



COVID-19 Third Sector Response Forum
Wednesday 15th September 2021
3pm – 5pm
Zoom Meeting

Present:

Lynsey Hansford (LH) (Chairperson)
Laura Jamieson (LJ) (Minute Taker)

CVS Falkirk and District
CVS Falkirk and District

Alan Grey (AlG)

Forth Valley Migrant Support Network

Ania Sandland (ASa)

Outside the Box

Arlene Graham (ArG)

Roots

Claire Houston (CH)

NHS Forth Valley

Dave Cameron (DC)

Avonbridge Hall

Donald Johnston (DJ)

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Duncan Hearsum (DH)

Dial-a-Journey

Jennifer Cochrane (JC)

Roots

Jessie-Anne Malcolm (JM)

NHS Forth Valley

Kelly Tulloch (KT)

Health Improvement Scotland

Lesley MacArthur (LM)

Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)

Margaret Coutts (MC)

Falkirk and Central Scotland Samaritans

Maria Ferrari (MF)

Cyrenians

Martin Allen (MA)

Forth Valley Sensory Centre

Martin Kenny (MK)

Royal Voluntary Service Forth Valley

Sandra Lyon (SL)

The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) Scotland

Scott Malcolm (SM)

CVS Falkirk and District

Susan Docherty (SD)

Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre

Apologies:

Claire Bernard (CB)

CVS Falkirk and District

1. Welcome and Introductions

LH 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 24/6/2021)

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

3. Member Updates

3.1 Royal Voluntary Service Forth Valley

RVS is still supporting COVID-19 response in Forth Valley, mainly around delivering prescriptions and food. They have also seen an increase in requests for support around recovery, especially the work they do with people at home after hospital stays, to help them reconnect with their communities.



Additionally, they are planning further activities (which MK will send to LJ for promotion), and are working with Falkirk Council to install smart speakers in homes, in order to learn about how they benefit people through increased interaction. They have so far installed 56 devices across Falkirk communities, with support from AbilityNet. They are also working with Safebase (who have expanded into Stirling) on a new project in Stirling, where volunteers provide response support; the opportunity also helps people looking to develop careers in the ambulance or care services, to gain experience.

3.2 Falkirk and Central Scotland Samaritans

MC informed members that Vikki Wilson had left Samaritans, and Maggie Taylor would be the interim Falkirk director until next year. Aside from this, they branch is still manning the phonenumber and training volunteers.

3.3 Forth Valley Sensory Centre

The Centre is now completely open, with various groups and classes running, which has brought people back into the Centre. They are also working in partnership with Dial-a-Journey, where the Centre provides volunteer drivers and has use of Dial-a-Journey's fleet. Their [employability project](#) is also going well; Kim Grant, the project coordinator, is available to speak with individuals and organisations, and can be contacted by phone: 01324 590888, or email: kimgrant@forthvalleysensorycentre.org

3.4 Outside the Box

Outside the Box's team is busy with their different [peer support groups](#), which include Healthy Body and Mind (who go "wild swimming" 3 times a month, and do yoga), and a new group for partners of people with autism or chronic mental health issues (in recognition of the fact that many people are diagnosed with neurodivergency later in life, and that it is a journey for everyone involved). Falkirk Food Connections is also looking at the best ways to set up classes within guidelines.

Additionally, the Falkirk team is setting up a new, independent organisation, Central Wellbeing, which will take over current OTB projects in Falkirk and start new ones, from April.

3.5 Dial-a-Journey

Dial-a-Journey has seen their customer numbers rising, though many of their pre-COVID-19 customers are still reluctant to use public transport. They are also working with NHS Forth Valley to provide transport to COVID-19 vaccine appointments, which has also gained them new members, and their Shopmobility services are both operating fully again (with 6 days in the Howgate Shopping Centre).

DH expressed concern over the idea or expectation that the third sector will be able to provide the same support during another lockdown as they did in the very first, or even subsequent. Dial-a-Journey are experiencing issues recruiting both staff and volunteers (especially now furlough has ended and many people have returned to work), in addition to staff burnout as a result of working throughout the pandemic. However, DH is positive and excited at the opportunity to think outside the box.

LH confirmed that recruiting volunteers and staff was an issue being faced across the sector.

3.6 Forth Valley Migrant Support Network (FVMSN)

Nationally, FVMSN is working with the Scottish Human Rights Consortium (SHRC) on their [human rights reform work](#), particularly around lived experience. Locally, they are working and supporting people regarding Settled Status; ALG noted that there are some difficulties accessing funding for these activities as the Settlement Scheme deadline has passed, despite many people having been awarded “Pre-Settled Status” and still waiting or progressing their Settled Status applications.

ALG also highlighted difficulties with vaccine certificates for people whose first language is not English (including refugees), which their team is trying to address by going through available resources in person, and an increase in hate crime and ignorance, especially with regards to refugees.

