

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 28th September 2026

at The Carers Centre Falkirk

Chaired by Sharlene Ramage (Carers Centre Participation Development Worker)
Online option facilitated by Alison Hiney (Adult Carer Support Worker).
Notes by Dana Horsburgh Carer Representative, Sharlene Ramage and Zoom assistant.

Attendees

There were 29 people in attendance, Carers with a variety of caring situations, Carer Representatives, staff and staff who are also unpaid Carers.

Alison Hiney (Adult Carer Support Worker).

Lyn McKay- Citizens Advice.

Kim Wyllie- Falkirk Foundation.

Pauline Phee- Neighbourhood Networks.

Leah McAuley- Royal Voluntary Service.

Elaine Nicholson- Citizens Advice.

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Quick recap

The meeting focused on local health and wellbeing services, discussed gaps in support, presentations from Neighbourhood Networks and Falkirk Foundation, unfortunately Clair Fair from NHS Keep Well could not make the session today so Sharlene shared her slides.

Carers shared positive experiences and frustrations about accessing health checks, GP services and vaccinations. Pauline from Neighbourhood Networks briefly explained their peer support model for vulnerable adults, the referral process, and the challenges with limited funding and staff capacity. Kim from Falkirk Foundation outlined the range of programmes offered, including Centre Forward, Back in the Game, Ahead of the Game, The Changing Room, Football Pathways, The Blind Club, Football Memories, and Bairns Blether as well as mental health and wellbeing support for all ages. Carers raised concerns about the lack of services and positive destinations for young people with additional support needs after leaving school and discussed the value of programmes that build independence and social connections. The conversation ended with an invitation for carers to suggest future speakers and consultations.

Next Steps for Sharlene

- Ask the Keep Well service about the questions that were raised on the day and update carers at a future voice.
- Invite two representatives from each service (Keep Well, Neighbourhood Networks, Falkirk Foundation etc) to future meetings/ consultations, to avoid speaker not attending on the day.

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Message from Jessie Anne Malcolm NHS Forth Valley

- Some carers asked why Jessie Anne attends the Voice.
- Jessie Anne's role is public engagement; she works across Forth Valley to hear from people who use the NHS and to let them know about what's happening within NHS FV. Jessie Anne attends existing community groups like the Voice to find out what is working for carers and what is not.
- Jessie Anne informs colleagues who are looking to consult with carers about the Voice and recently this has resulted in Carer Reps being invited to the NHS AGM, which then led to the Chief Executive and Nurse Director coming to speak with us regularly.
- When NHS Forth Valley are having strategic meetings, Jessie Anne makes sure that Laura our centre manager is invited to represent the needs of Falkirk's unpaid carers.
- When Jessie Anne is out at other events, she informs people about the Carers Centre and the supports that we provide to unpaid carers in Falkirk.
- Unfortunately, at a session in August, Jessie Anne made a comment that offended some carers.
- My manager Nicola and I met with Jessie Anne and explained that some of the carers were offended by the comment that she made, we explained that many carers face stigma whilst caring for people where mental health, drugs and alcohol are present.

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- Jessie Anne wants you to know, “I appreciate being invited and I feel heartbroken that I have offended anyone. I too am a carer, and I never intended to offend anyone, I am deeply sorry.”
- Sharlene and Nicola thanked Jessie Anne for apologising and welcomed Jessie Anne to attend future sessions. Nicola confirmed that the Carers Centre appreciate how helpful Jessie-Anne has been in putting us in contact with so many people within NHS FV, and in making sure her NHS colleagues know that carers are keen to have their voice heard.
- Jessie Anne wants you to know, “I appreciate being invited and I feel heartbroken that I have offended anyone. I too am a carer, and I never intended to offend anyone, I am deeply sorry.”
- Sharlene and Nicola thanked Jessie Anne for apologising and welcomed Jessie Anne to attend future sessions. Nicola confirmed that the Carers Centre appreciate how helpful Jessie-Anne has been in putting us in contact with so many people within NHS FV, and in making sure her NHS colleagues know that carers are keen to have their voice heard.

Palliative Care Involvement

NHS Forth Valley are currently reviewing the out of hours palliative care services, they have a wee questionnaire that takes no longer than 10 minutes to complete, if you or someone you know is currently using palliative care services, please can you complete the questionnaire attached below.

