

Agenda Item 12

Falkirk Carers Strategy Progress Report



Falkirk Integration Joint Board

4 June 2021

Falkirk Carers Strategy Progress Report

For Noting

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines progress of the work of the Carers Strategy Implementation Group (previously Carers Act Implementation group) towards the implementation of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and the Carers Strategy Action Plan. It outlines ongoing priority work streams, particularly outlining how support has been offered to carers during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 The report provides recent performance information, including activity for completion of Adult Carer Support Plans and Young Carer Statements and 2020/21 performance of the Carers Fund Projects.

2. Recommendations

The Integration Joint Board is asked to:

- 2.1 note the progress made to date, including flexibility applied to support carers during the pandemic response period.
- 2.2 note the ongoing work, including evaluation of flexible respite approaches to support and learning from the activity of the last year.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 was enacted on 1 April 2018. It introduced a number of duties on local authorities and the NHS, some of which are delegated to Integration Joint Boards.
- 3.2 A multi-agency Falkirk Carers Act Implementation Group was established to oversee the preparation and implementation required for the 2016 Act. This has been renamed the Carers Strategy Implementation Group.
- 3.3 In line with legislative requirements, the Falkirk Carers Strategy 'Getting it Right for Carers in Falkirk' was approved and published at the same time as the HSCP Strategic Plan in April 2019. The Strategy will be reviewed and updated as noted at section 4.16.
- 3.4 An Action Plan was developed and included in the Strategy. Additional actions have been added to this Action Plan in line with the

recommendations of the 2019/20 Falkirk Integration Joint Board Internal Audit Review: ***Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and Participation and Engagement Strategy Arrangements.***

- 3.5 The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent national lockdown, in March 2020, interrupted the work of the Carers Strategy Implementation Group, including the continued development of the Carers Strategy Action Plan. The priority at this time was to communicate with carers regarding the disruption to carer support and the potential impact of this.
- 3.6 Also, at this time there was a particular focus on the distribution of Personal Protective equipment (PPE) ensuring that Carers, Personal Assistants and care providers had adequate supplies of PPE to keep those most at risk as safe as possible.

4. Carers Strategy Update

4.1 Covid-19 Response

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic the Short Breaks Team and the Self-Directed Support team have been working in close partnership with Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre to offer coordinated support to carers. The team has continued to work with other partners and teams to support carers in whatever way is possible to meet agreed outcomes.

- 4.2 During 2020-21 the Carers Centre has completed 151 ACSP and identified and offered support to 833 new carers. Completion of Young Carer Statements was suspended as this was only possible online and there were concerns about confidentiality and relationship building issues. Young carers continued to receive support and a range of short breaks were delivered including pamper/craft gifts, winter parcels and coffee shop cards.
- 4.3 By mid-June 2020 in-house respite provision had been realigned to offer emergency /urgent respite across all care groups. Locality teams have continued to prioritise to ensure that those carers most in need have been able to access respite care.
- 4.4 The Falkirk Carers Centre staff carried out a survey in June 2020 which showed that 78% of carers in Falkirk (who completed the survey) had not been able to have a break from their caring role during the lockdown period. Consequently, short break service provision was reviewed to enable carers to be supported in different ways using very flexible approaches.
- 4.5 Supporting carers through provision of information and support on how to keep themselves and the people they care for safe is a feature of carer support during the pandemic. This includes ensuring carers know where to access information on staying safe, Covid-19 guidance, access to PPE and information on the vaccination programme for carers. A delivery service is available locally to ensure all carers have access to appropriate PPE to enable them to deliver care safely – sometimes in more than one household.

- 4.6 A 'Flexible Respite' budget application process has been implemented and enables eligible carers to use their overnight respite funding to access an alternative break from their caring role. A budget of up to £1,000 is provided from which carers can purchase items or activities to support them in their caring role, for example exercise equipment, garden furniture and technology. Over 50 carers have so far accessed Flexible Respite with further requests anticipated.
- 4.7 The Short Breaks Team will evaluate the impact of this approach for carers and use the information gathered to identify how effective the support is so that carer outcomes can continue to be supported as Covid-19 restrictions are gradually eased. This will include identification of (perceived or actual) barriers to supporting carers in a more outcomes focussed way. By helping carers to think about their own support needs staff have been able to deliver a more bespoke response to short breaks/respite for individuals. Consequently, Flexible Respite budgets will continue for a further year and continue to be evaluated.
- 4.8 Throughout the pandemic short break/respite provision has continued to be funded. Personal Assistants funded through direct payments have also continued to be paid so that, as restrictions are eased, staff have been retained and support provision can resume.
- 4.9 Ongoing work under Carers Act Implementation is set out below.
- 4.10 [Adult Carers Support Plans/ Young Carers Statements \(ACSP & YCS\)](#)
Completion has continued remotely over phone or video call by the Carers Centre staff for Adult Carers Support Plans.
- 4.11 ACSP & YCS captures comprehensive demographic information for the Carers Census and for local planning purposes. The plans/statements are person-centred, focussing on carer outcomes. There is additional focus on prevention and early intervention, providing all carers with information and support to maintain their caring role and prevent crisis situations, e.g. Caring with Confidence Training, Benefits/Income Maximisation, Respite and Short Breaks.
- 4.12 A constant feature of the work is partnership with other parts of the social care sector, including NHS and third sector partners, as well as support providers. There is an increasing focus on a blended approach, combining support from a range of provision including community led models. There have also been increased efforts to ensure carers can focus on their own needs/health and wellbeing as they tend to focus primarily on the needs of the person/people they care for.
- 4.13 [Carers Fund Projects](#)
The six Carers Fund projects have continued to be funded in 2020-21:
1. Adult Carer Support Plans (Carers Centre)
 2. Young Carer Statements (Carers Centre)
 3. Support for Carers (Carers Centre)

4. Short Breaks / Carer Support Development (Short Breaks Bureau)
 5. Falkirk CAB Help for Carers
 6. FDAMH Family & Carers Support
- 4.14 Following approval by the IJB projects are funded for a further year, until 2022, to help address the impact of the pandemic on the progress of the work. The progress of these projects is provided in Appendix 1 Carers Fund Projects Status Reports.
- 4.15 **Falkirk Carers Strategy**
The Falkirk Carers Strategy, 'Getting it Right for Carers in Falkirk' 2019-22, is due to be reviewed and updated in 2022. There has been significant impacts on carers and carer support since the onset of the first Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020. As described in this report, much has changed and the way carers have been supported has been disrupted with new approaches emerging to ensure compliance with public health measures. Some changes have been beneficial and could signal new ways for carers to access support to meet their agreed outcomes. There is a lot of recovery work to do, including what we have learned from working through the pandemic.
- 4.16 It would be helpful to allow time to reflect on how that should influence the review of the Strategy. We are working through the Carers Strategy Implementation Group to review the plan and consider options. This will be aligned to the review of the Strategic Plan, and proposals will be presented to the next IJB meeting.
- 4.17 **Terminal Illness Regulations**
These regulations prescribe timescales for the preparation of Adult Carer Support Plans and Young Carer Statements for carers of people with a terminal illness diagnosis and come into force on 31 July 2021. A working group has been convened to consider the impact of these regulations and to ensure effective and timeous implementation. Identifying training requirements for staff and how this will be addressed is part of the work of the group. Statutory Guidance to accompany the Regulations has not yet been published.
- 4.18 **Short Breaks Services Statement**
There is a requirement under the Carers Act that we publish a Short Break Services Statement (under section 35) which has recently been reviewed and updated, including taking account of the impact of the pandemic. An Easy Read version has been produced with support from a range of people, including carers, to ensure information is accessible for both those who are cared for and their carers.
- 4.19 **Workforce Development**
The continued implementation of the 2016 Act includes supporting workforce development in the context of strengths-based assessment and support planning. This involves identification of eligible outcomes and ensuring personal and community-based resources are explored. For carers this

includes their right to continue caring and have a life outside/alongside their caring role. ACSP & YCS completion is based on good conversations with a carer support worker, focussing on the carer's outcomes. This is enhanced in conversation with the allocated worker to incorporate the outcomes of the person being cared for to achieve a good experience for both.

4.20 Refresher training is currently being offered to Locality Teams on Self Directed Support, Short Breaks and the 2016 Act as well as providing an update on the adaptations that have been made to support for carers as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions.

4.21 **Carers Census**

Carers Census submissions to Scottish Government have been suspended due to the pandemic, however appropriate recording mechanisms remain in place enabling provision of information when required.

5. **Conclusions**

5.1 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been significant for unpaid carers over the last year, with many services closing/reducing overnight and carers having to increase their caring role at very short notice. Many carers have experienced significant additional stress and have needed considerable support to enable them to adapt to changing circumstances out-with their control.

5.2 This report outlines the partnership working undertaken to try to address these issues in a responsive and flexible way and to try to ensure carers had access to support and information with staff providing as much support as was possible during the current crisis.

