



**Safer and Empowered Communities Forum**  
**Wednesday 3 December 2025**  
**10am – 12pm**  
**Via MS Teams**

**Present:**

Lynsey Hansford (Interim Chairperson)	CVS Falkirk & District
Laura Jamieson (Minute Taker)	CVS Falkirk & District
Chloe Mackie	Red Cross
Margaret-Anne MacMillan	Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)
Rachael Scott	Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs (SFAD)
Lynda Ross-Hale	Cyrenians
Safia Ali	RISE Forth Valley
Elaine Grant	Falkirk Delivers

**Guest Speakers:**

Brian Sharkey	Falkirk Council
Dave Cooper	Falkirk Council
David Timpany	Falkirk Council
Gordon Adams	Falkirk Council
Sarah Rogers	Upside

**Apologies:**

Beverley Isdale	First 4 Kids
Eloise Wilson (Chairperson)	CVS Falkirk & District
Jessie-Anne Malcolm	NHS Forth Valley
Kelly Tulloch	Healthcare Improvement Scotland
Sharlene Ramage	Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Lynsey introduced herself, welcomed forum members present, and introduced the guest speakers: Sarah Rogers from Upside, along with David Timpany and his team from Falkirk Justice Service at Falkirk Council.

**2. Review of Previous Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting held in September 2025 were sent to members for approval by email, and are now available to view on the [CVS Falkirk & District](#) website (linked for your convenience), along with the presentations delivered.

**3. “National Throughcare Project and the Upside Model”: Sarah Rogers, Upside**

Sarah introduced herself as the Forth Valley contact in the national team, and gave a brief background of Upside, a new \* hosted by SACRO, which is designed as a universal service for anyone with a short custodial sentence (ie. of 4 years and under), or on remand. The project has



received funding from Scottish Government for 3 years, and aims to “provide people with the practical and emotional support they need to transition to community life”. Key points are noted below:

- While Upside is a national service, it has a local approach and is embedded across the Scottish prison service, providing consistency and adapting to the needs, strengths, and resources of each area (as the team recognise all areas across Scotland are different).
- The service aims to integrate the successes of previous services and projects (including the strength in relationships), but also focuses on innovation. Partnership working is also key.
- The goal is to ensure every person is “living a safe, happy, meaningful life”.
  - As this looks different to everyone, the service is designed to be very person-centred and adaptable, with all staff having received trauma-informed training, or from these backgrounds.
- Upside uses a pod model (with 8 across Scotland), which again ensures the team can adapt delivery and be flexible; they also utilise “pod meetings”, bringing together the organisations working in each area.
- Sarah also took members through the journey of the person supported, and noted:
  - Upside will get involved with the person 3 months before their liberation date.
  - The team can and has adapt quickly and flexibly – they have already had to change their model to meet people’s needs.
  - They cannot take referrals 2 weeks before the liberation date without meeting the person supported; however, the person can self-refer up to 3 months before their liberation date.
  - Support provided includes accompaniment, advocacy, creating connections, and community integration.
- The overall aim of Upside is to ensure a safe transition at the end of the support journey.

Questions from attendees included:

- Does Upside offer the service to service users who are released into the community, but with an outstanding Community Payback Order with stand-alone Unpaid Work and other activities?
  - While they didn’t originally, after feedback the team now does, but the supported person must have completed their custodial sentence.
- What types of short-term sentences, less than 4 years, do they not work with?
  - Right now this is on a case by case basis, and is something Upside is working on.
    - They have currently paused Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) referrals for the time being, as they are still in talks with Social Work Scotland about the safest processes for this.
    - The only other reason Upside would not work with someone is if they were assessed to have more intensive needs than the team could support (eg. the supported person has specialist mental health support needs or recovery needs at a higher level than the Upside team is equipped to support), or if through the risk assessment process, it was deemed to be an unsafe engagement.



- Do they inform Falkirk Justice Services on the outcome of the Upside offer of service, whether accepted?
  - Not automatically, but they are happy to share, if Justice Services reach out to ask if this has been offered.
- Do they work with people on Supervised Release Orders (SROs)?
  - They can do – again, the adaptability of the service allows them to complement existing support, be responsive to both the local area’s needs, and the supported person’s.
- There will be opportunities to work together, depending on the local landscape is – is there any mechanism for that happening at local level in Falkirk District? Or is this why the team are coming to speak with more local audiences, to try and raise awareness and start those conversations with Falkirk.?
  - The Upside team currently attends different meetings in Falkirk District, such as pre-planning meetings and Community Justice Partnership meetings, many of which are currently weekly with a focus on emergency early release. They also work with local agencies, helping plan for housing, etc. However, they are looking to work with others.
- Do they keep data on the ethnicities of the people they are working with and supporting? Would this be worth looking at, in order to offer extra support? Because that is something which local groups in Falkirk District can help with.
  - While Sarah was unsure of the data recorded on this (other than for equalities monitoring purposes), she acknowledged that this was a good point worth discussing, and noted that she would take it back to the national team. She also expressed that she would love to work with local groups to provide that specific kind of local community support.

Multiple attendees expressed their willingness to help Upside with building community connections.

