Agenda Item 6

Following the Public Pound: Services to Children and Young People – 2020/21 Annual Reporting Statements

Agenda Item 6

Falkirk Council

Title:	**Following The Public Pound: Services To Children and Young People – 2020/21 Annual Reporting Statements**
Meeting:	**Scrutiny Committee - External**
Date:	**25 November 2021**
Submitted By:	**Director of Children's Services**

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update regarding the work of the external organisations that receive funding, provide services to children and young people, and fall within the Following the Public Pound reporting and monitoring arrangements. The reporting period is April 2020 to March 2021.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider individual reports for external organisations and select an option to:-

(1) approve the report and acknowledge progress by the external provider(s) in meeting the Council's priorities;
(2) request further information on specific aspects of the service provided; and
(3) request action with follow up for subsequent Scrutiny Committee (External) consideration.

3. Background

3.1. External organisations in receipt of funding from Falkirk Council are subject to formal monitoring, scrutiny and reporting. The organisations receiving funding from Children's Services are Third Sector Organisations (voluntary/charitable) and NHS Forth Valley.

The organisations are funded on the basis that they are able to provide services which could not readily be provided within the Council. Services are, however, provided in ways which compliment those provided by the Council and other statutory partners. The services support our corporate and strategic partnership priorities.

3.2. The majority of external organisations have been subject to funding reductions in recent years. Whilst the long-term value of input from external provision is acknowledged, challenging fiscal restraints have required organisations to operate with reduced funding and in future years these constraints are expected to further impact on service delivery. Resources allocated to external organisations continue to be under review.

3.3 As part of the process for Following the Public Pound, Monitoring Officers assess risk and measure performance for the organisations they are responsible for.

Monitoring is recommended to take the form of scheduled reports and meetings. Each Reporting Statement (attached as Appendices) provides an overview of the service funded by the Council, the agreed objectives or outcomes, performance information during the period and a financial overview.

3.4 Falkirk Council provides varying levels of funding to the organisations whose services are reported within this report (appendices). They each provide services to children, young people and their families and operate in partnership with Children's Services and our partners. They are specifically aligned to support Council priorities, service plan objectives and national policy.

4. Considerations

4.1 The services funded by Falkirk Council significantly enhance our ability to meet our statutory responsibilities, national and local policy objectives. The services may have been funded for many years by the Council but the monitoring and review processes are utilised to ensure services adjust and align to internal and external policy drivers and changes in legislation.

4.2 National Policy Context

4.2.1 Getting It Right For Every Child

National policy is delivered in the context of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). The GIRFEC approach is intended to ensure that children get the right help at the right time in their lives.

4.2.2 Early Years Framework

The Early Years Framework sets out the elements that need to come together to improve outcomes for early years using the strength of universal services to deliver preventative and early intervention services.

The objective of the Early Years Collaborative (EYC) is to accelerate the high-level principles set out in GIRFEC and the Early Years Framework into practical action.

4.3 Local Policy Context

4.3.1 Integrated Children's Services Plan

The Integrated Children's Services Plan (ICSP) sets out the collective ambition of the Community Planning Partnership to achieve the vision that every child and young person should have an enjoyable, fulfilling life in a nurturing, healthy and safe environment. The ICSP sets out ways in which services will work together in order to achieve this vision for Falkirk's children, within its priorities. Services provided by the third sector are key partners in the delivery of these services.

4.3.2 Closer To Home

Closer To Home is an important transformational Children's Services Strategy. The key principle of the Closer To Home Strategy is that children and young people, wherever possible, should be brought up within the environment of their own family. Where parents are unable to provide direct care, every effort should be made to maintain the child or young person within the family network. When it is assessed as necessary to provide alternative care, this should be provided locally, as close to home as possible.

The overarching aim of this Strategy is to reduce reliance on external foster and residential care, thus improving outcomes for Looked After children and young people. Closer To Home puts the needs of children, parents and families at the centre of Children's Services. It concentrates on the need to work closely with public, private and third sector partners to focus services towards prevention. The success of the Strategy will support improved outcomes for vulnerable children and young people and enable budget management leading to budget savings in the later stages. It is a critical element of the Council's Business Plan and services provided via FTPP have all aligned to support Strategic intent.

5 Implications

5.1 Financial

The table below details funding received by external organisations which fall within Following The Public Pound reporting. Some of these are national organisations and may have access to other financial resources.

An overview of the funding provided for both 2020/21 and the previous financial year (2019/20) is provided.

Organisation	2019/20	2020/21	Appendix
Aberlour Early Years Outreach	£159,060	£159,060	1
Aberlour Family Support Centre - Langlees	£110,937	£110,937	2
Barnardo's	£500,000	£500,000	3
Home-Start Falkirk West	£28,014	£28,014	4
NHS Forth Valley CAMHS Clinical Psychologist for Looked After Children	£33,100	£78,500	5
NHS Forth Valley Speech & Language Therapy	£465,040	£515,040	6
One Parent Families Scotland Falkirk	£82,523	£82,523	7
Quarriers Children's Rights Service	£86,200	£86,200	8
Transform Forth Valley Time For Us	£38,870	£38,870	9
"Who Cares?" Scotland Advocacy Service	£27,970	£27,970	10
TOTAL	**£1,531,714**	**£1,627,114**	

6. Conclusions

6.1 Each Appendix attached provides a detailed statement of the service provided, the agreed objectives or outcomes, performance information during the reporting period and a financial overview. With the specific focus and overall importance of the Closer To Home Strategy and the need to deliver on all of the objectives, Service Level Agreements with all organisations are being firmly aligned to performance monitored against agreed outcomes.

Children's Services intends to change the way it commissions services from external organisations. We intend to move away from one-year grant funding to contracting of specified services.

Not all of the organisation's audited accounts for 2020/2021 are available as yet. This is largely due to the timing of the Annual General Meetings of each organisation.

6.2 As part of the assessment process, external organisations are allocated a risk rating based on governance arrangements, financial management and past performance. The ratings are low, medium or high and provide monitoring officers with an indication of the minimum level of monitoring and support which should be established.

External organisations deemed as low risk are monitored at least annually, medium risk or external organisations should be monitored at least quarterly and high risk at least monthly. Monitoring is recommended to take the form of regular reports which measure performance against outcomes and/or objectives and provide financial monitoring.

Director of Children's Services

Author: Sara Lacey, Head of Social Work Children's Services 01324 506695, sara.lacey@falkirk.gov.uk

Date: 26 October 2021

Appendices

Annual Reporting Statements

1) Aberlour Early Years Outreach
2) Aberlour Family Support Centre - Langlees
3) Barnardo's
4) Home-Start Falkirk West
5) NHS Forth Valley CAMHS Clinical Psychologist for Looked After Children
6) NHS Forth Valley Speech & Language Therapy
7) One Parent Families Scotland, Falkirk
8) Quarriers Children's Rights Service
9) Transform Forth Valley Time 4 Us
10) "Who Cares?" Scotland Advocacy Service

List of Background Papers

None

Appendix 1

FALKIRK COUNCIL
FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT 2020/21

Organisation Name	Aberlour
Project	Aberlour Early Years Outreach
Agreement Dates	1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021
Name of Lead Officer	Cathy Megarry

A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

1. Summary of key aims & objectives of organisation

Aberlour Early Years Outreach provides a service to vulnerable families and those experiencing multiple stresses across the Falkirk Council area. Support is provided to families living in the following areas, however support can also be provided in other areas across Falkirk Council. This is subject to ongoing review by Falkirk Council.

