

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 25th August 2025

at The Carers Centre Falkirk

Chaired by Sharlene Ramage, Carers Centre Participation Development Worker.

Online option facilitated by Carly Crooks.

Notes by Carly Crooks (Adult Carer Support Worker) and Sharlene Ramage.

Attendees

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

Carly Crooks- Adult Carer Support Worker.

Chris Gunn-Falkirk Football Foundation.

Lisa Wilson- NHS Falls Lead

IJB Vote for Sharon

Carers who attended the Voice were provided with **yes** or **no** squares to see if they were happy for Sharon to become our new IJB Carer Representative. Online attendees received an email to seek their views. Carers voted unanimously **Yes!** Sharon is now our main IJB Carer representative!

I am sure everyone who knows Sharon recognises how passionate and dedicated Sharon is to supporting Falkirk's Carers! I would like to thank Sharon for all her support whilst we try to recruit our new depute!

Carer Representatives have been asked to pop in a note of interest, we hope to vote in our new depute during September's Voice.

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You said, we did!

- Some Carers commented on the evaluation (the wee sheet I pop out at the end of each Voice) that they wanted advance notice of future Voice dates/speakers.
- We have now added this information to your invite. Thank you for letting us know how to improve things for you.
- We had our first session with Yvonne (Dementia and Delirium Lead) and Emma (Community Mental Health Team) about Dementia supports and services, the session went well, and Yvonne and Emma left the session with lots of ideas about improvements.
- Carers were informed that their views and ideas would be acted upon. Yvonne and Emma return to the Centre on Friday, the 12th of September 10- 12 noon, please join us if you can!

Update from Mandy AVG (Authentic Voice Carer Representative)

- One year anniversary of the AVG, the group has been nominated for a COSLA award (this is recognition of the work that has occurred between AVG staff/Carers and Service Users.)
- Public Health Scotland have planned to come to a future AVG to seek the attendees' views.
- The AVG are looking to recruit new members, Mandy emphasised the importance of new members having support from staff, for preparing and debriefing.
- Forth Valley NHS will begin Alcohol death-related research, the AVG will be involved with this.
- The AVG lead asked the group which professionals they would like to invite to the AVG, Mandy suggested CADS (Community Alcohol and Drugs Services). Mandy would like to know more about the service, as some Carers and their loved ones have had poor experiences of this service.
- At the AVG, hospital discharge was discussed, the group recognised that there needs to be better pathways to support and reduced stigma for alcohol and drug-related addictions. Mandy is passionate about Carers becoming involved in this process and recognises the need for better signposting to support services.

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Welcoming Lisa Wilson from the NHS.

We are all at risk of falls, regardless of our age, however a significant fall can have serious consequences on our lives, making us fearful of going out and becoming socially isolated, causing us to suffer from anxiety and impacting our abilities to be independent.

Lisa said that strength and balance are key to preventing falls. Prevention is key as there can be a revolving circle of fall, hospital admissions, less mobility and then repeating this. There is a diagram of this included in Lisa's slides.

Lisa spoke about hospital admissions and people only managing 50 steps per day. Lisa said this is not enough and she is working to try and improve patient's support to ensure they are encouraged, when safe to do so, to be mobile.

Lisa spoke about the stigma attached to falls, people often hide when they fall as they are scared that they may be "admitted to a care home", Lisa reassured people that most people who have falls do not have to be admitted to a care home.

Sharlene asked if Lisa provides support/advice to people who are using drugs/alcohol in a problematic way, Lisa has reached out to cyranians and said she is more than happy to work with organisations who are trying to support people with problematic drug/alcohol use.

Lisa spoke about the need for earlier education, she is trying to reach out to people in their 50's to make sure they are taking measures to minimise the risks of falls later in life, such as looking after your bone health, taking part in balance and strength exercises and maintaining good mobility.

Lisa asked Carers their views about the things that increase falls, Carers recognised, sight loss, lack of hydration, low blood pressure, being under the influence of drugs and alcohol and medication can all increase your chances of falling. Lisa added that the environment/lighting/rugs/etc, poor footcare, infection and low muscle density/strength can all increase your risk of falls. Lisa emphasised that being on 4 or more medications significantly increase your risk of falls.

If you fall and you don't know how you got on the floor it is very important to seek assistance from your GP.

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Lisa spoke about urinary tract infections (UTI's), and the importance of ensuring vulnerable people are seen quickly by a GP, (UTI's) massively increase your chances of falling.

Lisa suggested Carers access NHS Inform [Scottish health information you can trust | NHS inform](#), where you can find information about falls and strength and balance exercises.

Lisa said that a good site to visit regarding bone health is the [Royal Osteoporosis Society - Better Bone Health for Everybody](#) and another good site is Living Well Falkirk [Health and wellbeing: Living Well Falkirk - Falkirk Council](#) where you can type in problems you are having at home "ie bathroom" you will be asked a series of questions, they may recommend something, issue equipment or suggest you require further assistance and provide you with contact details.

Lisa spoke about the importance of trying to exercise, she knows that this can be very difficult for people who are in Caring roles.

Lisa spoke about dementia and people's loss of 3D vision, this can increase the risks of falls. Lighting can help, many falls happen in the middle of the night, therefore sensor lights/LED ones can be good sources of lighting.

Lisa spoke about the importance of moving trip hazards, such as bathmats when not in use, coffee tables put away and rugs removed if they are a trip hazard.

