

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 27th October 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 Dana Horsburgh (Carer Representative) and Sharlene Ramage.

Attendees

There were 29 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.

Gemma Ritchie – Adult Support and Protection Lead Officer HSCP (Health and Social Care Partnership).

Jessie Ann Malcolm- NHS.

Lyn McKay – Citizens Advice Bureau.

Alf Kelly- Older Persons Champion/Local Councillor.

Jack Ryan – CEO Central Advocacy

Karen Moffat- Plus Forth Valley

Campbell MacPherson and Sally Hendry- Carers Trust.

Josh Collen and Sarah Patrick- Caeser and Howie

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You said, we did!

- We have another date planned with Yvonne (Dementia and Delirium Lead) and Emma (Community Mental Health Team), Thursday the 27th of November, 10-12 noon, an invite should have reached you, if not please contact Sharlene.
- Regarding State Pension and Carer Support payment, Lyn from CAB and myself will attend Parliament in November, we also have Age Scotland coming to speak with us on the 10th of November from 10-12 noon, please join us!

IJB Update from Sharon and Mandy.

- Gail Woodcock (Chief Officer) thanked Elaine for her time being IJB Carer Representative and welcomed Sharon as our new IJB Carer Representative!
- An update was provided regarding shifting the balance of care (people in hospital going home for assessment, when they can do this safely) people were saying that this is a good way forward, however, concerns were raised that more GP's and Social Work staff are needed to support this.
- Sharon was able to thank the partnership for consulting with Carers, share Carers positive feedback about Dollar Park Dementia Service (particularly the paperwork) and thank Falkirk Council for acknowledging the vital role of Young Carers.
- Marie Keirs (Chief Finance Officer) spoke about the demand for care home places and costs linked to this, wage rises and demands for new medications, we may need additional budget cuts in the future.
- Fiona Collie (Councillor) asked what the risks will be if we don't save money, it was stated that the risks are real, reserves will be used, and council tax may be increased.
- Sharon asked if Carers would be consulted about budget changes and Marie reassured Sharon that they would.
- There will be a Forth Valley Wide Mental Health Plan, covering all ages.

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- The Mental Welfare Commission visited HMP Glenochil, there was positive feedback from prisoners regarding the mental health and multidisciplinary approaches that are in place.
- Carer Representative Day was highlighted and the importance of the contributions from our amazing Carer Reps.
- Anne Hannah (councillor) agreed that the Carer Rep programme was a success, however she stated that we need to get better at public consultation and providing the public with information to make informed decisions.

You can find more details here: <https://centralcarers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/IJB-Meeting-Summary-September-2025.pdf>

John's Update Dementia Strategy

- John was able to tell Alzheimer's Scotland's staff that he encountered a technical problem with the Safe Connect app, he showed staff in the room this problem on his phone, the staff team fed this back to the and the problem has now been resolved, the power of collaboration!
- John also shared how useful the Alzheimer's Scotland Cards were for Carers, some of the professionals in the room were not aware that these cards were available and Yvonne was able to show them too.
- John received a reply from Town Breaks regarding cost increases and the impact of this on Carers, a full update can be found here: <https://centralcarers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Update-from-Town-Break-Dementia-Support.pdf>
- John spoke about Carers positive experiences at the Iris Murdoch Centre and fed back how useful Carers found the practical support ideas, such as the Magi Plug and bath towel for privacy in the shower. A professional in the room mentioned a seatbelt cover that can help identify someone if they have been in a car accident.
- Sharlene was able to share Carers views regarding the dollar park dementia services paperwork, Carers experience of emotional abuse from the person that they care for,

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and Carers need to be included in initial and occurring reviews/paperwork relating to the person that they care for.

Mandy's Update

- Mandy attended the AVG and was able to feedback to the professionals that presentations need to be in easy-to-understand language.

Welcoming Gemma Ritchie and Jack Ryan Adult Support and Protection and Advocacy.