Resource Implications

Expenditure on short breaks/respite and carer support reduced over the course of 2020-21, resulting in an underspend against budget. This was inevitable due to pandemic restrictions and significantly reduced options for support for carers. A new earmarked reserve was created to carry forward the underspend to 21-22. Proposals for the use of the reserve are being developed in order to increase support during 21-22.

Impact on IJB Outcomes and Priorities

A flexible approach to supporting carers was adopted early on in the pandemic to try to reach carers and provide information, emotional and practical support and access to short breaks that were flexible and focussed on outcomes identified by carers themselves. While it was not possible to deliver the support that carers would have normally expected to access, progress continued to be made towards the IJB Outcomes and Priorities in the context of what was possible during this time.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no identified legal or risk implications attached to this report.

Consultation

Consultation on this report is not required.

Equalities Assessment

No equalities impact assessment is required as a result of this report.

6. **Report Author**

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7. **List of Background Papers**

n/a

8. **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Report on Carers Funded Projects



Falkirk Integration Joint Board

June 2021

Carers Fund Projects – End of Year Report 2020/21

To note progress of Projects

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Six projects have been awarded Carers Act funding since 2018. These projects all contribute to the implementation of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016.
- 1.2 This project summarise the progress of each project and illustrates performance during 2020/21 with tables and charts.

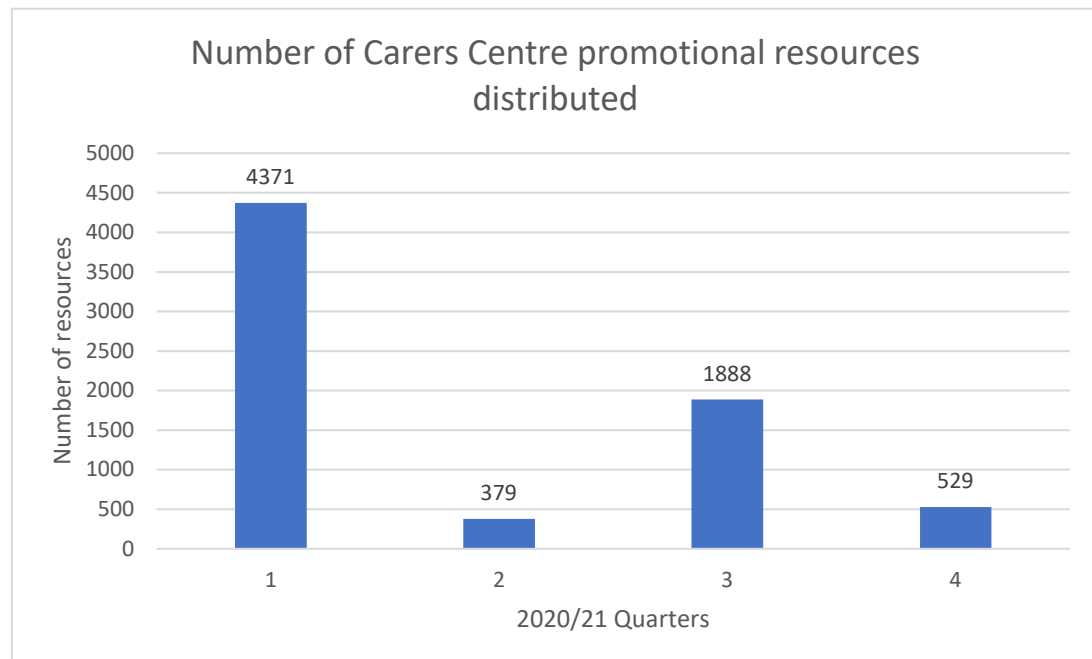
2. Support for Carers – Falkirk & Clackmannanshire Carers Centre

2.1 Overview of Project

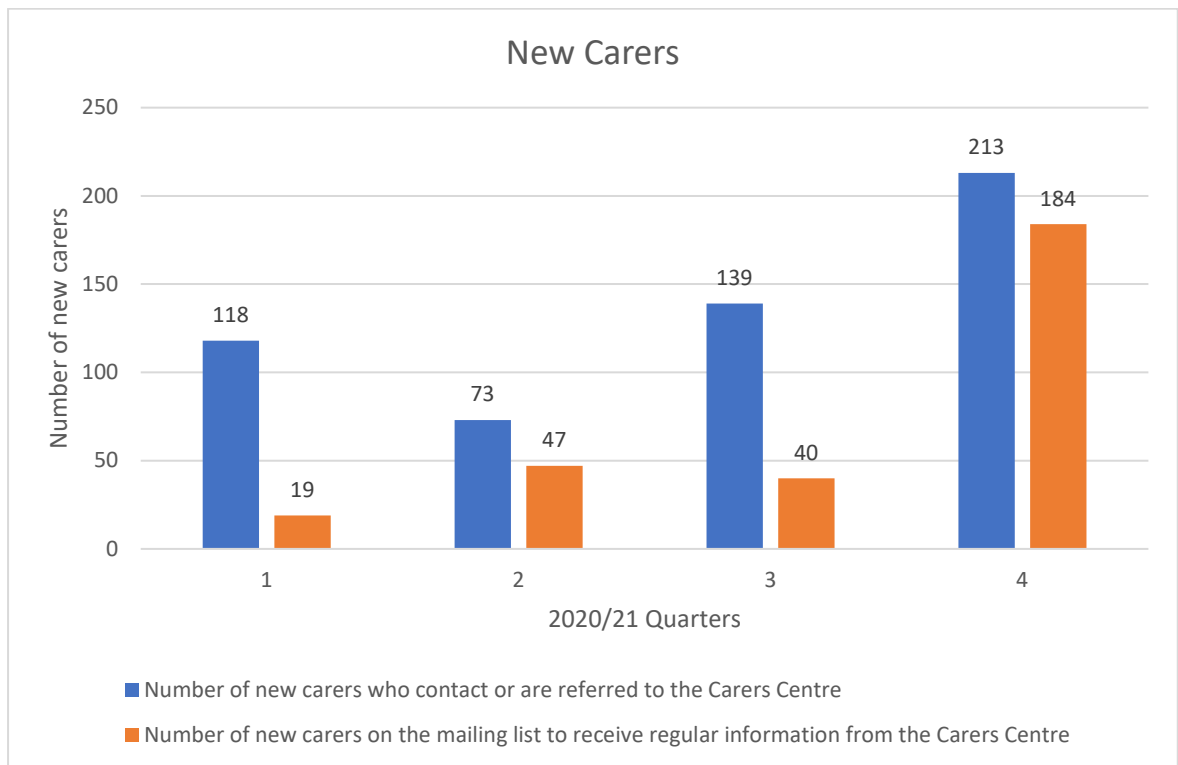
This project raises awareness about the services delivered by the Carers Centre through promotional resources, talks, participation in events etc.

2.2 Promotional Resources

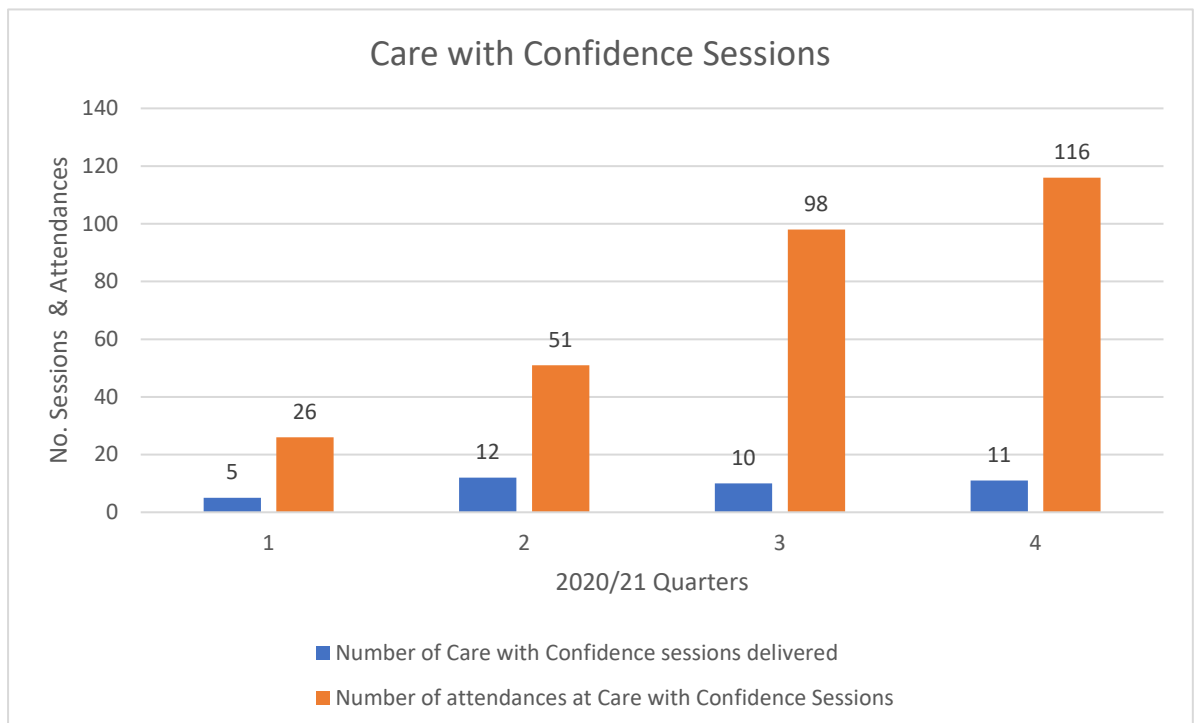
Produce, update and disseminate Carers Centre promotional resources:



