



COVID-19 Third Sector Response Forum
Wednesday 20th January 2021
3pm – 5pm
Zoom Meeting

Present:

Claire Bernard (CB) (Chairperson)	CVS Falkirk and District
Laura Jamieson (LJ) (Minute Taker)	CVS Falkirk and District
Scott Malcolm (SMA)	CVS Falkirk and District
Alan Grey (AIG)	Forth Valley Migrant Support Network
Angela Smith (AS)	Corra Foundation – Dawson Centre
Annette Tonner (AT)	Community Focus Scotland CIC / The Social Grocer CIC
Arlene Graham (ArG)	ROOTS
Chris Grant (CG)	AbilityNet
Claire Houston (CH)	NHS Forth Valley
Dani Lisney (DL)	Outside the Box
Dave Cameron (DC)	Avonbridge Hall
Donald Johnston (DJ)	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Duncan Hearsom (DH)	Dial-a-Journey
Geoff Reid (GR)	SACRO Forth Valley
Iain Goodall (IG)	Camelon Community Hub
Jane Morrow (JM)	Victim Support Scotland
Janine	Symington Drive Residents' Association
Jennifer Cochrane (JeC)	ROOTS
Jessie Anne Malcolm (JM)	NHS Forth Valley
Jim Couper (JiC)	Falkirk Foodbank
John McGhee (JMc)	Scottish Seniors Computer Club
Lesley MacArthur (LM)	Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership
Lynne Boslem (LB)	Tamfourhill Community Hub
Maria Ferrari (MF)	Cyrenians
Martin Allen (MA)	Forth Valley Sensory Centre
Martin Kenny (MK)	Royal Voluntary Service Forth Valley
Mary Baillie (MB)	Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) Falkirk
Mhairi MacDonald (MM)	Community Focus Scotland CIC / The Social Grocer CIC
Michele Reap (MR)	Falkirk District Association for Mental Health (FDAMH)
Sandy Hunter (SH)	Wheatley Care
Sarah Murray (SMu)	Royal Voluntary Service Forth Valley
Sharron Linton (SL)	Symington Drive Residents' Association
Steve McQueen (SMc)	Sustainable Thinking Scotland CIC
Susan Docherty (SD)	Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre



1. Welcome and Introductions

CB introduced herself, welcomed forum members present and advised the meeting was recorded via Zoom. Introductions were made via the Zoom chat function.

2. Review of Previous Minutes (Wednesday 6/1/2021)

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting, with the following updates:

- 2.1 “Action: CVS Falkirk team to create and share one document with food providers’ organisation contact details; all providers present agreed.”
 - Carried over to the next meeting.
 - **Action:** SM to complete.
- 4. Vaccines for Carers and Frontline Volunteers: CB updated the forum that neither group is included in NHS Forth Valley’s Phase One of vaccine rollout, though they will receive them at the earliest possible opportunity.
 - CB advised that, at the moment, NHS Forth Valley is following the government guidelines to the letter, meaning they are prioritising “preservation of life” and delivering to the most vulnerable in Phase One (ie. the elderly and those in care homes). They are however keen to get volunteers and other key workers vaccinated, but want to make sure that this is done during the correct phase.
 - Falkirk HSCP has stressed the importance of vaccinating carers, volunteers and key workers, and will keep CVS Falkirk and the sector updated as much as possible on when they can be vaccinated.
 - It was noted that other health boards are rolling out their vaccination programme differently (eg. in some areas, volunteers and other essential workers have received theirs first), meaning that volunteers from organisations and groups covering different areas may have different experiences. Additionally, other essential workers such as teachers and the emergency services have not yet received vaccines in some areas.
- 6.3 “Forum Meeting Times”: CB informed members that meetings had been scheduled for monthly meetings going forward, but that this additional meeting was due to the amount of changes happening, and that more meetings could be scheduled if necessary.

3. Funding

The CVS Falkirk team highlighted the following funding opportunities:

3.1 Forth Giving

The Forth Valley COVID-19 Partnership has launched a new grants programme, distributing funds to support communities and people affected by COVID-19 outside of hospital.

