 70 next year but you are never too old to learn!"**  
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**"Really enjoyed talk, Angela was excellent."**  
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**"Thank you for making us so welcome. It was really interesting and the supper was lovely."**  
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79% said they would attend a future Food for Thought talk with a further 11% saying they maybe would and rest choosing not to answer.

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**"We shall certainly be keeping an eye on your programme of future events."**

The sessions allow for GCU researchers and PhD students to share their research with new audiences and to showcase the work going on at the university.

Researchers have said that their favourite part of the evening is sitting chatting to people over dinner as they get "questions and perspectives on their work that they wouldn't otherwise get". After our February event, Gathering The Voices actually received a donation from someone who had been in the audience and wanted to support the work of the organisation.

The talk series although valuable in its own right also keeps the partnership between our two organisations live to allow for other opportunities to be realised such as a visit from young people in QCHA residential services, March 2020 who visited the gaming labs and clinical simulation labs and the library.

FfT talks were organised and promotion had already begun for talks in March, April and May 2020 but face to face sessions were cancelled due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions on social distancing. Initially the priority for QCHA was to ensure the people they serve had access to food and support and Susan Grant volunteered with them to deliver meals to families. Then as lockdown continued they started looking at more social offerings and asked GCU if we could look at running FfT online. Moving to an on-line format, keeps the project live and partnership live and allowed us to test out new ways of engaging with the public for GCU such a live mindfulness session which worked really well.

At Universities Scotland's annual reception in March 2019, CPE's Food for Thought initiative was showcased as an example of the transformative impact Scotland's higher education institutions have in their local communities and both partners attended the event.

**COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GOALS:**

- 3. Engaged Research;
- 4. Sustainable Engagement.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:**

- 2. Zero Hunger;
- 3. Good Health and Well-being;
- 10. Reduced Inequalities;
- 17. Partnership for the Goals.

**FURTHER LINKS:**

- #GCUFoodForThought.



**Food for thought**

**Talks with a little more bite**  
 Online conversations during lockdown  
**Mindfulness and Stroke**  
 Wednesday 22nd July, 6.30 - 8.30pm

Researcher Ben Parkinson from GCU's School of Health and Life Sciences will be talking online about how mindfulness-based stress reduction is helping ease anxiety and depression after Stroke. We will have the opportunity to sample some mindfulness techniques and hear about what changes are being recommended as a result of their research to allow more stroke survivors to benefit from mindfulness practices.

**Book your FREE place(s) now:**  
 email [socialregeneration@qcha.org.uk](mailto:socialregeneration@qcha.org.uk)  
 call 0141 589 7435  
 visit [mindfulnessandstroke.eventbrite.co.uk](http://mindfulnessandstroke.eventbrite.co.uk)





Food for Thought team with Deputy First Minister of Scotland, John Swinney and Chris Fitzgerald, GCU Communications, March 2020.



University for the Common Good

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