

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 22nd September 2025

at The Carers Centre Falkirk

Chaired by Sharlene Ramage, Carers Centre Participation Development Worker.
Online option facilitated by Nora Deme (Digital Support Worker).
Notes by Nora Deme and Sharlene Ramage.

Attendees

There were 30 people in attendance, Carers with a variety of caring situations, Carer Representatives, staff and staff who are also unpaid Carers.

Nora Deme – Digital Support Worker.

Lana Ray – Central Locality Team Manager.

David Miller- HSCP (Health and Social Care Partnership).

Jessie Ann Malcolm- NHS.

Lyn McKay – Citizens Advice Bureau.

Alf Kelly- Older Persons Champion/Local Councillor.

Dayna Faulds- Training co-ordinator at the Carers Centre.

IJB Vote for Mandy

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

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I am sure everyone who knows Mandy recognises how passionate and dedicated she is to supporting Falkirk's Carers! I would like to thank Mandy for all her time and dedication!

You said, we did!

- We had our second session with Yvonne (Dementia and Delirium Lead) and Emma (Community Mental Health Team) about Delirium and Medication, the session went well, Yvonne brought along Carer and Cared for person cards (Alzheimer's Scotland ones) and Yvonne and Emma left the session with lots of ideas about improvements.
- Yvonne and Emma hope to return in the near future, keep an eye out for an invite.

Welcoming David from the HSCP .

David came today to chat with Carers about Falkirk Carers Strategy, he thanked everyone for their attendance. David emphasised the importance of the new strategy being informed by Carers views and experiences. You can find out more about David's questions within the slide show attached.

David raised thanks to our wonderful Carer Representatives and all the fantastic Carers who take time to come along to the Carers Voice Group and other consultation events, he emphasised that changes have been happening (e.g. Dementia sessions, Parliament Visits, Carer Representatives out at community groups), regular updates and lots more two-way conversations between staff and Carers.

David also spoke about the fantastic work of the Young Carer and Young Adult Carer Team; with festivals and the amazing work they do in schools and colleges.

David asked Carers their views on the following topics:

Identifying carers:

Carers suggested: -

- Flyers out to community places e.g. libraries where the young people, GP surgeries.

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- Centre staff going to schools. Sharlene explained that the young carer and young adult carer teams go out to schools and colleges, and many schools have carers champions. A Carer suggested that the staff could also raise awareness of Carers impacted by their loved one's drugs/alcohol misuse.
- A Carer highlighted that some people don't identify as Carers because of the concept/stigma. This Carer feels that more emphasis/advertisement about what a Carer is, is needed.
- A Carer stated that Stigma must be challenged, as people are not reaching out for support that are caring for a loved one/friend who is misusing drugs/alcohol.
- Carer's spoke about other Carers informing them that they too are an Unpaid Carer.
- A Carer said that her GP put her on their system as a Carer, however, did not inform her of the Carers Centre's supports. This Carer feels strongly that GP's need to inform people about the Carers Centre.
- Carers spoke about the need to publicise Carer Supports better.
- Carers felt that more diverse advertisements around what a Carer is, covering various age groups, photos, that show younger people.
- A Carer spoke about people misunderstanding what our Carers Centre is. Stating "some folk think Carers are sitting here taking the phone to go out and care for someone".
- Carers spoke about hard-to-reach Carers and how more work needs to be done to try and help them to access supports, ie older people who don't leave their home.
- Carers spoke about social work and SDS telling them about the Carers Centre supports.

Carers spoke about lack of support for older people; Sharlene spoke about the bill that has been raised at parliament regarding an older person's commissioner.

- A Carer feels that "Social care is pulling funding", this Carer feels that they are doing "more care now than when the children were children". This Carer stated that "3 different appointments for 3 different people on the same day, how can I factor in self-care".
- A Carer commented that no one in the hospital talked about the Carers centre's supports when their loved one was in the hospital.

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- A Carer stated that “people think you get everything given to you when you’re an unpaid Carer and this isn’t the case”.
- A Carer online suggested to post into local Facebook groups that have a very strong community.

Support, inform, and empower... - what format should it take?

David spoke about the current Carers Strategy and said that a few issues have impacted the delivery of this.

David asked Carers if they felt there needs to be better signposting to agencies that deliver support/information?

If Carers would like information around the condition/ training?

He asked Carers what would they like more of, what format should it be?

What would help you in your caring role?

- A Carer commented “it’s difficult because you don’t know what you don’t know”.
- A Carer spoke about television advertising and said this is a good way to raise Carer Awareness.
- A Carer suggested advertisements on the local radio.
- A Carer spoke about volunteer’s distributing leaflets and said that he would be keen to do this.

David asked if there was any information that was difficult to get hold of?

- A Carer said that their needs to be more information about finances for adult children who are moving into residential complexes in an easy-to-read format.
- Lynn at CAB spoke about a leaflet that the social work team have.

Enable unpaid carers to have a life outside of caring.

David asked Carers what would help them to have a live outside of Caring.

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- Rachel from SFAD added: More opportunities to go with the cared-for person in the community.
- A Carer added that their employer has been supportive of their Caring role, and this enables them to have a life outside of caring.
- A Carer added that in minimum wage jobs there is less support, less rights and less money, this Carer was not supported by their employer, and they had to give up work.
- Lynn at CAB added that under Carers' rights Carers can request changes to their working role, however it's up to the employer to agree to it. Lynn also spoke about how it can take a year to receive benefits, and in the meantime, jobcentres require you to look for a job, Lynn feels that more employer training is needed.