Lisa spoke about the MECS service (Mobile emergency care service), and how they can provide equipment/alarm systems to keep you and the person you care for safe, there may be a charge for these services.

Lisa spoke about the importance of having a falls plan in place, thinking about things like "what will I do if I fall" "can I get myself up" "do you have an Alexa in place that can call for help, or a MECS alarm?".

You can find Lisa's slides here: <https://centralcarers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Lisa-Wilson-Fall-Prevention.pptx>

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Welcoming Chris Gunn from Falkirk Football Foundation.

Chris spoke about the various activities/groups/training and support that Falkirk Football Foundation provide. Chris mentioned that many people assume that Falkirk Football Foundation only provide Football opportunities, when they host a variety of different opportunities such as education experiences for children age 16-24, where they can gain SVQ qualifications, these education courses are available to children who have additional support needs/disabilities or children who have not managed well in school settings.

Chris also said that they offer, walking football, volunteering opportunities, cafes for people who are visually impaired and people who have a dementia diagnosis, women's football and much more.

Chris spoke about the opportunities that they provide and how many of these are due to funding from places like the big lottery fund!

The foundation support people from the age of 1-101.

Falkirk Football Foundation also provide the Carers Centre with free football tickets, which you can apply for via the Carers Centre respite application [Respite - Expression of Interest](#).

You can find out more information about groups and activities on this [Home Page - Falkirk Foundation](#) please email info@falkirkfoundation.org to register for these activities.

Carers highlighted that there were not enough options for younger adults, especially those in recovery, Chris said that if there is a need for services, they try their best to provide opportunities, they work in partnership with SAMH. Carers felt that many of the employability opportunities and SAMH groups would really benefit people in recovery.

You can find Chris' slides here: <https://centralcarers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Chris-Gunn-Falkirk-Football-Foundation.pptx>

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Some of the Carers' Situations/Views

A Carer stated that chair aerobics have been very helpful, and asked, can they not do this in hospital? Lisa replied that she is currently working with Care homes to try and make improvements.

A Carer informed the room that the person she cares for recently fell, she was too embarrassed to say that they had fallen, Lisa said that this is common.

A Carer felt that there needs to be more education opportunities for young people regarding falls.

A Carer spoke about the pendant that he wears to keep him safe if he has a fall, he worries about people who live alone and may not be able to pay for the MECS service.

A Carer spoke about his concerns about people losing their driving licence when they are older and how this may add to social isolation.

A Carer shared their experiences of falling and how upsetting and worrying this was for them.

A Carer highlighted that it is really good that most GP surgeries now have their own physiotherapist.

A Carer raised their frustrations that hospital staff speak to the person he cares for who has a dementia diagnosis, which frustrates the Carer and the cared-for person.

A Carer highlighted that a person she cares for was at high risk of falls, she had a calcium infusion, as a preventative measure, this Carer feels there should be more advertisement around this preventative support.

Carers in the room had suggestions about free exercise opportunities, such as YouTube, Joe Wicks, food cans as weights and RVS (Royal Voluntary Service) who have free exercise classes.

Many Carers in the room stated that they don't have time to look after themselves, they are "juggling too many things" to partake in exercise.

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Some Carers spoke about sleep deprivation, due to their Caring role, this results in limited “spare energy for exercise”.

A Carer said that their whole lifestyle has had to change due to the demands of their caring role.

A Carer spoke about dementia resources that have helped them, a magi plug, that stops water overflowing and indicates if hot or cold water is in the sink and a large poncho towel for privacy when showering.

A few Carers spoke about volunteering opportunities and how they would be willing to help out in hospital and care homes, raising awareness of falls and helping people to get up and be mobile, one Carer commented that as she was retired, she would happily be involved if she had training.

A Carer stated that £20 a month for MECS and paying extra for additional alarms is very expensive for a Carer who is of pension age.

A Carer said that he had to pay for a wetroom for his home as it was privately owned.

A Carer spoke about his rising costs of caring for 3 people, he is a minimum of £50 per week for incontinence products on top of MECS and “paying top up’s” for paid carer support, this Carer is of pension age.

Some Carers raised their concerns that local community centres were closing down.

A Carer suggested that Lisa could reach out to local community centres to raise awareness and prevent falls.

A Carer asked if there was any training courses/tips for Carers to support them to properly lift their cared-for person should they fall. Sharlene will speak to Carers Centre staff about this.

A Carer asked if there was football classes for people from the deaf community. Chris suggested that walking football may meet people’s needs.

A Carer spoke about their experiences of attending the blind club, she said the atmosphere is amazing and the club is fabulous.

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Carers in the room highlighted that there was a lack of groups/clubs and activities for young people from the age range 24-30, especially for people in the recovery community.

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.

Future Voice Dates

The next Voice is planned for September 22nd, where we shall discuss the New Carers Strategy with David Miller from the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and Lana Ray from the HSCP will come along to tell us more about home care and care at home! I hope to see you there! Many thanks, Sharlene.

During Octobers Voice 27th we hope to be joined by Gemma Ritchie from the Adult Support and Protection Team (HSCP) and Caesar and Howie will talk a little more about Power of Attorney.

During November's Voice 24th we will welcome MECS staff to tell us all about their services and Kerry from Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs will tell us about My Family My Rights (this session is relevant to all Carers).

*Please note topics and guest speakers are subject to change. We shall confirm these details closer to the time via email.

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