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[Patient Reported Experience Measures - OOH Palliative Care – Collaboration](#)

The Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Consultation (ADP)

The ADP are holding an event at the Carers Centre on the 13th Oct 1:30pm-4:30pm, this is an opportunity to shape the way that service is delivered. There is also a link to complete a short questionnaire.

Please find attached the link for the online ADP Model of Care consultation.

[\(15\) Project: Alcohol and Drug Support in Falkirk | Participate+](#)

IJB Update Carer Representative Sharon Mwale

- Transformation of Falkirk's services is going well, especially the care at home redesign, there is still focus on people receiving the right care at the right time and people only staying in hospital when they need too.
- Falkirk has been accepted for new GP walk in service provision.
- There is a national campaign to inform people about the importance of having power of attorney.
- Sharon our IJB Carer Representative mentioned that parent carers need more support with Guardianship/POA, especially as many are not sure what to expect when their child turns 18. Sharon also mentioned the GP walk in service in Falkirk and explained that she hoped there would be a focus on mental health supports as Carers in Falkirk need this support, she also highlighted the need for staff in these new services to be carer aware.

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- Daniel Stoddart spoke about the Care at Home Team's developments, shifting from the current provision of time and task to a reablement approach, this redesign has been well thought about with theoretical perspectives considered. Reablement will encourage people to do more for themselves and Daniel is aware that getting people linked back in with their communities is an important part of this work too.
- Daniel mentioned that from speaking with unpaid Carers it became clear that continuity of care is very important. People are concerned when there care provider changes, especially during hospital admissions. Daniel strives to address these issues by having better dialogue with staff/service users'/family carers. Daniel will be reviewing the service and making changes as appropriate. Daniel also seeks to reach out to younger people in a recruitment campaign.
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The minutes from the Integrated Joint Board meeting can be found here:
<https://centralcarers.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/IJB-Meeting-Minutes-Aug-26.pdf>

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Keep Well Service Discussion

Sharlene led a discussion about this service in the absence of planned speaker Clair Fair NHS Forth Valley. The Keep Well service “is a community based, early-intervention service that gives people time to talk about their health, identify concerns early and take practical steps towards better wellbeing”. You can self-refer to the service by looking on the website or calling the telephone number attached below.

During your one-to-one appointment an NHS staff nurse will look at your blood pressure, provide health advice, ask about your mental wellbeing and may take some bloods if needed.

Sharlene asked carers if they knew about the service, about half the room had heard about it, many of these carers who knew about the service had accessed it via the Carers Centre. Sharlene asked if there were places that NHS should advertise this service, carers shared great ideas such as supermarkets, pharmacies, GP surgeries and places where people visit like local shops.

Participants discussed challenges with accessing healthcare appointments, including issues with coordination and home visits for housebound individuals.

Keep Well 01786 434 044 (Stirling phone number but Falkirk carers can access support in Falkirk)

Neighbourhood Network Discussion

Pauline provided an overview of Neighbourhood Networks, explaining their service facilitates peer support networks for vulnerable adults aged 16-65 in Falkirk, with up to 90 people per network, focusing on skills development and community connection through weekly meetings.

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Pauline discussed their community support network that helps individuals with additional support needs develop independent living skills through activities, social connections, and practical support like budgeting and bus pass management. The service supports people who are aged between 16-65 years old. The service is funded by the Local Health and Social Care Partnership with no cost to participants, it is expected that people pay their own way for activities and expenses. Pauline explained that while referrals are currently being processed, limited funding is affecting the ability to expand the network. There was discussion in the room about the current challenges of supporting young people transitioning from child to adult services. There is currently a waiting list for the service that is about 1-2 years. Carers in the room spoke about the need for this service and were concerned that there was such a long waiting list for this support. Pauline mentioned that their team are aware that people lose skills when they aren't using these and said that unfortunately sometimes their support comes too late and people are having support provided by statutory services as they couldn't wait for the Neighbourhood Network supports. Pauline mentioned that some of their service users go on to be volunteers and support others who are new to the service, this helps with capacity to recruit new members. Sharlene asked how many staff are in the team and there is one manager and three staff for the Forth Valley area.