Aberlour Early Years Outreach works in partnership with other local agencies where the need arises and by doing this strives to complement not duplicate services available.

Support will be offered primarily to expectant parents and those with children prior to entering school (under the age of 5 years). Support provided has a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of families and support children's development. Staff work on an outreach basis within families' homes and their local communities in the following areas: Airth, Bantaskine, Bothkennar, Camelon, Carronshore, Dunmore, Denny, Dunipace, Fankerton, Grangemouth, Haggs, Head of Muir, Larbert, Letham, Longcroft, Skinflats, Stenhousemuir, South Alloa, Stoneywood, Tamfourhill, Torwood.

The key aims and objectives of the Service are to:

- Reduce risk and levels of harm to children and young people
- Increase and/or strengthen protective factors
- Improve healthy relationships
- Improve physical and mental health
- Involve children in regular constructive activity
- Increase confidence in children and parents' own ability
- Promote participation in social and community activities
- Improve relationships with family (carers)
- Reduce risk of family breakdown
- Improve children and families quality of life
- Actively involve families in plans and decisions
- Ensure families are listened to and heard
- Enable children and parents to take part in planning
- Encourage families to have positive networks

2. What is the purpose of the funding provided by the Council?

When working with families, staff assess the families' needs by using Aberlour Outcomes Framework. This is done alongside the families and involves them exploring their wellbeing in keeping with Wellbeing Indicators. A programme of support is then agreed and support is focussed on improving the areas of need identified.

The service aims to take into account GIRFEC wellbeing indicators for children and young people.

3. Why does the Council fund this?

EXTRACT FROM JOINT WORKING AGREEMENT FOR 20/21:

The service provided by Aberlour Child Care Trust contributes to the following Falkirk Strategic Outcomes:

- Improving mental health and wellbeing
- Tackling the impact of poverty on children

Aberlour Child Care Trust also contributes to the outcomes of the Integrated Children's Services Plan the delivery of provisions in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and Children's Services Closer to Home Strategy.

4. How long has the Council funded this organisation to deliver this Service?

Aberlour Early Years Outreach (formerly known as CLASP) has been working with young children and their families since January 2000. Funded initially by Sure Start Scotland, the Service has continually evolved in response to the needs of the children and families across Falkirk, while taking into account Falkirk Council and the Scottish Government's strategic objectives. The Service has adapted to reduced funding over time.

Set out the funding provided by the Council over the last five years.

Year	Annual Funding	Support in Kind	One Off Support
2020/21	159,060	Office premises, electricity	Nil
2019/20	159,060	Office premises, electricity	Nil
2018/19	159,060	Office premises, electricity	Nil
2017/18	227,705	Office premises, electricity	Nil
2016/17	263,464	Office premises, electricity	Nil

B SERVICE DELIVERY

1. **What does the organisation deliver and to whom i.e. typical service users, customer group targeted etc?**

1a) WHO DOES THE SERVICE SUPPORT?

The Service provides support to expectant parents and those with children prior to entering school2 (under the age of 5 years). The Service works with families who are impacted by one or more of the following:-

bonding/attachment concerns; disability; domestic abuse; child development concerns; family crisis; limited family support; parental learning disability; parental ill health; parental mental health; poverty; problematic substance use. Many of these issues, referred to as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic events, including parents and/or children's experiences of abuse and neglect.

1b) HOW ARE FAMILIES SUPPORTED?

Staff work on an outreach basis within families' homes and their local communities using local community resources & facilities. The Service delivers a range of structured themed programmes while also planning bespoke packages of support to address individual needs of families.

Staff liaise with partner agencies, to ensure families are supported and that children are safe and healthy and sometimes assessing parents' capacity in caring for their children.

Support provided has a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of parents and their children; enhancing relationships between parents and their children; promoting children's development; ensuring families have safe and healthy home environments; connecting families with their communities.

1c) COVID RESPONSE

The Service had adapted to take account Covid-19 Safety measures. As the Service was regarded as essential for vulnerable families, staff firstly undertook planned 'garden' visits and social distance walks to families with particular focus on addressing the mental health and wellbeing of parents and their children, as well as planning how to best manage children's behaviours. They then were able to work directly in families homes in Autumn of 2020 while adhering to Covid safety measures.

Themed groupwork resources were adapted so that families could access support via email and/or printed copies delivered to their homes. Staff then facilitated individual sessions by phone, Microsoft Teams, garden meetings and home visits.

1d) ADDITIONALITY OUTWITH JOINT WORKING AGREEMENT

A. <u>FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO FAMILIES from EARLY YEARS OUTREACH FUNDRAISED MONIES</u>: during this period the Service provided the following:-

- £11,267.68 for direct financial support to 62 families for food, clothes, and gas/electricity
- £4,505.49 for sourced essential items i.e. clothes, baby equipment, household items and furniture

B. <u>FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO FAMILIES from ABERLOUR URGENT ASSISTANCE FUND:</u>

- £38,634.38 to 162 families across Falkirk Council (355 children) to pay for essential household items, furniture, beds, clothes, food and gas/electricity.

£1,535.49 of the above funded debt/arrears accrued by families.

TOTAL ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO FALKIRK FAMILIES = £54,407.55

C. FALKIRK FAMILIES SUPPORT LINE

In June 2020 Barnardo's Children's Services and Aberlour were commissioned by Falkirk Council Children's Services to deliver the Falkirk Families Support Line (FFSL), in response to difficulties experienced by families due to Covid-19, including, isolation, poverty, and mental health. Consisting of two key elements i.e. Support to Members of the Public and Requests for Assistance from agencies, the Service was initially planned for 3 months to support families during the school holiday period, and was then continued until August 2021.

239 Member of Public calls	**90** Requests for Assistance
128 Individuals signposted to other supports	**100%** callers satisfied with outcome

The Support Line evolved from offering short-term support to a much-needed lifeline for some families during a very difficult period. Often receiving calls from distressed parents, worried about being able to provide basic needs for their children, such as food, heating and access to education, highly skilled support staff were able to provide a safe space for callers to explore feelings, find a way forward, signpost to other supports and offer direct financial assistance.

D. ABERLOUR PERINATAL BEFRIENDING SUPPORT: This Service is funded by Scottish Government PNIMH Fund, The Robertson Trust and The Cattanach Trust with cumulative total of:

£122,500 and worked with 84 families in 2020/21

The Service works closely with Aberlour Early Years Outreach, having shared office space, and supporting families jointly and/or transitioning from one Service to another.

