



**Safer and Empowered Communities Forum**  
**Wednesday 20 November 2024 at 10am**  
**Via MS Team**

**Present:**

|                 |  |
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| Eloise Wilson   | CVS Falkirk & District   |
| Kerrie Hoggan   | CVS Falkirk & District   |
| Pauline Smith   | Central Advocacy Partners  |
| Angela Graham   | Central Advocacy Partners  |
| Nicola Bruce    | Falkirk Council  |
| Maria Thorp     | 1 <sup>st</sup> Step Development Ventures                                      |
| Safia Ali       | Al Masaar [Post meeting note: renamed<br>RISE Forth Valley on 31 January 2025] |
| Lou Carberry    | LGBT Youth Scotland  |
| Sharlene Ramage | Central Carers   |

**Guests:**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Sarah Finnegan | Lead Officer, Gender Based Violence<br>(GBV)/Violence Against Women and Girls<br>(VAWG), Falkirk Council |
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**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Eloise introduced herself, welcomed Forum members to the meeting.

**2. Previous Minutes and Action Tracker**

The minutes of the meetings held on 4 September 2024 were approved as an accurate record of meeting.

**3. Gender Based Violence Partnership Update & Local 16 Days of Activism Plans**

Eloise introduced Sarah Finnigan, Lead Officer, Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) for Falkirk Council, who had been in post since March 2024. Sarah shared her presentation entitled "Gender Based Violence and 16 Days of Activism". The following additional points were noted:

- i. GBV could not be addressed by a single agency, hence the multi-agency partnership as detailed on slide 5.
- ii. Most human trafficking was domestic i.e. within the boundaries of the UK and although normally involves movement, this was not necessarily the case. More details can be found [here](#).
- iii. The Equally Safe Strategy 2023, as detailed on slide 3, was designed to offer broad and overarching categories covering the elements listed in the slide.
- iv. There are six Falkirk Community Planning Priorities, Theme 5: Gender-Based Violence was listed on slide 4.
- v. The Gender Based Violence Partnership met quarterly and was working in collaboration to produce a strengthened framework. Work was also underway to

- develop an interconnected agency Lead officers Group and work with to train and develop the workforce across these multiple agencies.
- vi. Safe & Together training continued to be rolled out across the Falkirk District, looking at a three-tier model: Basic Awareness, Skilled and Enhanced.

Eloise committed to keep the Forum updated on developments with the Multi Agency Action Plan.

A discussion took place on the role of Marac – a multi-agency risk assessment conference - that brought together a wide range of people, across a range of agencies, who could think creatively to safeguard high risk victims. In the third sector this was supported by Equally Safe, Transform Forth Valley and Committed to Ending Abuse (CEA). With work underway to enhance and strengthen this practice.

Sarah noted the planning underway locally in relation to 2024's 16 Days of Activism which included a Munro challenge and a full programme of events [post meeting note: details were shared with Forum members via email on 26 November 2024]. She highlighted the work of Autistic 'n' Awesome in creating banner that combined the three local authorities across Forth Valley and the key themes. She also noted the scale of the challenge, highlighting the impact on children, with domestic abuse the single highest reason a child would be on a child protection register.

Sarah was thanked for her informative presentation and encouraged groups to contact her, [Sarah.Finnegan@Falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:Sarah.Finnegan@Falkirk.gov.uk), with questions or ideas and encouraged collaboration in this area.

Sarah left the meeting.

#### 4. CVS Falkirk & District Updates

Eloise shared that Marnie Forster, Participation and Engagement Manager, was based in the new Grangemouth Hub to coordinate input into a public consultation 'Grangemouth Just Transition Draft Plan Consultation'.

#### 5. Any Other Closing Business

There being no other business, the meeting was closed.

**Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 19 February 2025,  
9am to 4.30pm – ASP Conference**