



COVID-19 Third Sector Response Forum
Wednesday 8th December 2021
3pm – 5pm
Zoom Meeting

Present:

Lynsey Hansford (LH) (Chairperson)	CVS Falkirk and District
Laura Jamieson (LJ) (Minute Taker)	CVS Falkirk and District
Alan Grey (AlG)	Forth Valley Migrant Support Network
Anne Black (AB)	Braveheart Association
Ania Sandland (ASa)	Outside the Box
Arlene Graham (ArG)	Roots
Carolyn Dick (CD)	dates-n-mates Falkirk
Carrol Wilcox (CW)	One Parent Family Scotland
Catherine Quinn (CQ)	Falkirk's Mental Health Association (FDAMH)
Claire Bernard (CB)	CVS Falkirk and District
Claire Houston (CH)	NHS Forth Valley
Colin Crabbe (CC)	Dunmore Village Association
Dave Cameron (DC)	Avonbridge Hall
Derek Allison (DA)	Falkirk Foundation
Diane Cairns (DC)	Transform Forth Valley
Duncan Hearsum (DH)	Dial-a-Journey
Elaine Hill (ElH)	Central Scotland Regional Equality Council (CSREC)
Eman Hani (EmH)	Central Scotland Regional Equality Council (CSREC)
Emily Harvey (EHa)	Forth Environment Link (FEL)
Fiona ???	[Unknown Organisation]
Fiona Macfarlane (FM)	NHS Forth Valley
Gillian Currie (GC)	Central Scotland Regional Equality Council (CSREC)
Hazel Taylor (HT)	Cyrenians
Jennifer Cochrane (JC)	Roots
Jennifer Sherlock (JS)	Committed to Ending Abuse (CEA)
Julia Duncan (JD)	The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) Scotland
Julie Ryan (JR)	Forth Environment Link (FEL)
Kelly Tulloch (KT)	Healthcare Improvement Scotland
Kerry Kennedy (KK)	CVS Falkirk and District
Lisa Shepard (LS)	Cyrenians
Lynne Boslem	Tamfourhill Community Hub
Margaret Coutts (MC)	Falkirk and Central Scotland Samaritans
Maria Ferrari (MF)	Cyrenians
Martin Allen (MA)	Forth Valley Sensory Centre
Martin Lewis (ML)	[Unknown Organisation]
Sandra Lyon (SL)	The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) Scotland
Steve McQueen (SMc)	Sustainable Thinking Scotland CIC
Susan Docherty (SD)	Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre
Tariq Mahmood (TM)	CVS Falkirk and District

Urooj

SupportedED

Apologies:

Gemma Ritchie (GRi)

Scott Malcolm (SMa)

Vivienne Malcolm (VM)

Falkirk Council – Adult Support and Protection (ASP)

CVS Falkirk and District

Solicitors for Older People Scotland (SOPS)

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 10/11/2021)

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

LH provided the following updates:

- 3.1: A date has not yet been confirmed for Home Energy Scotland's (HES) referral portal training; LH will be in touch with the groups interested as soon as she has this information.
- 3.4: KT spoke to her colleagues re: volunteers and vaccinations; LH is currently writing guidance the sector can refer to based on this and recent Scottish Government guidance.

3. Funding Focus

3.1 Falkirk Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund: Information Session

The [Falkirk Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing \(CMHW\) Fund](#) was launched on Wednesday 1st December, and is open for applications.

As the fund is managed by CVS Falkirk, the first half of the forum was dedicated to an information session on the fund, with TM delivering a presentation on its background, the funding available, and eligibility for groups and projects.

The presentation is available to view or download as a [pdf](#) or [text-only version](#) on the CVS Falkirk website (linked for your convenience), via the [dedicated CMHW Fund page](#).

Key points from the presentation included:

- The fund aims to tackle mental health inequalities and increase community-led support options for people aged 16 years old and over across Falkirk.
- Charities, social enterprises, community and voluntary groups, and other third sector organisations operating in the Falkirk Council area can apply for 3 grant types:
 - Small Grants: up to £2,000 for unconstituted groups; up to £5,000 for constituted groups
 - Medium Grants: up to £10,000
 - Large Grants: up to £25,000
- The first deadline for Small Grants applications is Monday 10th January 2022; the deadline for Medium and Large Grants is 12pm on Wednesday 12th January 2022.



- **The Fund cannot be used for specific clinical treatment services**, such as counselling, or CBT.

