

Open Secret

Background

Open Secret was established in 1994 to work with survivors of childhood sexual abuse or trauma. They work with survivors of all ages. The organisation provides a service across the Forth Valley area including the Local Authorities of Clackmannan, Falkirk and Stirling It also provides a service to West Lothian.

Open Secret is an independent community based organisation. The core service funded by Falkirk Council provides:

- Free confidential services to survivors of childhood sexual abuse
- Support to partners and friends
- Support to other workers and organisations working with childhood sexual abuse issues
- Support for non-abusing parents of children who have experienced sexual abuse (Parent Support Worker)

They achieve this through a range of service interventions which include:

- Counselling
- Direct Support work
- Group Work
- Befriending
- Advocacy
- Training to other organisations
- Campaigning and awareness raising
- Resource library

Open Secret has also been successful in sourcing other grant funding. In this regard their service is not limited to the Forth Valley Area but has a wider Scotland position.

The following services are provided in addition to the core service:

- Services for children, young people and families
- Homelessness support
- Prison services (Scotland wide)
- EMDR/ EFT* service in partnership with NHS Forth Valley (Scotland wide)
- Complementary Therapies Service (Scotland wide)
- In Care Survivors Service Scotland (ICSSS)
- Ethnic Minorities Service (in partnership with Central Scotland Racial Equality Council)

*EMDR – Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing
EFT – Emotional Freedom Technique

Service profile

In total Open Secret worked with 1,148 (972 new and 176 existing) people during the financial year 2012/2013 of which 268 were Falkirk citizens. The number of Falkirk citizens increases to 308 when those within the Scottish prison service are included.

The largest number of Falkirk referrals was self-referrals (153) with statutory agencies being second with 67.

The average waiting time from referral to start of service is 4 weeks with the average intervention being just under 9 sessions. Although length of intervention is specific to the individual and as such can be longer or shorter.

Through a wide range of interventions Open Secret provide a holistic approach to working with survivors of abuse.

Direct 1 to 1 counselling was provided to 214 people from Falkirk. Art Therapy, Creative writing, gardening group, fund raising group, service user support group and parents group are other supports provided.

The Complex Trauma Service provides EMDR / EFT therapy through Open Secret with funding from Survivor Scotland. This service is provided in partnership with NHS Forth Valley and enables quicker access to these therapies for Forth Valley residents.

Funding

Source	Amount	Timescale
Falkirk Council	£149,442	Reviewed annually
Stirling Council	£12,120	Reviewed annually
Clackmannan Council	£15,807	Reviewed annually
West Lothian Council	£37,802	Reviewed annually
Scottish Prison Service	£75,121	Reviewed annually
Scottish Government ICSSS	£225,000	March 2015
Survivor Scotland	£50,000	October 2014
Inspiring Scotland	134,967	June 2014
RS MacDonald Trust	£10,000	March 2014
Big Lottery	£22,229	March 2015
FV Health Board (Stirling and Clackmannan)	£17,306	annual
Community Jobs	£25,716	varies

Open Secret has a history of successful fund raising as can be seen from the table above. They continue to pursue alternative and additional funding. They are cognisant that sources of funding are due to end and if no alternative or continuation can be found have advised that they will stop the associated activities and services.

They have advised that they consider the core service to the Forth Valley and Falkirk Council area as a priority. However they also advise that if additional sources of funding were not pursued and obtained the grant funding received from Falkirk Council would be insufficient to cover the whole cost of the core service. If the grant funding from Falkirk Council were reduced they would need to lose staff hours and depending on amount, staff posts. Further there is a threshold whereby the viability of the service continuing would be compromised.

Audited accounts are submitted to the Falkirk Council monitoring officer annually. These accounts are reviewed by officers from Falkirk Council finance services.

The 2012/ 2013 audited accounts were submitted by Open Secret and have been reviewed by Falkirk Council finance services.

The financial position has been assessed as follows:

Income was greater than expenditure in the general (unrestricted) fund and the restricted fund. The reserves policy sets a target equivalent to 6 months of expenditure on the unrestricted fund which would require £116,010. Actual reserves were £51,693. The accounts state that they plan to address this with fundraising and full cost recovery in funding applications. The Board of Directors are satisfied that the level of restricted reserves is sufficient due to the funding secured with a good spread of funding services.

Falkirk's contribution to the General Fund represents 63% of income, with the other main contributors being Clackmannanshire Council, Forth Valley Health Board, Stirling Council, other grants and generated income.

The organisation's running costs on the general fund were:-

Staff	73%
Volunteers	1.5%
Premises, training, admin, etc.	<u>25.5%</u>
	<u>100.00%</u>

No concerns are indicated by the analysis of the accounts and the Creditsafe rating report.

A number of grants on the restricted fund are scheduled to finish by the end of 2015. In particular, a £225k grant from Scottish Government and £135k from Inspiring Scotland. If no other sources of funding or continuation of existing grant funding due to end is not obtained then Open Secret's total income will reduce by 46% by end March 2015.

Staffing – Falkirk Service

There are 5 members of the core staff group – Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive, Parent Support Worker, Finance Admin and reception admin.

There are 39 volunteers recruited, trained and supported by Open Secret.

They have 20 registered /qualified counsellors.

Taking account of all service provision and funding sources Open Secret employ 31 members of staff.

Summary

Open Secret is a well-established and valued service. 2014 will mark 20 years of operation. They have in recent years been successful and skilled in identifying and obtaining other sources of grant funding. As such they have grown substantially over the last 6 years and have established a national profile.

Open Secret recently received the King's Fund Impact Award being one of only ten organisations from 400 applicants to do so. Of the successful 10 organisations Open Secret is the only one from Scotland.

In 2013 they achieved the Investors in People Award. They have also been short listed in 2 categories of the Scottish Charity Awards.

Open Secret work with the police, victim support and NHS Forth Valley. They have developed partnerships with other organisations dealing with abuse across Scotland and have representation on the Cross Party Group for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse and the Survivors reference group.