



**Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Third Sector Forum**  
**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018**  
**10am – 12pm**  
**CVS Falkirk and District Offices**

**Present:**

Scott Malcolm (Chair)

CVS Falkirk and District

Megan Hamilton (Minute-taker) (MH)

CVS Falkirk and District

Alan Gray (AG)

Forth Valley Migrant Support

Cheri-Ann Kerr (CAK)

Cyrenians

Jacqueline MacKenzie (JM)

Home Energy

Stephanie Plotnikoff (SP)

Scotland

Conduit Scotland

**Apologies:**

Laura Shand (LS)

Action on Hearing Loss

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed forum members to the meeting and introductions were made.

**2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 20.09.18**

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

**3. Speaker from Conduit Loans (Stephanie Plotnikoff)**

Stephanie introduced herself to forum members present then proceeded to give a presentation about Conduit Scotland. Conduit Scotland is a Social Enterprise to tackle financial poverty from money lending businesses as people who are financially struggling can easily end up in more debt by using money lending services. Conduit Scotland is a not for profit Community Development Financial institution (CDFI).

Conduit Scotland have been contracted to provide a service via a forward thinking consortium of 3 local authority areas; Fife, West Lothian and Falkirk. Conduit Scotland is currently supported by Poverty Alliance, Carnegie UK Trust and Fairer Scotland.

According to previous service users they have very highly rated the services provided by Conduit Scotland in the shops across the 3 local authority areas and how they are able to get in touch with



other organisations and signpost them to get the support that the service user needs for their current situation.

Conduit Scotland are contributing to the long term financial sustainability of individuals and communities by being part of a network that builds financial strength while creating opportunities and improving the lives of many people.

The loans that Conduit Scotland offer vary from £100 – £1000 which can be paid over flexible repayments tailor-made to each individual service user and their financial needs. There are no penalties for any missed-payments and they do not cold call previous users.

Conduit Scotland relies on 'word of mouth' to spread the news of their services as the social enterprise does not have the budget for marketing. The organisation also relies on its staff social conduct as well as their behaviours towards customers. According to the 4 shop managers each staff member always tend to go the 'extra mile' towards every customer they interact with which has been highly praised via customer feedback.

The presentation given received positive reviews from forum members present.

#### **4. Jacqueline MacKenzie (Home Energy Scotland)**

Jacqueline introduced herself to forum members present then proceeded to give a presentation about Home Energy Scotland and what they do.

Home Energy Scotland is funded by the Scottish Government and managed by the Energy Saving Trust. They offer free and impartial advice to each individual service user. The aim for Home Energy Scotland is to tackle fuel poverty across Scotland. In the recent year's fuel poverty as well as extreme fuel poverty has risen across Scotland affecting many people including families with small children.

The impacts of fuel poverty are the following;

- Choosing between heating or eating
- Fuel Debt
- Social Isolation
- Health Issues – Physical and Mental
- Disrepair of property



Electricity is raising the cost of fuel which is leading the way to fuel poverty. Living in a cold damp home affects the people living in the home holistically, including their mental and physical health. Home Energy Scotland assess the person's home to find a way to bring down the cost of bills while keep their homes heated. For example a person's home may be compatible to receive insulation or a new heating system for free depending on their benefits/area.

Home Energy Scotland covers all of Scotland and has 5 information centres; Highlands and Islands, North East of Scotland, Strathclyde and Central, South East of Scotland and the South West of Scotland. It is a telephone based service, however, they do not cold call in order to sell the services. Once contact has been made with the service user and it is agreed that a home assessment is required. The representative from Home Energy Scotland can either meet the service user at their home or in a public place if they do not feel comfortable around a stranger.

A service user does not have to be on benefits to receive services from Home Energy Scotland as their advice can be tailored to each user's needs. Jacqueline also advised that private landlords will also have to meet new heating standards under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006.

Jacqueline continued to advise the forum that the Warm Home Discount Scheme is still available if the service user meets the criteria for the scheme. If eligible the discount is automatically taken off the provider's bill, however, the scheme does not automatically continue annually which means the service user will need to reapply annually if they still fit the eligibility criteria.

