



Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Third Sector Forum
Thursday 22nd March 2018
10am – 12pm
CVS Falkirk and District Offices

Present:

David Gardener (DG) (Chairperson)	CVS Falkirk and District
Stacey Munro (Minute Taker)	CVS Falkirk and District
Marnie Forster (MF)	CVS Falkirk and District
Hannah Gordon (Trainee Minute Taker)	CVS Falkirk and District
Kieran Hamilton (KH)	Action on Hearing Loss
Annette Tonner (AT)	Forth Valley Community Focus CIC
Janette Hastings (JH)	Department of Work and Pensions
Martha O'Carroll (MO)	Cyrenians

Apologies:

No Apologies

1. Welcome and Apologies

The chairperson welcomed forum members to the meeting and introductions were made. There were no apologies to be noted.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 30.03.17

The minutes of the previous meeting were passed as an accurate record.

3. Universal Credit Full Service

JH provided the forum members with a presentation regarding the new roll out of full service Universal Credit in the Falkirk area, the presentation was found to be very helpful to the forum members present.

JH informed the forum members that Universal Credit (UC) went live in the Falkirk area on the 21st March. The main focus is to move people from unemployment and relying on welfare to paid employment. The new UC benefit will be paid in a single monthly payment instead of weekly or fortnightly, which is to help clients manage their money as if it were a normal working wage, if there is a joint claim the payments will be made to one person in the household. The UC benefit will be worked out on what income is received each month instead of what hours are worked, to do this there are links between Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), to provide real time earnings information and the customer doesn't have to provide a weekly or monthly account of what they have earned.

UC will simplify the current benefits system, which sees all of the income based benefits rolled into one. The main change will be that all the work is now digital, and the client will be able to see what the job coach and HMRC can see. The



claim process will all be done online, and the client is responsible for updating all their circumstances through their customer portal. The claim process is aimed at taking 4 weeks to complete, with the information being gathered and the first payment processed within the first month.

Job centres are being restructured as they are expecting customers who need digital support to come in and have a trained member of staff on hand to provide help. There will also be assisted digital support and personal budgeting support available through the local authority to those clients who are in need of additional help.

The first claim is critical to get the information right so the application process is done properly. For housing benefits the client must provide all the payment details and this will be confirmed with the landlord or through the local authority where there are already links set up for information sharing to ensure the right amounts are paid. If the client is with a private landlord they will be asked to provide evidence to show the amounts they pay.

There will be an option for new claims to receive an advanced payment if they need to cover the period of applying and waiting on the first payment. This payment will then be paid back over a 12 month period. If there is a need to have a fortnightly payment or alternative payments put in place this can all be discussed with the client.

The housing benefit can be paid directly to the landlord if the client feels they cannot manage the payments themselves. UC payments can be made more frequently if the client is struggling with monthly payments, or the payments may be able to be split between couples in the household. Those claimants who are currently in supported or temporary accommodation will have their housing costs covered by UC and will be paid directly to the landlord.

The biggest change is the disclosure of information to third parties. Claimants will have the ability to put notes on their journal in their online account for the service centre to access if anyone is trying to access the information. The claimant must provide explicit consent for the third party to access the information, for explicit consent to be effective the claimant must provide the following information:

- That they give consent for their personal information to be disclosed
- What information they want to be disclosed
- Why the information is needed
- The name of the third party representative who they want to handle the issue on their behalf and the name of the third party organisation (where it applies)

In cases where explicit consent are given that consent will only last for that month, and no more information will be given once the issue it is relating to has been dealt with.



The following link has a quick guide to Universal Credit:

<http://instantarticles.dwp.gov.uk/2017/11/23/everything-you-need-to-know-about-universal-credit>

A forum member asked if there are some fliers or leaflets available to give to people who may be unsure where to go for any questions or for new claims. JH informed them that the jobcentre hasn't got any leaflets as the information is subject to change, however all the information is available from the job centre or online at www.gov.uk. There is also telephone numbers available for those who are struggling to use the online services, however they do encourage the client to use the online version.

JH advised that for those who are interested she can set up a meeting to go through a claim in the job centre and questions they are asked with those attending the forum to allow them to help their clients.

It was also discussed that there should be some help available for clients with substance misuse and addictions, so they are not getting their rent money and spending it on their habits. JH advised that they will be aware of this at the time of the claim and there will be measures in place to have payments sent straight to the landlord and someone to help with their budgeting.

4. Third Sector Partner Updates

Annette Toner – Forth Valley Community Focus CIC

AT informed the forum members that she is approaching her first year of business on the 14th April 2018. Some of the projects she has working at the moment are as follows:

- Free food larder has supported over 4,000 families in the area
- FV Community Focus are a key stakeholder in the new college building
- They have a contract to provide onsite catering which will cater to 400 people a day
- AT will be given the catering cabin after the college site is done which she plans to use as her new catering college, she is looking at where best to place the unit
- The catering academy will be available to unemployed people and ex-offenders to provide a qualification and new skills
- She is currently working on developing a construction academy
- Both the catering academy and the construction academy will be open to all partnerships in the area
- There is an 8 week course starting in a call centre aimed at single parents, all participants are guaranteed an interview. If the course is successful this will be a continued project
- AT is exploring opening a hairdressing academy
- Has been involved with the food poverty network, has groups pulling together that deal with food, to enable them to share the supplies received among those who need it and the operating groups.



