



# Falkirk Multi Agency Domestic Abuse Forum

## Annual Report on Activity

2008 - 2009

## Introduction

This report summarises the work of the Falkirk Multi Agency Domestic Abuse Forum for the period April 2008 - March 2009.

The forum has been in existence since 1996 and was originally established to address local issues of domestic abuse. Since then, its agenda and membership has increased to encompass a wider violence against women (VAW) focus, which is reflective of the Scottish Government's priorities.

A wide variety of expertise is contained within the forum with many Council services, public sector organisations and voluntary organisations being represented

## 2008/09 Action Plan

The action plan contained a number of objectives which were prioritised under the 4Ps - Prevention, Protection, Provision and Participation. This report will summarise the work that took place to meet these objectives. Additional examples of good practice in relation to each action can be found in appendix 1

### PREVENTION ... of acts of violence occurring (including repeat incidents)

Action - continue to work with children & young people (CYP) to raise their awareness of VaW issues.

Many forum members engage directly with children and young people to increase their awareness of issues associated with violence against women, particularly in relation to domestic abuse. This work continued in 2008-09. Members of the local forum are involved in the Forth Valley CEDAR (Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery) programme; a three year pilot project funded by the Scottish Government. Members participate either as co-facilitators in groupwork sessions or as members of the CEDAR local advisory board. The programme was officially launched in January 2009 and the first groups for mums and CYP began during w/c 9<sup>th</sup> March.

Action - continue to raise public awareness on the extent and effects of VaW

The forum continues to be represented at events within the community. Forum members, along with other partners from across Forth Valley, organised a wide variety of events in support of the '16 Days of Action for the Elimination of Violence against Women' campaign. Articles about domestic abuse / violence against women appeared in local magazines including Falkirk Football Club match programmes. Booklets and posters were widely distributed to ensure that an extensive audience was being reached. Falkirk library had a display of books / reading materials available to the public during the 16 Days.

Action - continue to promote awareness of VaW issues in our own organisations

Falkirk Council introduced a 'Domestic Violence and Abuse' workplace policy in 2008. This was supported by training for Human Resources Advisers. Absence management training in the council now includes a case study about a person who is affected by domestic abuse and encourages line managers to consider such issues. Since the introduction of the policy, there has been an increase in line manager enquiries in relation to supporting employees affected by domestic abuse. The council's staff newsletter included an article on domestic abuse / violence against women in the lead up to the Christmas period and included local support agency contact details.

Action - continue to encourage our own staff and volunteers to attend training on issues around VaW

The Forth Valley Domestic Abuse Training Consortium received funding from the Scottish Government to employ a part-time training coordinator and to deliver training to a variety of agencies across the area. A comprehensive training calendar was circulated to all forum members who have a responsibility for ensuring that it is disseminated to their own staff. Uptake of courses was very positive.

The Training Consortium also held a conference in October 2008. The day was aimed at decision makers within organisations who could go back to their services / organisations and consider what changes they needed to make to service delivery, in terms of supporting women affected by violence. A number of forum members attended the conference.

Action - Encourage medium-large sized local organisation to adopt domestic abuse policies

Some local medium-large sized organisations were approached in the lead up to the 16 Days of Action and offered their support for the campaign, thus raising their awareness of issues around domestic abuse. Progress was not made in terms of encouraging them to adopt their own internal policies however.

Action - Forum members to report relevant statistics at each meeting

Forum meetings provide an opportunity for each agency / service represented to give an update on statistics and other relevant information. Statistics are given as a means of information sharing and are not collated in a formal manner. More detailed statistics are available to forum members in a variety of ways including annual reports, annual police statistics and Scottish Government figures.

Action - Continue to investigate opportunities for men to address their offending behaviour (non court mandated)

Partners continue to recognise the value of group work with men to help them address their offending / abusive behaviour. Across the Forth Valley area the SACRO programme works with men who have been convicted of such behaviour and who are attending groups as part of a court order. However, it is recognised that this only reaches a very small minority of men who abuse their partners. Local partners are in favour of developing a non court mandated programme to support this gap in service provision and are currently seeking funding opportunities to progress this. Various forum members have visited the 'Working with Men' programme in Edinburgh which already provides such a programme.