2. **How many people directly benefit from the organisation?**

ABERLOUR EARLY YEARS OUTREACH
REFERRAL INFORMATION – 01 April 202 to 31 March 2021

Families within the commissioned catchment area:				**Families outwith the catchment area where an alternative support could not be sourced**			
Larbert/ Stenhousem'	25	Carronshore	6	Hallglen	5	Boness	1
Grangemouth	21	Airth	2	Falkirk	4	Redding	1
Denny/ Dunipace	11	Tamfourhill	3	Avonbridge	3	Wallacestone	1
Camelon	6	Bantaskin	1	Bonnybridge	3		

Total no of Families	**93**	No of children 0-5yrs	**124**	No of adults/parents	154
		No of older children in families	39	Total no of people impacted	313

Number of families affected by the following personal and social issues:

Parenting challenges	89	Parent Stress	17	Parent Disability	8
Parental Mental Health	56	Poverty/Low Income	17	Child Illness	5
Child Behaviour	33	Social Isolation	17	Parent Illness	4
Domestic Abuse	22	Dependency Drugs & Alcohol	16	Child Disability	4

3. **Set out what other similar and or complementary services are provided that are similar in function or support the same client / communities. Include any differences in service.**
There continues to be various Falkirk Council employed and commissioned Family Support Services across Falkirk. Some of these services are geographically located to work in nominated towns and villages. Each of the Services offer different types of support but work towards shared outcomes of Falkirk's strategic priorities.
Aberlour Early Years Outreach works in specific geographical areas, however, the service will extend its reach, when other agencies do not have types of intervention that Aberlour provides. e.g. Sleep Scotland Counselling, Linked Childminding, individual parenting programmes, personalised mental health support.

4. **How does this organisation support the council to achieve its priorities?**
Please see section A 2 and 3 above.
Aberlour Early Years Outreach works to find and build on the strengths of families, to identify areas of need for change and to deliver early help locally. This supports the priorities outlined in Children's Services Closer to Home Strategy, putting families first and providing the best start in life for all children.

5. Are there any areas of improvement or efficiency that could be achieved?

The budget for the Service is in excess of the grant from Falkirk Council.

Aberlour's Marketing and Fundraising have sourced £30,000 in this financial year to bridge the gap between Falkirk's grant and the budget needed to maintain the Service

The Service currently has 1 x full-time Child & Family Worker and 2 x part-time Child & Family Workers who undertake the direct support to families. For the financial year ending 31 March 2022, the gap in finances will be supported by the reduction of the Service Manager and Service Administrator costs as this will be shared with 2 x new Aberlour Services that are operational from 1st April 2021.

The Service began its training of volunteers in February 2020. It had been anticipated that the Service could extend support to families with the use of volunteers in 2020/2021 however due to implications of Covid-19, the Service did not make use of the Volunteers within the last financial year. This will be part of the Action Plan for 2022.

C ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

Set Out current agreed performance information alongside previous years and future years. If there is any benchmarking data provide that.

The financial year 2020-2021 has seen unprecedented times due to Covid-19, with a particular impact on how agencies have continued to help communities and individuals in need of additional support.

During 2020-2021 Aberlour Early Years Outreach work focused on:-

- Addressing requests for assistance for families. Total no of Families - 93
- Changing groupwork resources to allow for work online, by telephone or during garden visits.
- Undertaking more individual work as opposed to groupwork, focused on – how to manage feelings of anxiety, stress and/or depression; promoting children's development; how to manage children's behaviours; implementing improved sleep hygiene; budgeting; cooking; maintaining hygienic home conditions; support for families with older children being 'home schooled'; support for families affected by illness and loss due to Covid-19; sourcing additional family finances; sourcing essential items; monitoring children's safety and welfare.
- Contributing to Parenting Assessments in partnership with Social Work Colleagues.
- Increasing emotional support to parents and their children in addressing the impact of Covid-19 on individual families.
- Responding to emergency requests for food, clothing, gas/electricity, household items toys.
- distributing funding to Social Work and Health colleagues to support families known to them and delivering essential items to families across Falkirk. Total no of Families - 62

Are there any aspects of performance that are causing concern or need to be improved? If so what are they and what are the plans for improvement.

The Service are planning to work more intensively with fewer families in the future in order to make a bigger impact on individual families with the highest level of need. This will be monitored to ensure that the increased number of contacts does have the desired impact on the families, and it is hoped that the length of time the families remain active with the Service will reduce.

	This will likely impact on waiting times for new requests to the Service and this aspect will also be monitored over the next year.
	When was the last time the service was reviewed and what plans are there to review this? Aberlour Early Years Outreach is not a registered Service, therefore does not undergo assessment from external agencies. The Service does review processes, outcomes, impact etc from parents and partner agencies that then influences ongoing Service delivery. The service was last reviewed in August 2020.

D FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT/OVERVIEW

1. **Set out FC funding as % of organisation's budget, including financial and in-kind contributions**

   Falkirk Council funded 85% of the Service's budget. This takes into account Falkirk's funding 76% of the total budget with planned savings accounting for approx 9% of the total budget. Falkirk's In-kind contributions over the past 20 years has included providing office / work space, electricity and access to Falkirk's feature-net phone line.

2. **List other sources of funding the organisation has and how much is provided by source.**

   Aberlour sourced approx 15% of remaining funds totalling £30,000 from STV Hunter Foundation (£10k) and Scottish Government Immediate Priority Funding (£20k)
   Additional external monies funded financial assistance to families affected by hardship and poverty as noted in Section B, item 1d.

   What is the amount of uncommitted reserves held by the organisation?
   There are no uncommitted reserves within Aberlour Early Years Outreach.
   Any Aberlour reserves are at a level consistent with OSCR's best practice for charities. As a large children's charity Aberlour are required to hold reserves at this level to support any unforeseen issues to ensure the continued functioning of the organisation. This figure is not available for general revenue use and is to support over 50 services across Scotland in an emergency situation, many of which operate without certainty on funding.

   What proportion of operation costs do reserves represent?
   "Free" reserves represents a small % of total operational costs for Aberlour as a Scotland wide organisation.

   What other services does the council fund that are similar to this organisation including council provision and to what level are those activities funded?
   Various local authority and commissioned organisations offer family support across the Council area. They are currently being aligned while taking into account Falkirk's Integrated Children's Services Plan in order to ensure equality of access and avoid duplication.

   Are there any ways in which the organisation can improve resilience and decrease the money required from the council?
   Aberlour has worked closely with Falkirk Council to minimise the impact of the reduction of funding that has taken place incrementally over several years. Aberlour has made external funding applications to be able to support families that may have been impacted by the reduction in funding, and also to address the strategic needs of Falkirk Council.
   Further funding cuts would reduce provision further and impact on the viability of the service.

3. **Last Period of Submitted Audited Accounts**

   Aberlour's accounts for the period up to 31 March 2020 have been prepared and audited.
   A copy of this can be sourced by accessing the following link :
   https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/aberlour_dev/2020/10/02122508/Aberlour-Final-Signed-Accounts-2019-20-1.pdf

4. **What is the risk to the Council if these services are not funded?**

   Aberlour's work directly supports parents in making changes in how they care for their children and/or how they can make changes to their own lifestyle that will benefit their families.

