



Health and Wellbeing Forum
Wednesday 25 February 2026
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)
Andrew Todd	PLUS Forth Valley
Anna Cameron	Cyrenians
Barry Jordan	LGBT Youth Scotland
Chloe Mackie	Red Cross
Diana Morgan	NHS Forth Valley and Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)
Ellen Ledingham	NHS Forth Valley
Fiona Bartley	NHS Forth Valley
Christine Bell	Cycling Without Age Scotland
Ian Dickson	Falkirk's Mental Health Association (FDAMH)
Jayne Brown	Barnardos Forth Valley
Jill McEwan	Strathcarron Hospice
Justine Nicolson	Falkirk Football Community Foundation
Kimberley Wyllie	Strathcarron Hospice (Compassionate Communities)
Linda Black	LGBT Youth Scotland
Lou Carberry	NHS Forth Valley
Mairi Wright	Falkirk HSCP
Margaret-Anne MacMillan	Beatson Cancer Charity
Mary Ross	Self Directed Support Forth Valley
Melissa Ryan	Falkirk HSCP
Nicola McCourtney	Penumbra
Pauline Simpson	RISE Forth Valley
Safia Ali	Why Not? Trust
Samantha Marsh	Strathcarron Hospice (Compassionate Communities)
Sara McPhee	Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre
Sharlene Ramage	NHS Forth Valley Health Improvement Team
Taylor McFarlane	Solicitors for Older People Scotland (SOPS)
Vivienne Malcolm	
Guest Speakers:	
Ruth Hart	Deafblind Scotland
Apologies:	
Susie Hooper	Pause and Breathe CIC



1. Welcome and Introductions

Eloise introduced herself, welcomed forum members present, and asked members to make their introductions in the chat, along with something they were looking forward to.

2. Review of Previous Minutes

Review and approval of the previous meeting's minutes was conducted via email; the minutes are now available to view or download from the **CVS Falkirk & District** website (linked for your convenience).

3. Deafblind Awareness Taster Training Session: Ruth Hart, Deafblind Scotland

Ruth delivered a taster training session on Deafblind Scotland and communicating with deafblind people; key points are noted below:

- Along with the organisation's history and background, Ruth spoke about [Deafblind Scotland's vision](#), which she summed up as, "We want to be able to try and enable deafblind people to take their place in society, so they can live independently as they want to and be a part of the community."
 - The team provides a lot of advice for deafblind people and their supporters, including benefits advice and supportive technology and equipment.
 - There are also "talking kitchen" appliances available – eg. talking ovens, talking cookers – which RNIB Scotland can help source, but are also available to purchase via Amazon; other retailers can be found via [Google search](#). Deafblind Scotland is also able to help source these appliances.
- Ruth then highlighted hidden disabilities (especially sensory impairments), and gave a brief overview of visual loss, hearing loss, deafblindness, and the types within these categories.
 - There are an estimated 30,000 people living in Scotland with some degree of deafblindness.
 - In 2025, Scottish Government recognised deafblindness as a distinct disability, adopting the WHO's definition (which is also used in Nordic countries, which have been involved in "a lot of good work" around deafblindness).
- Deafblind people are entitled to not only free bus and train travel, but free travel for a companion (eg. a family member, a carer, a guide communicator).
- Ruth spoke about a tactile art exhibition currently in place at the Deafblind Scotland office in Kirkintilloch, created by a deafblind artist, for deafblind people to experience and explore art.
- She then took members through what living with deafblindness can look like, with examples of areas of life affected, and things to keep in mind if working with people affected, along with tips on communication.
 - Ruth also covered alternative ways to communicate with deafblind people, including tactile British Sign Language (BSL), Moon written communication, hearing aids and hearing loops (Ruth advised members to ensure that their hearing loops work, and shared that infrared loops are typically the best), visual (frame) signing, and block alphabet.
- Deafblind Scotland also provides a [Deafblind Manual](#), a tactile communication alphabet method (which involves fingerspelling out words using specific hand shapes that



correspond to the letters of the alphabet); Ruth briefly explained how to begin, how to deal with mistakes, and topics to cover.

- Deafblind Scotland has a number of [training courses](#) available, including self-learning deafblind awareness training (which includes a small charge).
- Finally, Ruth took members through the deafblind fingerspelling alphabet, with an interactive display.
 - While this alphabet has similarities to the BSL fingerspelling alphabet, it has been adapted for use with and by deafblind people, and has some differences.