The new Community Partnership Grants Programme will distribute £126,000 of local grants, and is open to any registered charity, community interest company (CIC), community or voluntary group with a bank account delivering services in the Forth Valley area.

The grants are only open to organisations offering support to:

- unpaid carers
- people affected by drugs and alcohol
- people isolated and lonely
- groups helping with wellbeing and mental health community support
- suicide prevention
- bereavement and end of life support

There will be a large grant programme offering 7 grants up to £15,000 each (Phase One). There will then be a phase of small and micro grants of up to £2,000 and £1,000.

Phase Two launches on Tuesday 2nd February.

For further information, including how to apply, please visit the [CVS Falkirk](#) website.

3.2 Community Choices

[Community Choices](#) is Falkirk Council's new [participatory budgeting](#) initiative, which they hope to launch on Monday 8th February. CVS Falkirk's role will be in supporting Falkirk Council during the process, and in promoting the initiative.

Members asked questions about the process, including who decides how funding is awarded, and if there would be panels in each community. Funding is normally awarded based on community votes in some form, and as part of its role, CVS Falkirk will ensure communities will be represented.

A member from a small community asked if their small size meant they would not receive as much attention during this process, and therefore less funding. CB advised she would find out, and invite Tariq Mahmood (TM) to the next meeting.

Action: CB to find out how Community Choices and participatory budgeting affects small communities and organisations, and arrange for TM to attend next forum meeting.

3.3 Free Grantsonline Funding Portal

LJ and SMa spoke about the free online portal from Grantsonline, available on the [CVS Falkirk](#) website (linked for your convenience), and demonstrated it.



Those looking to use the portal to assist with their funding searches should sign up via the portal, which gives access to funding information from across the UK. There is also the weekly Funding Insight Bulletin, which portal users can sign up to during their registration.

LJ advised that anyone who registers should be sure to check their junk folder for their profile activation link, and should "opt-in" to receiving information in order to receive the Funding Insight Bulletin.

For further information, please visit the CVS Falkirk [online funding portal](#), or contact LJ by email: laura@cvsfalkirk.org.uk

4. Mental Health and Wellbeing

CB asked members on the kind of support or resources they needed around mental health and wellbeing, both from CVS Falkirk and in general. The following points were discussed:

- the [ClearYourHead.scot](#) website and resources available, which will be sent to members
- FDAMH is still operating and offering support, including phone befriending, support for families, and their [Immediate Help Service](#)
- some had been informed previously that Police Scotland was no longer responding to concerns for welfare (ie. suicide risks); DJ noted that SFRS is still responding when Police Scotland need access to premises for welfare checks, and others spoke about their recent positive experiences in requesting checks, including from Community Officers in Falkirk.

CB informed members that suicide prevention is a key concern and area of work right now, with training available from Assist for individuals. CVS Falkirk is working with partners to ensure a whole systems approach around suicide prevention, and everyone is keen to involve communities and groups such as food providers, as they are often at the forefront and know what is needed best in their communities. CB will keep forum members up to date with any information, resources and activities as they become available.

CB also spoke about the [Compassionate and Included Communities Forum](#), which was set up due to the pandemic's impact on mental health, not just on communities but also volunteers, staff and those running response groups, as people face lots of challenges (including the winter weather, and the length of pandemic and lockdown). The forum began by looking at how to support communities with health and wellbeing, but turned to focusing on staff, as they cannot support communities without being resilient themselves.



CVS Falkirk is happy to continue to facilitate both forums. The next Compassionate and Included Communities Forum meeting is Wednesday 24th February, 3pm – 5pm via Zoom.

5. Vitamin D Provision

CB has spoken to the majority of members present about the Vitamin D provision support, but noted that there was still an opportunity for food providers to submit a request, as the working group was finalising the order and would soon be distributing.

There will be an information leaflet provided with the vitamin D supplements, including those who shouldn't take the supplements due to medication, etc.

CB noted that vitamin D is especially important for children, babies, and breastfeeding and pregnant mothers; anyone who hasn't already spoke with her should get in touch.