In losing the capacity to engage with families when there are complex social and/or personal issues impacting on family functioning and the welfare of children, the Council would be exposed to risks of increasing demand for more intrusive and expensive services to meet escalating need.

5. Overall Risk Rating (Low/Medium/High). Please note this should clarify the risk to the council not the organisation?

The risk to the Council is low, however, the should the service not be funded, the gap in provision to vulnerable families would be significant and likely to result in escalating needs and associated costs to the council.

E CONCLUSIONS

The Service continued to perform well despite the impact of Covid-19 pandemic. The Service continued to provide crucial practical, advisory and emotional support to children and parents. The Service adapted aspects of the Service while taking into account required safety measures while also supporting partner agencies.

Aberlour and Falkirk have confirmed that 2 x new Services operating in Falkirk begun operating on 1st April 2021. i.e.

- Aberlour Intensive Perinatal Support : Supporting parents affected by problematic substance use during pregnancy and in their child's first year of life.

Aberlour Sustain – Falkirk : Working with families where children (12-18yrs) are at risk

FUTURE ACTIVITIES :

- One aspect of the Service's work that has ended is the Infant Massage Classes, which has been operating since 2003. This group was accessed by any parent and baby within Falkirk Council and did not require a formal assessment prior to attending the class. Staff resources will be utilised in working more frequently with individual families.
- The continuation of Aberlour Early Years Outreach will allow the 2 new Services to continue for Falkirk families.
- of being looked after and accommodated
- The Service will adapt to the change of office space that has been made in response to Education Services requiring the use of the most recent office space. The previous office space allowed for groupwork and creche facilities to take place simultaneously. It is likely that the future office space will not provide this resource.
- Plans for groupwork to resume will be determined by Covid-19 safety measures. It is hope that this will recommence in 2022 i.e. Parenting Programmes, Finding A Balance (mental health and well-being programme), Parent & Children gathering together.

F. Monitoring Officer Details

Name: Cathy Megarry
Designation: Service Manager
Service: Children's Services
Date of Report: 04/10/2021

Appendix 2

FALKIRK COUNCIL
FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT 2020/21

Organisation Name	Aberlour
Project	Aberlour Family Support Centre - Langlees
Agreement Dates	31 March 2020 – 01 April 2021
Monitoring Officer	Cathy Megarry

A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

1. Summary of key aims & objectives of organisation

Falkirk Council fund two Aberlour services who support families across Falkirk, Aberlour Family Support Centre - Langlees and Aberlour Early Years Outreach.

Aberlour Family Support Centre – Langlees provides a range of services for vulnerable families and those experiencing multiple stresses across the Falkirk Council area, primarily offering support to expectant parents and children under the age of 5 years, supporting families to enhance their child's development, improve family relations and engaging them within their local community. Primarily support is provided to families living in the Langlees, Bainsford and New Carron areas however support can be provided in other areas across Falkirk. This is subject to ongoing review by Falkirk Council.

The Service is offered to children under the age of 12 years where there are additional support needs and capacity is available and Aberlour will work in partnership with other local agencies where the need arises to complement services available

2. What is the purpose of the funding provided by the Council?

The Council provides core funding to the Family Support Centre so that support services can be directly delivered to vulnerable and hard to reach Falkirk communities in line with Council's Strategic Priorities e.g.:

- Address the impact of poverty on children and young people
- Improving mental health and wellbeing
- Inclusion – live, learn and thrive in Falkirk
- Earlier identification and response to childhood neglect.
- Closer to Home – keep families together/prevent accommodation.

Council funding contributes to employment of professional Children and Family Workers, who are registered with Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and are vital in helping families overcome issues and become involved in their local communities. The Family Support Centre provides families with the support they need before their problems escalate to a point that requires more intrusive and costly statutory interventions.

3. Why does the Council fund this?

The Council is committed to prevention and early intervention for families and Aberlour Family Support Centre – Langlees provide this type of support to families who require additional help across the Falkirk area with the Core service focusing on three deprived Falkirk communities. The work undertaken is outcome focused and aligns with the priorities of Children's Services Closer to Home Strategy. Early intervention support for families results in a reduction in the need for costly statutory interventions (such as care placements). The Service has adapted to meet local needs while addressing the evolving priorities of the local authority and the Scottish Government such as offering the Eligible 2's provision between 2014 and 2021. From August 2021, Aberlour Family Support Centre – Langlees will provide an innovative programme of Family Support delivered in line with and to support the education outcomes of children with diagnosed or emerging Additional Support Needs.

4. How long has the Council funded this organisation to deliver this Service?

Aberlour Family Support Centre - Langlees (formerly known as Langlees Family Centre), has been working with young children and their families since 1983. The Service was initially funded by Central Regional Council and Falkirk Council continued funding the service because it recognised the community need. Whilst funding has been reduced over the past 5 years, the Service has evolved in response to the needs of the children and families across Falkirk, while considering Falkirk Council and the Scottish Government's strategic objectives.

5. Set out the funding provided by the Council over the last five years.

Year	Annual Funding	Support in Kind	One Off Support
2020/2021	£110,937	Falkirk Council provides the premises for the services contracted.	
2019/2020	£110,937		
2018/2019	£110,937 plus £40,000 from PEF		
2017/2018	£168,811		
2016/2017	£201,260		

B SERVICE DELIVERY

1. **What does the organisation deliver and to whom i.e. typical service users, customer group targeted etc?**

Referrals are accepted where there are children and families, primarily aged 3 and under, who are adversely impacted by one or more of the following issues:

- Child development concerns.
- Parental ill-health and well-being.
- Difficulty with parenting.
- Domestic abuse.
- Problematic substance use.
- Bonding / attachment concerns.
- Limited family support.

Additional to Core Funding Aberlour Family Support Centre – Langlees offers:

- Eligible 2's nursery provision
- Trauma recovery support for Children, Adults and Families who require support to manage the impact of experiencing abuse.

Many of these issues, referred to as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic events, including parents and/or children's experiences of abuse and neglect. Staff work in a trauma informed way on an outreach basis within families' homes and deliver support from the centre base.

In support of the above, the service offers:

- Play Together, Learn Together Group supporting children aged 12 months – 3 years.
- 6 week Five to Thrive groupwork approach.
- Individual Family Support utilising recognised training in various models of intervention
- Art Therapy via students from Queen Margaret University.
- Parenting Assessment including specialist assessment where the parent has a learning difficulty.
- Nursery Provision for 2-year olds whose parents meet criteria set out by the Scottish Government.
- Bespoke individual support to Children, Adults and Families who require support to manage the impact of their experiences around Abuse.

Children and family workers assess families' needs using Aberlour's Outcomes Framework. The framework is completed alongside the families and involves them exploring their wellbeing in-line with SHANARRI indicators. A programme of support is then agreed, for as long as it is required, focussed on improving the areas of need identified. Each family member supported will have their own personal goals in addition to those identified with the Child's Plan.

