

Mapping the evidence base for the community food sector

An evidence scoping and mapping project

Kim Newstead
Food and Physical Activity Team

Living Good Food Nation Lab



Food and Physical Activity team's community food work

We connect people and share learning to strengthen community food practice across Scotland.

Knowledgehub

Community Food Network for Scotland

Our [Knowledge Hub](#) group provides a shared space to connect, discuss, share resources and promote events.



Regular e-bulletin

A roundup of community food news, useful resources, opportunities and upcoming network activity.



Webinars

Online sessions that showcase practice, evidence and collaboration from across the community food sector.



Peer sessions

Opportunities for people to learn from each other, explore shared challenges and build connections.

Together, these activities support collaboration, shared learning and a stronger voice for Scotland's diverse community food sector. We are advised by our Community Food National Reference group

A diverse community food sector

Food may be the main focus, or the way an organisation engages people and pursues wider aims.



Why is the mapping the evidence of the community food sector important now?

Community food activities are diverse, and the wider, holistic contribution can be hard to explain.

Evidence is scattered

Research may focus on individual activities, such as cooking, growing or food aid.

Policy opportunities

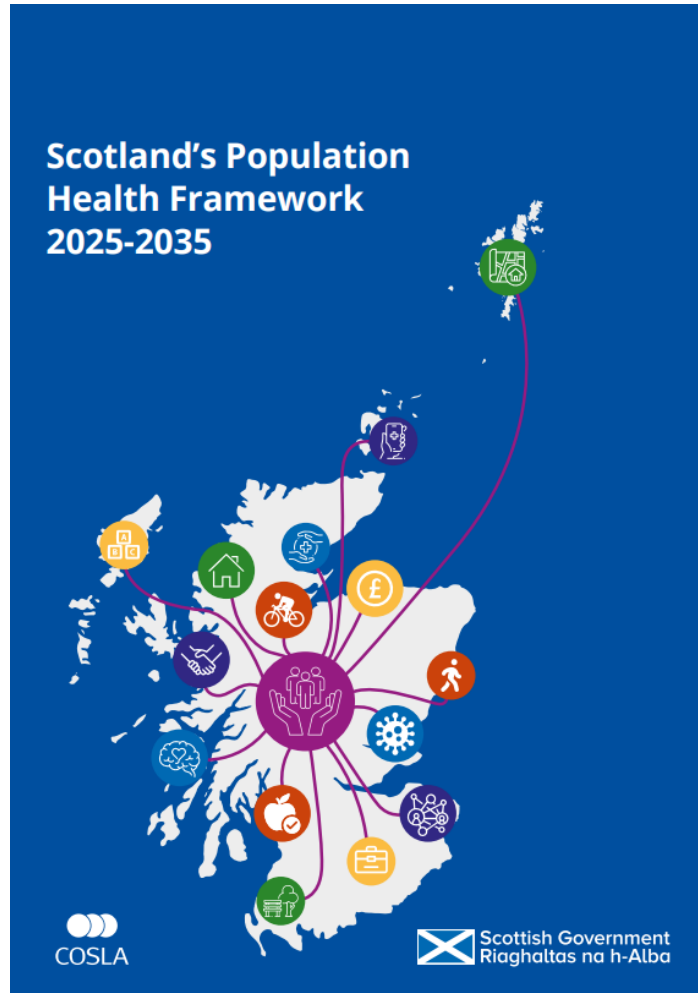
Prevention, community wellbeing and whole-system approaches are shaping public policy.

Clear messages are needed

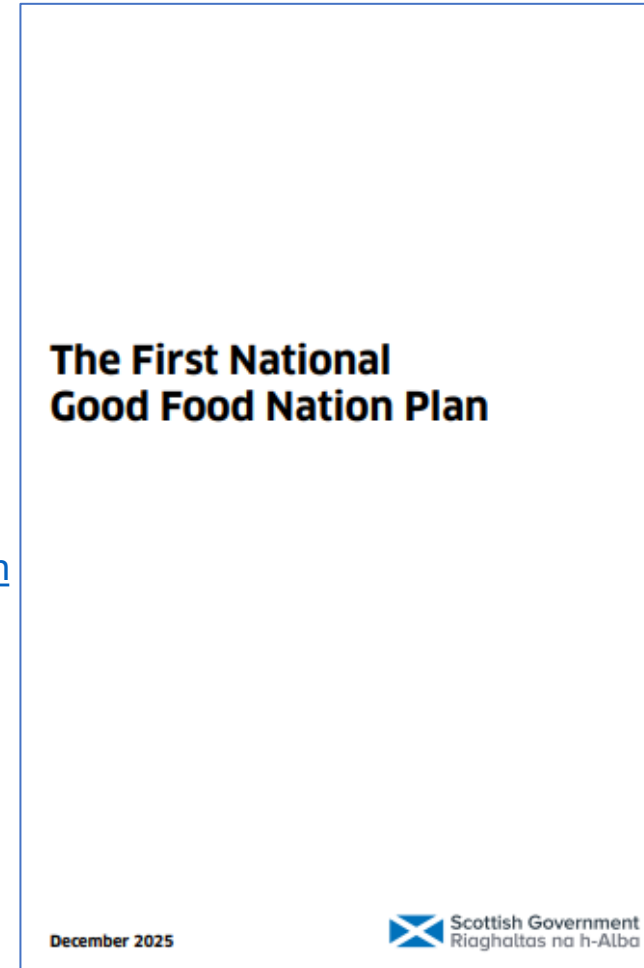
The sector needs credible, evidence-informed ways to describe its contribution.

The opportunity: bring the evidence together and make the sector's wider contribution more visible.

Links to policy



[Scotland's Population Health Framework: supporting sector summaries - community and voluntary sector - gov.scot](#)



[The First National Good Food Nation Plan - gov.scot](#)

What are we trying to find out?

How do community-led and community-based food activities contribute to a range of outcomes?

Health and wellbeing

Diet and nutrition
Healthy weight
Mental health
Oral health

Food security and access to food for individuals

Access and affordability
Dignified response
Access to income
maximisation support

Social and economic wellbeing

Connection and confidence
Participation and volunteering and skills
Engagement

Engagement and mechanisms of change

Reaching marginalised communities
Using food as a vehicle to engage
How/ why activities 'work'

How we are doing the mapping

1

Bring sources together

International reviews, UK studies and reports, including 'grey literature'



2

Review



3

Sense-check

Learn with colleagues and stakeholders.

A pragmatic and iterative scoping exercise.

A draft theory of change

How community food activities may contribute to positive outcomes



Context matters: mechanisms, reach and engagement, resources, partnerships, policy ‘contribution not attribution’.

Community food should not be viewed in isolation.



Opportunity: draw on wider research about the community and voluntary sector.

What will we do with the findings?

- Sense check with stakeholders
- Develop clear, evidence-informed messages about the value of community food activities
- Identify gaps and plan next steps

Thank you

Kim Newstead | Public Health Scotland