Gemma spoke about Adults with Incapacity Act (Scotland 2000) (AWI). Gemma explained what this is, and how this is used, we listened to a video about how this legislation materialised and the importance of this.

Gemma spoke about the principles of this Act and how all actions need to benefit the adult in question, Gemma also highlighted the importance of protecting the adult's freedom, whilst taking account of both their past and current wishes, other important people who are linked to the adult in question must be consulted with.

You can see more as Gemma's slides are attached below.

Gemma highlighted the importance of having Power of Attorney or Guardianship in place and showing evidence that this document is registered. Gemma also discussed the importance of positive forward planning to make sure people know our wishes.

Sharlene spoke about (The Carers Scotland Act 2016) and how this should be used alongside the AWI, to ensure Carers rights are being upheld alongside the person who has limited or no capacity. **More information about your Rights as a Carer will be discuss during Novembers Voice.**

Gemma said that sometimes people believe that as they are next of kin they have a role under AWI, this is a myth, next of kin and POA are totally different things.

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Gemma mentioned emergency care summaries and how everyone can ask for one of these via their GP, you can find out more information about this in the attached document that Gemma has kindly provided:

Emergency Care Summary: <https://centralcarers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Emergency-Care-Summary-Gemma.pdf>

Gemma's slides: <https://centralcarers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Gemma-Ritchie-from-FHSCP-Voice-slides.pptx>

7-minute briefing document: <https://centralcarers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/7-minute-briefing.pdf>

Jack introduced himself and provided a very quick pitstop about advocacy services (Jack had not booked in to present on the day and promised to come back to a future voice to tell us in depth about the service he provides.

Key points about advocacy

Jack's advocacy service can support both the Carer and the person that they care for. Advocacy services support people to ensure their rights are upheld, power is balanced, people's views are heard and people are supported to make informed choices. You can self-refer to this service, or a professional may support you to do this.

Jack's service covers hospitals, community and schools for people aged 16+. They do not provide legal advice or mediation. Below is a link to find out more.

[Forth Valley Advocacy - Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance](#)

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Welcoming Sarah and Josh, Caesar and Howie.

Sarah introduced herself and her colleague Josh. Sarah highlighted the importance of having Power of Attorney (POA) in place regardless of your age. Sarah explained that it can be very sad for her to have to support someone to apply for Guardianship due to incapacity, especially when the cared for person is young, a common myth is that POA is only required for older people.

Sarah spoke about the ongoing expenses of Guardianship, and how POA is a much cheaper and a less stressful option for the Carer. Sarah spoke about Legal Aid and how it is best for everyone to check if they can qualify for this when they are applying for POA/Guardianship, some firms offer this service and some don't, Caesar and Howie offer Legal Aid.

Sarah said that sometimes as professionals they must call in the expertise of a psychiatrist if they have any concerns regarding the cared for person's capacity.

Sarah spoke about the importance of having a really well wrote POA and emphasised that this is a changing document that can be updated at any time. Sarah said to make sure that people you appoint as POA are people who you can trust, that will always have your best interests at heart, if you have more than one of your children or siblings think can they work together? Sarah also suggested putting down everyone that you wish to be your POA. Your POA does not have to be family, it can be friends, and you can list as many people as you wish, in a hierarchical order. Social Work can be your welfare guardian.

Sarah said that POA lasts forever, however you can change it, remove people and add people, you can even cancel this if you wish to do so.

Sarah took the opportunity to inform Carers that there is a big backlog at the office of public guardian, around about a year, some Carers in the room stated that they had waited 18 months.

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A Carer asked if you could apply for POA without support from a solicitor, Sarah said that this can be done, however she raised caution as this is very important document, and you really need to make sure you have everything in it. A Carer spoke about the office of public guardianship having a support guide, people in the room were unsure if this still exists.