The service offers a range of planned interventions to parents and children in need.

2. How many people directly benefit from the organisation?

77 families (31 adults and 76 children) were supported by the service between April 2020 and March 2021with under 3's continuing to be the main beneficiaries of the service (40).

The number of new requests for assistance for the financial year was: 55
At year end March 2021, there was a waiting list for all services with 22 families requiring support. The high level of requests on the waiting list was exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, where referrals were made by school, and the restrictions did not allow for face-to-face supports. Referrals were received from the following sources:

- Family Members (42%)
- Social Work (32%)
- Self-Referral (12%)
- Health and Education (6%)

Main reasons for referral include:

- Family support and parenting support (92%)
- Childcare Assistance and Support (58%)
- Social, Emotional, Mental Health and Behaviour concerns (28%)
- Child Protection concerns (18%)

Each referral can have multiple reasons support is being requested.

Service impact
26 families had statutory or voluntary Social Work involvement, with 9 children on the child protection register at point of referral. During involvement, 4 children had their name removed from the register.

3. Set out what other similar and or complementary services are provided that are similar in function or support the same client / communities. Include any differences in service.

While there are other in- house and contracted family support services across Falkirk, most of the interventions the Family Support Centre provide, through core service provision are only offered in the Langlees, Bainsford and New Carron areas. Aberlour works in partnership with other providers to ensure equity of service delivery and accessibility.

4. How does this organisation support the Council achieve its priorities?

The organisation supports the Council in delivering Strategic Priorities as follows;

- Address the impact of poverty on children and young people
- Improving mental health and wellbeing
- Inclusion – live, learn and thrive in Falkirk, narrowing the poverty related attainment gap
- Earlier identification and response to childhood neglect ensuring more of our children have a better start in life and are ready to succeed
- Support to families builds on their strengths and networks, in more innovative ways and at lower cost.

Aberlour Family Support Centre Langlees works to find and build on the strengths of families and to deliver early help, locally. This supports the priorities outlined in the Children's Services Closer to Home Strategy, putting families first and providing the best start in life for all children.

5. How are service users involved in the design and delivery of services?

Parents and children are involved in staff interviews. Feedback is gathered on an ongoing basis particularly at 8-week Learning Journey reviews, mid and end reviews. Views are gathered in a variety of child friendly ways through visual charts and fun activities. Families are involved in planning what works for them by identifying what matters to them.

6. What specific geographical areas does this service / organisation cover within the Council area?

The Family Support Centre, Core Service, covers Langlees, Bainsford and New Carron areas. The service helps families in other areas of Falkirk where there has been an identified gap in service delivery and where the service has a specific expertise or resource that is not available in those areas. Trauma Recovery Service operates throughout Falkirk District.

C ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

1. Set out current agreed performance information alongside previous years and future years. If there is any benchmarking information provide that.
(Performance reports can be attached as appendices.)

The service was expected to support 45 families. Of the 77 families that were supported:

- 39 families accessed core service.
- 27 children accessed eligible 2's provision
- 4 individuals attended Art Therapy
- 31 individuals were supported digitally including Teams Calls and WhatsApp video chat totalling 142 interactions which could not take place face to face due to Covid restrictions.
- 11 families (13 adults and 9 children) accessed the Trauma Recovery Service.
- 4 Individuals were supported digitally for the duration of their involvement with the service, with individual support programmes delivered digitally such as In My Shoes and Nurture Support Work.
- 6 families accessed enhanced service, where multiple elements are offered including Neglect Toolkit, access for child to Early Learning & Child Care along with parents engaging in individual parenting support at home.
- 3 families accessed specialist service of high intensity or long duration.
- 1 family engaged with the service to participate in a Parenting Assessment (PAMS)

Over the year, Child & Family Workers have submitted reports and contributed to the full range of statutory, child protection and Team around the Child meetings. The centre chaired multi agency family meetings where the family felt more confident and familiar with the staff they had built positive relationships with.

Feedback from stakeholders, children and families on the work they have engaged in and the impact this has had:

- *"The staff are amazing with the kids. I've noticed such a change in my son since he started here. He loves the walk in the morning and telling me about everything he sees and he would never really do this before. His speech is coming on great to what it used to be."* **Parent.**
- *"I just wanted to drop you a quick email to say over the 6 ½ years it has been a pleasure working with you. You are all very committed professionals and I am grateful to you for the support you gave me and the families we worked with."* **Social Work**

2. Exception reporting - Note any areas where there is exceptional performance outstripping expectation or where performance is below what would be expected.

Aberlour Family Support Centre – Langlees:

The centre has supported 15 families (19 adults and 33 children) who required food, fuel, household items, clothing, transport costs, replacement birth certificates and funeral costs totalling £2330 from funds raised outwith core funding. 3 families were supported to access the foodbank and a further 5 families were supported by food donations received at the centre. A further 12 families were supported with the Salvation Army Christmas appeal.

Child Protection Committee and Children's Commission Learning & Development Group : The Service Manager represented the Third Sector within these forums and assistant service manager delivers **In My Shoes** training with a Social Worker from Children's Services. To date, 46 individuals have attended the training.

Aberlour, organisation wide within Falkirk:

a) "Aberlour's Urgent Assistance Fund" has provided additional funds for families affected by Poverty and/or low income.
b) Aberlour Perinatal Befriending Support: This Service is funded by Comic Relief, The Robertson Trust and Scottish Government PNIMH Fund

3. When was the last time the service was reviewed and what plans are there to review this?

Date of most recent review - – August 2020

Next planned review - The service will be reviewed under the priorities of Children's Services Closer to Home strategy.

4. Are there any improvements in efficiency or effectiveness that could be achieved?

There may be scope to extend the family support element across the eligible 2's provision and support the roll out of 1140 hours for 20 children.

5. Is the organisation covered by any external regulation or inspection? If so please provide a link to the most recent inspection report noting any improvements etc?

All staff are SSSC registered for Day Care of Children. Family Support Service is a Care Inspectorate registered service for Day Care of Children. Most recent inspection carried out in November 2020. The service was awarded a 5 for leadership and management and a 5 for quality of environment. An award of 5 equals a 'very good' standard.

D FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

1. Set out Falkirk Council funding as a % of the organisations budget. Including financial and in kind contributions.

Falkirk Council funds 100% of the Service's budget (with the exception of the funds used to financially assist families affected by hardship and poverty detailed in section C2(a)

2. List other sources of funding the organisation has and how much is provided by source.

The family centre brings additional funding to support vulnerable families:

- Aberlour Urgent Assistance Fund: this is specifically to help families, across Falkirk, in need of resources when affected by poverty. Over 2019 / 2020, over 15 families (33 children) have benefitted at a cost of £2133.00.
- Individual donors / fundraising: This provides minor funds to support particular one- off activities and does not contribute to the daily running of the Service.
-

3. What is the amount of uncommitted reserves held by the organisation?

There are no uncommitted reserves with the Aberlour Family Support Centre – Langlees Any reserves are at a level consistent with OSCR's best practice for charities. As a large children's charity Aberlour are required to hold reserves at this level to support any unforeseen issues to ensure the continued functioning of the organisation. This figure is not available for general revenue use and is to support around 50 services across Scotland in an emergency situation, many of which operate without certainty on funding.