TM finished by highlighting CVS Falkirk's commitment to making sure this funding gets out to and benefits the local sector and communities, and asked members to share information on the fund with their networks and colleagues. He also reminded members of the next information session on Monday 13th December, 10am – 11am.

Members then had the opportunity to ask questions:

- When do projects need to be completed by, and allocated money spent?
 - CVS Falkirk is seeking clarification from Scottish Government on this, and hope to have this information before they close for the festive period next Friday 17th December; members will be informed by email once this is confirmed.
- Would certain projects be eligible for the fund?
 - TM answered these on an individual basis, and offered his contact information and further support around funding searches for those whose project was unlikely to be eligible.
 - TM also noted that as long as the project is related to community mental health, it is likely to be eligible, and that the third sector is known for adapting well and being innovative.
- Is it possible to fund a staff member through the CMHW Fund, not just running projects?
 - If the staff member is linked to those community mental health projects (eg. Project Co-ordinator positions), then this would be eligible.
- If multiple organisations or groups submitted a joint application, would they be limited to one bid's amount?
 - No application can exceed the maximum amount for its application type (eg. a joint application to the Medium Grant could still only request up to £10,000), but collaborative projects and joint applications are definitely encouraged.
- Are projects focusing on young people eligible?
 - The fund's definition of "adult" is anyone over 16 years old (as set by Scottish Government), so those looking to apply should be mindful of this; young people aged 16 – 24 years old would still be considered an adult by the fund's definition.

Further information on the Falkirk CMHW Fund, along with all application documents and guidance, and how to apply, is available via the [dedicated CMHW Fund page](#).

3.2 Falkirk Food Futures

Local community groups will soon be able to apply for grants of £5,000 – £30,000 to fund new or existing food projects, which seek to improve access to nutritious, affordable food in a sustainable and dignified way.

Falkirk Food Futures is delivered by FEL and other local partners, with funding from the UK Government; the project's grant programme has £300,000 available to support community groups in delivering their food projects (with £54,000 earmarked for capital funding), and creating dignified and sustainable access to food. Digital information sessions are taking place after the forum, and on



Thursday 9th December at 10am; member are welcome to attend, or to speak with FEL staff outwith these sessions.

The fund will open for applications shortly, once final confirmation has been received from the UK Government on some details, including project end dates. EHa is hopeful that they will be able to open the fund before Christmas.

For further information, please contact EHa by phone: 07545247489, or email: Emily@forthenvironmentlink.org.uk

3.2 Business Ventilation Fund

The Business Ventilation Fund is now open for applications.

Providing funding to help small and medium-sized businesses improve their ventilation, and help reduce the spread of COVID-19, the fund is worth £25 million in total.

“Businesses” include community, function and multi-purpose event venues or premises, such as community halls, used for-profit or otherwise.

Businesses can claim up to £2,500 per eligible premises to recover the costs of carrying out work to improve ventilation and air quality. This could include:

- installing of carbon dioxide monitors
- repairs to windows and vents

The fund is open to Thursday 31st March 2022, or until the fund is exhausted.

To apply, or for further information (including [eligibility](#)), please visit the [Scottish Government](#) website.

3.3 Update: Connecting Scotland Fast Track Applications

Connecting Scotland’s Fast Track scheme has been extended, and has no deadline; it is expected to run until the funding is exhausted.

Public and third sector groups and organisations can apply for support for up to 10 people they are working with. Fast track applications are intended for organisations who can identify specific people they are currently working with who meet the eligibility criteria, and have capacity to deliver devices to them quickly.

Applying organisations are committing to distribute devices and provide basic monitoring information within 14 days of receipt. This means organisations should already know who they plan to support prior to applying.

LH noted that as “social isolation” is included within the eligibility criteria, eligibility can be quite wide, and encouraged members to apply. Members also discussed their experiences with the scheme – one applied and received a response within days, and had the devices within roughly two



weeks. Another noted that they hadn't received any response and assumed they had been unsuccessful, but contacted them to be sure; they received an email within hours to say their application had been successful and their devices were ready, but for some reason they hadn't received the email. This member encouraged others who hadn't heard about their application status to enquire, as a result.

To apply, or for further information, please visit the [Connecting Scotland](#) website.

3.4 Community Opportunities Resource Pack: Funding Applications Open

The Small Grants funding available through the [new resource pack](#) for community-led support services for vulnerable people is now open for applications.