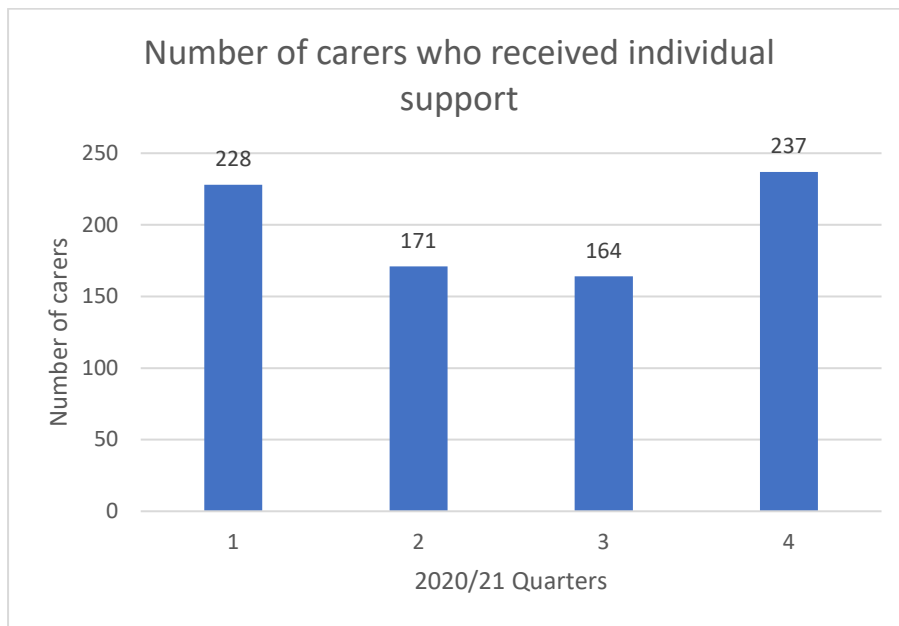
2.3 New Carers



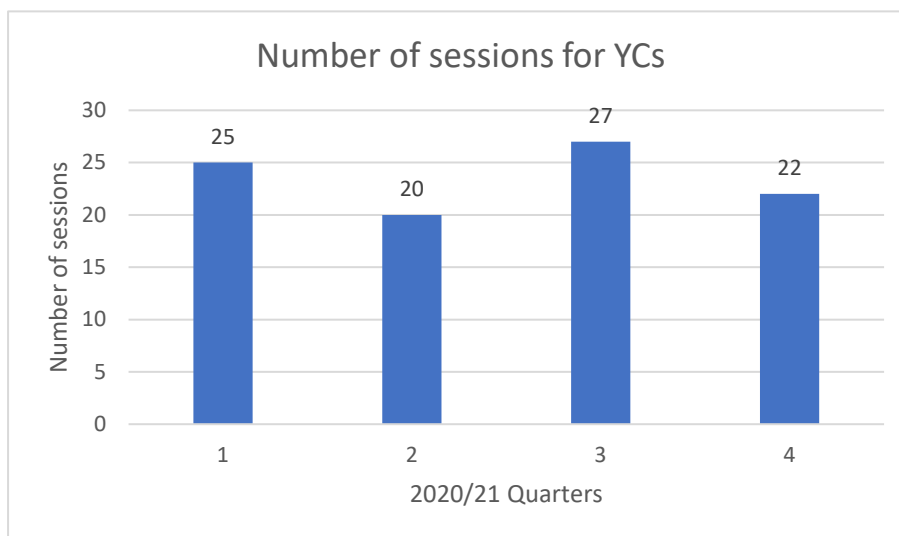
2.4 Care with Confidence Sessions



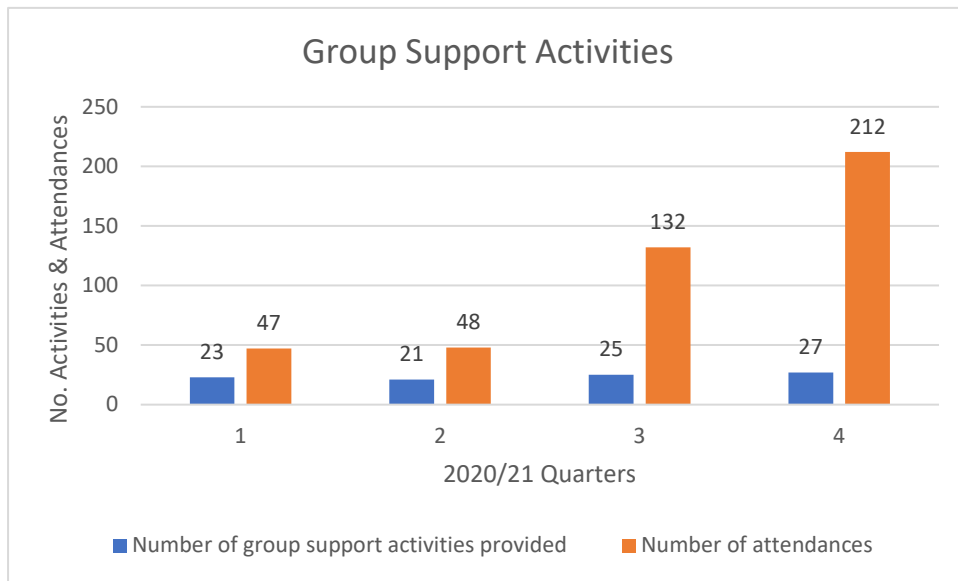
2.5 Individual Support



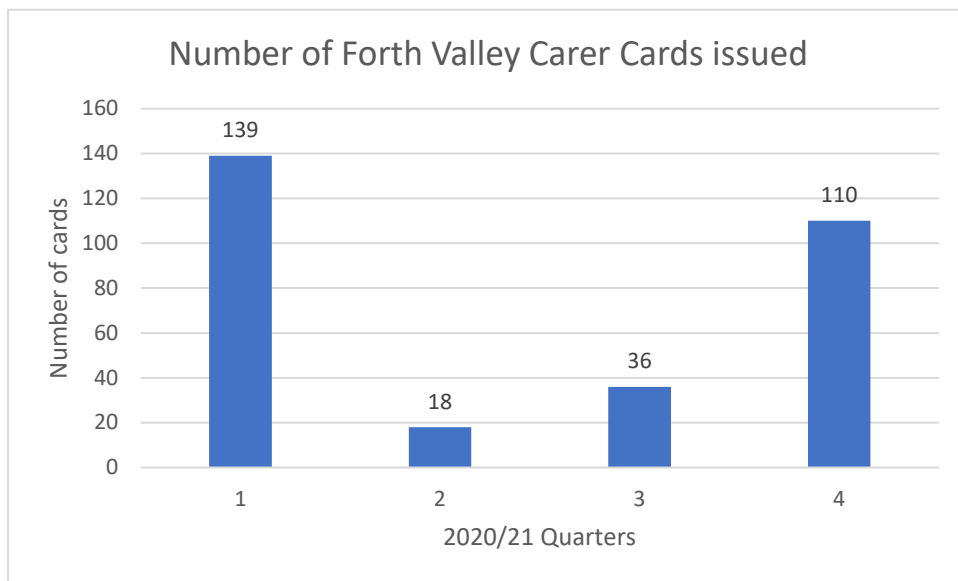
2.6 Young Carer Sessions



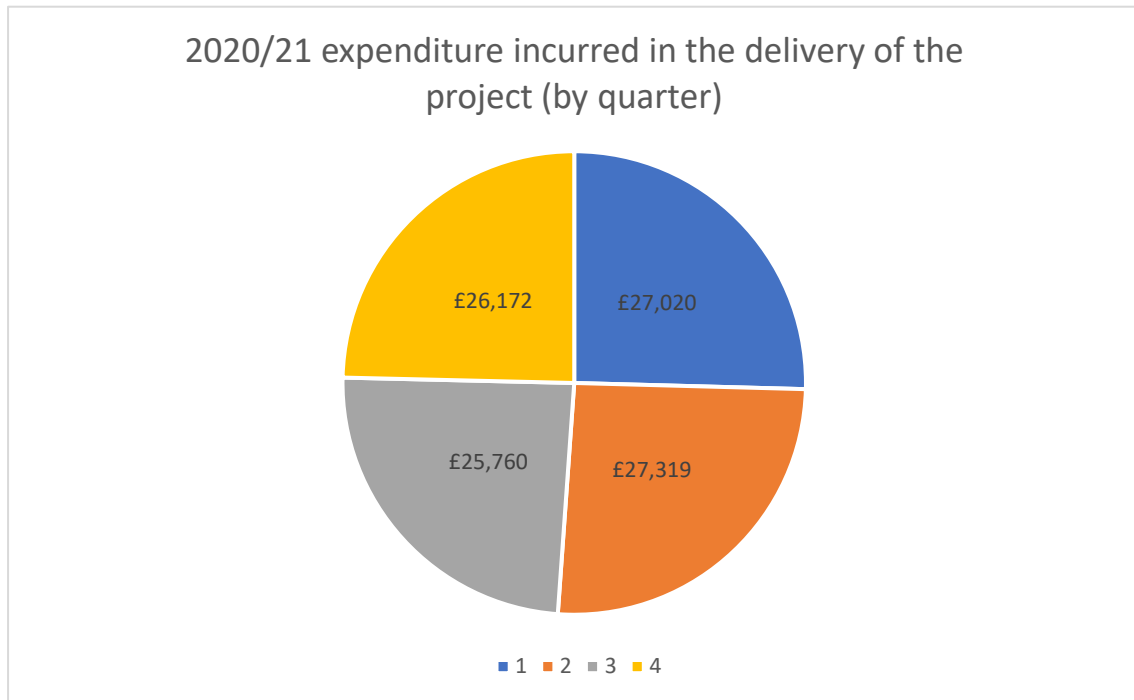
2.7 Group Activities



2.8 Forth Valley Carer Cards



2.9 Expenditure



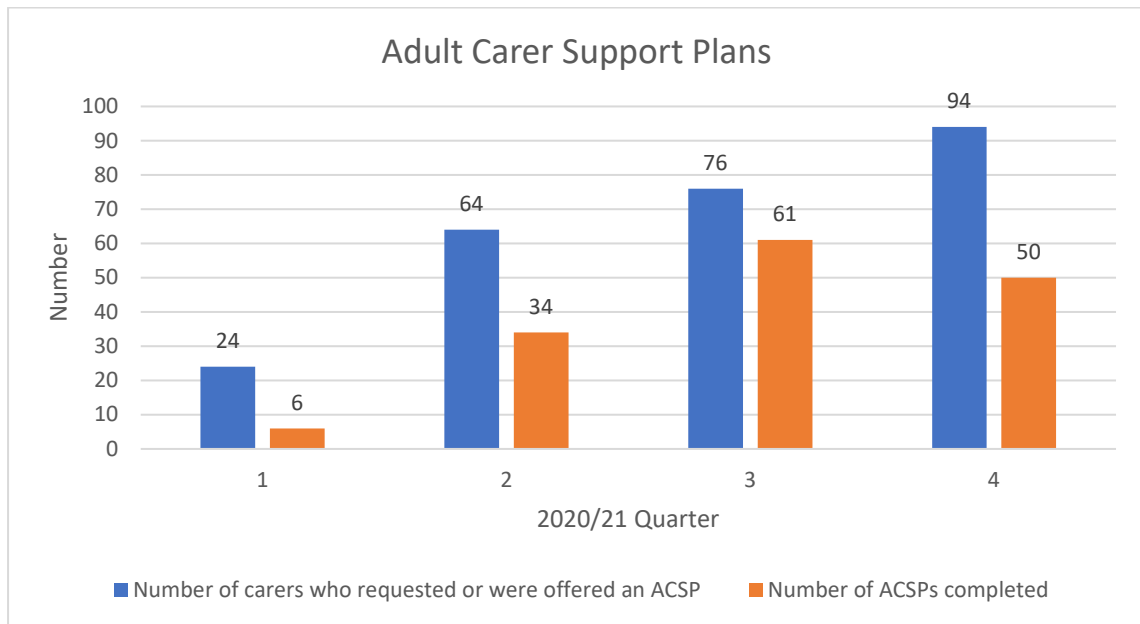
3. Adult Carer Support Plans – Falkirk & Clackmannanshire Carers Centre

3.1 Overview of Project