Sarah went on to discuss Guardianship, the courts will only put things in place that are in the best interests of the person, there is limited flexibility with Guardianship, and this has to be renewed. The office of public guardian has a waiting list of around 18 months for Guardianship.

Gemma spoke about adult protection at this point and highlighted the importance of safeguarding, in order for someone to be appointed guardian, they will have to be interviewed to make sure that they have the best interests of the person, Gemma and her team have a duty to make sure people are safe. Gemma's team also have to make sure that the guardian is aware of the roles and responsibilities that they will take on.

Gemma finished by saying to Carers that if they have a concern about adult protection regarding someone who holds POA or Guardianship for someone, they can contact the office of public guardian who have an investigation team or make an AP1 report with the support of the local authority who will investigate this.

Some of the Carers' Situations/Views

- Carers shared their frustrations that hospitals and GP's do not have a computer system alert that informs staff that the cared for person does not have capacity. Examples in the room were people with a diagnosis of Dementia, Autism, Parkinsons and other additional needs.
- A Carer said how useful the Carers Card that Yvonne provided was with many health professionals, he did have one negative experience when a consultant refused to look at the card and continued to speak to the cared for person, this caused stress/distress for the Carer and the cared for person.

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- Carers raised concerns about future budget savings and the negative impact this may have on their caring role, especially if more groups stop.
- Alf Kelly raised the reality that for some Carers online consultations don't work, he feels that more needs to be done to reach these Carers. Alf also said that he was disappointed that the IJB notes did not mention Tygetshaugh, Sharlene explained that this is provided in the fuller update, **attached above**.
- Carers spoke about the lack of information available, Carers said that there needs to be better signposting particularly from GP's.
- Carer raised her frustrations that all costs were not discussed when she spoke about POA/Guardianship, Sarah from Caesar and Howie raised the importance of ensuring you choose a good solicitor that informs you of all costs in the moment and also in the future.
- A Carer shared their experiences of using a company for POA and the company going bust, she had to go to a new solicitor, by this point the cared for person had lost capacity and she had to apply for guardianship, more costs and stress.
- A professional in the room thought that having a will in place means that there is no need for POA, Sarah informed the room that you need to have both POA and a will.
- A Carer spoke about Guardianship and how this is "very intrusive", they feel that they are being questioned for spending the money that they have worked all their lives for.
- A Carer raised concerns about professionals speaking with the cared for person and assuming the person has capacity.
- A Carer spoke about the Carers Centre and how they only discovered the importance of having Guardianship in place through attending an information session.
- A Carer said that they have used the advocacy service and said it was "a great support".
- A Carer said "how do you know what support you need if you don't know it exists" many Carers agreed with this comment.
- Many Carers feel that the knowledge needed around POA, and guardianship is very complex, one Carer commented that "you need to be a lawyer to know what they are talking about".

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- A Carer/professional was very concerned that their parents had to pay £79 each for a COVID vaccine, during the pandemic they were “made” to get this vaccine and now they are “petrified” not too, they do not qualify for this for free, although they still have the same caring role. This has negatively impacted both Carers mental health.
- A Carer said that banks are asking for proof of POA, Sarah said that this should not be happening.
- A Carer asked if you could have a joint POA, and Sarah said that you can.
- A Carer asked if your POA can live abroad and Sarah said that they can.
- A Carer thanked Sarah for organising their POA and said they wished they had known about this “years ago”.

Final Thoughts

Please remember to book your space at our Christmas Lunch!

Call 01324 611510 or email centre@centralcarers.co.uk

Future Voice Dates

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 as will cover Carers Rights as a whole).

We have no Voice date in **December** as there are lots of fun and exciting things happening in the Centre over the month of December.

In **January** on the 26th we will welcome Jennifer from the HSCP who will discuss the New Carers Strategy, as this is such a crucial development the whole session will be dedicated to finding out from you what Falkirk needs to prioritise for all of Falkirk's Carers.

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