Developed by Falkirk HSCP and CVS Falkirk, the aim of the pack is to make it more straightforward for people to get involved in leading projects and activities in their local community. This pack is intended to give people the information, tools, and resources to get started, or restart their activities.

Groups who provide community-led support projects and activities for vulnerable people can apply for up to £500 to support costs associated with restarting or starting activities. Funding may be used to cover **initial** venue hire costs and can be spent on items such as PPE equipment, new equipment such as coffee urns and chairs, or certain backdated costs.

New groups will need a constitution to open a bank account in order to apply. However, there is no **deadline** for this funding, and Falkirk HSCP aims for a quick turnaround on all applications.

Further information, including how to apply, please visit the [CVS Falkirk](#) web article.

Alternatively, groups should contact LH by email: lynsey.hansford@cvsfalkirk.org.uk if:

- they are unsure if their group is eligible for this funding
- they would like to discuss their needs in more detail
- they would like to request further support on top of the resource pack (including around policies and risk assessments)

3.5 Investing in Communities Fund

Scottish Government is currently holding information sessions on the next round of the Investing in Communities Fund (ICF), which is anticipated to open for applications in March or April 2022, covering projects running 2023 – 2026.

ICF is designed to be a streamlined communities fund, delivered as part of the Empowering Communities Programme. The fund reflects Scottish Government's commitment to investing in communities so they can develop the resources and resilience to decide their own aspirations, priorities and solutions in response. The fund specifically aims to support disadvantaged communities to tackle poverty on their own terms, and to meet targets set out in the [child poverty delivery plan](#), underpinning the [Place Principle](#) by encouraging more joined up collaborative approaches to services and assets, to achieve better outcomes for people and communities.



For further information, including presentations used during the information sessions and draft application guidance, please visit the [Scottish Government](#) website.

4. COVID-19 Challenges, Opportunities and Useful Resources

4.1 Daylight and Sleepio Apps

FM delivered a short presentation on the [Daylight](#) and [Sleepio](#) apps, both of which have been developed through Scottish Government's digital investment programme.

Both are free and open to everyone experiencing general anxiety. They are targeted at people aged 16 years old and over, using evidence-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) approaches. The apps are tailored to each person's anxiety needs, designed as self-management tools.

Daylight was piloted in Forth Valley, and has now been made available throughout Scotland; Sleepio was piloted in another area, but is now also available across the country. Sleepio is specifically designed for anyone with sleep issues or insomnia, and will take them through a 6 week programme looking at sleep hygiene and sleep routines, amongst others, with techniques including a sleep diary.

Multiple members asked if they could use the presentation slides with their colleagues or people they support, which FM confirmed.

To view or download the presentation slides as a pdf, please visit the CVS Falkirk website.

Alternatively, to download either of the apps, click the following links on a smart device like a phone or tablet:

- [Daylight](#)
- [Sleepio](#)

4.2 Anxiety Pathway Working Group Opportunity

LH highlighted the new Anxiety Pathway Working Group, which is keen to involve the third sector and welcomes any forum members who would like to join (not just groups working specifically in mental health).

The group currently meeting fortnightly on Thursdays, but they know this will not work for everyone; however, as the group is in its early stages, input on this and all points of discussion are valued.

Any members who would like to get involved should contact CB by email to note their interest: claire.bernard@cvsfalkirk.org.uk

4.3 Accounts Commission Meeting: Report on Falkirk Council

On Thursday 9th December, members of the Accounts Commission will meet virtually at 9:30am to discuss an independent report on Falkirk Council. Members of the public are welcome to watch the meeting via livestream.



The report provides an independent assessment of the performance and services of Falkirk Council, and will be available from 2pm on Friday 3rd December, via the [Accounts Commission](#) website.

The Accounts Commission holds councils and other local government bodies in Scotland to account and helps them improve by reporting to the public on their performance. The Accounts Commission operates impartially and independently of both councils and Scottish Government.

For further information, including joining the livestream, please visit the [CVS Falkirk](#) web article.

4.4 Social Justice and Social Security Committee Evidence

At their next meeting on Thursday 9th December, the Social Justice and Social Security Committee will be hearing evidence from the TSI Scotland Network, amongst others, on the third sector's recovery from the pandemic, its resilience, and support needed. They will then consider this evidence and make recommendations to Scottish Government.

For further information, please visit the [Committee's dedicated page](#).

4.5 Forth Valley College Wakelet Tool

Forth Valley College (FVC) has created a new resource showcasing and promoting the range of support options and resources available to students to support their mental health and wellbeing, using the free [Wakelet](#) tool.

