

Falkirk's Voluntary Sector

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A Hidden Giant - the community and voluntary sector within the Falkirk Council area.

Introduction

***The most comprehensive
survey of the community
and voluntary sector***

99% participation

Over £25 million turnover

***Employs more people than
BP Grangemouth***

***7,185 volunteer hours
every week***

***Sector database will be
made available***

The Council for the Voluntary Sector in the Falkirk Council area (CVS Falkirk and District) has undertaken the most comprehensive ever survey of the community and voluntary sector locally. The field work amounting to some 5,000 hours of staff time started in 2003 and has provided a wealth of information, confirming that the sector is a major factor in the continued well-being and prosperity of the area covered by Falkirk Council. With a participation success rate of 99%, the CVS can be confident of the facts that underpin this report. The community and voluntary sector within the Falkirk Council area consists of around 700[†] organisations, has an annual turnover of over £25 million, employs over 1,300 staff (as a comparison BP Grangemouth currently employs around 1,000 direct staff), and enjoys the services of 2,899 active volunteers contributing a massive 7,185 hours per week, the full time equivalent of over 200 persons. These volunteer numbers do not include those who give so unstintingly of their time to serve on the management bodies of voluntary organisations. From these figures it can be concluded that the community and voluntary sector is a significant contributor to the provision of services, information and facilities for the benefit of the community. The information contained in the database produced in the course of the survey will be used to promote the further development of the sector and, subject to considerations of confidentiality, parts of it will be made available to the public.

What is the Community and Voluntary Sector?

***Not all voluntary
organisations are charities***

***Autonomous,
non-profit distributing and
non-statutory***

Although most people have had some experience of the community and voluntary sector they have only a limited awareness of its size and scope. The variety of activities encompassed within the sector makes it difficult to provide a simple definition. The term 'voluntary sector' can itself be a source of confusion as it is usually equated with 'volunteering'. The terms 'voluntary' and 'charity' are commonly used interchangeably although not all charities are voluntary organisations nor voluntary organisations charities. For example NHS trusts, which are statutory bodies not voluntary organisations, are recognised as charities. Conversely many voluntary organisations, such as credit unions, do not have charitable status. The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) in its definition of the sector employs the criteria that a community and voluntary organisation may be a charity but is non-profit distributing, non-statutory and autonomous.

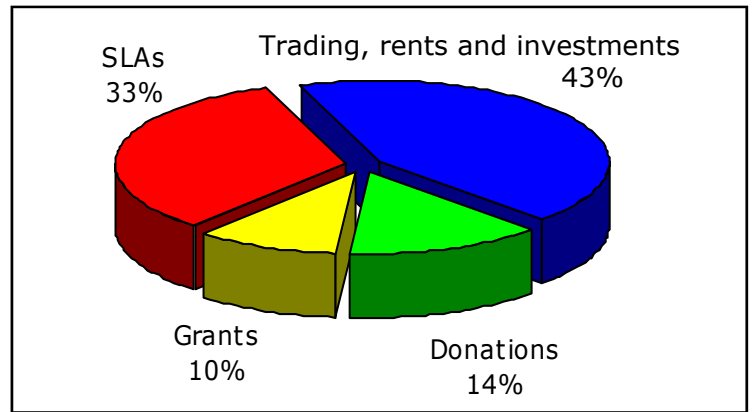
briefing paper



[†] At time of printing, the database contained data for almost 500 organisations - a cross-section from the total estimated number of 700.

Community and Voluntary Sector Funding

The local authority area is the source of £16.9m or 68% of the sector's turnover. Of the known turnover, Falkirk Council itself provides approximately £3.75m (15%) of total turnover, by means of grants or payment for services. The diagram to the right is a graphic representation of how the sector's turnover is generated. It is becoming increasingly common for organisations reliant on grants from the local authority to enter into service level agreements (SLAs). Such agreements specify the quantity and quality of service to be achieved over the period of the agreement in exchange for the funding provided. Of the total turnover achieved by the sector £9.1m, or 43%, is self-generated by economic activities such as trading, rents and investments.



Service level agreements and contracts with public sector bodies worth £7m, or 33% of total sector turnover, provide a significant level of sector funding, underlining the sector's importance in public service delivery. Grants and donations from the general public amounting to £5.2m, or 24% of total turnover, continue to be an important, if diminishing, proportion of the sector's revenue.