The Warmer Homes Scotland scheme is also available via Home Energy Scotland which is a benefit based scheme which has certain criteria to meet; there is a fast track service available for service users who are terminally ill. The scheme takes a holistic overview to the person's needs in their home and finds the best way possible to heat their home.

## **5. Future of the Forums (Discussion)**

Only 1 attendee had not already taken part in this discussion at other forums. It was agreed that the survey would be emailed along with any CVS Updates and also shared on our Online Discussion Boards.



## **6. Third Sector Partner Updates**

Having only 1 forum member remaining at the end, third sector updates were not discussed on this occasion.

## **7. Update from CVS Falkirk**

It was decided due to having 2 speakers that this information would be sent out to both forum attendees and also shared on Online Discussion Boards.

### **7.1 Fair Food Transformation Fund**

The Fair Food Transformation Fund is currently supporting community-based organisations across Scotland to tackle food poverty and food education and to make a valued contribution to projects through volunteering.

The Fair Food Transformation Fund aims to help Scotland become a country where everyone has access to healthy, nutritious food without needing emergency food aid.

The fund will only support projects from voluntary organisations, community groups, housing associations and social enterprises. Public sector organisations may not apply.

For more information please visit the Scottish Government website for an application form or email [fairfoodfund@gov.scot](mailto:fairfoodfund@gov.scot)

### **7.2 Free Sanitary Products**

FareShare is the UK's largest charity fighting hunger and food waste, the Cyrenians run the Edinburgh FareShare redistribution centre delivering surplus food to the frontline charities and community groups.

The Cyrenians have recently received funding to enable redistribution of sanitary products to vulnerable women and girls as well as low-income households across the country. They are aiming to reduce period poverty as well as the anxiety experienced by those who struggle to find the money to afford sanitary care.

This project will be able to make free sanitary products available for all community food member organisations as well as other organisations that may well benefit their service users, this is a free service. More information can be found on the Cyrenians website [www.cyrenians.scot](http://www.cyrenians.scot) or by emailing [goodfood@cyrenians.scot](mailto:goodfood@cyrenians.scot)

### **7.3 Forth Valley Third Sector Conference**

Following our successful 2018 event in Falkirk, Clackmannanshire TSI (CTSI), CVS Falkirk and Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise (SVE) are delighted to announce that we will be holding our second Forth Valley Third Sector Conference on Wednesday 13th February 2019 at Alva Academy in Alva, Clackmannanshire.

Our theme this year is “Growing Your Communities”, stemming from our commitment to helping community groups, charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises throughout the Forth Valley area continue to thrive and learn.

There will be workshops, stalls and guest speakers from across the local and national landscape. Places are £10 each, covering the cost of lunch and refreshments, with lunch provided by a local social enterprise. Booking is essential.

For further information, please contact CVS Falkirk by phone: 01324 692000, or email: [info@cvsfalkirk.org.uk](mailto:info@cvsfalkirk.org.uk)

### **7.4 Falkirk Council Young Persons Housing Survey**

Falkirk Council’s Housing Strategy team is currently working a Young Persons Housing Plan (16 – 34 years old), and, having reached the consultation stage of the project, have launched an online survey to gather the views of as many young people as possible in Falkirk and the surrounding areas.

The plan is being developed to help create and improve service provision for all young people within Falkirk. The survey is open to anyone within the age group mentioned above, and includes questions on housing, education, employment, service awareness, and health and wellbeing.

This will help Falkirk Council to develop effective and useful Housing and Support services to benefit these young people within the Falkirk communities. It will also provide an opportunity for Falkirk Council to improve current service provision.

The deadline for responses is Wednesday 19th December.

To complete the survey, or for further information, please visit the Falkirk Council website.

There is also a Word document version of the survey, which can be submitted by post: Ross Allan, Falkirk Council, Suite 1, The Forum, Callendar Business Park, Falkirk, FK1 1XR.



**8. AOCB**

This agenda item was not discussed.

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next Tackling Poverty and Inequalities forum will take place on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019 10am – 12pm at the CVS Falkirk offices.

**[www.cvsfalkirk.org.uk](http://www.cvsfalkirk.org.uk) | 01324 692 000 |**

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