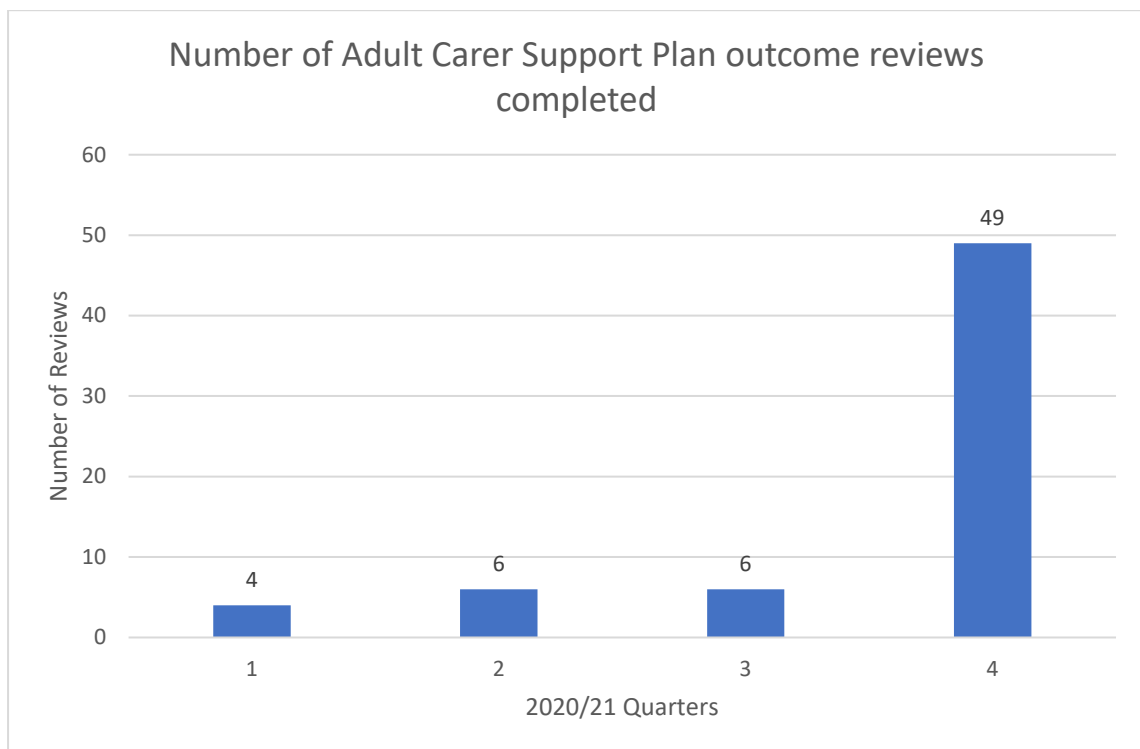
This project aims to make carers more aware of the choices available to them under the Carers Act and empowers to make genuine outcome focused choices which support them.

Carers will be better supported, on a more consistent basis, so that they can continue to care, if they so wish, in good health and wellbeing, allowing them to have a life alongside caring.

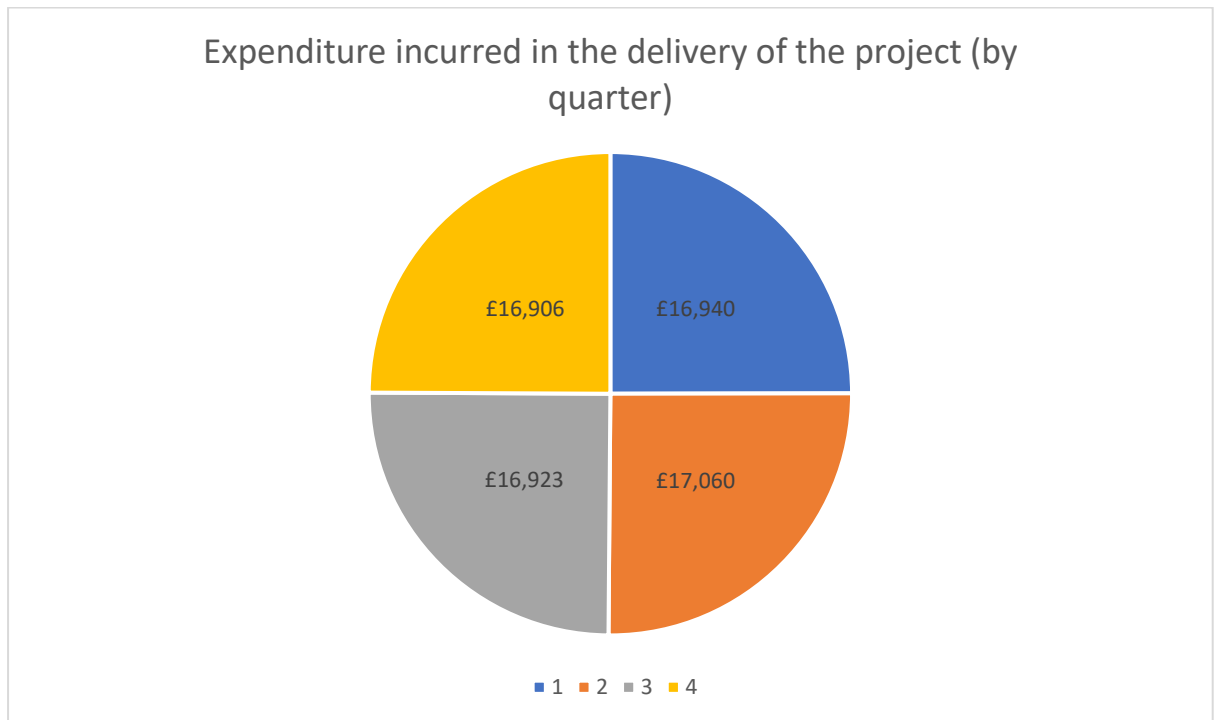
3.2 Number of Adult Carer Support Plans Requested, Offered & Completed