## PROTECTION ... of women and children

Action - Ensure information about support services is readily available to women and children

The Forth Valley Domestic Abuse Training Consortium paid for a review and reprint of the local domestic abuse information leaflet. This leaflet was developed by forum members and provides contact details of a number of local support agencies. The leaflet was also translated into Polish in 2008, at the request of Central Scotland Police Domestic Abuse Unit, to meet an increasing demand for resources in this language. These information leaflets are taken to networking events such as International Women's Day, 16 Days of Action, conferences etc, as well as being available in GP surgeries, One Stop Shops, libraries and Police Stations.

## PROVISION ... of services and information

### Action - Continue to produce twice yearly e-newsletter

Newsletters were produced by the Domestic Abuse Policy Coordinator and circulated in the Spring and Winter of 2008. Forum members contributed to the development of the newsletter by writing articles and distributing it throughout their networks. Contributors in 2008 include the Area Procurator Fiscal, Relationships Scotland, Central Scotland Rape Crisis & Sexual Abuse Centre, Victim Support and the Domestic Abuse Training Coordinator.

### Action - Apply for funds to create a stand-alone website for the Forum.

Funding was requested from the Falkirk Community Safety Partnership to develop a Violence against Women website for the forum. The Council was unable to provide the funding requested but was able to offer the support and expertise of its Communications Web team to allow the website to be created as part of the Council's website. This will be progressed in 2009/10.

### Action - Consider the Forum's involvement in the local International Women's Day event.

Falkirk Council's Education Services paid for the actor Naomi Breeze to attend Falkirk's International Women's Day event and perform her play called 'Jackie's story'. The play focuses on one woman's experience of domestic abuse. 13 women attended the workshop (the maximum number for the room size) and participated in a group discussion afterwards about some of the issues raised in the play. A range of information leaflets from forum members were available at this event.

Falkirk Council also provided resources and support to the IWD group to assist with the development, marketing and organisation of the event.

## PARTICIPATION ... of appropriate services/organisation/individuals

### Action - Members to aim for at least 50% attendance at forum meetings throughout the year. When attendance is not possible, members to provide written update on activities

Forum meetings continue to be well attended with a wide range of members represented. Meetings are held on a quarterly basis, usually on a Friday morning. Some members have reported difficulty in attending on a Friday and, as a direct result of this feedback, meetings in 2009 will take place on a Thursday. Analysis shows that 63% of forum members have attended at least 50% of meetings held in the reporting period. Three members attended all meetings in the reporting period, whilst four members have not attended any meetings in the period.

Whilst it would be preferable for members to attend all meetings, it is recognised that resource constraints can often be an issue, particularly for voluntary sector organisations.

Action - Forum membership to be reviewed. Enquire if regular non-participants still want to remain as part of the forum network and invite new members as appropriate

The Chair of the forum is receptive to new members joining the forum where there is a clear link with forum/service priorities. CVS Falkirk joined the forum at the start of the reporting period and Relationship Scotland's new Domestic Abuse Project Worker now represents their Service. Whilst there is no Service representing BME communities, the Chair has close links with Central Scotland Racial Equality Council and relevant information is communicated. The Domestic Abuse Policy Coordinator has just agreed a similar link with Falkirk & District Association for Mental Health.

Action - Maintain links with other groups / forums and committees as appropriate to ensure a joined up approach to VaW agenda

Forum members continued to maintain links with other groups/forums and committees, including:-

- ◆ Forth Valley Domestic Abuse Strategy Group
- ◆ Forth Valley Domestic Abuse Training Consortium
- ◆ Falkirk Community Safety Partnership
- ◆ Falkirk GIRFEC domestic abuse pathfinder
- ◆ Falkirk Child Protection Committee
- ◆ Falkirk Substance Forum
- ◆ National Network Tackling VaW
- ◆ National CYP (Children & Young People) Network
- ◆ CEDAR programme

