



**Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Third Sector Forum**  
**Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018**  
**10am – 12pm**  
**CVS Falkirk and District Offices**

**Present:**

Jen Kerr (JK) (Chairperson)	CVS Falkirk and District
Laura Jamieson (LJ) (Minute Taker)	CVS Falkirk and District
Alan Gray (AG)	Forth Valley Migrant Support
Cheri-Ann Kerr (CK) Service	Cyrenians Lighthouse
Iyke Ikegwuonu (II)	Falkirk Council
Kevin Ferguson (KF)	Salvation Army (Debt Advice Service)
Kate McKeown (KM)	Conduit Scotland
Lynne Belton (LB)	Denny Community Flat
Lynsey Hansford (LH)	Signpost Recovery
Martin Allen (MA)	Forth Valley Sensory Centre

**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 – 28.06.18**

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

**3. Third Sector Partner Updates**

Members attending the forum introduced themselves fully and discussed their organisations' backgrounds and interest in the forum, and how their organisations' work tied into with each other's work and the forums.

**4. Falkirk Poverty Strategy Workshop: Iyke Ikegwuonu, Falkirk Council**

II attended the forum to discuss the drafted [Falkirk Poverty Strategy](#) with a presentation. This presentation can be found on the [Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Forum](#) webpage.

II is hoping to embed a focus on poverty across all areas of Falkirk Council's work, in order to better understand its impact. With the review of the Falkirk Poverty Strategy, Falkirk Council and Falkirk Community Planning Partnership (CPP) aim to improve lives, making life better for people in the Falkirk area.



The focus of the strategy review is to mitigate the impact of poverty, through 3 key strands:

- “Fairer Money”
- “Fairer Access”
- “Fairer Culture”

Il discussed these strands with the forum, along with what they cover and key work within them, including the Falkirk Food Initiative and the Digital Skills for Life programme:

- Digital Skills for Life: as a lot of services are moving online, including council tax payments and services, Falkirk Council has introduced the course as a way to promote digital inclusion and provide “digital upskilling” for members of the public.
- Falkirk Food Initiative: Falkirk Council have been working with the Community Learning and Development (CLD) team and CVS Falkirk, mapping all food programmes across Falkirk. The initiative ran over the school holidays and aimed to ensure children had one good meal a day. It was not advertised as a food programme, due to the stigma and attention in the press around food poverty and poverty in general, but this was its main purpose.
  - The forum discussed the fact that stigma around poverty is a big issue in Falkirk, and often has to do with the language used. It was noted that the disabling effect of stigma is that often people do not want to be known as requiring support or assistance (as can be seen in school children and the stigma around free school lunches).
  - It was also noted that during the summer holidays, children living in poverty may not receive the 35 meals they would in school, and that this is often the only meal they do receive.
  - Il explained that this was why the initiative focused on delivering the programmes where needed, however possible (eg. in partnership with sports clubs), and not identifying the children who needed the programme. All children were welcomed, and all received food throughout the day.
  - The report on the initiative is currently being finalised, and there are discussions with Scottish Government on future initiatives.

Il noted that the use of language is important, and that no one lives in poverty intentionally.

Discussion then turned to ways of making people aware of this course and making it available. One member noted that the Forth Valley Sensory Centre has 6 computers and IT facilities in their building; it was suggested that classes could possibly be held there, though space is limited. Another stated that the Salvation Army's New Futures Project does have IT facilities, though they were unaware of the amount of space available; there were comments around some links being made between these spaces and the course.

Members also discussed the Advice and Support Hubs and Outreach which had been mentioned during the presentation as a more holistic approach to services, allowing Falkirk Council to focus on delivering services in the face of limited resources. Due to the success of the Grangemouth hub, a hub in central Falkirk is due to open in December, with plans for a third in Denny underway.

It was mentioned that the Grangemouth hub can feel very much like a "fishbowl" with its glass walls, and an apparent lack of privacy. Il highlighted that the rooms with glass walls are not used for interviews, as these are deeper within the building to ensure privacy, but that he would raise this point, as he was aware that much of these issues came from perceptions.

Il explained that, as this is the last of the 6 consultation workshops carried out across the Falkirk area, the CPP's next steps would be to reconvene and review the feedback they had received. These workshops, along with the concurrent surveys, had shown emerging themes, and that there were some basic key actions needed to tackle poverty in Falkirk.

The Chair also mentioned the use of language in the strategy regarding services, and suggested making the strategy a bit more instructive, more of a call to action.

Forum members then worked in small groups to feedback on the following questions:

- "What are your views regarding proposed themes?"
- "What in your experience are the key issues in Falkirk?"
- "What would you change in the document we shared?"

## **5. Update from CVS Falkirk**

JK informed the forum that David Gardener had now left CVS Falkirk, and they would soon be hiring someone else to fill the role.

**6. 3 Key Messages**

There were no key messages from the meeting.

**7. AOCB**

There was no other business to discuss.

**Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018,  
10:00am – 12:00pm at the CVS Falkirk office**

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