**ACTION: Sarah to send Eloise her presentation slides for distribution.**  
**ACTION: Sarah to ask her colleague Alex to contact David and his team via email.**  
**ACTION: Laura to connect Sarah and Safia via email after the meeting.**

Further information is available via the [Upside](#) website, or the following articles from SACRO:

- [\*\*\*“No Downside: New “Upside” Prison Throughcare Service Launches Across Scotland”\*\*\*](#) (April 2025)
- [\*\*\*“Emergency Early Release: Necessary and Challenging but Ultimately, Unsustainable”\*\*\*](#) (November 2025)

4. **“Community Payback Order Unpaid Work”**: David Timpany et al, Falkirk Council  
 David and his colleagues gave attendees a brief rundown of [Community Payback Orders \(CPOs\)](#), what they are, the ways third sector groups and organisations are involved now, and possible ways that the sector could get involved more if they so wished, to support people on these orders. The following key points were noted:



- Around 1,500 – 2,000 people per year are assessed for CPOs in Falkirk District.
- For the majority of people given short term sentences, a justice social work report will have been provided by Falkirk Justice Services to the Court, to inform them of the preferred option for managing that individual in the community.
- The “punishment” part of the order is the *time* dedicated to the Unpaid Work Order (UWO), not the activity.
  - This is because if the order is only about shame and being shamed, people will not come back to finish their order.
  - However, the “activity” is about personal development and wellbeing, with a focus on preventing reoffending.
- When someone is given a “community-based disposal”, there are a number of risk assessments involved, which are ongoing throughout the person’s journey, in order to ensure the assigned unpaid work is the best opportunity for that person to pay back the time.
- This will be assessed by the unpaid work officers, and this is where the opportunity for the third sector is, working closely with these officers to provide suitable opportunities which benefit everyone.
  - David noted: “Whether it's charity shops, whether it's work placements, whether it's identifying particular areas they could do with assistance in, if they contact us, we can see what would be beneficial placements.”
- Many of the activities currently include waste pickups from various areas in Falkirk District (including flytipping and waste areas), along with removals (which can often be very short notice from the Housing Department, with people moving into homeless accommodation), and maintenance of war memorials and other public amenities, and support for local food banks to produce and collect parcels.
  - In the last year, there have been around 60 house clearances, and 150 garden clearances (including for community centres, care homes, older people and disabled people).
- While this is the visible “payback” part of the order, the soft-skills are often missed – how to help people with their personal development (eg. communication skills, relationship-building skills, problem-solving skills). It can often be difficult for people who are in crisis, or who don’t have these life skills, to engage and come back to David and his team, but if they do engage, this is a transferrable skill, which the team then uses as a base to build on.
- They are keen to work with others who can help them help people build these transferrable skills, which again help prevent reoffending and build connections with their communities.
- Regarding safety, David noted that roughly one third of the population has the potential to have a criminal history; however, they are very unlikely to harm the general populace.
  - Those on a CPO have had multiple risk assessments conducted on them and their placement or environment. These assessments will have found them to be no risk in the situation they have been placed in.

David finished by saying: *“If there's anything we can do to try and distil the myth that all the people that we work with, all our clients, are out there to cause significant harm to everybody else, we will try. This gets in the way of the fact that these are human beings who have made*



*poor choices. But if we can help them learn different ways of achieving the same outcome, but in a positive way, then that's so much the better.*

*“The more opportunities we have available, the more we can tailor the order to their needs, and develop their skills.”*

Questions included:

- Do CPOs involve frequent court visits?
  - They can, especially if the sheriff wants to see the individual regularly, but they could also have other charges involving court.
- Is there any mandatory training available for people on CPOs, which might help with soft skills?
  - Not at this time – a lot of the referrals are on a voluntary basis and the person can choose whether they're engaged or not. However, if the recommendation is that somethings need to be mandated due to how entrenched the offending lifestyle is, the court can give them a compensation requirement.
- What would need to happen for a third sector organisation or group to offer a placement, other than a Health and Safety assessment?
  - When visiting a placement for the first time, the team will conduct a meet and greet, complete their own Health and Safety form (including the placement's processes and induction procedure), and ensure that the placement will treat their client with safety, dignity and respect. The person will be employed by both the Falkirk Council team, and their placement organisation, so both are responsible for them.

#### **4.1 Cyrenians Experiences of CPOs: Lynda Ross-Hale, Cyrenians**

Lynda delivered a short presentation on the experiences of Cyrenians in Falkirk in using the services of those on CPOs. Her presentation highlighted the kinds of projects people on CPOs had undertaken at Arnotdale House, including the Walled Garden and Floral Clock, and the responses of the people involved. Other members present echoed similar experiences to their involvement with those on CPOs.

Lynda's presentation is available to view or download via the [CVS Falkirk & District](#) website.

#### **5. AOCB**

Lynsey informed members of a fund through Falkirk Council, with up to £50,000 available to third sector organisations to help provide furniture for those going into homeless accommodation. Those interested in finding out how to apply should contact Lynsey for further information: [lynsey.hansford@cvsfalkirk.org.uk](mailto:lynsey.hansford@cvsfalkirk.org.uk)

**Date of Next Meetings: Wednesday 11 March 2026,  
10am – 12pm, via MS Teams**

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