

newsletter

Information for Carers throughout Falkirk District and Clackmannanshire

WINTER 2023

Carers Centre is a Carer Positive Established Employer



Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carer Centre is delighted to announce that we were awarded the **Carer Positive Established Award** in August 2023. This is awarded by Carers Scotland to employers to reflect the level of support that is given to their employees who are also unpaid carers. We were previously awarded the **Engaged** level in September 2021, and we hope to achieve the third and final level – **Exemplary** – soon.

Most of the work needed to acquire the award was about ensuring our policies reflect the support that is on offer; as a result, a full carers policy has been adopted by our Board. We would like to give our thanks to our colleague Katie Baker for leading on this project and helping us achieve this award.

Many of the staff at the Carers Centre are – or have been – unpaid carers themselves, and those that provided feedback towards the award commented positively on the support they have received from managers and colleagues. This includes:

- emotional support
- completing an Adult Carer Support Plan
- paid time off
- flexible working arrangements for caring responsibilities
- using the Employment Assistance Programme to have counselling services
- knowing that any of the supports offered by the Carers Centre are open to them (if they or the cared-for person lives in Falkirk or Clackmannanshire).



There are around **270,000 people** in Scotland who juggle caring with holding down a job.



IN THIS ISSUE

- A fond farewell – page 3
- NEW Carers Centre website – testers needed – page 6
- Carers Christmas Lunches – page 8



We're now on Instagram!
 Follow us @fcentralcarers



www.centralcarers.org

Inform

Inform | Support | Involve

Information and training for carers and professionals



Falkirk & Clackmannanshire
YOUNG ADULT CARERS

Self-Growth Fund & Programme

The Young Adult Carer Self-Growth Fund and Programme continues to go from strength to strength.

The first of our events took place over the summer with visits to Thornhill Alpaca Trekking and Muiravonside Country Park. We've also worked with the Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution to deliver sessions on emotional regulation and anxiety. We have lots of different topics and trips planned, including a talk with Money Advice Scotland, as well as an age-appropriate version of a 'sip and paint' session. Keep an eye on our social media pages for more information.

Applications are still open for the Self-Growth Fund. This is a small amount of funding we are using to help our young adult carers grow as individuals. Any applications or questions can be sent to Kim at kimwyllie@centralcarers.co.uk.



Twitter/X: @YAC_FCCC



Facebook: YACentralCarers



IN FOCUS Falkirk Telephone Support Worker

Rhona is part of our Telephone Support Team in Falkirk. We took a few moments out of Rhona's busy day to ask her some questions.

Can you tell us about your role with the Carers Centre?

The best way to explain my role is having a 'two-pronged approach'. Both equally important, I have the responsibility of providing ongoing emotional support to carers, whilst also conducting reviews of completed Adult Carer Support Plans (ACSP). Reviewing ACSPs allows us to check back in with a carer a few months down the line and assess how their situation might have changed. This ensures that we capture the difference the work the Adult Carer Support Team has made, whilst also identifying opportunities for further support to be implemented.

At what point during the support process are you usually involved?

When an ACSP is completed with an Adult Carer Support Worker and the carer's ACSP outcomes are determined, they may be referred to the Telephone Support Team for ongoing emotional support. So quite early in the support process, although even if a carer is not referred for ongoing emotional support, we will still be catching up with them after 3 months to complete a review of their ACSP.

How do you think your role makes a difference?

We are able to provide regular check-ins and support to carers that may be particularly isolated and/or unable to access in-person support within their local community. I also feel that it's beneficial for carers to have an opportunity to talk about challenges within a safe, neutral and non-judgemental space.

What do you do in your spare time?

I am a huge foodie and love to cook so you'll find me usually experimenting with a recipe and trying something new. I also love the outdoors and enjoy walking with friends, often followed by a cake or some other tasty treat!

Tell us an interesting fact about you!

I studied Greek and can read and write using the Greek alphabet.

Care With Confidence

The Care with Confidence team continues to offer a range of sessions covering topics to help carers in their caring role and improve their health and wellbeing. These sessions are available online, in person at the Carers Centre, during the day and in the evening.

While the carer training coordinator post is vacant in Clackmannanshire, carers in Clackmannanshire can access sessions on a Tuesday morning either online or at the Carers Centre in Falkirk.

Carers attending the regular session at the Carers Centre on a Tuesday morning enjoyed something different in the summer in the form of a barge trip organised by Seagull Trust Cruises, a charitable organisation run by volunteers that offers accessible barge trips for people with support needs. The carers and the person they care for had a wonderful day out and, due to popular demand, we hope to be able to repeat this next year.

