



Safer and Empowered Communities Forum
Wednesday 22nd February 2023
10am – 12pm
Zoom Meeting

Present:

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

CVS Falkirk and District
CVS Falkirk and District

Allan Robertson (AR)
Derek Allison (DA)
John Hosie (JH)
Lynda Ross-Hale (LHR)
Nicola Bruce (NB)
Pauline Smith (PS)
Richard McFarlane (RM)

Social Security Scotland
Falkirk Foundation
Our Place Camelon and Tamfourhill
Cyrenians
Community Justice Co-ordinator
Central Advocacy Partners
Falkirk Council (Fairer Falkirk)

Apologies:

None.

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. Fairer Falkirk Overview: Richard McFarlane, Fairer Falkirk Coordinator

RM spoke to members about Fairer Falkirk, giving an overview of their work and his plans to engage with the third sector on the refresh of Fairer Falkirk's income maximisation strategy, which he views as critical.

Members had previously been asked to consider tools and resources they needed to support people, and those needed by people in the community; members offered their channels and networks to RM as a way to reach local people on various topics (including Fairer Falkirk's new communications strategy), as well as inviting RM and his team to their events and partnership meetings. Discussions also took place around the power of social media, and the importance of reaching those not online, including through accessible and easy-read materials.

RM noted the opportunity to put together a panel on these materials, which would provide a fresh, new perspective for all members while ensuring people's needs are met. One member also highlighted the [benefits calculator](#) as a useful tool, as both an employer and a group offering support.

Please see Action Log for actions assigned.

3. Falkirk Plan Theme 4: Substance Use – ADP Commissioning Consortium

LH asked if any members had been involved in the Forth Valley Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) Commissioning Consortium previously.

As none present had been, she gave a brief outline of the background, and that CVS Falkirk is working to arrange for Phil Heaton, the Falkirk lead, to attend and speak to the forum. LH also informed members that the current commissioning contract is coming to an end, and the Consortium is looking at a new one, which they are keen to make more co-productive. This will mean that local groups make recommendations to Forth Valley ADP, rather than the Consortium making decisions.

LH asked if any members would like the opportunity to participate and the following questions and points were noted:

- If members of the forum got involved, would they then be barred from submitting a bid?
 - LH confirmed they would not be barred, currently commissioned services and others in this space are participating already.
- If there are too many different people and groups involved, it risks becoming unproductive.
 - LH highlighted that all possibilities are being discuss, including consortium bids, so that recommendations may be made to decision-makers.
- The current Strategic Property Review (SPR) at Falkirk Council also needs to be considered, with 133 community buildings and spaces at risk; some ADP related activities take place in these spaces currently (this has been highlighted to the Consortium by the TSI representative).

After discussion, LH invited members to let her know if they would like to be invited to the Consortium meetings. A number of members submitted their interest, but stated they are also happy for CVS Falkirk to continue acting as liaison.

Please see Action Log for actions assigned.

4. Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Update

In December, [Volunteer Scotland's Disclosure Services \(VSDS\)](#) began issuing email certificates for most PVG disclosures, in a move to a paperless process. In January, VSDS issued [an update to help people understand the new process](#) (linked for your convenience), which was designed to allow for an overall quicker turnaround time.

The update includes details on the differences between the old certificate and new e-certificate; LH advised members who work with volunteers to read thoroughly, and sign up to the [Volunteer Scotland newsletter](#), as there will be more changes to the PVG scheme going forward. (Once this happens, LH will arrange for VSDS to attend and speak to the forum.)

5. Forum Member Updates and AOCB

LH invited members for updates on their own work, and any points they wanted to raise or issues they had encountered. A number noted an increase in demand, and concerns around the ongoing energy crisis; one stated that the third sector is in a very difficult position, and are also having to look at the support offered to staff and their own infrastructure too.

Some members will soon be recruiting for new staff thanks to successful funding applications, and 2 are launching new projects, including:



- the Safer Streets Youth Action Project
- the Survivors' Advocacy Project (providing victim support for people with learning disabilities or autism affected by domestic abuse, from the start of the process all the way through, which anyone can refer to)

Other updates include:

- Social Security Scotland: the Winter Heating Payment will start at the end of March; the replacement for the Carer's Allowance and the transfer process for the Adult Disability Payment are both ongoing.
- Community Justice Partnership: NB highlighted their communications toolkit, which demonstrates the rationale behind the language used in community justice; she also proposed the following, both of which members were interested in:
 - Forth Valley meeting: Stirling and Clackmannanshire have their own Community Justice Forum, and as many third sector groups work across multiple areas, NB wondered if it would be useful to have a Forth Valley meeting, with the possibility of sharing learning, and how community justice operates in other Forth Valley areas.
 - Review of Outcomes and Improvement Framework: due to be published in March, but is quite abstract, so NB is happy to speak with members at a future meeting about how it affects community justice locally, and the third sector's role.
- CVS Falkirk Upcoming Events: LJ and LH highlighted the upcoming [Falkirk Funders Fayre](#) and [Forth Valley Third Sector Conference](#), both in March, with information on how to book places, along with the [fully funded Lasting Leadership Training](#).

**Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 24th May,
10am – 12pm, via Zoom**

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