- Tesco and Greggs are currently providing a great amount of food to her free food larder.

Martha O'Carroll – Cyrenians

MO informed the forum members that she is working on a new service for people in the criminal justice programme. Which deals with helping them into paid employment and helping them claim the Universal Credit benefits they are entitled to while they are looking for employment. They are also supported in accessing main stream services like volunteering etc.

Kieran Hamilton – Action on Hearing Loss

KH informed the forum members that there is a welfare rights service which is operating over the central, east and Ayrshire areas, which they have received a 14 month funding grant for.

He is launching a drop in session on the week beginning 26th March, at the Forth Valley Sensory Centre between 2.30pm and 3pm, more information will be passed to DG if anyone is interested. They are looking at having more drop in sessions set up throughout the areas they operate in, which will be available to those with hearing loss or tinnitus, the carers for those attending are also welcome. AT mentioned that she has training rooms available if KH is looking for spaces to hold drop in sessions.

There are other services that are running at the moment which he is looking to build on; service users can also be referred between the services already in place if they would benefit from more than one.

Marnie Forster – CVS Falkirk

MF informed the forum members that she has been in post now for three months with CVS Falkirk with the new Aspiring Communities' project. She currently works within Grangemouth, specifically Kersiebank and Bowhouse areas as well as Maddison as a whole.

Currently she is trying to engage with as many people in these areas as possible to see what groups are running and to encourage people to work together. From this she will analyse where the gaps in services are and what new groups can be created to fill the spaces.

5. Review of Terms of Reference

DG Informed the forum members that the terms of reference are reviewed each year. DG has highlighted the following points to change:

- Change the word children in the scope of activity to children and young people.
- Change inequalities in the scope of activity to issues of equality.

DG also noted that the online discussion board is currently under review. The forum members agreed on the terms of reference for the year.

6. Role of Forum Rep

DG made the forum members aware that the rep role for the forum is re-elected every year, any member of the forum may put themselves forward for the role, or the current rep may wish to continue the role. Anyone interested in taking up this role should contact DG for further information.

7. Update from CVS Falkirk

FREE Community Empowerment Act Workshop

The Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC), in partnership with Community Health Exchange (CHEX), will be delivering a free workshop for community organisations on Tuesday 27th March, 10am –1pm here at the CVS Falkirk office.

Attendees will have the opportunity to find out what the Act contains and how community-led health organisations, and other groups they work with, can use it to take forward their ideas.

As well as providing a general overview, the workshop will cover:

- How community organisations can use participatory requests to start a dialogue with public bodies, including health boards and local authorities, about things that matter to them
- Changes to community planning and how community groups might be able to have their voice heard
- Provisions around asset transfer and community right to buy land.

To book your place, or for further information, please contact CVS Falkirk by phone: 01324 692000, or email:

Adult Protection Legislation Training

Falkirk Council are holding training on Adult Protection Legislation on Wednesday 30th May, 9:15am – 4:30pm at Camelon Education Centre, Abercrombie Street, Camelon, FK1 4HA.

As a result of the training the attendees should:

- Gain a greater understanding of the relationship between the social work role in Adult Protection and the relevant legislation in Scotland
- Gain knowledge of the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
- Gain knowledge of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
- Gain knowledge and understanding of the relationship between these two acts and the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Understand the roles of appropriate agencies and professionals within the framework of Adult Protection

The training is aimed at council officers and key staff from local authorities, Police Scotland and NHS Forth Valley across the Forth Valley area.

To book your place, or for further information, please contact Evelyn McGregor by phone: 01324 590533, or email: asptraining@falkirk.gov.uk

Future Forum Dates

The following upcoming forum meetings will be held in the CVS Falkirk office between 2pm – 4pm, unless stated otherwise.

- Safer Communities - Wednesday 18th April
- Connecting Volunteering - Wednesday 2nd May
- Community Care & Health - Tuesday 8th May – (Falkirk Fire Station)
- Economic Resilience & Employment – Thursday 24th May
- Voluntary Sector Children’s Services - Thursday 31st May – (2pm–4pm)
- Community Transport - Thursday 7th June
- Tackling Poverty & Inequalities - Thursday 28th June

Scottish Social Security Agency

The first jobs for the new Scottish Social Security Agency have been advertised. The roles are for Client Advisors, whose duties will include processing applications and responding to queries. More information on the role can be found on the Work for Scotland website

8. 3 Key Messages

The forum members decided that the key messages from this meeting are as follows:

- Universal Credit is not as bad as the media has made it out to be, it seems straight forward and self-explanatory to all users.
- The forum meeting is good for meeting colleagues from other organisations, partnership working and information sharing.

9. AOCB

There was no AOCB.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 28th June 2018, 10am – 12pm.

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