The majority of organisations in the sector have an annual turnover of less than £25,000 and these account for only 5% of the total revenue of the sector. Of the largest organisations 2.5% have an annual turnover in excess of £500,000 and they account for 59% of the total turnover of the sector. Many organisations (42%) within the sector have sought funding from major funders such as the Community Fund (which distributes lottery money), and the local authority. Of the 474 applications identified 126 were unsuccessful.

Increasing use of service level agreements

Diminishing reliance on grants

Sector consists mainly of small organisations

Widening search for sources of funding

People in the Sector

Community and voluntary sector is a significant source of employment

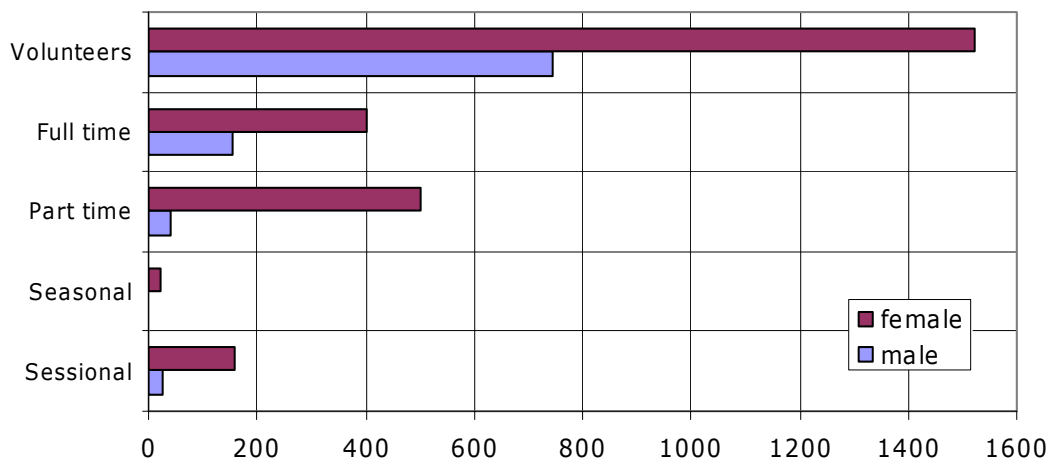
Volunteer work valued at £3.5 million per annum

Clear majority of paid staff are female

Smaller majority of volunteers are female

Many opportunities for volunteering

The community and voluntary sector was served by some 1,309 paid employees at the time of our survey. 1,081 of these, or 83% were female. The graph below shows gender breakdown in volunteers and employees. It clearly demonstrates that approximately two thirds of active volunteers are female. Seasonal and sessional staff working part time account for 16% (211) of paid employees. The monetary value of the contribution made to the sector by active volunteers (based on the minimum wage) is a staggering £3.5m per annum.



Organisations within the Falkirk Council area have highlighted 529 distinct vacant volunteering opportunities within the area. A "distinct volunteering opportunity" is a specific category of activity e.g. If there are vacancies for five drivers this is one distinct volunteering opportunity. From this it can be concluded that there is ample scope for the sector to absorb many more volunteers. 79% of organisations in the sector have local governing bodies whose 3,047 volunteers contribute on average 7,821 hours each week to the running of these organisations.