3.7 Falkirk HSPC

LM is currently working with LH to create a resource pack designed to help groups start or restart their activities post-COVID-19. The pack will include templates, policies, and a small grant to help with start-up costs (which is deliberately designed to be accessible and “light touch”).

LH added that while the pack has been designed for groups and organisations offered health and social care activities, it should be useful for everyone.

3.8 Cyrenians

Cyrenians are currently running a new pilot project with the Employment and Training Unit (ETU), which focuses on employability for parents in Falkirk. The pilot provides a free part-time programme, running over 6 weeks, which aims to help unemployed or underemployed parents build their skills. The programme will run from Tuesday 19th October on Tuesdays and Thursdays (both half days) at Arnotdale House.

They have also conducted interviews for a Women’s Services Officer, which will be attached to the Caledonian Service, due to the rise in domestic violence, and the tensions and mental health concerns as the courts restart normal activities.

3.9 NHS Forth Valley

JM described the forum as a “window of opportunity to talk to everyone”. Both she and LM are heavily involved in the [new masterplan for Falkirk Community Hospital](#), and JM will strongly rely on the forum for feedback, consultations and planning aspects, as well as helping promote local people’s chance to have their voice heard.

The flu vaccination programme for 2021/22 is due to launch in October, and as in previous years, will begin with those over 70 years old before being cascaded to other eligible groups.

Action: JM to circulate flu vaccination details to LH, LJ and SM once available.

3.10 Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre

The Carers Centre is now open to staff, though not to carers and members of the public yet; they are reviewing this in October, as part of a commitment to community-centred care.



Carers have still been supported throughout the pandemic, albeit through alternative means – [they are now](#) recruiting to continue to deliver this support. Respite funding has also been active, with Care Breaks and Better Breaks funding available. Care with Confidence is still being delivered via Zoom, but has started to hold in-person sessions across different venues.

SD also spoke about a new voucher scheme launched by Shared Care Scotland and Visit Scotland, [ScotSpirit](#). The scheme works with local tourism boards, accommodations and attractions to help provide visits or overnight breaks away from home.

Carer engagement and involvement has been incredibly busy, including the HSCP [Joint Loan Equipment Service](#) consultation, the hospital discharge consultation, and the NCS consultation.

SD highlighted the benefits of the forum for her and her work, including networking and partnerships, and that she disseminates the information she learns here monthly to her colleagues.

3.11 Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS)

KT informed members about recent targeted work by HIS regarding redesign of urgent care, using new 111 pathway. They spoke to groups across Scotland (including one from Forth Valley Sensory Centre) to ensure the views of those with protected characteristics were represented and included.

The resulting report has now been published, and is available to view or download via the [HIS](#) website (linked for your convenience).

3.12 CVS Falkirk

LJ highlighted that she will be on annual leave for 2 weeks after Friday 24th September, and that anything members would like to promote through CVS Falkirk (via the e-bulletin or social media) should be sent to her before then, by email: laura@cvsfalkirk.org.uk

4. Third Sector Participation

4.1 COVID-19 Public Inquiry and the Opportunity to Contribute

LH informed members of Scottish Government's [COVID-19 Public Inquiry](#), which will independently investigate the handling of the ongoing pandemic in Scotland (relating to devolved matters on). The deadline for responses is Thursday 30th September.

The purpose of the public inquiry is to:

- investigate events causing public concern, for example the experience of COVID-19 in care homes
- establish the facts in relation to such issues
- determine the explanations for decisions taken, and causes of anything which may not have gone as expected
- consider if and how different outcomes could have been achieved
- establish any lessons to be learned from what has happened
- make any recommendations that the inquiry considers appropriate

LH offered members the opportunity to submit a response as a forum, with members able to feed in further at a later date. (Other options included submitting a forum response at a later date, or as separate organisations.) Additionally, a joint response would not prevent members submitting separately with their own team.

Members chose to submit a forum response during this meeting; feedback was then gathered through MentiMeter, using 3 questions provided by Scottish Government. The responses will be collated and published at a later time.

Action: LH to write up a response collating these responses (which will also include the raw data) to submit to the inquiry as Falkirk's local third sector response.

Action: Any members wishing to add anything further should contact LH or SM by email before Tuesday 28th September:

- LH: lynsey.hansford@cvsfalkirk.org.uk
- SM: scott.malcolm@cvsfalkirk.org.uk

4.2 The Feeley Review, and the Proposed National Care Service for Scotland

LH briefly spoke about the Feeley Review and the [National Care Service \(NCS\) consultation](#) recently launched, for anyone unfamiliar, and offered invited LM to speak about the consultation. LM noted that she was keen for the third sector to have input, and how important it is for smaller third sector and community groups and organisation to have the chance to be heard.