Questions from attendees included:

- Examples of work from the Nordic countries?
 - In addition to national funding, guide communicators and translators are commissioned by the governments, making it a nationally commissioned service as opposed to local authorities. There have also been notable uses of wayfinding, with deafblind people involved.

Members also spoke about other support services available, including [Forth Valley Sensory Centre](#) locally, and the [Scottish Ethnic Minority Deaf Charity \(SEMDC\)](#) for those from ethnic minority backgrounds and communities (both of whom Deafblind Scotland works with regularly).

ACTION: Ruth to send Eloise links to Nordic examples.

4. Falkirk Care at Home Service: Chloe Mackie, British Red Cross (Falkirk)

Chloe spoke about the British Red Cross' Care at Home Service, which has operated in multiple locations across Scotland and the UK for a number of years, but was only established in Falkirk District in October 2025. Her overview of the service, and who they support, included the following points:

- The service covers the entirety of the Falkirk District, from Bo'ness and Blackness up to the Stirlingshire border. Currently, they are mainly working in central Falkirk, but are supporting people throughout the area.
- They mainly work with people who have had a hospital stay (often people with a decline in mobility), or who are palliative, and need support to stay at home.
 - This support to return or remain home reduces the risk of readmittance, and helps builds the person's independence.
- The aim is to build back people's comfort and routines in their own home, as well as their networks and relationships if needed. Chloe's team supports people with personal care (including washing and bathing, taking and understanding their medication), nutrition and meal prep, and domestic tasks).
 - The team can also look at referrals for home adaptation, and Occupational Health referrals.
- Chloe has connected with and used services she has met through the forum (including around substance recovery, and community payback services), as they are able to



support their service users building these connections and support, as well as signposting.

- “The main thing we offer is social and emotional support for people”; Chloe’s team are often who the people they support see most often or regularly (often every day), and as a result they are well placed to help them get back into these routines and networks, and identifying any barriers which might impede that.
- They work closely with Falkirk HSCP and social care services, but also with families and carers, including Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre.
- “We are the bridge between hospital and home, and crisis periods of life, being able to support them where [people] want to be. We try to empower people, rather than do for or to them.”

Through questions from members, Chloe provided an overview of her team, and clarified that:

- The team receives requests for support packages through Falkirk HSCP and the Falkirk Council process, but they also take private requests, made through the British Red Cross’ own process.
- Her team (including those delivering personal care) are trained to the British Red Cross’ organisational standards through their nation-wide training, and is registered with the Care Inspectorate (ensuring they have the required training and insurance in place to deliver personal care).
 - Chloe also highlighted that should any gaps be identified in their training, there is a team of British Red Cross trainers based in Falkirk District, who can adapt and tailor the courses to their training needs.

Members also offered the support of their own services to those helped by Chloe’s team, including around different cultures, languages, and resources. Chloe’s presentation is also available to view or download from the **CVS Falkirk & District** website.

5. Ian Dickson, FDAMH and Third Sector Integration Joint Board (IJB) Representative

Eloise introduced Ian, who recently agreed to continue for another three year term as third sector representative to the IJB. Ian will be attending more of the forum meetings going forward, and is happy for members to contact him by email with any questions or concerns:

ian.dickson@fdamh.org.uk

Ian gave a brief outline of his role as representative, along with an overview of the IJB and its oversight of Falkirk HSCP: “My role is to ensure that the third sector is well represented in the bigger decisions being made. I’m there to make sure we’re not a “forgotten sector”, and our voice is heard.”

Eloise reminded members of the forum’s links with the IJB, and the [other representatives](#) who serve on the board, including the Service User Representative, David McNiven (who spoke at December’s meeting), and carer representatives.

6. ORCA: Organisational Resilience and Capacity Assessment Tool

Euan spoke about ORCA, CVS Falkirk & District's new [online self-assessment tool](#) to help groups and organisations highlight their resilience, currently in the final stages of development, and encouraged members to sign up. Eloise described it as a “useful tool for self-reflection and self-evaluation”.

