

## **Adult Carers Voice Meeting**

**Held on 25 March 2024**

**at the Falkirk Carers Centre**

Chaired by Sharlene Ramage, Carers Centre Participation and Engagement Worker  
Notes by Katie Baker, FVRH Carer Support Worker

### Attendees

There were 13 carers with a variety of caring situations.

Magali Redding Scottish Families Affected by Drugs and Alcohol (also a carer)  
April Anne Ferguson\_Central Wellbeing (also a carer)  
Sarah Sabir, Al Masaar (present as a translator)  
Carol Ann Harrower IJB Carer Representative.

### Sharing of Information

Following on from requests for more information about different services, Sharlene had prepared a board with a variety of information about services from the Carers Centre and other organisations, including Dementia supports, drug and alcohol support services, hoarding support, parent carer support, life limiting illness support and self-care activities.

### Scottish Families Affected by Drugs and Alcohol

Magali spoke about the services SFAD provides which includes one to one and group support, mindfulness, and creative sessions. Magali said that many family members and friends of people with alcohol or drug addiction often don't see themselves as carers.

An 8-week Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) is starting on 22 April, 6.30 – 8.30. This explores patterns of use, triggers, empathy, how to raise issues of need for help, boundaries, improving relationships and the cycle of change.

### Central Wellbeing

April Anne informed people of the services they offered which include one to one support, peer support groups, a supper club. Groups include those for carers and former carers, for young Muslim women and sessions for craft and board games.

April Anne also said that carers were to contact her if they felt there was a need for a group that currently wasn't being offered in the Falkirk Area.

Most of these activities take place at their base on Manse St and are free.

### Al Masaar

Sarah Sabir spoke of the support they offer in general to people of Black and Ethnic Minority Groups and their role in supporting carers from these communities.

## Dementia Friendly Community Denny

This is a group for people with lived experience and professionals. Next meeting is 2 April. Sharlene will attend this meeting on the 2 April to find out more information.

## Other

Mention was made of upcoming CWC sessions, REACH (help with aids and mobility), Compassionate Communities (Strathcarron making links between people), Live your life team (Strathcarron support service for people with a life limiting illness), MECS, Town Break (for people with dementia and their carers), Falkirk District Association for Mental Health (FDAMH), Respite breaks (free opportunities for carers); and Growing Up Project (6 evening sessions for parents of children with autism).

## Points Made by Carers

- Thornton Gardens – this offers respite for young adults. During and immediately after COVID this was opened up for respite for older people but has now reverted to offering respite just for young adults. Very positive feedback about this service overall, however there was discussion around paid carers wearing work uniform when in the community with the cared for person.
- Dementia Awareness – the need for ongoing understanding of dementia needs, including when people are in care homes. The monthly Carers Centre's Care with Confidence monthly sessions for people caring for people with dementia was recommended by a carer and also looking at Teepa Snow on-line.
- Carers and Employment – the difficulties of managing paid employment and caring and other financial issues were raised by a variety of carers. The lack of services to support working carers was mentioned as was the issues of Carers Allowance only being paid till retirement age was raised.
- Self-Care- The importance of trying to capture a little time for you as a carer. Carers mentioned playing games on their phone whilst having a coffee, yoga, volunteering at a foodbank, chatting with friends, going for a walk, and taking time to relax if the cared for person attends respite or school.

## **Some of the Carers' Situations**

Carers of school age children with ASN for whom continuing in paid employment was a struggle with the lack of services outside the school day in term time was raised.

Carers of a brother who had early onset dementia who was positive about the Football Reminiscence run by Alzheimer Scotland.

The carer of an adult son with high care needs spoke of the difficulty finding somewhere for him to live when she was no longer able to care for him and the slow time this was taking.

Several carers spoke of caring for parents / parents in law as well as children.

Another spoke of the isolation she felt in caring for a daughter with cerebral palsy.

A wife spoke of the difficulty of getting a diagnosis of early onset for her husband which she had been pushing for but felt she wasn't listened to by professionals because of her husband's age.

Another carer said of her situation that “the buck stops here” and other carers identified with this.

**Feedback by Carol Ann Harrower, Carers Rep on the Joint Integrated Board (IJB) of the Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership.**

Carol Ann reported back from the last Board meeting including how she had been able to discuss points raised by carers at the last Voices meeting.

- The financial situation remains very tight and more savings need to be made.
- Mention was made of the need for earlier intervention and for Self-Directed Support procedures to be simplified. Carol Ann able to give feedback from carers on both issues. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining work force were mentioned.
- Carol Ann tried to raise issues re CAMHS but was told that this did not come under IJB.
- Mention was made about short breaks and that they are striving to deliver respite to be block booked in advance. Alternative types of short breaks also being explored.
- There was discussion on palliative and end of life care.
- The chief social work officer had produced a paper on transitioning between children’s and adult services. Carol Ann was able to feedback carers views on whether the services needed to be separated, as raised at the last Voices meeting.

Katie Baker 26 March 2024