3.3 Number of ACSP Outcome Reviews Completed



3.4 Expenditure

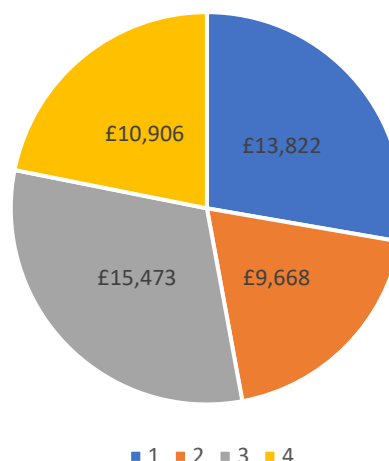


4. Young Carer Statements – Falkirk & Clackmannanshire Carers Centre

- 4.1 It has been difficult to complete interactive Young Carer Statements over video call, due to concerns around confidentiality and relationship building between the worker and the young carer. It was therefore decided to suspend the preparation of Young Carer Statements until they could meet face-to-face with a worker.
- 4.2 To facilitate face-to-face work in schools, the Young Carers Workers re-established relationships with schools when they re-opened in August. Education implemented Covid-19 regulations in schools, which in the interim included no visitors from external services. As confidence grew, this was relaxed to give access to children, subject to risk assessments, but only if deemed as essential for those in need of face-to-face contact with services. This required the production of risk assessments for both the activity and individual members of staff. Due to the increase in virus cases and the new variant of the virus in December, this resulted in workers once again not accessing schools.
- 4.3 Funding for young carers group activity programme was used to provide support identified as being required by young carers during this period. This included 80 pampering/craft gift bags, 120 festive winter parcels, 34 coffee shop gift cards, which the team distributed to young carers. By continuing to provide group meetings for young carers, their identified needs have been supported. Engagement and attendance at young carers groups, gave young carers opportunities to have a break from their caring role, improve their health and have opportunities to make friendships.
- 4.4 An unexpected positive outcome for a small number of young carers living with anxiety, who did not previously attend face-to-face groups, was they felt able to engage with online virtual groups, often with their cameras off, but obviously participating by using the chat function. There have also been 119 check ins/contacts made with young carers or their families by young carer workers in this period to offer any support or information about other services.

4.5 Expenditure

2020/21 expenditure incurred in the delivery of the project (by quarter)

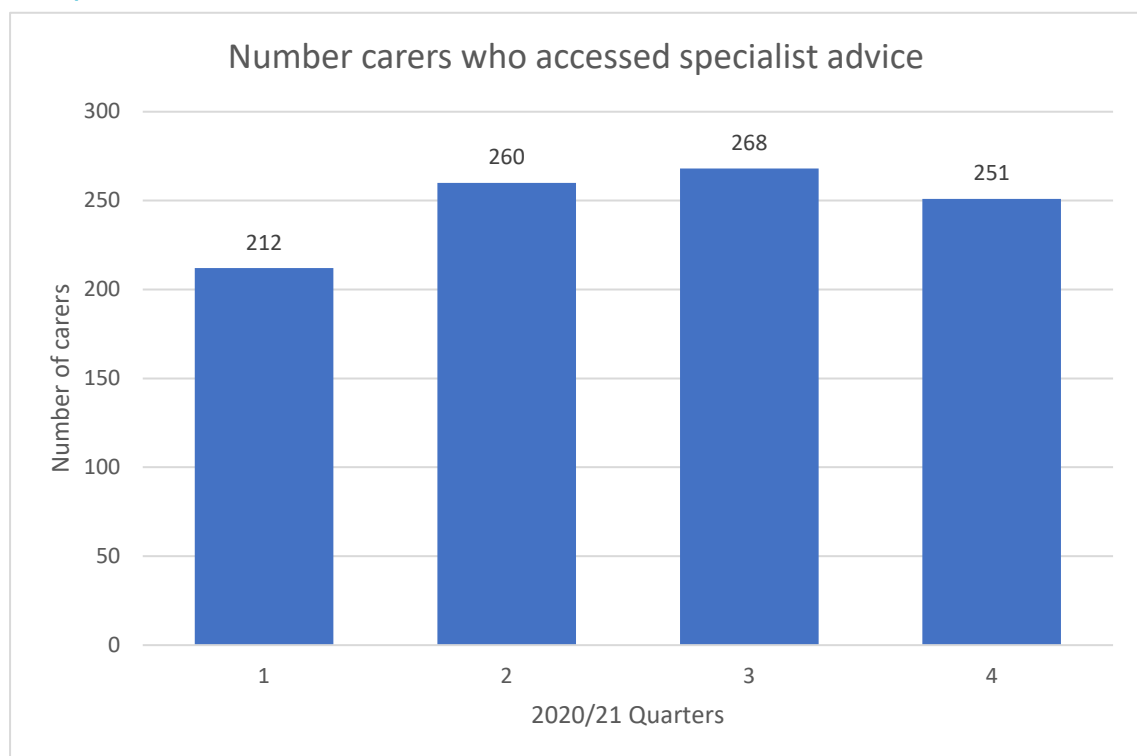


5. Help for Carers – Falkirk Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB)

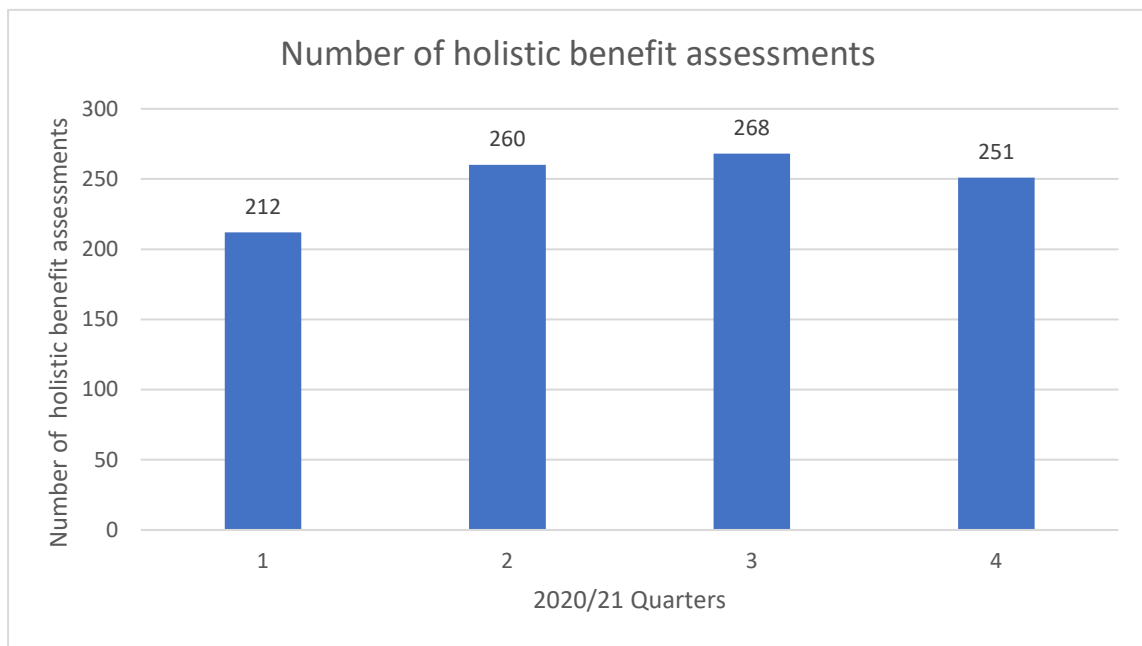
5.1 Overview of Project

This project provides an outreach clinic in the Carers Centre 2 days per week for initial referrals. The project worker is normally available 2 further days for follow up appointments or home visits. However, during the past year appointments have been online. The service identifies options and solutions to meet carer needs and works closely with other agencies to ensure that further assistance is accessed, where appropriate e.g. CAB Legal Clinic, Advocacy Centre, Falkirk District Credit Union. There is also a focus on providing support and advice to young carers and young adult carers,