4. What proportion of operation cost do reserves represent?

"Free" reserves represent circa 10% of total operational costs for Aberlour as a Scotland wide organisation.

5. Last period of submitted audited accounts

Aberlour's accounts for the period up to 31 March 2020 have been prepared and audited. A copy of this can be sourced by accessing the following link : https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/aberlour_dev/2020/10/02122508/Aberlour-Final-Signed-Accounts-2019-20-1.pdf

6.	**What other services does the Council fund that are similar to this organisation including Council provision and to what level are those activities funded?** Various in-house and commissioned organisations offer family support across the Council area. They are currently being aligned under Children's Services Closer to Home strategy in order to ensure equality of access and avoid duplication.
7.	**Future sustainability- Are there ways in which the organisation can improve resilience and decrease the money required from the Council?** Aberlour has experienced a significant reduction in service funding over the last 5 years. Aberlour has been proactive in introducing efficiency savings to ensure as much of the Council's funding is directed to frontline services and vulnerable families as possible. Any further funding reductions would reduce front line services to children and families and increase the waiting list. The service is proactive in working alongside colleagues in Children's Services and Health to avoid duplication and ensuring as many families get the service they need, at a time that they need it.
8.	**How can reductions in funding be achieved?** The viability of the service will be at risk if further reductions to funding are made.
9.	**What is the risk to the Council if these services are not funded?** There is a risk of increased expenditure due to the loss of a preventative service that supports engagement with families when there are complex social and/or personal issues impacting on family functioning and the welfare of children. There will be a direct impact on vulnerable families of very young children in the three areas of multiple depravation that the service supports. There is no other Early Years provision in the local are for under 3's.
10.	**Overall risk rating (Low/Medium/High). Please note this should note the risk to the Council not the organisation.** Low
E	**CONCLUSIONS**
1.	**Summary of the future activities of the organisation that will allow services to continue to be delivered.** This organisation has continued to perform well despite significantly reduced funding. The ethos and practices of the organisation clearly align to Children's Services Closer to Home strategy and changed monitoring arrangements will provide the opportunity for family support provision across the Council Area to be increasingly joined up in delivering support where it is needed most.
F.	**Monitoring Officer Details**
Name: Cathy Megarry	
Designation: Service Manager	
Service: Children's Services	
Date of Report: 30/09/2021	

Appendix 3

FALKIRK COUNCIL
FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT 2020/21

Organisation Name	Barnardo's
Project	Axis Service Falkirk Pathways Family Group Decision Making – Lifelong Links Service Falkirk Families Support Line
Agreement Dates	1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021
Name of Monitoring Officer	Cathy Megarry

A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

1. Summary of key aims & objectives of organisation

Barnardo's is one of the UK's largest children's charities, delivering over 900 services supporting 220,000 children, young people, and their families in the UK every year. Barnardo's vision is that the lives of all children, young people and families should be free from poverty, abuse, and discrimination. Barnardo's purpose is to help the most vulnerable children and young people transform their lives and fulfill their potential. Barnardo's work in partnership with local authorities to meet agreed strategic aims. The service fits within the principles of Children's Services Closer to Home Strategy for earlier intervention and prevention of escalation in the needs of young people and families.

Axis Service

The service aims to reduce the risk and harm to young people, families, and communities in the Falkirk area by providing support to people up to the age of 19 (or 25 if care experienced) who are experiencing difficulties related to substance use. Interventions include a core service for medium to long term support for young people with more complex difficulties and an early intervention service including group work and up to 8 individual and/or family sessions. Axis also provides awareness raising sessions with Children's Services partners across universal and targeted services.

Falkirk Pathways Family Group Decision Making Service

Family Group Decision Making is a family led decision making process that recognises the strengths within the family. They are empowered to find their own solutions and to develop a plan to address the difficulties they face to protect and support the child(ren) of the family. The Family Meeting provides a supportive space where families and agencies can work together to support the wellbeing of children and young people. The process is undertaken in a child focused, blame free, future focused way.

Barnardo's provide independent Coordinators who are not involved in the other formal decision-making processes for the family e.g., Team Around the Child meetings or Child Protection procedures. The coordinator spends time with individual family members before the family meetings to enable families to consider and share their views and discuss the themes identified by the referring Social Worker to develop their own support plan. Through this preparation stage family members are often identified who have previously been unknown to the referrer. This can increase the circle of support within the family resources to address the identified issues.

Falkirk Pathways Lifelong Links

The Lifelong Links Service is for children and young people who have been in care for 5 years or less with no plans to return home or be adopted. The service aims to find family members or reconnect with those where contact has been lost, to provide children and young people with lasting relationships upon which they can depend, know more about their own history, and feel a stronger sense of identity. These lifelong connections will hopefully give children someone to turn to for practical and emotional support.

Falkirk Family Support Line (FFSL)

Barnardo's Scotland and Aberlour were commissioned by Falkirk Council at the end of June 2020 to deliver the Falkirk Family Support Line (FFSL). The initial pilot was developed to offer support to vulnerable families over the school holidays in response to additional challenges experienced by them because of Covid -19. Due to its success and ongoing impact of the pandemic on families, funding was extended to the end of August 2021.

Callers have been listened to and given the time and space to explore their feelings and to consider options for a positive way forward. Where relevant, signposting to other supports has also been offered, for example to Housing, Benefits Advice, Foodbanks and community activities for children and young people.

FFSL consists of 2 elements:

- Support Line – incoming calls from members of the public
- Requests for Assistance – additional support requested by partner agencies for identified families

The FFSL will conclude on 31/08/2021.

2. What is the purpose of the funding provided by the Council?

Barnardo's aims and priorities compliment Falkirk Council priorities and the services directly support and contribute to Falkirk Council's SOLD and Integrated Children's Services Plan priorities to:

- improve mental health and wellbeing.
- address the impact of poverty on children.
- minimize the impact of substance misuse on children.
- promote the principle of early intervention and prevention in the use of substances.
- support children to develop into resilient, confident, and successful adults; and
- enable people to live full, independent, and positive lives within supportive communities

The **Family Group Decision Making and Lifelong Links** services support Falkirk's Council's duty under Part 12 of the Children and Young People Act 2014 to plan to ensure that relevant services are offered to families. These services facilitate family decision making and increase parenting capacity and skills.

The Children and Young People Act 2014 requires local authorities to consider placing children with family or friend carers in the first instance and only if that is not appropriate, to then place children in foster or residential placements. Crucially, this supports one of the key aims of the closer to home strategy, to reduce the number of children looked after away from

home and in residential care by supporting and empowering families as experts in their own lives.