From an organisational perspective, Euan highlighted the benefits of having an established baseline and being able to identify which policies they need to consider; it can also be revisited, and used to monitor the organisation's progress towards different aims. The more groups and organisations who sign up for and use ORCA, the better CVS Falkirk & District can make it. It also helps the team improve the training offer from them as the Third Sector Interface, specifying it to the Falkirk District third sector's needs.

Euan and his colleagues are running user sessions on ORCA for people to begin their registration with the support of CVS Falkirk & District; the next takes place on Thursday 5 March 2026, 2pm – 4pm at the CVS Falkirk & District office. Anyone interested in attending (or who cannot make this session and would like to arrange another time) should contact Euan by email: euan.robertson@cvsfalkirk.org.uk

7. AOCB

Members were encouraged to get in touch with Eloise if they have any ideas for speakers or meeting themes, or if they would like to present during a future meeting themselves. Eloise then highlighted the following:

- What Works for Men's Wellbeing: Wednesday 4 March 2026, 10am – 11am via MS Teams

CVS Falkirk & District and researchers from Glasgow Caledonian University are holding an online session exploring findings from the *Well-beinG in Working-Aged Men* project,

The project looked at how community initiatives, such as Men's Sheds, can improve health and wellbeing for men living in disadvantaged areas. Researchers Dr Julie Cowie and Dr Dani Hutcheon will share what works, why, and for whom, offering insights for policy makers, community groups, and anyone interested in supporting men's health and reducing social isolation.

For further information, please view the [full web article](#) (linked for your convenience).

- Falkirk Older People's Network (OPN): Thursday 5 March 2026, 10am – 12pm at 1st Falkirk Scout Hall

Falkirk OPN and CVS Falkirk & District will welcome Doug Anthoney, Health and Wellbeing Manager at Age Scotland, who will lead an interactive session exploring how community groups and services can encourage and support older people to stay healthy and active. This meeting will also include the Falkirk OPN Annual General Meeting (AGM), led by the network co-chairs. There will also be time for member updates and networking.



For further information, including how to book your place to attend, please visit the [CVS Falkirk & District](#) website.

- Falkirk Funders Fayre 2026: Tuesday 17 March 2026, 10am – 4pm at Grangemouth Stadium

Falkirk Funders Fayre is a FREE event designed to give the Falkirk District's third sector, charities, community and voluntary organisations, and social enterprises the opportunity to meet with a range of diverse funders, and to learn about the various grant funding schemes available both nationally and locally. Attendees will also be able to ask questions and obtain information on how to apply, and learn about the criteria funders use when assessing applications.

This year's event will also offer a number of learning sessions throughout the day. Our speakers will focus on a number of different topics, including alternative funding options to traditional grant funding, and the use of AI and its impact on funding applications.

To book your FREE place, or for further information (including a list of funders attending on the day), please visit the dedicated [Eventbrite](#) page.

- Volunteers' Week 2026 in Falkirk District

Nominations are NOW OPEN for the CVS Falkirk & District Volunteering Awards 2026, inviting people to recognise the individuals and teams whose passion, innovation, and dedication supports and inspires.

In 2026, CVS Falkirk & District is thrilled to present two new Awards, increasing the team's ability to recognise as many individuals and organisations supporting and developing the Falkirk District third sector. Awards available for nomination include:

- Volunteer of the Year
- Young Volunteer of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Strength in Service Award **New for 2026**
- Organisation of the Year
- Health and Wellbeing Award
- Green Award
- Community Led Action Award **New for 2026**

The deadline for nominations is **12pm on Tuesday 31 March 2026**.

To submit your nomination, please complete the [online nomination form](#); nominations are welcomed from all who have been impacted by volunteers or volunteer-involving organisations, as well as from individuals who wish to nominate their own organisation or organisations who want to nominate their own volunteers.



Local groups and organisations across Falkirk District can also request free Celebrating Volunteering Certificates for their volunteers. To order certificates, please email info@cvsfalkirk.org.uk with:

- Contact Details (including address) for receipt of the finished product
- Name of your Organisation (to appear on the certificate)
- Name of each Volunteer (to appear on the certificate)

The certificates will be professionally printed with the names of your volunteers and your organisation. Please take particular care with spellings, as CVS Falkirk & District cannot print replacement certificates. The deadline for all certificate requests is also **12pm on Tuesday 31 March 2026**.

Date of Next Meetings:
Wednesday 20 May 2026
(venue to be confirmed)