Action - Participate in and support Forth Valley wide initiatives

- ◆ **CEDAR** - Various forum members are involved in the CEDAR (Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery) programme, either as members of the local advisory board or as co-facilitators in groupwork sessions. Members have been kept informed of the progress of the programme at forum meetings and have been encouraged to let as many people/services/organisations know about the programme as possible. The programme was launched at a local level in January 2009 and was well attended by the three Local Authority areas (Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and Stirling). The first group sessions for children and their mums took place in March 2009.
- ◆ **'16 Days of Action for the Elimination of Violence against Women' campaign** - This International campaign was supported for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year running across Forth Valley. Several forum members participated in the '16 Days' planning group and a wide range of activities/interventions were held between 25<sup>th</sup> November & 10<sup>th</sup> December 2008. A copy of the programme is attached as appendix 2.
- ◆ **Protocols for working with women involved in prostitution** - The lead person in relation to the development of these protocols changed job early in the reporting period. As a result, progress has not been made on this piece of work.

## ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE FROM FORUM MEMBERS

PREVENTION ... of acts of violence occurring (including repeat incidents)

Action - continue to work with children & young people (CYP) to raise their awareness of VaW issues.

Falkirk & District Women's Aid continues to work with CYP in Refuge and on an outreach basis.

Falkirk Council Education Services, along with project partners, developed a specific curricular resource called 'Safe as Houses?' to help CYP discuss and understand issues around domestic abuse. Graeme High school developed and performed a play about domestic abuse during the 16 Days of Action. The CYP involved performed the play in Bannockburn High School in Stirling.

Central Scotland Rape Crisis & Sexual Abuse Centre (CSRC&SAC) - Central Scotland Youth Project continues to work within secondary schools by raising awareness of the issues surrounding violence against women and children in order to encourage attitudinal change in young people. Information is displayed in all secondary schools in the Falkirk area.

Action - continue to raise public awareness on the extent and effects of VaW

Relationships Scotland constructed and arranged print of new leaflets highlighting VaW.

Falkirk Council Education Services developed and distributed a parental leaflet about domestic abuse.

CSRC&SAC delivered awareness talks to local community groups and displayed literature and posters in public places. They also attended events and raised awareness of the support the organisation can offer in dealing with the effects of VAW.

Central Scotland Police facilitated Domestic Abuse presentations to agencies outwith their service.

Victim Support - attended various awareness raising days throughout Forth Valley

Action - continue to promote awareness of VaW issues in our own organisations

Central Scotland Police - Use force 'C Speak' magazine to highlight DA issues.

CSRC&SAC - All voluntary support workers receive training on all issues surrounding VAW. Information leaflets from partner agencies are displayed in CSRC&SAC.

Falkirk Council - Domestic Abuse is covered in child protection training and in absence management training. A range of leaflets, posters and relevant websites are displayed throughout the Council.

Action - continue to encourage our own staff and volunteers to attend training on issues around VaW

Falkirk Council Education Services - Multi Agency Domestic Abuse training for all staff at launch of Child Protection Practitioners Folder. A weekend training event was held for Domestic Abuse champions for all schools & nurseries in the Larbert cluster area. An additional 4 training sessions on Domestic Abuse were held for all staff. The actor Naomi Breeze was commissioned to deliver her play about domestic abuse "Jackies Story" to a large number of school staff.

Falkirk Council Human Resources - All HR Advisers attended an awareness raising session designed specifically for HR personnel.

Pathfinder - Pathfinder MAG members and agencies have been encouraged to attend DA training.

Relationships Scotland - Training dates cascaded to all volunteers.

CSRC&SAC - All staff and volunteers are given the opportunity to attend training to increase their knowledge on the issues surrounding VAW where funding allows.

Victim Support - offers advanced training to both staff and volunteers in domestic and sexual assault.

Action - Forum members to report relevant statistics at each meeting

Central Scotland Police - Use Vulnerable Person Reports to update and inform partners.

Pathfinder - Project statistics can be provided for each meeting.

Falkirk Council Homelessness Service - Provides statistics at forum meetings.

Action - Continue to investigate opportunities for men to address their offending behaviour (non court mandated)

Central Scotland Police - Link in with Edinburgh based 'Working with Men' group to establish if opportunities exist to make use of their expertise.