Family Group Decision Making and Lifelong Links support Falkirk Council to fulfil its commitment to The Promise to care experienced children and young people due to the participative, future focused approach of both models.

Barnardo's AXIS Service provides a specialist young person's substance service in the Falkirk Council area, supporting the Council to address its priorities in SOLD, minimising the impact of substance use. The service provides advice and information for young people and parents. It promotes knowledge and understanding of the needs of young people who are using substances and works with Children's Services in sharing practice, understanding responsibilities, and providing drug specific support and information to universal and non-specialist services as appropriate.

Falkirk Families Support Line (FFSL)provides a wide range of assistance, including emotional support, information and advice on parenting, family life, relationships, finance, mental health, and wellbeing.

3. Why does the Council fund this?

The services provided by Barnardo's are part of a Spend to Save initiative.

The **Axis Service** provides a harm reduction service to young people and is aligned with the SOLD priority of reducing harm resulting from substance use. As identified from Falkirk Child Protection data there is significant correlation between risk to children and the prevalence of substance use.

Barnardo's **Family Group Decision Making** Service and **Lifelong Links Service** have been designed as part of Falkirk Council's 5 year Closer to Home Strategy, which "seeks to improve outcomes for young people by strengthening families and building resilience to enable more young people to stay at home as opposed to being in care". The Family Group Decision Making Service aims to empower families to develop their own Family Plans to protect and support children to stay safely at home or in their own community rather than residential or foster care. All Barnardo's Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Service Coordinators are trained and certified and all have received additional training through the Family Rights Group to undertake Lifelong Links. Where this has been established elsewhere, young people who have been supported to identify and establish lifelong connections have become more settled in their placements where their needs had previously been escalating.

FFSL has provided support to vulnerable families who may not have been supported otherwise due to the impact of the pandemic.

4. How long has the Council funded this organisation to deliver this Service?

The **Axis Service** was established in 2009 because of identified unmet need in relation to young people's substance use and associated risks.

Until March 2018, Barnardo's Cluaran and Education Family Resource Services were funded to provide assessment, supported and targeted interventions to vulnerable families in Falkirk which ranged across a spectrum from early intervention to specialist therapeutic work and

support to children who are 'Looked After'.

In response to reduced funding and opportunities to realign with the Closer to Home Strategy, Barnardo's agreed to provide **Family Group Decision Making and Lifelong Links** services in Falkirk to harness families' support and resources to help keep children safe, and where possible enable children to stay within the family home and/or wider community.

5. Set out the funding provided by the Council over the last five years.

Year	Cluaran £	BEFRC £	Axis £	FGDM/LL £	FFSL £	Total £
20/21			116.905	383,095		£500,000
19/20			116.905	383,095		£500,000
18/19			116.905	383,095		£500,000
17/18	345,297	281,583	105,405			732,285
16/17	345,297	253,644	105,405			704,346

B SERVICE DELIVERY

1. **What does the organisation deliver and to whom i.e. typical service users, customer group targeted etc?**

Barnardo's Axis works with young people who are identified because of problematic substance use and require either an intensive/long term service or an earlier intervention and shorter-term support. Their needs are identified using an initial Substance Screening tool, followed by a more detailed comprehensive Assessment tool as required. The service works with a broad range of issues and substance use is often a symptom. Issues include domestic abuse, poverty, and parental substance use, transient home life, and limited educational attainment, experience of care and child sexual exploitation.

Falkirk Council funding pays for the intensive core service and Barnardo's access additional monies/resources either by way of Voluntary Funds and the CORRA Foundation.

Barnardo's Falkirk Pathways Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Service works with whole families where there are welfare or safety concerns about the child/children. The service aims to widen and reinforce the support network families have by harnessing their own strengths to help keep children safely living within the family. Families have a positive experience of working together and producing agreed safe plans for their children.

Barnardo's Falkirk Pathways Lifelong Links Service is a family connection finding model for young people who have been in care for up to 5 years, with no plans to return home or be adopted. The service is part of a 5-year pilot with 5 Scottish sites including Falkirk. The service is a partnership between Falkirk Council, Barnardo's, and the Family Rights Group, with an external evaluation by CELCIS and Strathclyde University.

The Lifelong Links Coordinators use tools and techniques to search for and find family members, either known or unknown to the child and other adults, such as former foster carers or teachers, who care about the child. This network is then brought together through Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) to make a lifelong support plan with, and for the young person. All FGDM Coordinators are trained in the Lifelong Links model. Young people in care often experience broken relationships, which may end suddenly. They often won't know or understand why these relationships have ended and this can affect their self-esteem and sense of identity. Support is provided to young people, family and friends throughout the Lifelong Links process and young people report feeling an enhanced sense of belonging and positivity about the future because of the process.

FFSL callers presented with a range of difficulties, with some seeking support for more than one issue. Parenting, family relationships and mental health and wellbeing were the areas of most concern for those contacting the Support Line. This could be viewed as a direct impact of Covid –19 and the additional pressures on family life. As FFSL evolved it became evident that for several individuals, ongoing support was required that was not available elsewhere at that time. This was particularly true for those experiencing emotional distress and mental health issues, where sometimes it was enough simply having someone to call at a time they needed to. Contacting the Support Line has been a lifeline for a significant number of people who simply need to speak to someone who will listen to their concerns and help them to access appropriate support, if not directly through FFSL.

All Barnardo's Falkirk services have access to **Barnardo's Forth Valley Volunteers Service** which is funded by Barnardo's to enhance service delivery and maximise the resources for young people and their families. Volunteers support Family Group Decision Making meetings by providing a crèche or activities for children and young people to participate in if they feel unable to join all or some of the private family time during the meeting.

2. How many people directly benefit from the organisation?

During the period April 2020 – March 2021, the **Axis Service** offered support to 99 young people and 16 families. Referrals were received from social work, EEI, Health services, Education, Police direct, Sacro, residential units and Change Grow Live.

Most young people referred were aged between 14 and 17 years, although in the last year there has been a fall in the 16 - 17-year group, whilst referrals for younger age group (12 - 13) has risen. This may be a result of additional work carried out in schools to raise awareness around substance use and risks. The ratio of males and females who engage with the service appears to be changing. Whilst numbers for males have fallen over the last 3 years, the number of females supported has remained steady during the last 2 years.

Between April 2020 and March 2021, the **Falkirk Pathways Family Group Decision Making Service** offered support to 86 families/ 149 children / young people. 41 children / young people remained at home who otherwise may have been accommodated.

Progressing **Lifelong Links** referrals has been challenging during the pandemic and a few enquiries did not come to fruition. To address this in the coming year we have revisited the criteria to widen the offer out to more young people in care settings. At 31/03/2021 there were 2 active Lifelong Links cases, both of which have proved to be successful in enabling the young person to reconnect and stay connected with family and other supports.

During the reporting period **FFSL** made 239 contacts, including follow up calls with members of the public through the support line and received 90 requests for assistance. 128 families were referred on to other supports they might not have otherwise accessed.