LH is currently discussing CVS Falkirk's role in this with their interim CEO (which may involve ensuring smaller organisations have a voice here), and if it would be valuable to offer a similar opportunity to the sector as the COVID-19 public inquiry (regarding a joint response). She asked members if they would find this useful, though it would probably be a lengthier exercise.

A number of members confirmed their organisations and groups had already begun planning engagement, or would be working with people to submit responses, including the Carers Centre. Other members said they thought a joint response, alongside individual responses, would be useful.

LH spoke about the fact that, while the consultation focused on adult care, there were a number of points relating to lifespan and children's services included. LM also highlighted that another focus is on person-centred care, and that this is a good opportunity for the sector to feed in how they contribute to these services.

The deadline for responses has been moved to **Tuesday 2nd November**. CVS Falkirk will keep members informed, and LH invited members to contact her directly with any input.

5. Training and Resources

5.1 Cyber Resilience Training

CVS Falkirk will be holding cyber resilience training for the local third sector, which will take place on Wednesday 20th October, Thursday 21st October, and Friday 22nd October.



Times of the training will vary in order to make them as accessible as possible; LH has been informed that the training is not designed to be incredibly technical, but rather is based on human behaviour, and what people can do.

Further information will be available shortly, including via the CVS Falkirk e-bulletin and social media.

5.2 Free “Mental Health and Wellbeing for Volunteers” Online Workshop

Ready Scotland and Lifelines Scotland are holding a free online workshop, “Mental Health and Wellbeing for Volunteers”, on Wednesday 29th September, 9:30am – 11am.

The workshop is open to third, voluntary and community sector organisations who have been involved in emergency response situations (including COVID-19), and aims to:

- explore what protects people in their work or volunteering role
- demonstrate how people can stay well, cope with stress and boost their resilience
- explain where they can access advice should they or their family need more help

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

5.3 Connecting Scotland Phase 3 Round 2 Open

[Connecting Scotland](#) has announced the reopening of phase 3, which provides devices, data, training and support to people who are from low-income households, digitally excluded and seeking employment.

Applications can only be submitted by groups and organisations on behalf of the people they support; applications from individuals cannot be accepted.

The deadline for applications to Phase 3 Round 2 is 5pm on Monday 27th September.

To apply, please complete the online application form on the [Connecting Scotland](#) website (linked for your convenience).

Alternatively, for further information, visit the [application guidance](#) and [FAQ](#) pages, or contact the Fairer Falkirk team by email: fairerfalkirk@falkirk.gov.uk

5.4 Third Party Reporting Online Training

In conjunction with Police Scotland, Falkirk Council’s Adult Support and Protection team is holding virtual training on Third Party Reporting (TPR), on Friday 17th September, 9:45am – 12pm.

The training aims to ensure attendees are aware of the reasons for TPRs, processes in completion of the relevant forms and Police processes once the form has been completed. The sessions can also enable organisations to become Third Party Reporting Centres.

Additionally, the training can act as suitable refresher training for anyone who has received the training previously.



For further information (including how to book your place), please visit the [CVS Falkirk](https://www.cvsfalkirk.org.uk) website.

6. The Future of the COVID-19 Third Sector Response Forum

LH invited members to speak about what they wanted to see from the forum going forward, and suggested it could be used as a space for training and learning opportunities during recovery from the impacts of the pandemic.

The majority of members said they valued the forum as a networking and peer support space, with information and insights into what else happened in the area and the sector. They felt that, as their needs varied from organisation to organisation or group, training offered would not necessarily be of interest or benefit to everyone. A number were concerned about what splitting focus would do to attendance numbers, and therefore the value of the forum, which currently provides opportunities to collaborate and learn about what is working in local communities.

Some suggested that training opportunities through the forum could be more generic and apply to multiple groups, or expensive (such as First Aid or HR). They suggested this might develop more of a “collective buy-in”, especially if the cost could be split or subsidised.

Others mentioned the importance of the forum in learning about funding, and stressed that it was crucial that smaller groups be supported and encouraged to apply. This turned the conversation to funding available, capacities and restrictions in applying (especially around constitutions and bureaucracy) and the possibility of joining up with others who could act as “lead” applicants.

LM noted that the Community Grants Scheme provides grants of up to £5,000 to serve local communities and resources; it is currently undersubscribed, and LM would be happy to speak with the forum about the application process. It was then suggested that the forum could be an opportunity to hear from various funders, similar to surgeries or the in-person setup of the Funders Fayre.

Action: LH to liaise with LM on organising a Community Grants Scheme surgery for a future meeting.

7. AOCB

LH reiterated CVS Falkirk’s commitment to keeping the forum as a space to adapt as the sector moves forward through the pandemic and into recovery, in order to keep its benefits to the sector and help address the challenges, and to demonstrate the value of the third sector.

**Date of Next Meeting: to be confirmed
via Zoom**

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