Falkirk Foundation Community Programs Overview

Kim from Falkirk Foundation presented an overview of their organisation's programs and services, which use football as a hook to engage the community. Many of Falkirk Foundations groups and activities are suitable for those with additional support needs. Kim detailed several key initiatives including Centre

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Forward (a 12-month education program delivered in partnership with Forth Valley College), Back in the Game (a 12-week condensed program), and mental health programs like Ahead of the Game and The Changing Room, some of these groups are for men only. Kim also highlighted their football pathways from 18 months to adults, including specialised programs for people with autism and down syndrome, as well as social groups like the Blind Club and Bairns Blether for over 60s. Kim announced plans to launch a women's only recovery group and mums and babies' group and invited attendees. Kim said that people can go onto the Falkirk Foundation website to sign up for groups and activities many of these are free, you can also call the club on to sign up if you are not good with technology.

[Falkirk Foundation – Our Community, Our Future](#) or phone 01324 619980

Carers Views/Experiences and Suggestions

- Carers are interested in finding out how the Keep Well advisors reach people who need the service.
- Carers spoke about advertisement of the Keep Well service, some suggestions were in supermarkets, GP surgeries, Pharmacies, social media.
- Carers spoke about the well women and men clinics and how these are a good way to keep you well.
- About half of the carers in the room had heard of the Keep Well service, about half of these had heard about the service from the Carers Centre and had accessed this service at the Carers Centre.

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- Many carers are keen to know if the Keep Well sessions will be returning to the centre, Sharlene will ask and keep carers informed.
- Some carers wondered if the Keep Well service linked to the men and women wellbeing sessions.
- Some carers spoke about getting yearly check ups at their GP surgery.
- A carer mentioned that they have waited 5 years without a check-up.
- A carer who has used the Keep Well service said that they now receive an annual reminder to book a follow up appointment, this carer said that the service is a good use of carers time as you have time to talk to the staff member and you get many things checked at the same time. This carer explained that the Keep Well staff also share the information from your appointment with your GP.
- A carer mentioned that they have not been seen by their GP in over a year, this carer has been suicidal in the past and feels that as an older carer he is not cared for by the health and social care systems.
- A carer mentioned that they attended the Keep Well session in the Carers Centre as the nurse was in the centre when the carers café was on.
- A carer mentioned that not all carers can make it into the centre to attend the Keep Well sessions.
- Carers and Sharlene spoke about carers who cannot leave the person that they care for and wondered if home visits were an option for carers to access the Keep Well session.
- Carers spoke about services/workshops that were previously available in Falkirk that upskilled people with disabilities and provided working opportunities for those who wished to work. The sign factory was

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mentioned, as was a place where wooden benches were made in Tamfourhill. Carers spoke about people they knew who enjoyed their work, and their disappointment that there are no longer places in Falkirk for people to do this. These opportunities benefitted both the carers and the people that they care for.

- Carers spoke about older people being unable to access online bookings for appointments. Online only options often result in more work for the carers as they not only have to accompany the person to the appointment, but they now also need to book it.
- Some carers wondered if people in need of the Keep Well service are identified at their vaccine appointments. A carer in the room said they would ask as they had their vaccination appointment booked.
- A carer said that they wanted to know if the Keep Well service would provide specialist support for people who have additional support needs, this carer said they would not want to waste their time going to a Keep Well appointment if it would not be adapted to meet their cared for person's needs.
- A carer spoke about the long wait to access disabled peoples NHS health checks.
- A carer mentioned that for the flu vaccines they got an appointment for there's on a different day to the person that they care for, this resulted in two visits to the hospital when it could have been one.
- Some carers got appointments for vaccines appointments arranged one after the other on the same day, many carers in the room commented that it would really help having these appointments next to each other,

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especially for those carers who have no choice but to take the cared for person with them to their own appointments.

- A carer said that their friend had been waiting over a year to access the supports that Neighbourhood Networks provide, she worries that the persons independence skills decline as they are at home most of the time.
- Lyn from Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) asked Kim if peoples benefits would be affected if they did not attend the session with Kim, Kim said that this would only affect those who had been referred to the course as part of their work plan/ job centre.

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