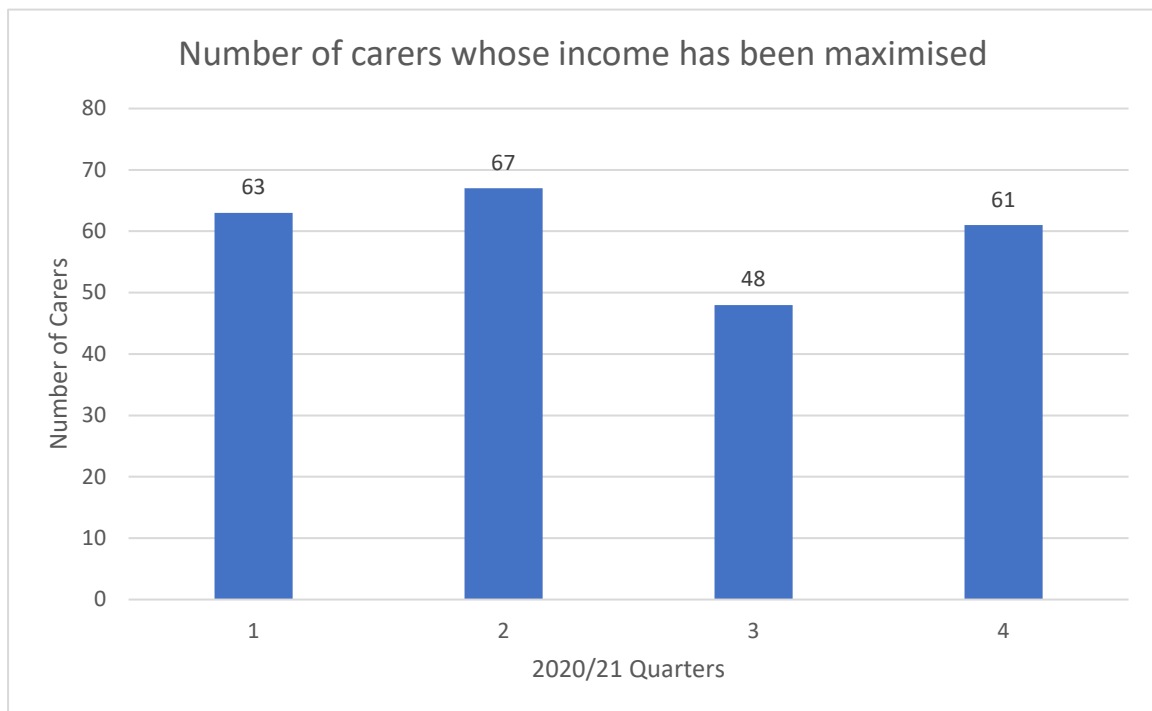
5.2 Specialist Advice



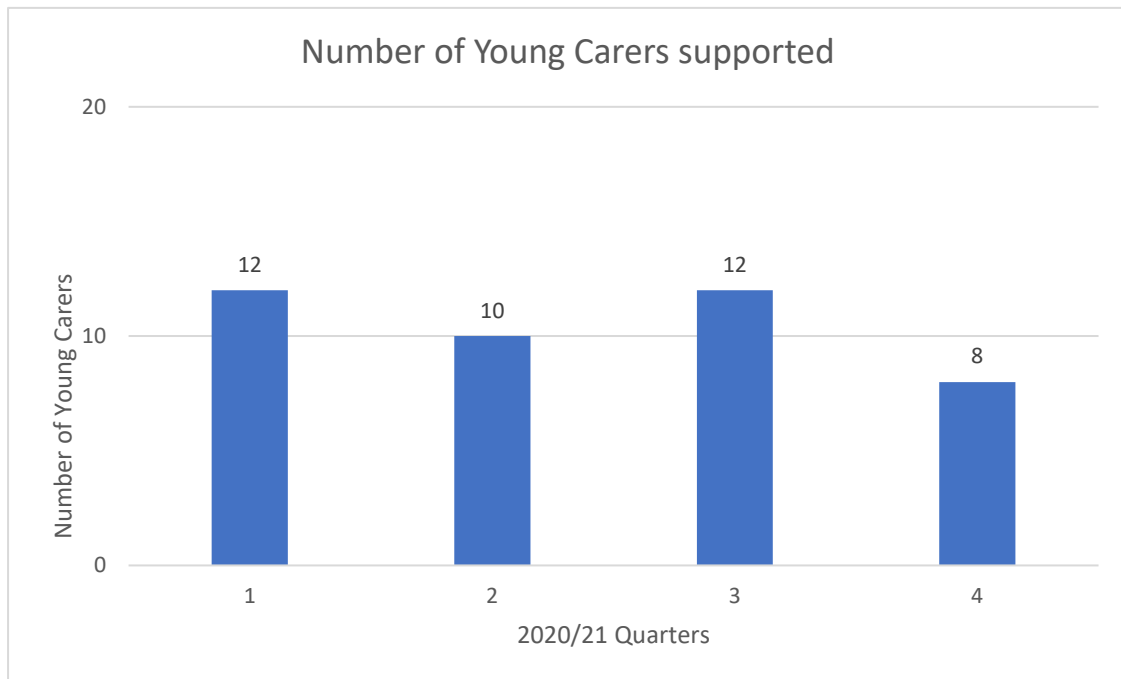
5.3 Holistic Benefit Assessments



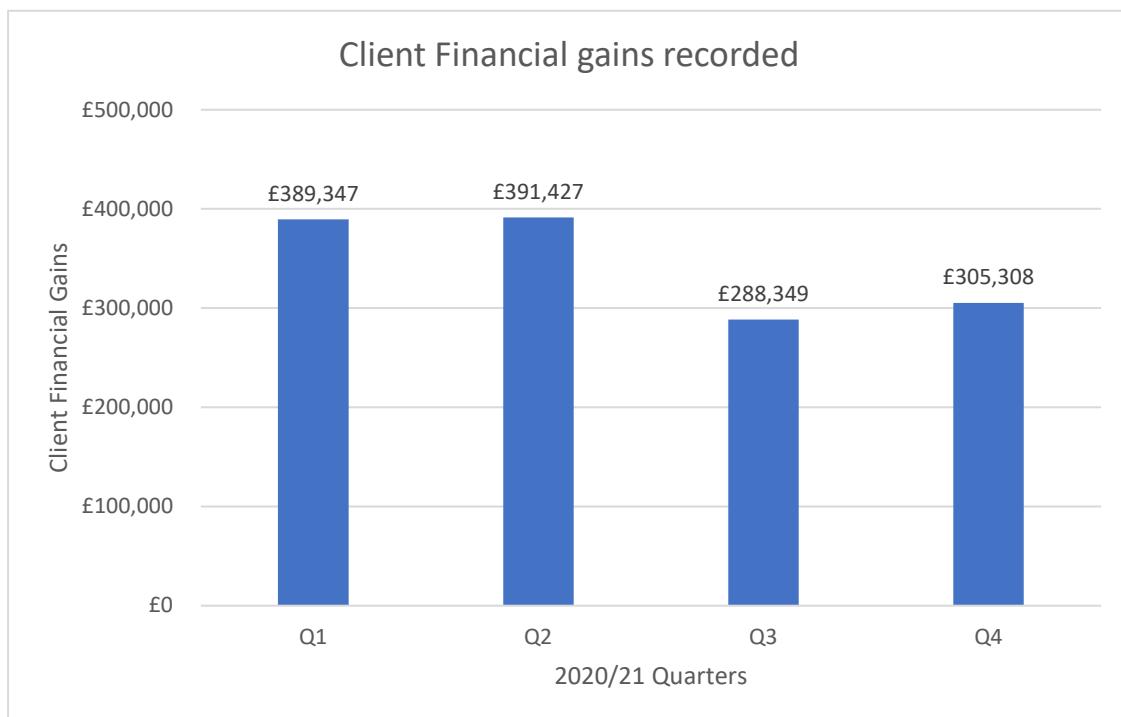
5.4 Income Maximisation



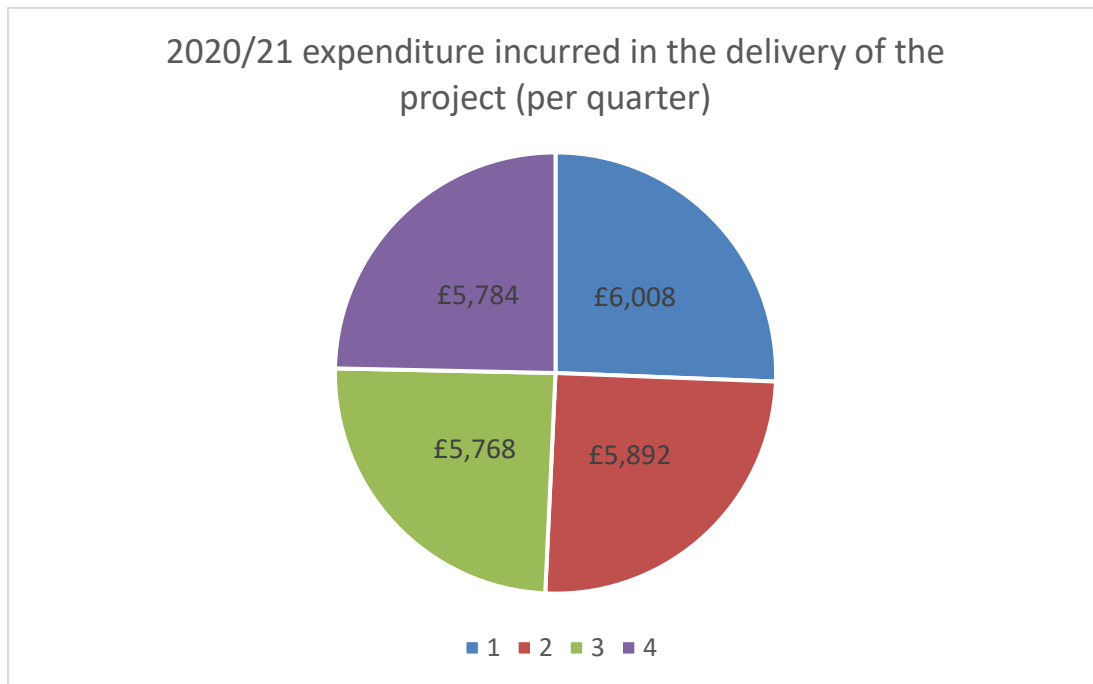
5.5 Young Carers



5.6 Client Financial Gains



5.7 Expenditure

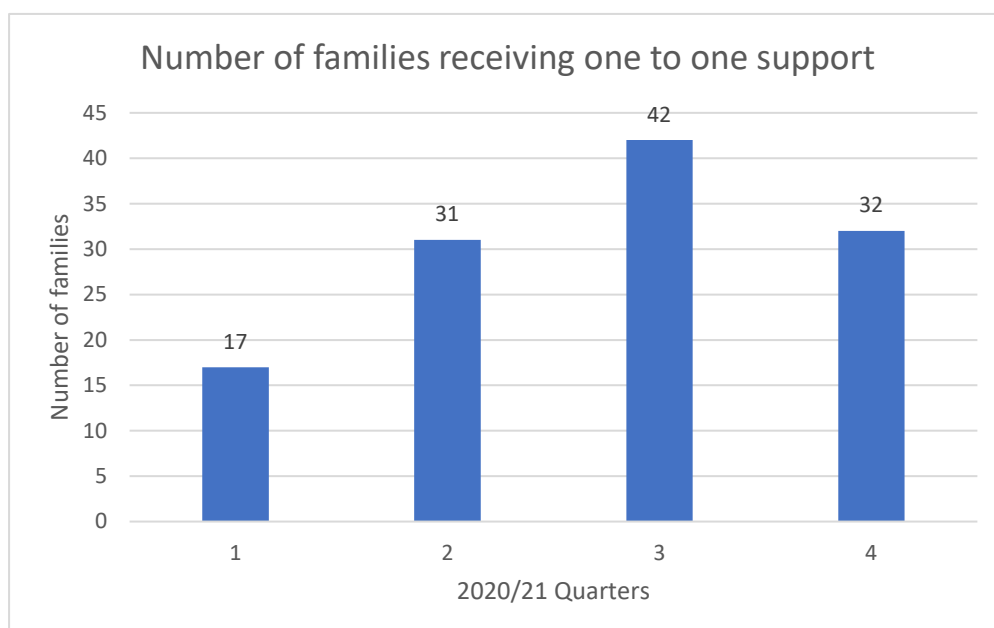


