

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 27 July 2026

at The Carers Centre Falkirk

Chaired by Sharlene Ramage (Carers Centre Participation Development Worker)

Online option facilitated by Carly Crooks and Nicola Weedon (Carers Centre Staff and Manager).

Notes by Dana Horsburgh Carer Representative, Sharlene Ramage and Zoom assistant.

Attendees

There were 19 people in attendance, Carers with a variety of caring situations, Carer Representatives, staff and staff who are also unpaid Carers.

Carly Crooks- Carers Centre Staff.

Nicola Weedon-Carers Centre Manager.

Lyn McKay- Citizens Advice.

Jessie Anne Malcolm- NHS Forth Valley

Donald Johnston- Fire Service

Caroline Armstrong and Aileen Farquharson- Dial a journey

Fiona Collie- Local Councillor/Vice Chair IJB (Integrated Joint Board)

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Quick recap

This meeting was a community safety and support session focused on fire safety, transport services, and resources for older adults and vulnerable individuals. Donald Johnson, a community safety advocate from the fire service, discussed home fire safety visits, hoarding issues, and the challenges of getting assistance for elderly residents who cannot afford to clear their properties. He explained the process for requesting fire safety visits. Fiona Collie addressed concerns about wheelie bin theft and provided information about assistance schemes for people who cannot manage bins, you can request assistance via Falkirk Councils website [Household waste and recycling: Assisted collections - Falkirk Council](#) or call 01324 506070. Aileen from Dial-a-Journey presented their transport charity services, explaining how they provide door-to-door transport for medical appointments, shopping, and social activities using accessible buses with wheelchair lifts. The session also covered various safety topics including smoke alarm testing, power cut procedures, and driving regulations for older adults, with participants sharing experiences and asking questions about accessing services and support.

IJB Carer Representative Update

This is a brief summary. Sharon's full notes are attached below. Thanks so much to Sharon for taking time to minute the meeting.

- Children's and families, social care and social work criminal justice services and prison healthcare are now all under the responsibility of the IJB.
- As Carer Reps and others will have voting rights on the IJB new training will be delivered.
- Plans to ensure early intervention and preventative measures are put in place to prevent hospital admissions.
- Mandy was able to raise Carers concerns regarding care companies and the impact it has on Carers when care companies don't do what they are meant to do.
- Mandy said some Carers are scared to complain directly to care companies and there doesn't seem to be any way that people can complain anonymously.
- Mandy also said that some Carers have mentioned that they didn't know that they can change care providers, Mandy said more needs to be done to let Carers know about this.

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- Caroline (Interim Chief Officer) has contacted Sharlene, and they have a meeting to discuss these points. Updates will be provided at the next Voice.

Minutes from the IJB Meeting can be accessed here: <https://centralcarers.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/IJB-Meeting-Minutes-26-June-2026.pdf>

Mandy Carer Representative in the Falkirk Herald

- Carers concerns that were raised by Mandy at the IJB were captured by the press, you can see this article in Thursday 16 July's Falkirk Herald! Thanks to everyone for coming to the Voice and other consultations to share your views and thanks to Mandy and Sharon and all our Carer Reps for continuing to raise your views to make things work better for Falkirk's Carers.

Upcoming Consultations and Conversations

University of Western Scotland

- April Shaw and Greig Inglis from the University of Western Scotland will join us on Friday 31 Aug from 10am to 12noon.
- April and Greig have been working with Carers to find out how Caring for someone living with addiction impacts them.
- On the day they shall share their research findings and check with Carers that they have got it right. Please join us!

Hourglass

- Colin Scott Community Response Co-ordinator from Hourglass will join us at the Carers Centre on Thursday 6 Aug from 10am to 12noon.
- "Our confidential services provide information and support to an older person, or anyone concerned about an older person who is at risk of, experiencing or recovering from any form of abuse or neglect".
- Please do join us even if you don't identify as an older person!

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Mental Health

- We would like to invite you to a conversation being held at the Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre on Thursday 20 August from 1:30-3:30.
- Kara Connor is the Primary Care Mental Health Team Leader from Falkirk Community Hospital. Kara is looking to hear your views and experiences and will tell us more about the services that their team provide and how you can access these.
- An invite will follow soon!

HSCP Visit during and after August's Carers Voice

- "Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership are looking for feedback on their new Strategic Plan and Falkirk Carers Strategy.
- There will be a drop-in session in the Carers Centre on Monday 24 August, 11-1pm.
- Come along at any time to learn more about the proposed priorities and share your views."

NHS Chief Executive and Executive Nurse Director visit

- So happy to say that Ross and Karen will return to see us all from (1pm-3pm) on Tuesday 20 October, an invite will follow closer to the time.

Hoarding Fire Safety Protocol

Donald discussed the process for handling hoarding situations through home fire safety visits, explaining that permission must be obtained from the individual before requesting a visit from Donald's team. Donald outlined that while fire services can provide advice and install smoke alarms, they cannot enforce cleaning or removal of items, and social work may need to be involved for further assessment. Donald also shared that councils no longer have funding to help with hoarding

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cleanup costs, though free uplifts are still available for limited items. Donald and his team have a duty to raise any adult or child protection concerns with the social work teams.