Care with Confidence programmes are available on the 'What's On' section of our website. If you would like to speak to someone to find out more about Care with Confidence, contact **Donna Mulder** or **Cath Brunton** at the Carers Centre.



A fond farewell to our Centre Manager, Agnes McMillan

It's with mixed emotions that we share with you all that our Centre Manager, Agnes McMillan, has announced that she will be retiring at the end of the year.



Agnes started with the Carers Centre back in November 1999 as an Information and Development worker, working in the Clackmannanshire area. In 2009 she became Project Manager for the Clackmannanshire service and the Carer Information Strategy project, before stepping into the Centre Manager role in October 2012 – and the rest, as they say, is history! Over the years Agnes has guided us to many, many achievements and has helped grow the organisation into what it is today.

Agnes will be missed by everyone here at the Centre and the wider carer community. So please join us in wishing her all the best for a long and healthy retirement!

Keep an eye out in our next newsletter where we'll be sitting down with our new, as yet to be confirmed Centre Manager to find out a little more about them.

Staff Changes

Since our last newsletter we've had a few internal moves and post clarifications.

Jason Thomson has successfully applied to fill one of the vacant adult carer support roles in Clackmannanshire and will take up the post pending further recruitment to the Falkirk adult carer support team. **Sharlene Ramage** has also moved from her carer support worker post to become our new carer participation development worker. In addition, and after a successful pilot period, **Ami McKnight** has now been confirmed as our short breaks development worker.

Two of our Clackmannanshire adult team have left the Carers Centre since our last newsletter in May. We'd like to thank **Alison Tanner** and **Tracy Gibson** for all their hard work over the last few challenging years and wish them both all the best for the future. We'd also like to give our thanks to **Annette Ballantyne** who has been providing cover for Karen Barrett during her maternity leave.

Craig Marsland recently celebrated 15 years at the Carers Centre, whilst **David Smyth** and **Karen Barrett** both celebrated their 5-year anniversaries – and there were further celebrations in July for Karen as she welcomed baby Lewis! Congratulations Karen and Ross.

Support

Inform | Support | Involve

Individual and group support for carers

SHORT BREAKS

CASE STUDY

A Canyoning Experience with



Short Breaks

The Carers Centre can help carers access a short break from their caring routine by providing information on different short break opportunities available for carers and/or those they care for, and through a number of options offered directly by the Carers Centre. These include individual short breaks grants of up to £400 to fund a break of the carer's choosing and access to a range of short breaks through our Respite programme.



Short breaks grants are funded by the Scottish Governments Short Breaks Fund and also by the Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership. Respite breaks are breaks which have been offered by local hospitality and activity providers and are free to carers.



Sandra is caring for her two young children who both have their own health concerns. She accessed a **Respite** break of a canyoning experience for two after seeing a promotion of this on the Carers Centre's social media pages and contacted the short breaks worker to access. Canyoning had been something that Sandra had always wanted to try but would never attempt this herself. She is an avid hillwalker and rock climber but had never tried canyoning and she hoped this would help her get out of her day-to-day routine.

"Now that was an epic way to spend an afternoon, we both needed that so much without realising we did!"

Before the experience, Sandra advised that she felt quite trapped in her routine and was trying to find something to do just for her, but it was difficult to come up with ideas. However, after her break, she advised that this was a fabulous experience and found it to be an adventure. She said that it made her feel like she was a child again and had so much fun. It was a nice treat for Sandra to have something that was only for her to enjoy.

We would like to extend our thanks to Ruaridh and Scotland's Canyons for the donation of this break to the Respite project.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT – Al Masaar

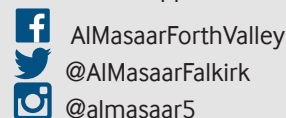
Al Masaar Carer Support team supports ethnic minority and mixed-race carers who are seeking information, assistance, advice, and support. They genuinely listen to the carer, understand their unique circumstances, and subsequently explore their diverse options.

Al Masaar's aim is to provide personalised information and guidance to carers ensuring they receive the best possible support. Their dedicated team comprises fluent English, Urdu, Punjabi, and Hindi speakers and they offer clear communication to suit individual carers' needs, including telephone calls, online sessions and in-person meetings.

If you are unsure whether you qualify for assistance or not, please do not hesitate to contact Al Masaar. You can visit their website and social media pages to find out more about Al Masaar and the support they provide.