What the Sector Does

National definitions

Individuals benefit

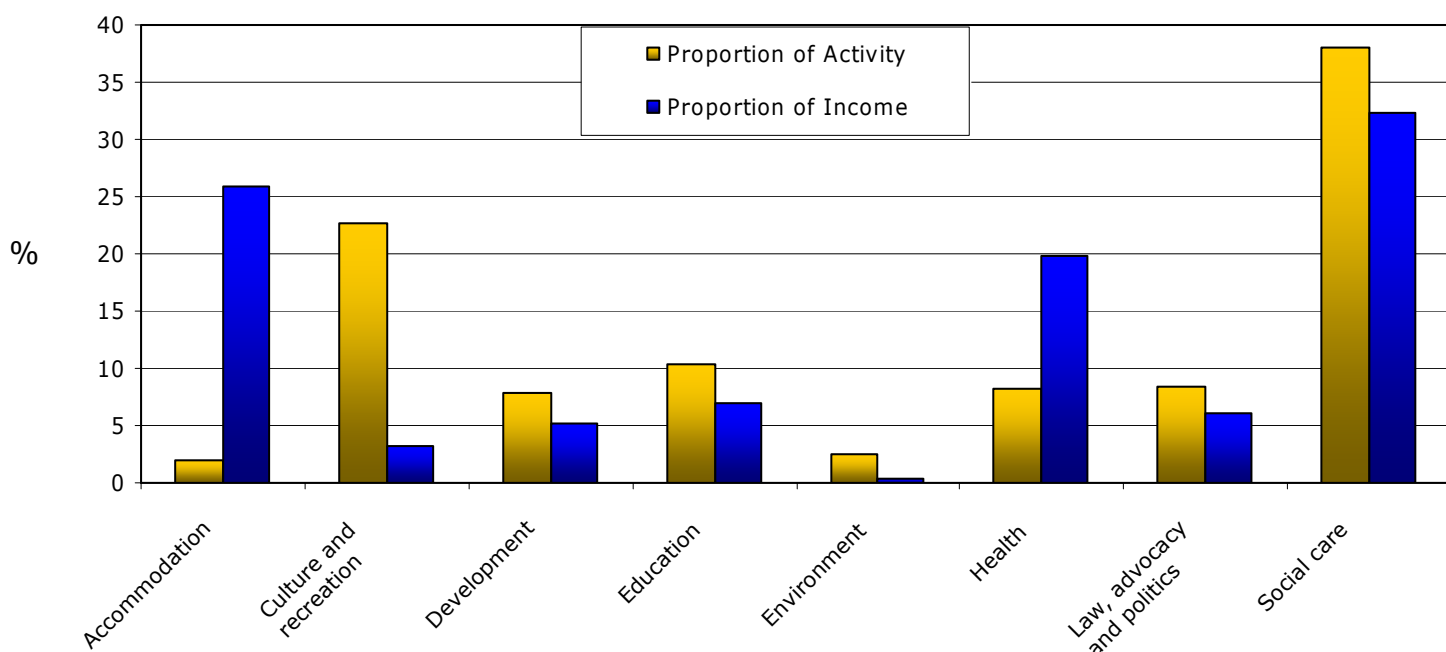
Defining activities within the sector

In determining which category the activities of a particular organisation comes under CVS Falkirk and District employs a system of classification similar to that of SCVO and the Charity Commission in using the headings "beneficiaries" and "fields of work".

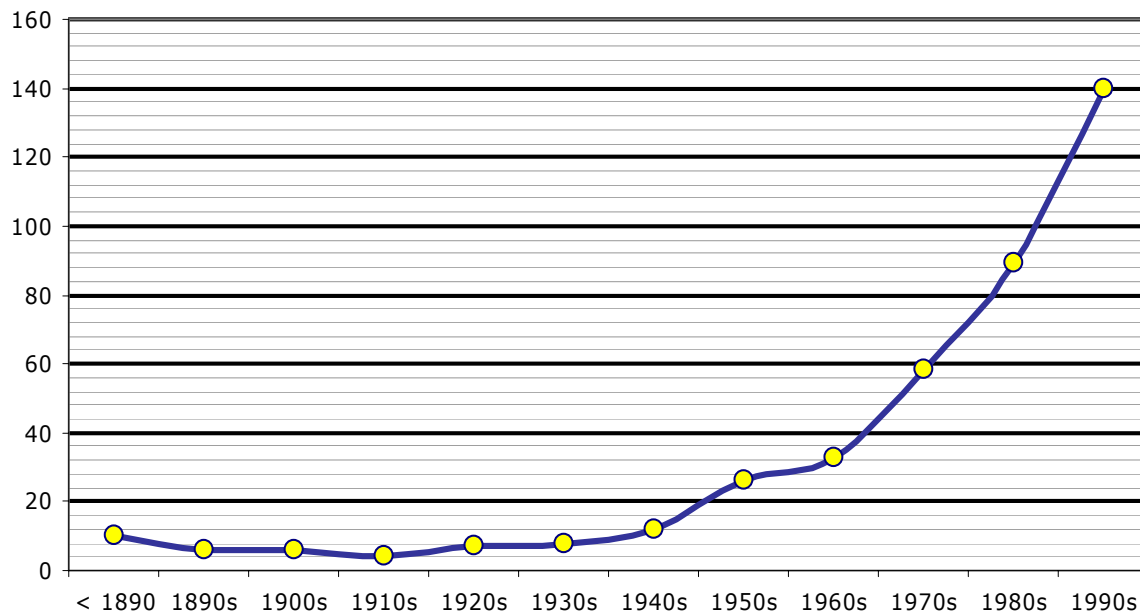
The beneficiaries of the vast majority of organisations (92%) were individuals; 5% aimed to benefit organisations and the remaining 3% are classified as benefiting either the built or natural environment.