Elderly Residents' Service Challenges

Donald discussed various challenges faced by elderly residents, including issues with wheelie bin theft and accessibility problems, noting that the council has stopped replacing stolen bins, requiring affected residents to pay £36.20 for replacements. Donald highlighted the fire service's expanding role in handling waterway incidents, flooding, and wildfires, while expressing concerns about disposable barbecues and how people often think these have been extinguished when they have not. Fiona Collie confirmed that assistance schemes exist for people unable to manage wheelie bins and agreed to share information about applying for these services (this information is attached above).

Home Fire Safety and Transport

Donald discussed home fire safety risks, including problems with toasters, plug-in air fresheners, and the importance of proper car seat installation. Donald advised checking fire alarms every week. Donald explained the process for home fire safety visits, which are available for free to eligible residents over 65 or with specific needs, to register for this check please contact the Carers Centre who can pop a referral over for you. If you have sight or hearing problems the sensory centre can provide specialist fire safety alarms and equipment.

Dial a Journey Charity Transport Services

The discussion then shifted to Dial-a-Journey, a transport charity that provides door-to-door services for people with mobility challenges, with services costing around £7.50-£8 per trip, if someone needs a Carer to accompany them on the bus they can travel for free, otherwise free services are only available to support people to attend vaccination appointments. This service covers the whole of Forth Valley and drivers have specialist training that enables them to help people out of their home and onto the bus, gently remind people why they are being collected and where they are going, pop keys into key safes etc. The drivers like to know as much as possible about the people that they collect and appreciate lots of information on the sign-up sheets. The team try to ensure as much as

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possible that it is the same driver for all journeys, this helps people to build relationships with the drivers too.

Dial a Journey Hospital Service

You may have seen the Dial a journey buses dropping people off from or to hospital, this is because the hospital pay to use the buses on certain days of the week, this is a hire basis and not a service provided to Dial a Journey to the public.

Dial a Journey Charity Transport Services

Aileen discussed the history of the service and provided an overview of the charity who offer reliable transport for individuals with disabilities and additional needs. Aileen explained their school transport services, group travel, and excursions, highlighting the trust and relationships built between drivers and passengers. The service supports people from primary school through to adulthood. Caroline mentioned their membership system and various programs, including Shop Mobility and self-drive hire services.

Dial a journey how to refer.

You can see what trips and activities Dial a journey have on by visiting their Facebook Page, having a look at their website <https://www.dial-a-journey.org/> or calling them on 01786 465355 (Falkirk Carers call this Stirling phone number too).

Carers Views/Comments and Suggestions

- Many Carers were shocked that there is limited support available for hoarding.
- Many Carers did not know that dial a journey organise day trips over the school holidays and trips to the beach, Christmas markets and more.

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- A Carer commented that they must take all their elderly neighbours bins in as they can't manage to do this anymore.
- A Carer spoke about the need for additional eye tests for driving when you become older and the extra expense of insurance when you are older too.
- A Carer spoke about the importance of trusting professionals who your loved one is spending time with.
- Carers discussed cars now not being able to park on pavements and how this is preventing larger emergency vehicles from accessing some properties.
- A Carer spoke about their young person liking the same taxi driver, the importance of this for his own independence and how this has developed his confidence whilst being transported to college.
- A Carer spoke about Dial a journey's limitations to Forth Valley area and how they wish the service operated across council areas.
- A Carer spoke about the problems and risks when someone lives alone, particularly if they are in an upper flat, disabled and hoarding.
- A Carer spoke about the cuts to gardening services and the negative impact this is having on elderly people.
- A Carer said it would be good to have dial a journey service available in the evening.
- Sharlene mentioned on behalf of Carers that couldn't attend today's session, that, some Carers cannot travel into Falkirk Town Centre in the evening for fear that they can't get home due to lack of wheelchair accessible public transport.

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- A Carer commented that a social work team member advised them to contact dial journey for school transport in another council area, this Carer was frustrated as the service only operates in Forth Valley.
- A few Carers spoke about the additional stress caused unintentionally when professionals share the wrong information with them.
- Carers spoke about the lack of assessable transport in Falkirk, particularly for taxi services and public transport.
- A Carer said that many children with additional support needs benefit from the same staff supporting them, many parents also prefer this.

Future Voice Dates meetings are from 10am-12noon.

In August on the 24th we will welcome Pauline Phee from Neighbourhood Networks (service that supports adults with disabilities) who will tell you about the supports/services that they provide and Lisa Wilson NHS Falls lead will discuss supports in the community, how to prevent hip fractures and discuss findings from her questionnaire that you might have completed.

In September on the 28th we will welcome Clair Fair NHS Keep Well who will tell you about this fantastic service and how to access this and Kim Wylie from Falkirk Football Foundation who will tell you all about the groups and supports that they provide, many are free and not all are football related.

In Oct on the 26th we will welcome Sarah Patrick Caesar and Howie who will discuss POA/Guardianship and Shirley MacDonald/Carlynn Baillie who will discuss the services and supports that the Dollar Park Dementia Services provide.

Hopefully see you all at Aug's Voice! Many thanks Sharlene 😊

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