6. Family & Carers Support – Falkirk District Association for Mental Health (FDAMH)

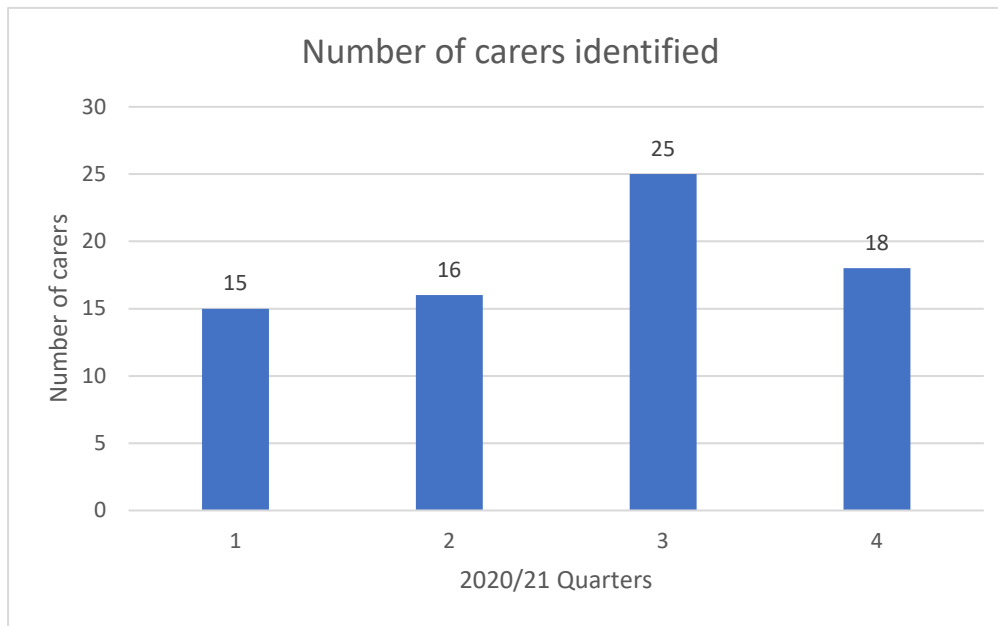
6.1 Overview of Project

This project delivers a service to carers / families who are struggling or in crisis as a result of caring for someone impacted by reduced psychological wellbeing.

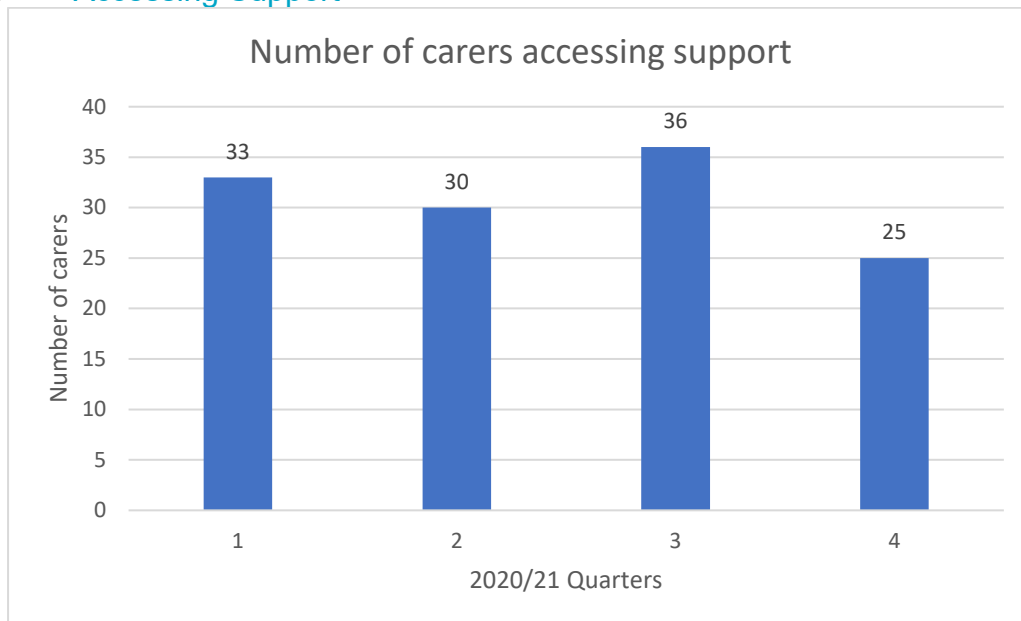
6.2 Families Receiving One to One Support



