

**Notes from the Falkirk Carers Forum
Tuesday 22 March 2022
at Falkirk Trinity Church**

Present: Eliana Clark, Elizabeth Derks, George Derks, Frank Donnelly, Margaret Donnelly, Ruth Forrester, Dana Horsburgh, Iain Kirkman, Joe Kotrys, Lyn MacDonald, Teresa Parker, Andrew Parker, Julie Silcock, Jenny Totten, Marion Wilson

In Attendance: Susan Docherty (Chair), Katie Baker, Carol Findlay, Jessie-Anne Malcolm, Allan Robertson, Alice Wadkin

Apologies: Helen Boyd, Morven Mack, Diana Morgan, Anne Williams

1. Welcome and Introductions

Susan welcomed and thanked all in attendance today and particularly gave Morven Mack's apologies. Morven is stepping down as Joint Integration Board representative after 4 years (having served a year more than she was appointed for). Morven will continue with some carer involvement work. SD will provide the IJB report today. SD thanked Morven in her absence and will present a gift of thanks to Morven.

2. Notes of the Previous Meeting

These were proposed as an accurate record by RF which was seconded by LMacD. There were no matters arising.

3. Carers Issues

Lack of Daycare & Respite Services

Carer highlighted that there was still no access or limited day care and respite and reasons given still due to COVID. It was accepted that a lack of carers was the issue although this was often not the response given by social workers. The problems in getting Self Direct Support option one or two was raised and SD explained what the four options of SDS were to the forum.

Transport to Day Care

Carer advised of a letter she had received explaining that transport to the day centre for the person she cared for was no longer available. If the cared for person has a mobility car, then the expectation is to use the car to transport to the day centre.

Terminology of "Unpaid Carer"

Carer felt frustrated that references were often made to "unpaid carers" receiving support or extra payment and those carers of pension age were not included in this. AR advised that the Retirement Pension is for older people who are termed as 'retired' thus not able to claim Carers Allowance. Carer responded to this as she explained that the caring role is in effect a working role in her opinion and more recognition is needed about this. Other carers agreed and acknowledged this.

Parent Carers:

Clarity given around this term as this is carers of school age children. Transfer from being a parent carer to an adult carer was primarily linked to when the cared for person left school but was not at a fixed age of the cared for person.

4. Social Work/Health/Third Sector Update

Allan Robertson (Social Security Scotland)

AR provided an update to the benefits which are being transferred from the Department of Work and Pensions to Social Security Scotland:

Child Disability Payment

The first transfer will be for children aged from 15- 17 years old. Part of this process will involve parents, carers or guardians being contacted by a SS Scotland adviser via telephone to arrange an appointment by phone or face to face.

Noted: AR advised the forum that these will be genuine phone calls and not scam calls. One forum attendee advised she had received a call and participated, and the process was straightforward.

Scottish Carers Assistance

Another benefit transfer in the next year will be Carers Allowance which will be replaced by the Scottish Carers Assistance. A consultation document has been produced and comments are invited from carers by the 26 May 2022. SD advised she had received the consultation, however as it is large document, she will condense what the proposed changes are relevant to carers and have this distributed in the next few weeks. Carers assistance generated the conversation of the most common issue is for carers who are not entitled to CA due to other income and benefits and they feel disregarded or recognised because of this. SD advised that SS Scotland had mentioned this issue in the consultation document where they have sought to look at how to recognise carers in this situation. There is a consultation question about this in which carers can respond to.

Appointees

Under the current DWP guidelines, persons with limited capabilities can choose a family member, parent, carer, or guardian to become their “appointee” to support them with benefits. When benefits get devolved to Social Security Scotland, there may be a process the person will have to re-appoint the appointee. AR advised there are ongoing discussions about this as the person should have their own bank account. Some carers voiced concerns as they are the appointees for the person they care for and what the expectations will be.

ACTION: AR reassured the forum that he will keep SD informed of the developments around this and SD will keep carers up to date as the decisions around this issue progresses.

Adult Disability Payment (replacing Personal Independent Payment – PIP) was being piloted in 3 areas – Dundee, Perth & Kinross, and the Western Isles

Jessie-Anne Malcom (NHS Forth Valley)

J-AM advised Forth Valley Royal Hospital and the Bellfield centre were at maximum capacity and COVID was a contributing factor to this. The vaccination programme is still active within Forth Valley and J-AM encouraged anyone to get vaccinated.