The [FVC mental health and wellbeing themed Wakelet](#) is available to view online without an existing account or sign-up needed.

FVC also invites local third sector groups and organisations to get in touch, so their support offer can be added to this resource and made easily available to FVC students.

For further information, including how to get involved, please visit the [CVS Falkirk](#) web article.

5. Winter Challenges

LH asked members to discuss the challenges their groups are facing this winter, the support they need and the help they can offer others.

One member spoke about the clear impact on some of their volunteers' mental health due to isolation, and that while they were happy to support them, they were not sure of how. Other members suggested various resources and support from different avenues (including FDAMH, Age Scotland, the Scott Martin Foundation, Outside the Box, and NHS Forth Valley's "Ask, Tell" training). LH suggested that something operating at the member's premises could be funded by the CMHW Fund, as that is where the volunteers are clearly comfortable. LJ and FM highlighted the different leaflets available from CVS Falkirk and , highlighting local support services.

MC highlighted that the fact these volunteers are opening up is a start, and that the member is doing a good job of supporting them so far; the member said they felt they were not the best person to listen, but MC pointed out that listening is an important skill, one this member clearly has, and the volunteers obviously feel safe enough to speak about these things.



Action: LJ to send members attending via their phone the chat, as they could not view via the mobile app this time.

5.1 Winter Pressures Project

The Winter Pressures project is joint project from Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) Forth Valley, Strathcarron Hospice, Food Train (as leads), and recently, Dial-a-Journey and the Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre, with support from and for NHS Forth Valley and Falkirk HSCP.

As part of the project, RVS and their partners will provide a Hospital Link Worker Service (HLWS) and coordinated community out of hospital wrap around care across Forth Valley. The HLWS will bring together a range of organisations to support patients on their discharge from hospital, putting them at the centre of the service. The person-centred focus aims to put control and choice in the hands of the patient, tailoring support to the individual and their needs. Link Workers will help patients plan their discharge support and bring together local organisations and volunteers to provide practical support, address immediate needs, and signpost to further support.

SD provided an update on the project, where so far there has been 28 referrals made to different third sector organisations and groups across Falkirk and Forth Valley, to patients being discharged from Forth Valley Royal Hospital. She also noted that they were trying to source donations of housecoats and slippers from different retailers.

DH then spoke about the project's aim to help discharge patients quicker, and reduce the strain on the hospital, as well as providing access to care parcels, transport, and prescriptions, amongst others. Dial-a-Journey has also been running prescriptions home to patients who have only been able to be discharged because Dial-a-Journey was collecting and delivering their prescriptions later, once available, instead of the patient waiting until after the prescriptions were available. (He noted that the Scottish Ambulance Service is currently operating overcapacity, and that their involvement also helped ease the strain on them.)

DH described the project as an example of joined up thinking, and as working well; both he and SD applauded the efforts of Martin Kenny, who began the project. LH noted it as an example of the agile working the third sector is known for, and good at.

Action: SD to send LJ details of the project, and to find out if individuals can donate housecoats and slippers to the project.

6. Going Forward into 2022

LH asked members about the forum's future, if it is still useful to them, and what it should look like in 2022. Members confirmed that they find the forum still incredibly useful and are happy with how it has adapted and responded to what they and the sector needed it to be, even if that has meant a different format each meeting.

LH thanked members for their input and positivity, and noted that while there was no guarantee meetings would continue to take place 3pm – 5pm, there is obviously a clear need and desire from the sector for the forum, and it would continue to be as responsive as possible.



One member suggested the “COVID-19” be dropped from the forum name, as it has become more of a general response forum; another asked about the existing forums which took place prior to COVID-19, and any plans for these. LH confirmed that all existing forums were currently being looked at and considered, and that CVS Falkirk is trying to find the balance between this forum and the others, the number of meetings, demands on members’ time, and how all forums best suit members’ needs.

7. AOCB

7.1 Knitting Donations: Winter Pressures Project

SD asked if any knitting groups would be willing to create and donate hats, scarves and gloves for both men and women, in various sizes, to support people during hospital admissions and discharges within Forth Valley Royal Hospital.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the items will need to be new and unused.

Those interested in donating, or for further information, can contact RVS Forth Valley to arrange a drop-off, by phone: 01786 450718.

Action: SD to send LJ details for promotion.

**Date of Next Meeting: to be confirmed; a Wednesday in January,
via Zoom**