



**Health and Wellbeing Forum**  
**Wednesday 10 December 2025**  
**10am – 12pm**  
**Via MS Teams**

**Present:**

Eloise Wilson (Chairperson)	CVS Falkirk & District
Laura Jamieson (Minute Taker)	CVS Falkirk & District
Alison McClymont	Scottish Action for Mental Health (SAMH)
Ami McKnight	Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre
Caroline Nisbet	Forth Valley Sensory Centre
Cheryll Bremner	GO! Youth Trust
Chloe Mackie	Red Cross
David Henderson	Strathcarron Hospice
David McNiven	Integration Joint Board (IJB) Representative
Diana Morgan	NHS Forth Valley and Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)
Diane Cairns	Transform Forth Valley
Donald Johnston	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Donna Rodgers	NHS Forth Valley
Fiona Bartley	NHS Forth Valley
Fiona Primrose	Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Forth Valley
Georgina Faulkner	Child Bereavement UK
Gill Wilson	Epilepsy Connections
Gillian Millar	Cycling Without Age Scotland
Greg McKnight	Cyrenians
Hazel Cunningham	Falkirk HSCP
Jessie-Anne Malcolm	NHS Forth Valley
Jill McEwan	Barnardos Forth Valley
Julie Hayward	Bailliefields Community Hub SCIO
Justine Nicolson	Strathcarron Hospice
Lou Carberry	LGBT Youth Scotland
Mairi Wright	NHS Forth Valley
Margaret-Anne MacMillan	Falkirk HSCP
Mehar Shagufta	Playlist for Life
Melissa Ryan	Self Directed Support Forth Valley
Nicola McCourtney	Falkirk HSCP
Rachael Scott	Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs (SFAD)
Ricky Taylor	Maggie's Forth Valley
Safia Ali	RISE Forth Valley
Sharlene Ramage	Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre
Stephen Sutton	Bailliefields Community Hub SCIO
Susie Hooper	Pause and Breathe CIC
Suzanne Riddoch	Help at Home
Vivienne Malcolm	Solicitors for Older People Scotland (SOPS)

### Guest Speakers:

James Paterson	Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)
Tony McLaren	Breathing Space

### Apologies:

Donna Laidlaw	Strathcarron Hospice
Samantha Marsh	Why Not? Trust

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

Eloise introduced herself, welcomed forum members present, and introduced the speakers from Breathing Space, and Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP).

## 2. Review of Previous Minutes

Review and approval of the previous meeting's minutes will be done by email; Laura will send out the drafted minutes following today's meeting, and members should respond by email, with the deadline to be confirmed.

## 3. Breathing Space: Tony McLaren

Eloise introduced Tony, the National Coordinator for Breathing Space through NHS24. Tony's presentation is available to view or download via the [CVS Falkirk & District](#) website (linked for your convenience), with key points noted below:

- The majority of people contact Breathing Space because they know that their details will not be collected, and the contact is almost completely anonymous; people are only ever asked for the first 3 digits of their postcode, in order to map need, but this is not required.
- The Breathing Space staff come from a wide variety of roles, backgrounds and sectors.
- People's reasons to contact Breathing Space are largely unchanged over the last 20 years, mainly revolving around key relationships, isolation, disconnection, and not belonging (especially for young people).
- Anonymity is key to the Breathing Space model; the webchat is very popular (especially amongst young people and the D/deaf community), as people can often find emotional conversations too difficult over the phone.
  - Tony noted men can also often prefer writing in this instance (though this can also have limitations for them).
  - "Support is there, and *the choice* is there."
- Breathing Space has a team of over 50 staff, including a small coordination action team.
- Like many other support services, Breathing Space is getting busier, with the number of people getting in touch increasing.
- **"Take Some Breathing Space" Bench Initiative:**
  - The initiative is mainly funded by funeral collections, which is put into endowment accounts; benches cost approximately £1,500 each.
  - Tony noted that the reception has been very positive, with no negative feedback received so far, and described it as "mental health architecture which is visible to communities and will last".



- There are 4 benches in Falkirk District, including at the [Falkirk's Mental Health Association \(FDAMH\) office](#); the 100<sup>th</sup> bench will be installed at Stirling train station, on Tuesday 3 February 2026 (just after Breathing Space Day (see below), and in time for [Time to Talk Day](#)).
- **Breathing Space Day 2026**: celebrated each year on 1<sup>st</sup> February, the 2026 event's theme is "Learn to Listen", about "the critical role listening plays in mental health support".
  - Tony explained that the event is about encouraging people to focus on "listening and responding, not solutionising". He noted this can be a surprise for people, as they can feel they are not *doing* anything, but by just *being*, they are often doing exactly what is needed.
  - Overall, the event highlights the basic skills of listening, which everyone has, and how best to apply them.
- In 2026, the team will be focusing on Forth Valley, with the coordination team planning a "deep dive" into the area.