Telephone: **07821 356406**
www.almasaar.org
Email: carersupport@almasaar.org





Clackmannanshire Carer Lunches

Early in 2022, we heard from some carers that they were struggling to attend our groups as they did not have alternative care for their cared-for person; we recognised that we needed to look at different ways of providing group support to carers. With support from the Mental Health and Wellbeing fund, we began offering monthly lunches for carers to which they could bring their cared-for person.

The lunches take place in **Tullibody Civic Centre** on the third Monday of the month, and at **Hawkhill Community Centre, Alloa**, on the first Tuesday of the month. As well as having a delicious lunch, carers and their cared-for person can relax and chat. We have also been entertained by singers and the occasional quiz or game of bingo. If you would like to attend, please contact Clacks Team Lead Nicola Weedon: nicolaweedon@centralcarers.co.uk.

International Short Breaks Association Conference

In September, our Short Breaks Development Worker Ami had the opportunity to attend the biennial International Short Breaks Association conference, which took place in Wrocław, Poland. The conference was a fantastic opportunity for Ami to hear more from our inspiring colleagues around the world on how they deliver short breaks.



Scottish Young Carers FESTIVAL 23



The Scottish Young Carers Festival is a firm favourite in the Young Carers team's diary.

The annual two-night camping event, organised by Carers Trust Scotland and funded by the Scottish Government, welcomed over 500 young carers (YCs) from all across Scotland. This year the Young Carers Project supported 18 local YCs to take part in the festival and enjoy a short break. They loved the activities, including the giant slip-n-slide, inflatables and zip line. Some also had the opportunity to speak with Scottish Ministers about what matters to them as YCs.



Four of our young adult carers also took part in the festival as media ambassadors. This was an exciting opportunity to learn how to use camera equipment, plan and edit films and conduct interviews. The themes for the films this year included 'Mental Health and Support', 'Transitions' and 'Financial Problems and Advice'. The films launched at the annual Carers Parliament in November and communicated some very powerful messages – you can watch the film on our social media.



Involve

Inform | Support | Involve

Opportunities for carers to have their voices heard



Carer's Leave Act 2023

More than one in seven people in the UK balance their caring role alongside paid employment.

In recognition of the challenge this can present, a Private Member's Bill was introduced to the UK Parliament. The Carer's Leave Bill has now received Royal Assent and is expected to be implemented from April 2024. The new law will:

- introduce a new and flexible entitlement to one week's unpaid leave per year for employees who are providing or arranging care for a relative or dependant who has a long-term condition,
- allow employees to take the leave flexibly for planned and foreseen caring commitments,
- be available from the first day of employment,
- offer the same employment protections to employees taking this leave that are associated with other forms of family-related leave, meaning they will be protected from dismissal or any detriment because of having taken time off.

It is hoped that this new law will help many carers to remain in employment and be better supported with their caring role. If you would like to make sure your employer is aware of this new right, you can download a guide by scanning the QR code.



Carers Centre website – testers needed



Some of you may remember that last year we asked for some feedback on our website. Well since then, we've been working in the background on a new website which we hope will go live at the beginning of 2024.

We'd like to put together a group of website testers, to make sure that everyone can access our website and find exactly what they're looking for. If you'd like to be a website tester for us, please scan the QR code or visit the link to complete the following form.

For more information, email davidsmyth@centralcarers.co.uk.
<https://form.jotform.com/CentralCarers/website-test>



CCA Membership for 2024-25

Did you know that you can become a member of Central Carers Association (CCA)?

CCA is the local voluntary organisation that aims to support carers in Falkirk and Clackmannanshire and is the managing body of the Carers Centre. Local carers are invited to register as a member of CCA to demonstrate their support for the work of the organisation and strengthen its voice as a body that represents carers. Memberships start or renew in April every year and we would like to ask if you would be interested in becoming a member in April 2024. There is currently an annual subscription fee of £5 for full and associate membership. To indicate your interest in becoming a member please tick the relevant box on the tear off slip and return to us as stated and we will send you out some further information and details at the start of 2024.

For existing members, we will contact you early 2024 to ask you to renew your membership.



Young Carers' Voice trip to the Commissioner's Office

In August, members of our Young Carers' Voice group had a brilliant trip into Edinburgh to meet with the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland. It is the role of the Commissioner and their team to protect the human rights of children and young people in Scotland. This was a really exciting opportunity to learn more about children's rights ahead of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) being incorporated into Scots Law very soon.

The young carers shared pizza with the acting Commissioner, Nick, before participating in an interactive consultation session. Important feedback from our young carers included training for Education staff so they can better identify and support young carers, and the need for better transport links to get to social groups. The group really enjoyed sharing what matters to them and championing young carers' rights.