Recognise –

- A Carer stated that “NHS staff are not Carer aware or condition aware”, this Carer feels that more work is needed surrounding this.
- A Carer said that the Getting to know me document has been suggested, however they feel that things need to be concise and simple as no one has time to read long documents.
- A Carer suggested that stickers could be used on case notes so that staff could easily identify if someone has a certain condition ie blue sticker = dementia.
- Jessie Anne spoke about Care Opinion and the importance of Carers putting positive and negative experiences on here.
- A Carer spoke about her struggles with her caring role and how it took months before any NHS staff asked how she was, this Carer was not signposted to any supports.

David said that Carers can email him if they have anything that they would like to add, David's email can be found on his slides which are attached below.

You can view David's slides here: <https://centralcarers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/David-Miller-FHSCP-Carers-Voice-22.09.25.pptx>

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Welcoming Lana Central Team Manager.

Lana introduced herself and explained to Carers her role within the partnership, Lana's team overview care packages after social work have provided an assessment.

Lana was keen to hear from Carers about their experiences and of the supports that they need, she was also keen to discover how her team can get better at sharing information with Carers.

Lana asked Carers if they felt a "drop-in service", regarding specific areas of Care provision would be helpful for everyone, many Carers said that anything that helps them to develop knowledge about services is useful.

Lana mentioned that their services support a variety of different people of varying ages and with different care needs, her team try to ensure people who want to stay at home can do so, for as long as possible, with the supports that they need to do this. Lana's team also support medication administration at home, there are various levels to this support, certain situations/medications require specialist staff to administer certain medications, Lana's team can help with the coordination of this.

A Carer asked Lana if there are services to support people with Mental Health needs and Lana said that there is, many Carers in the room did not know about this provision. Lana said that although this is not her area, she would send an email contact to Sharlene.

Lana spoke about the teamwork between NHS and the Carers Centre's hospital team, who jointly attend daily meeting regarding inpatients, these meetings help people to access the Carers Centre supports as early as possible. A Carer asked if that's across the board and Lana said that this is a pilot that is occurring in Falkirk.

A Carer asked about people who were identified as needing a high level of care. Lana spoke about the social work team, carrying out an assessment of the cared for person's needs (Lana's team does not carry out the assessment, social work team does this).

Lana mentioned that previously people were assessed in clinical environments, however this is not always the best place to assess someone's needs, during the pilot people have been

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assessed at home and this is preventing people going into care homes. Risks are explored to ensure the person is safe at home.

Lana spoke about futures redesigns of services and how she hoped to involve Carers in this process.

Some of the Carers' Situations/Views

When David was discussing the hospital discharge work a Carer asked if NHS mental health services were included, David said that they should be.

Jessie Anne spoke about young people leaving prison without support, she feels more needs to be done to support these young people.

A Carer online suggested reaching out to SDS forth valley, she said they are a small team but very knowledgeable about care packages.

A Carer spoke about their child receiving a neurodiverse diagnosis and the medical professionals not telling them about the supports provided by the Carers Centre.

A Carer spoke about addiction being a hidden illness and Carers not recognising that they are in a caring role.

A Carer spoke about there being a lack of focus on support for older Carers.

A Carer shared their concerns that the number of people diagnosed with dementia is increasing and will continue to increase.

A few Carers raised concerns that their loved ones with mental health/addiction needs were being discharged from the hospital without the Carers knowledge.

Carers talked about the word Carer and if this terminology acts as a barrier to people accessing support.

A Carer spoke about feeling "pressurised" into working when they had to stop working to care, this Carer did not want to stop working.

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A Carer said to other Carers in the room “be aware you don’t get Carer Support Payment when you turn pension age”. (Some Carers in the room were shocked by this).

A few Carers spoke about finances when their adult child moves to residential care, these Carers feel that there are many unknowns, this is a complicated process and also a very stressful time for Carers.

A Carer shared that they found AI (artificial intelligence) a useful tool to help them find out more about things such as the NHS. (Please be mindful AI can give inaccurate information too).

A Carer said that they feel having Carer Representatives sitting in meetings with professionals “is a great thing” as the Carer Reps can take people’s views to the professionals.

A Carer Rep spoke about their time sitting in the groups and how it has “built their confidence, although sticking to the agenda can be hard”.

A Carer Rep mentioned the Older Person’s Forum and how there are tables available for professionals at an upcoming event.

A Carer said we need to work better with NHS to raise Carer Awareness.

A Carer spoke about the Alzheimer’s Scotland Carers Card that they received at Yvonne and Emma’s dementia session, they said the card was very useful.

A Carer spoke about the recent review of her son’s support, she worries his hours may be cut and as a result she will need to provide more care.

A Carer shared their frustrations that the care provider will change for her loved one in a local care facility, this Carer is concerned that her loved one’s needs will not be met.

A Carer spoke about external care providers and how they worry that the standard of care is not as high as the standard provided by Falkirk Council staff.

A few Carers shared their frustrations; they felt that they were not consulted about upcoming changes to the care provided at the facility that supports their loved ones.

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A Carer commented that the care provider called them to say they could not make it out to visit the cared for person, they also asked the Carer to attend in their absence.

A Carer spoke about females not wanting to receive personal care from male staff members.

A Carer said that they did not know about the Carers Voice group, this Carer also did not know about the Carers Centre and have been in a caring role for over 20 years.

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

During October's 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. I hope to see you there! Many thanks, Sharlene.

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).

There will be no Voice meeting in December.

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