Action: Members looking to provide Vitamin D supplements should contact CB by email: claire.bernard@cvsfalkirk.org.uk

Action: CB to send information to AS and SH.

6. Data and Technology

There was again discussion around the UK Government's "[Get Help With Technology](#)" initiative; CB and LJ confirmed this is available throughout the UK, including in Scotland.

CB also spoke about the [Connecting Scotland](#) initiative, which is currently closed before its next stage of applications, but encouraged members to look into, and noted that all applications from Falkirk third sector and social care departments had been approved so far.

CG spoke about AbilityNet's services, which are normally only available to older people but have been expanded to everyone, including groups and organisations, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. JMc asked if AbilityNet were able to help with device repairs; CG confirmed that due to the current restrictions, they could only offer "internal" (ie. software) repairs right now.

DC asked if there was a central provision for families with children at home, as in many families, multiple devices are needed (for school and work), which has an impact on bandwidth even if they have access to devices.

Discussion then took place around device provision for children; different schools appear to be progressing differently, with some asking families and organisations to contact them if they need additional devices, and some with differing criteria and priorities. Further information is available on the [Connected Falkirk](#) website.



Action: CB to find out more regarding support for device provision from Scottish Government.

7. Future Speakers

CB intends to invite speakers from CABs and Community Choices; those with any other suggestions are invited to contact her by email.

8. AOCB

8.1 Free School Meals

A number of food providers are working on this; families have currently received money for this until Tuesday 2nd February, but this will now be extended due to the latest announcement from Scottish Government.

Falkirk Council's [School Holiday Food Fund](#) is now accepting applications for the February 2021 school holidays (Friday 12th February – Tuesday 16th February, inclusive).

Groups can apply for up to £250. Applicants must be constituted; partnerships involving unconstituted community organisations can apply, but the lead partner must be constituted. Decisions will be made by the Fairer Falkirk Partnership, within 10 working days from receipt of a valid, completed application form.

For further information, including how to apply, please visit the [CVS Falkirk](#) website.

8.2 Struggles with Heating, Gas and Electricity Costs

Some members spoke about requests for support they had received from those struggling with their heating, gas and electricity bills.

LJ noted that [Maximising Income](#) page (part of Wellness in Winter) had information on organisations which could help people reduce their bills, including [Home Energy Scotland](#).

Others recommended the [Warmer Home Scheme discount](#), [Aberlour's Urgent Assistance Fund](#) and the [Support for People team](#); one member pointed out that Aberlour's fund is only available to families, not individuals, and that they had been informed by the Support for People team that they could only offer support around COVID-19 and its impact. CB will confirm this, as CVS Falkirk understood the Support for People team could refer and signpost to other departments.

Action: CB to confirm if Support for People can refer and signpost to other departments.



8.3 Hot Meals and Re-ablement

Discussion took place around provision of hot meals (especially to older people) and its impact on re-ablement, the purpose of which is to make sure people can still do things for themselves.

Members felt it was important to bear in mind who these hot meals would be most useful for, and if they would be helpful in each scenario. Those who provided hot meals reported that they were not every day, but often once a week, in order to provide a break for those who needed it, and especially carers. This also highlighted the need for support for carers, particularly around respite.

8.4 Falkirk Foodbank

JiC noted that, in addition to their support with food parcels and for social services, Falkirk Foodbank can provide white goods and pots, pans, towels etc.

8.5 National Adult Support Day

National Adult Support Day 2021 takes place on Saturday 20th February. CVS Falkirk is working with the Adult Support and Protection team to put together a Falkirk programme of online events via Zoom, which will run Monday 15th February – Saturday 20th February.

The aim of the programme is to inform people of information, resources and activities local to them around Adult Protection, even if everything is currently online. There will be information sessions and different demonstrations, with possibly some live performances. The programme's sessions will be open to staff, members of the public, and everyone involved in adult protection (including family and carers).

This will be promoted through the CVS Falkirk e-bulletin, but anyone looking to get involved should contact CB by email.

**Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 3rd February, 3pm – 5pm
via Zoom**

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