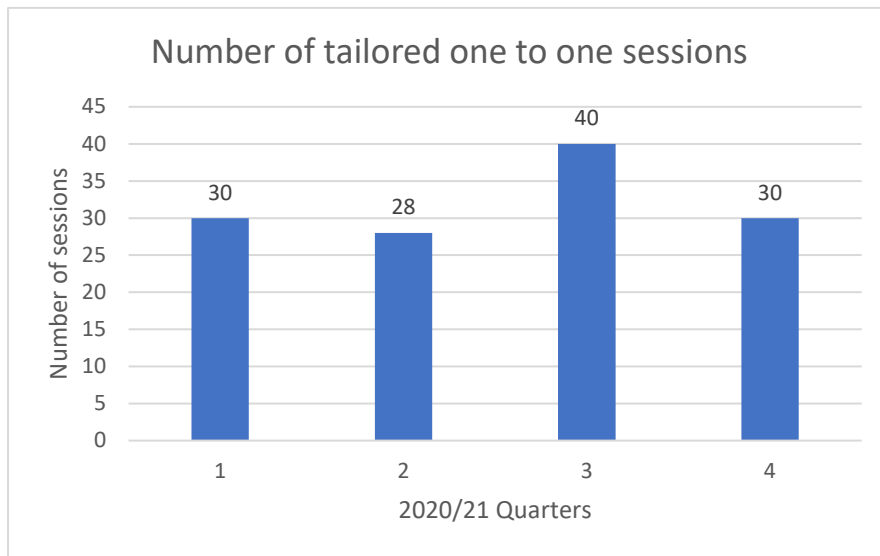
6.3 Number of Carers Identified



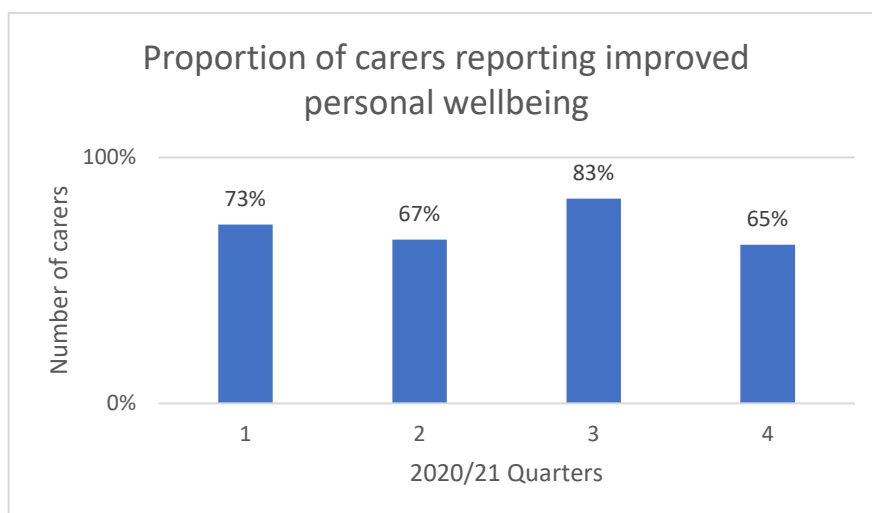
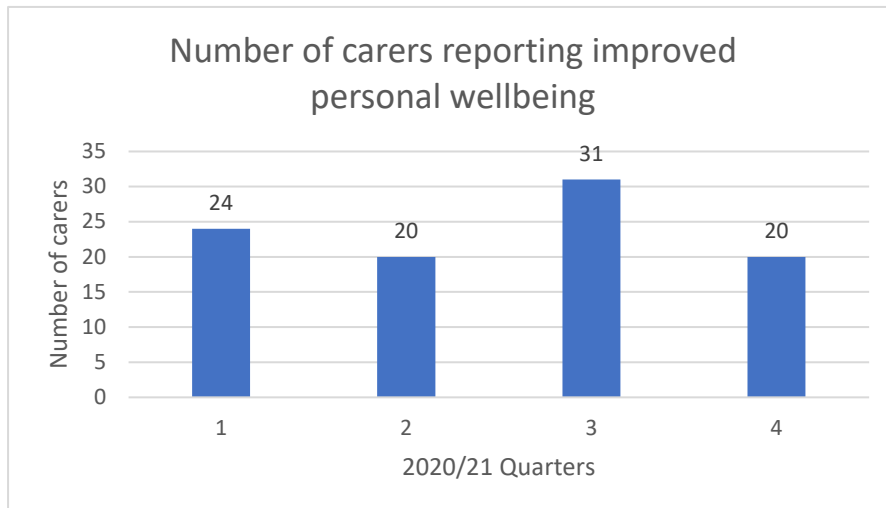
6.4 Accessing Support



6.5 Tailored One to One Sessions



6.6 Improved Personal Wellbeing



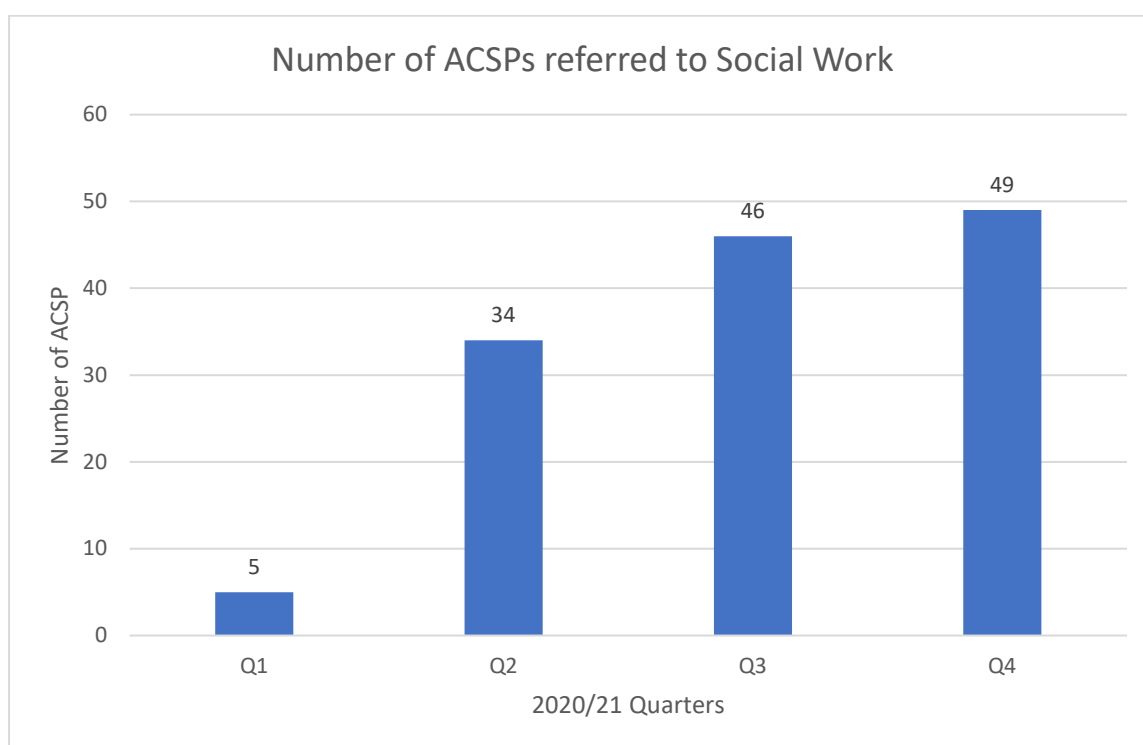
7. Short Breaks / Carers Act Development – Social Work Adult Services

7.1 Overview of the Project

This project continues to:

- Work in partnership with the Carers Centre (including the Carers Forum) to ensure design and delivery of short breaks takes account of the views of carers and those they care for in line with outcomes identified in Adult Carer Support Plans and Young Carer Statements.
- Increase awareness of the 2016 Act among carers, staff, providers, local organisations.
- Encourage the uptake and completion of Adult Carer Support Plans and Young Carer Statements.
- Link with local providers, businesses, and organisations to encourage them be more aware of carers and to support local carers in the community.
- Support service delivery within the Short Breaks Bureau to meet the expectation of all carers and service users.
- Improve the identification of carers from minority groups/hidden or hard to reach carers.
- Support the recording and reporting of carer identification and support in line with LA/HSCP requirements and the requirements of the Carers Census (Scottish Government).
- To promote and publicise the HSCP implementation of the Carer's Strategy within the Falkirk area.
- To ensure policy and practise regarding the 2016 Act links with the Carer's Strategy aims and outcomes and other related strategies and policy objectives of the HSCP and Falkirk Council.
- Continuously review the progress of implementation to ensure that objectives are met within appropriate timescales.
- Help the Carers Strategy Implementation Group to identify and report implementation risks and in collaboration with the Partnership Leads identify actions required to mitigate them.

7.2 Number of Adult Carer Support Plans Referred to Social Work



7.3 SDS Options

	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
SDS Options of Carers	Option 2	Planned respite suspended	Planned respite suspended	Planned respite suspended	Planned respite suspended
	Option 3	Planned respite suspended	Planned respite suspended	Planned respite suspended	Planned respite suspended
	Option 4	Planned respite suspended	Planned respite suspended	Planned respite suspended	Planned respite suspended
	Not recorded	Planned respite suspended	Planned respite suspended	Planned respite suspended	Planned respite suspended
		Due to Covid-19 only emergency or urgent respite was provided. Choice of resource was not possible due to very limited availability.			

7.4 Expenditure