The group also managed to catch some street performers at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival before catching the train back to Falkirk.



Clackmannanshire Carers Lead Officer

If you are a carer living in or caring for someone in Clackmannanshire and you feel you need further assistance - perhaps to navigate through what can be a complicated process regarding personal care budgets, or to raise any issues in regard to legislation - then please contact the carers lead officer for Clackmannanshire & Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership, **Jennifer Kennedy** at kennedyje@stirling.gov.uk who will be happy to have a chat with you.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S
Commissioner
Scotland



Project Recognition

In July, Kim, our Young Adult Carer Worker, worked alongside the Carers Trust to create a blog post for their website. In the article Kim chats about her role, what challenges young adult carers face, what the project is achieving, and what a year in her role has been like. It was amazing to see the work of the Young Adult Carer Project being recognised on a national level.

You can find the article on the Carers Trust website, on our Young Adult Carer Project social media, or by scanning the QR code.



'5 Days of Christmas' PRIZE DRAW

We recognise that not everyone will be able to make it to one of the Christmas Carers' Lunches. But fear not; there is still a chance to take part in our '5 Days of Christmas' prize draw!

A draw will be held every few days, starting from **Friday 1 December**, with multiple winners each day!

We want to support local businesses, so prizes will include locally sourced hampers, vouchers for a meal out, luxury chocolates, and more!

To enter, please contact us, complete the tear off slip below and send back to us using the freepost address provided, or simply scan the QR code. All entries will be included in an anonymous prize draw. Winners will be notified by telephone.



Carers' Christmas Lunch

We are now in a position to invite carers to register for our annual Carer's Christmas Lunches.

In **Clackmannanshire**, the lunch will be on Tuesday 12 December (12 noon for 12.30 pm start to 3.30 pm) at **Dunmar House Hotel** in Alloa. Lunch will cost £5. Spaces are very limited - to book a space, please get in touch with us on **01324 611510 (option 2)**.

Falkirk carers are invited to join us on Thursday 14 December (12.15 pm for 12.45 pm start) at the **Grange Manor Hotel** in Grangemouth. Lunch will cost £5 and spaces are also very limited - to book a space, please get in touch with us on **01324 611510 (option 1)**.



Name

Address

.....

.....

Contact number

Email address

Please include me in the '5 Days of Christmas' Prize Draw

I agree to receiving future information by email

Please remove me from the mailing list for this newsletter

Please send me more information about becoming a member.

Freepost address:
Central Carers Association, Freepost SC0167, Falkirk, FK1 1BR

Group Support Activities

Falkirk

We are now working in partnership with **Central Wellbeing SCIO**, who will be running support groups for carers in **Falkirk**. Currently, Central Wellbeing have a wide range of groups available, from a men's group to locality groups running in **Grangemouth, Polmont and Larbert**.

You can find out more about the groups that are currently running at the What's On section on our website, or by visiting Central Wellbeing's Facebook page (@CentralWellbeingFalkirk).

Clackmannanshire

For more about **Clackmannanshire groups**, contact **Nicola** on **01324 611510 (opt. 2)**.

- **Clackmannanshire Carer Support Group** – the group meets every Tuesday (except the first Tuesday of the month) at **Hawkhill Community Centre** between 1.30 pm and 3 pm.
- **Hawkhill Monthly Lunch** – This group meets for lunch every first Tuesday of the month at Hawkhill Community Centre, between 12.30 and 2 pm. Carers and the person you care for are welcome.
- **Tullibody Monthly Lunch** – This group meets for lunch every third Monday of the month at **Tullibody Civic Centre**, between 12 noon and 2 pm. Carers and the person you care for are welcome.

Festive Opening Hours

Falkirk & Clackmannanshire Carers Centre will be closed from **Monday 25 December 2023 to Tuesday 2 January 2024**, opening again on **Wednesday 3 January 2024**.

Prefer Paperless?

To keep the costs associated with our newsletter down, and to get more up-to-date information from our e-bulletins, we would encourage anyone who is able to receive this newsletter online to get in touch and let us know your email address! Get in touch with us today, or scan the QR to sign-up to our e-mailing list.



1a Bank Street, Falkirk FK1 1NB
 Tel: 01324 611510
 Email: centre@centralcarers.co.uk
www.centralcarers.org

Falkirk & Clackmannanshire Carers Centre is managed by a board of trustees elected from the membership of Central Carers Association, a voluntary organisation comprising carers and those with an interest in carers' issues.

The organisation is a Company Limited by Guarantee (Company No SC184443) and a Registered Scottish Charity (No SC023658)

Funded by