Following this, there was discussion around the benches, suicide prevention work, and participation. Questions from attendees included:

- The wait times for Breathing Space:
  - It is very hard to determine when enquiries come in (either by phone or webchat), as there is no pattern, and demand is high. There are normally around 15 – 20 staff working from 6am.
- How do those whose first language isn't English access the service, or those from ethnic minority communities? Are there translation or interpretation options?
  - Like NHS24, Breathing Space offers Language Line with a translation service. If there is an enquiry regarding trauma (eg. "the theatre of war"), the Breathing Space staff can speak to the person, and then refer them on to the specific service which can help practically.
  - There will also be a QR code at the Stirling station bench with links to resources available (including in languages other than English); this will act as a trial for future roll out.
- Does the webchat service uses AI or chatbots, or only real people?
  - No, the service does not use AI or bots; enquiries are answered by staff members.

Tony also noted that the service will be open over the festive period.

#### 4. Integration Joint Board (IJB) Representatives Update

##### 4.1 David McNiven, Service User Representative

Eloise introduced David as the [new service user representative](#) to the IJB, where he will be focusing on the patient journey.

David spoke to members briefly about his background in physio and clinical research (including helping design NHS24 in the 1990s as a third sector board director), roles at the UK Department of Health, and health management across the world. Now retired, he is keen to know more



about third sector services available, especially as he will be involved with the IJB at a strategic level.

“I like to see that our communities are not just treating and getting people out of hospital, but involved in preventing hospital stays and illnesses at that community level. The third sector has an immense ability to participate, and I looking forward to working with everyone.”

#### **4.2 Ian Dickson, FDAMH, Third Sector Representative**

Eloise informed members that, per the email she had sent the previous week, current Third Sector Representative to the IJB, Ian Dickson (Chief Executive Officer of FDAMH) is coming to the end of his current term, and has agreed to continue in this role for a further 3 years.

“Given the ongoing challenges facing health and social care locally and nationally, we believe this decision provides valuable continuity and ensures the third sector continues to be represented by an experienced and informed voice. Ian’s knowledge of the sector and his longstanding involvement in local structures will, we feel, remain an asset to the IJB and to our wider communities.”

Comments and feedback are welcome, and should be submitted to Eloise by 5pm on Wednesday 17 December 2025, by phone: 07825232057, or email: [eloise.wilson@cvsfalkirk.org.uk](mailto:eloise.wilson@cvsfalkirk.org.uk)

#### **5. Development of Next Falkirk HSCP Strategic Plan**

The next [Falkirk HSCP Strategic Plan](#) (due for completion in 2026) is in the very early stages of development, and will run for 3 years. Eloise stressed to members that this is the initial exploratory stage, and an opportunity for the third sector to learn more about how to engage in the process, but also a valuable opportunity to come together as a collective, consider topics more strategically, and decide how they want to be engaged with as a sector.

The hope with this exercise is to come up with an approach to suit the sector, and make engagement meaningful and impactful.

James echoed this, and his hope that this would be the first of meaningful conversations about the Plan between the HSCP and third sector in Falkirk District. He then gave an overview of the Plan and its process, including the interim Plan, which runs 2023 – 2026. Key to the new Plan will be looking at the interim’s priorities, and how these progress into 2026 and beyond.

He emphasised that the timeline provided is very rough, with nothing set in stone, as everything is still developing. However, ongoing engagement and co-production will be fundamental, in order to make sure the work, and the final Plan, are meaningful. This will not be the only opportunity to engage, though it is not yet determined what the engagement will look like, and James is happy to come and speak to groups.

James provided 4 questions to start initial discussion amongst forum members, who split into 2 breakout rooms to discuss:



- 1) What are the biggest challenges you see for health and social care and what areas should be prioritised?
- 2) What opportunities do you see for the third sector to contribute more or differently?
- 3) How can we deliver services more efficiently within limited resources?
- 4) As we plan our engagement approach to develop the Strategic Plan, what would be the best way to engage with you?

Feedback from both rooms will be anonymised and collated and used to inform the development of the Plan. James' presentation is also available to view or download via the [CVS Falkirk & District](#) website.

## 6. Future Plans and Topics for Forum Discussion

As chairperson, Eloise stressed that both the forum, and CVS Falkirk & District as an organisation, is an autonomous space, which has always been one of the strengths and benefits of the forum.

She noted that Falkirk HSCP and other partners are always welcome, and she is happy to arrange further engagement opportunities, but as the forum is a separate space, she asked members to for anything they would like to see covered during the coming year. Members are also welcome to contact Eloise outwith meeting with ideas, via email.

Responses included:

- poverty's impact on mental health
- how to signpost when crisis support in Falkirk District is not phone-based during evenings and weekends
- hoarding
- the negative effects of using Chat GPT as therapy
- more intergenerational work
  - Eloise highlighted the [Falkirk Older People's Network \(OPN\)](#), which is looking at how to build more lived experience into its approach.

**ACTION: Eloise to send Gillian the contact details for KLSB.**

**Date of Next Meetings:  
*to be announced shortly***

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