Pathfinder - Central Scotland Police in conjunction with Criminal Justice Social Work and children & families Social Work are working on introducing a non court mandated perpetrator programme across Forth Valley. All 3 Area Commanders from Central Scotland Police have agreed to participate.

Relationships Scotland - Carry out individual counselling appointments with men wishing to change.

## PROTECTION ... of women and children

Action - Ensure information about support services is readily available to women and children

Falkirk Council Education Services - Parent information areas in schools & nurseries

Pathfinder - The Pathfinder project provides support leaflets, advice etc to women and families experiencing Domestic Abuse.

Relationships Scotland - Specific information is available in counselling rooms, waiting areas and at domestic abuse training.

CSRC&SAC - Posters and leaflets are displayed in all public places on a regular basis.

Victim Support - Information displayed in prominent areas of local office

PROVISION ... of services and information

Action - Consider the forum's involvement in the International Women's Day event

Central Scotland Rape Crisis & Sexual Abuse Centre and Central Scotland Police domestic abuse unit had information stalls at this community based event.

PARTICIPATION ... of appropriate services / organisations/ individuals

The following members attended all 4 meetings in the reporting period:-

Central Scotland Police

Central Scotland Rape Crisis & Sexual Abuse Centre

Falkirk Council Corporate & Neighbourhood Services

Programme of events for 16 Days of Action 2008

25 Nov	16 Days of Action Launch event - Geese theatre performance	Lesser Town Hall, Falkirk
26 Nov	Conference on Understanding the Issues around Forced Marriages organised by Stirling Multi-Cultural Partnership.	Old Viewforth, Stirling Council (9:30am - 2:00pm)
27 Nov	Level 1 Domestic Abuse Training for professionals (pre booking required)  Teacher training (Domestic Abuse)  Relaxation & information day for women - organised by the W.I.S.H programme (free event)	Lime Tree House, Alloa  Falkirk  St Mungo's Church Hall. Alloa (1:30pm - 3:30pm)
28 Nov	Teacher training (Domestic Abuse)  Sale of White Ribbon Cookies  Child Protection workshop - What you need to know about Social Networking (free event)	Falkirk  Various outlets in Falkirk & Clackmannanshire  Dawson Centre, Falkirk (2pm - 4pm)
29 Nov	White ribbon sales at Falkirk / Hibs match	Falkirk Football Stadium
30 Nov	Girls football tournament (free event)	Forthbank, Stirling
1 Dec	World Aids Day - Sale of red ribbons  Keeping yourself safe classes for women (free event)  1 <sup>st</sup> Aid for women in the home (organised by Cardium 1 <sup>st</sup> Aid training) followed by keeping yourself Safe Class (free event)	Various locations in Forth Valley  Prudential offices, Stirling (11:45am - 2:00pm)  Falkirk Stadium 09.30am - 4:00pm
2 Dec	Graeme High School play about domestic abuse - being performed in Bannockburn High School  Child protection workshop - violence against women & children (free event)  Information Day for students & staff  Keeping yourself safe class (free event)  Keeping yourself safe class - (free event)	Stirling  Camelon Education Centre, Falkirk  Stirling University  Stirling University (12:00 - 2:00pm)  Forth bank Stadium, Stirling (6:00pm - 7:00pm)
3 Dec	Trauma, recovery & domestic Abuse training for professionals	Old Viewforth, Stirling

4 Dec	White Ribbon March from Stirling Castle Esplanade to Stirling Council Viewforth car park	March leaves Stirling Castle Esplanade at 6:00pm
5 Dec	Level 1 domestic abuse training for professionals (pre booking required)  Keeping yourself safe class for women (free event)  Keeping yourself safe class for women (free event)	Municipal Buildings, Falkirk  Alloa Leisure Bowl (10:00am - 12:30pm)  Grangemouth Sports Complex (7:15pm - 8:15pm)
6 Dec	Display of books and posters	Falkirk Library
7 / 8 Dec	Wear your white ribbon as a pledge that you will never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women	Available from various sources across Forth Valley
9 Dec	Join us for a World café discussion about violence against women & children issues (free event)	Camelon Education Centre 10:00am - 12:30pm
10 Dec	Closing Event - including a performance of 'Jackie's Story' by Breeze productions	Sauchie Hall, Sauchie