Fields of work are used to define the activities of an organisation so that it can be grouped with other organisations according to their particular concerns or areas of interest and to help in the examination of how the activity relates to the revenue generated.

The main headings with percentages within each are shown in the diagram below. It shows the proportion in terms of activity against income. This shows that approximately 2% of the activity is in the field of accommodation yet the organisations involved in that activity account for over 25% of the total turnover.



Sector Growth



The sector has seen a greatly expanding rate of growth in the number of new organisations starting over the past 60 years. This trend looks likely to continue as more groups are formed to tackle emerging and growing needs in modern society.

The graph to the left shows the number of organisations started in each decade that still exist today.

The Bo'ness Seabox is the oldest organisation in the area, founded in 1634 and still going strong!

Sector's Assets

Only 12% of organisations have invested in the purchase of their own premises, the remainder deciding to rent premises or a meeting place from the private sector (13%); the voluntary and community sector (28%); or the local authority (47%).

Computers play an important part in the activities of 52% of organisations, 31% own at least one computer and 15% have a specific ICT (information and communication technology) budget. The internet is accessed by 20% of organisations with 23% having their own websites and 32% an e-mail address. 6% of all organisations have broadband (high-speed) access.

Few organisations have their own premises

Less than a third of organisations have a computer

Did You Know?

Just over one third of organisations are recognised as charities

Almost 90% of organisations have disabled access at their meeting place

80% of organisations have an annual income of less than £25,000

Less than one third of the sector's turnover is sourced from outwith the Falkirk Council area

Geography

80% of organisations serve the Falkirk Council area only

13% serve the whole Forth Valley

5% serve the wider Central Belt

National and international organisations make up the remaining 2%

CONCLUSION

A major contributor

The community and voluntary sector within the Falkirk Council Area makes a significant contribution to the quality of life in its areas of benefit. The statistics show that it is a major employer and a significant provider of training and work experience. By effectively undertaking its activities it is an important and growing player in the local economy. Due to the disparate nature of the sector the general public and perhaps even some of the statutory sector are not always fully aware of the extent of the contribution it makes to the welfare and richness of life in the area covered by Falkirk Council. The community and voluntary sector is truly a hidden giant. A fuller analysis of the information collected by the CVS Falkirk and District survey team can be made available along with a description of the methodology used in the survey.

About CVS Falkirk and District

CVS Falkirk & District, the Council for the Voluntary Sector (CVS) serving the Falkirk Council area, is an independent voluntary organisation supporting the development of the community and voluntary sector locally.

We provide a wide range of support and services to groups, helping those that are starting up, as well as organisations that are already established. We help groups to develop, provide information and training, assist in liaison with local government and enable the views of voluntary organisations to be represented. We offer support and services for local voluntary organisations and community groups, for example:

- Information on the sector locally and also on a range of issues concerning voluntary organisations and community groups, including funding, constitutions, management, training, organisational policies and procedures;
- Provide services ranging from payroll processing to website hosting;
- Provision of resources such as meeting room hire, equipment hire, low cost photocopying facilities etc.

As a CVS we also have an intermediary role, supporting and facilitating joint working of community and voluntary groups with statutory bodies; helping to ensure that the interests and concerns of the community and voluntary sector are properly represented with local and national government and particular involvement in Community Planning locally.

CVS Falkirk and District is an integrated CVS and Volunteer Centre. Volunteer Centres exist in every local authority area in Scotland to provide a range of specific services that relate to volunteering and volunteer engaging agencies.

We are committed to equal opportunities and to making our services relevant and accessible to all local organisations.