

Falkirk Carers' Voice



Monthly on Mondays
10.00 AM – 12.00 PM



Falkirk Carers Centre
or via Zoom



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Adult Carers' Voice Meeting

Held on Monday, 28 July 2025

at The Carers Centre Falkirk

Chaired by Sharlene Ramage, Carers Centre Participation Development Worker.

Online option facilitated by Nora Deme (Digital Communications Worker).

Notes by Yvonne Muirhead (Adult Carer Support Worker).

Attendees

There were 21 people in attendance, Carers with a variety of caring situations, Carer Representatives, staff and staff who are also unpaid Carers.

Nora Deme- Digital Communications Worker.

Yvonne Muirhead- Adult Carer Support Worker.

Alf Kelly – Local Councillor.

Anne Hannah- Local Councillor.

Rachael Scott- SFAD (Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs).

Amanda Kerr- Office of the Public Guardian

Lyn McKay- CAB

IJB Update from Sharon and Elaine

Sharon attended June's IJB. Please read her updates here: <https://centralcarers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/IJB-Notes-June-2025.pdf>

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Welcoming Rachael from Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs (SFAD)

SFAD is a national charity that supports **anyone** affected by someone else's alcohol/drug use in Scotland.

Rachael opened the discussion with a question to the room "what do you think it feels like for Carer's who are supporting someone with addiction?" Carers commented that they may feel "worried, be aware that the cared for person is unpredictable, emotional, have financial worries, ignored by professionals, isolated, alone, judged and stigmatised".

Rachael emphasised that nobody "wakes up and decides to be an addict", she emphasised the importance of people recognising that addiction is an illness and people need support and treatment to get well. Rachael spoke about the many supports that SFAD offer, such as 1-1 support, group support, bereavement support, free craft/relaxation/axe throwing events. Anyone who cares for someone can access these supports, you do not have to be a relative of the cared for person, the cared for person can also be in recovery. You can self-refer to all these supports or ask a professional to refer you too, there is also a helpline. Supports are available in Falkirk/Stirling and Clackmannanshire, Carers can attend any/all sessions, however bereavement support can only be accessed to Carers who have been bereaved.

Rachael said SFAD are currently looking at providing more activities that will appeal to male Carers, such as walking football and axe throwing. Here you can find the local support groups: <https://www.sfad.org.uk/support-services/local-support-services/forth-valley-family-support-service>

Lyn (from citizens advice) asked what is considered as misuse, Rachael said if the cared for person's behaviours are negatively impacting the Carer, the Carer can access SFAD's supports.

Rachael spoke about the resilience that the Carers she meets have and how SFAD help Carers to recognise their own strength and build on existing skills that they have, SFAD also inform Carers of their rights. For more information, please view Rachael's slides here:

<https://centralcarers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/SFAD-by-Rachael-Scott.pptx>

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Welcoming Amanda from the Office of the Public Guardian

Amanda explained her role and the responsibilities of her office; she also spoke about Power of Attorney (POA) and Guardianship and the differences between them. There is a more detailed explanation of these within Amanda's slides.

During this discussion some Carers asked questions about finances, Amanda explained that this was not the role of her office. Lynn from citizens advice was in attendance and explained that she may be able to advise Carers of certain finance questions. If anyone has questions about this topic please reach out to the Carers Centre and we can pop over a referral to Lynn who can call you.

Carers asked about POA and if multiple people can hold this, Amanda explained that sometimes a few people hold POA, this is useful as if only one person holds the POA and they are in an accident etc, there is no substitute.

Amanda also explained that anyone over the age of 16, with capacity, can apply for POA, you cannot be granted POA if you are bankrupt.

POA only begins once the person loses capacity, you cannot make decisions on behalf of the person unless they have been deemed to lack capacity. POA is a living document, changes to address etc should be emailed to the office for update.

Amanda explained that many people think that as they are married they do not need POA or a will, Amanda advised that being married does not automatically mean you will receive your partners assets or makes decisions on their behalf, Amanda explained that the best way to avoid additional work and cost is to have POA and a will in place. Without POA nobody has a legal right to make decisions about anyone or their assets.

Amanda explained that POA should be given to someone or to people that you trust, that you know will have your best interests at heart, a Carer asked if you can appoint a solicitor to hold POA, Amanda stated that you can choose anyone you trust.

Lynn asked about copies of POA, the office will provide you with two copies, additional copies are charged for, and photocopies won't be accepted.

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A Carer asked what would happen if you had two people with POA who had differing views, Amanda advised that this is why it is important to make sure you choose POA carefully as everyone should be acting in your best interests, considering what you would want. Disputes can be taken to the sheriff's office.

You can find Amanda's slides here: <https://centralcarers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/PoA-and-Guardianship-by-Amanda-Kerr.ppt>

Alf and Anne

Carers wanted to see local councillors at the Voice and Alf and Anne came to listen to your views. Hopefully, we will welcome them both back soon ●

Some of the Carers' Situations/Views

- Comments from Carers who attend SFAD's groups, SFAD are good at communicating, there is a WhatsApp peer support group which means you have people to listen to you when you need them.
- SFAD groups make you feel like you are not alone.
- A Carer asked Rachael what can you do if a neighbour has no family and you think they are misusing drugs/alcohol, Rachael said that although SFAD are there for Carers, they will always signpost people to drug service supports.
- Carers felt that more info needs to be provided about services like SFAD as many people in the room were not aware that this support existed.
- A Carer asked if funding cuts would affect these services, Rachael said she was unsure.
- A Carer stated that services are meant to be person centred, however he feels that they are driven by finances.
- A Carer stated that they were at crisis point before support was provided, this Carer had been asking for support and did not receive this until they were admitted to hospital.
- A Carer said that SFAD provides a lifeline, others in the room agreed.

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- A Carer said at times they had felt suicidal, SFAD supported them through this.
- A Carer whose family member has addiction problems said that they often feel isolated and alone, however SFAD groups make you feel like you are not alone, you have someone to laugh with, you can forget your problems when you are at the groups.
- A Carer spoke about the troubles he has as his adult children hold POA and he is not being involved in decisions.
- A Carer asked if a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) could be added to someone's POA paperwork, Amanda advised that you could place your wishes for DNR with this.
- A Carer discussed her personal experiences of POA and explained that she was grateful that she had did this before her husband lost capacity, she also highlighted that her bank asked for proof of lack of capacity and she had to pay her GP for a letter.
- A Carer asked if you could appoint someone as POA if they do not live in Scotland, Amanda stated that you can.
- A Carer asked about charges for registering the POA, Amanda advised this is £96 however some benefits make POA registration fee waived.
- A Carer asked about guidance to completing POA, Amanda suggested seeking a solicitor's support for this and looking around solicitors for the best deal.
- A Carer asked how a hospital would know about POA, Amanda explained that there is a register that certain professionals can ask for access to.
- A Carer advised having POA in place, she said herself and sister shared this role for their mother and it simplified things when she passed.
- A parent Carer advised that there is a very long wait to gain Guardianship, this is not a straightforward process, and she feels that she was given poor advice regarding the financial side of this.
- A Carer commented that someone abroad was struggling to access finances when they have POA, Amanda advised calling the office of the Public Guardian.

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Final Thoughts

Mandy our carer representative for the Authentic Voice Group, Alcohol and Drugs Partnership helped with the wording of the questionnaire attached, if you are a carer for someone who uses drugs or alcohol in a problematic way please complete this questionnaire [Project: Supporting Someone: Your Experience with Substa... | Participate+](#) if you have any problems with the link please let me know.

The next Voice is planned for August the 25th, I hope to see you there! Many thanks,
Sharlene.

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