The Forth Valley Masterplan which is the plan to redevelop Falkirk Community Hospital continues with ongoing meetings determining which services can be improved or expanded in Falkirk.

Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership are currently carrying out a review of the current delivery of Occupational Therapy Services. As part of the review, they are looking to gain patient/service user feedback via a questionnaire as to what is working well and what could be improved. J-AM has been tasked to gather this feedback and has spoken with several Service Users and their Carers and promoted the Carer Centre as part of this exercise.

Carol Findlay (Food Train)

Carol informed the forum of the services provided by Food Train. Food Train are currently involved, along with the Carers Centre working on the Home from Hospital project (was known as the Winter Pressures) at FVRH. Food Train provide services to the community such as befriending, shopping, phone friends matching service and support with practical household tasks. Volunteers provide the support and Food Train are currently recruiting volunteers.

5. Joint Integration Board

In Morven's absence, Susan read Morven's report:

The IJB met on 18 March 2022 and was attended by both Morven and Frank. Delegate authority to the Chief Officer will be continued till June meeting. The Board agreed to extend the current Home Support and Supported Living contract to the end of March 2023 and to increase the number of providers included in the framework. The joint Mobilisation Plan continues with spot purchasing of care home beds to address current pressures on the system. Link workers within the hospitals provided by 3rd sector organisations are supporting patients during discharge and providing ongoing support. A co-ordinated response has ensured that services were provided to the most vulnerable during winter pressures despite high workforce absence. Delayed discharge numbers have increased along with waiting lists for packages of care. Two new antiviral treatments, either oral or IV infusion, have been developed for high risk patients who become seriously unwell with covid and a pathway is in place for inpatients, outpatients and community settings.

Work continues with the Falkirk Community Hospital redevelopment plan with engagement by service providers, service users and carers. An update will be provided at a planned workshop for IJB members and key stakeholders. Work continues with the Primary Care Improvement programme to consider impact of proposed clinical models on Falkirk localities. The programme covers the whole of Forth Valley.

A report on hospital re-admission was noted. It was observed that whilst figures for Falkirk appeared to be higher than the national average it could be accounted for in part by the system of coding out-patient assessments as admissions which has since been addressed. However, it was acknowledged that improved engagement with GP Practices and Social Care on patient discharges has led to improvement. The Annual Report of the Chief Social Work Officer was considered with the commitment of staff to deliver a high quality service commended. A question was raised regarding social work Reviews for Adult Care Plans and it was agreed to follow this up with Head of Integration.

The Finance Report indicated an overspend of £0.527m due pressures on hospital and primary care service but the final forecast remains at breakeven. Covid funding received has been earmarked. An underspend in community health services due to the temporary closure of wards at FCH has been offset by pressures on JLES, night nursing and complex care. The cost of significant pressure on home care services with a waiting list for packages of care have been offset by savings achieved through lower residential costs. The Budget Report for 2022/2023 was approved with a gap of £5.155m noted and approval of efficiency savings to achieve a balance. It was observed that there is a need to closely monitor the situation at a time when all costs are spiralling. The HSCP Communications update and presentation was noted.

This was the final Board meeting for Morven as carer representative and arrangements will be made through the Carers Centre for the appointment of a new representative. Meantime there is a Development Day relating to the Primary Care Improvement Plan and Falkirk Community Hospital Masterplan scheduled for 28 March which will be attended by Morven and Frank. Several working groups related to both these plans are continuing and it will be appropriate to appoint a carer representative to attend in place of Morven. The Training for Carers courses initiated by Coalition of Carers/Care Scotland will recommence in April. Morven and Frank attended the COCIS meeting in March to discuss National Care Service consultation and the Carers Collaborative in January. The next Collaborative meeting is 12 April.

6. Vote on Carer Forum Feedback

It was agreed this should be renamed Falkirk Carers Voice for consistency as the Clackmannanshire forum has adopted the same.

No formal agreement was made to how often professionals attend the meetings; therefore, we shall continue with each meeting being a joint gathering with both carers and professionals.

AOCB

Carer Representative Training

SD informed everyone about the Carer Representative Training which is training offered to carers who wish to participate in local focus and strategic planning groups within the Health and Social Care Partnership. Publication of this training was given to carers and details of the training will be shared on social media and other platforms.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 7th June at the Carers Centre