Service	Children & young people	Families
Axis	99	16
FGDM	149	86
Lifelong Links	2	0
FFSL	0	90
Total	250	192

3. Set out what other similar and or complementary services are provided that are similar in function or support the same client / communities. Include any differences in service.

All Barnardo's Falkirk services work collaboratively with the following service agencies:

- Social Work
- Schools

- Police Scotland
- CAMHS
- Children's Residential Services
- Leaving Care Team
- Housing
- Adult Social Work Services; and
- Other voluntary sector organisations

4. How does this organisation support the Council achieve its priorities?

Barnardo's aims and priorities align with Falkirk Council priorities and local services contribute to Falkirk Council's SOLD and Integrated Children's Service Plan priorities, as well as contributing to the aims of Closer to Home, by:

- Minimising the impact of substance by challenging harmful perceptions of norms within our communities.
- Health and wellbeing and children developing into resilient confident and successful adults; and
- Family first approach- empowering families and communities

5. How are service users involved in the design and delivery of services?

Service user's views are gathered at every stage of the engagement, assessment, care planning and intervention process. Young people and where appropriate, their families participate in designing the service plan and their feedback is considered through regular service reviews and final feedback and evaluation processes.

Axis

"I don't drink anymore, and I feel I know more about the effects and risks of taking drugs. My family has been really supportive"

"I feel like a huge weight has been lifted off my shoulders"

FGDM / Lifelong Links

"The plan is for him to come home eventually. It helped to get a plan of support".

"I felt listened to, not judged and able to open up to my son, who I was hiding a lot from. He is having contact with his sister again.

FFSL

"I was worried about calling but glad I did as you listened, did not judge me and understood where my worries are coming from. I would definitely call in the future if I had a question".

"The Support Line has been a huge relief."

6. What specific geographical areas does this service / organisation cover within the Council area?

Barnardo's Falkirk services deliver services to the whole Falkirk Council area.

C ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

1. **Set out current agreed performance information alongside previous years and future years. If there is any benchmarking information provide that.**
   (Performance reports can be attached as appendices.)

Service	Annual target	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Axis	100	93	97	99
FGDM	75 families across FGDM and LL	57 families (120 yps)	77 families (160 yps)	86 families (151 yps)
Lifelong Links				
FFSL	N/A	n/a	n/a	90

Barnardo's activity and performance is reported to and scrutinized by the Monitoring Officer. Challenges and opportunities are identified and progress and performance in relation to the Joint Working Agreement is reviewed

2. **Exception reporting - Note any areas where there is exceptional performance outstripping expectation or where performance is below what would be expected.**
   Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Barnardos services have either achieved or exceeded agreed targets.

   In 2020-21 Falkirk Pathways FGDM service exceeded the target number of young people and families supported, resulting in potential savings to the local authority, where children may have had to have been accommodated without these interventions and plans.

   4 young people left the **Axis service** substance free. 10 reported reduced or safer substance use on leaving the service.

   Barnardo's was uniquely placed through additional government funding and access to smaller funding sources of their own to enable a wide range of practical and financial supports to families in crisis. Over £15k has been distributed across our services in Falkirk.

Funding stream	Source	Supports provided
Wellbeing Fund	Scottish Government	Emergency payments for food and utilities, school and winter clothin household items, devices to allow families to connect with education and other supports, purchase of wellbeing items, such as 'pamper' products, treats and family games.
Augira Energy Redress Scheme	Scottish Energy Trust	Flat rate payments to families of £49 and £28 for young people who were struggling to meet fuel costs.
Connecting Scotland	Connecting Scotland	Digital devices, software, data and wifi

Christmas gifts	Sky Cash for Kids Local Business	Clothing Books Toys Toiletries

3. **When was the last time the service was reviewed and what plans are there to review this?**
   The service was reviewed in August 2020 and will be reviewed under the reporting arrangements for Closer to Home.

4. **Are there any improvements in efficiency or effectiveness that could be achieved?**
   None

5. **Is the organisation covered by any external regulation or inspection? If so please provide a link to the most recent inspection report noting any improvements etc?**
   The services are not subject to any external regulation.

D FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

1. **Set out Falkirk Council funding as a % of the organisations budget. Including financial and in kind contributions.**

Year	Falkirk Council	ADP – Axis Early Doors/Pilot for LAC Young people	Volunteer Service, Premises (funded by Barnardo's)	Voluntary Funding	CORRA (Inc 50 match funding from Barnardo's)
2020-21	£500,00	£0	£38,488	£80,076	£43,074
2019-20	£500,00	£16,823	£38,055	£43,995	£45,548
2018-19	£500.00	£20,000	£36,695	£82,701	£44,441
2017-18	£743,73	£20,000	£36,695	£50,686	£31,799
2016-17	£704,34	£32,692	£36,695	£68,173	£0

2. **List other sources of funding the organisation has and how much is provided by source.**
   Barnardo's in Falkirk and across the Forth Valley delivers a range of services, most funded by statutory partners and supported by Barnardo's Voluntary Funds and other external grants (activity specific), for example during 2020-21 they received £1505 to support families experiencing food and fuel poverty through Cash for Kids
   As a national organisation, Barnardo's has a wide range of statutory and trust/grant income as indicated within the annual accounts.

3. **What is the amount of uncommitted reserves held by the organisation?**
   The entire Barnardo's UK charity has unrestricted funds, excluding their pensions reserve of £98.615m.

4. **What proportion of operation cost do reserves represent?**

5. Last period of submitted audited accounts 2020-21 Accounts are pending and due later in the year.
6. What other services does the Council fund that are similar to this organisation including Council provision and to what level are those activities funded? There are no other services within Falkirk that provide a specialist substance service to young people who are directly involved with problematic substance use, or a Family Group Decision Making/Lifelong Links Service.
7. Future sustainability- Are there ways in which the organisation can improve resilience and decrease the money required from the Council? To date, Bernardo's has achieved significant savings by sharing resources, including premises and administrative and management arrangements across their Forth Valley services
8. How can reductions in funding be achieved? Further reduction in funding would reduce Barnardo's presence locally, including the ability to secure external funding or provide "added benefit" to the Council and Falkirk area. The delivery of services would need to reduce or stop.
9. What is the risk to the Council if these services are not funded? If the services are not funded, service users and their families and communities would be significantly disadvantaged; the outcomes and benefits for individual children would be reduced and potentially increase cost to services in the longer term - including impact of risk/harm; child protection processes; statutory measures via the Children's Hearings; health and well-being, including self-harm and addictions. The **Axis service** is currently operating a waiting list which is being prioritised according to need, however, this represents at risk young people with significant and often complex difficulties. Any further reduction in funding will directly impact service delivery to this particularly vulnerable group. Young people who use substances have often experienced significant trauma in their life such as domestic abuse or Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). Without the Axis Service the needs of these young people would remain unmet, whereas with support from the service, issues can be identified quickly, and referrals made to specialist mental health services as appropriate. In terms of **FGDM and Lifelong Links**, the risk to the Council is outlined in Section C2 above in relation to financial savings and the impact of young people supported to remain at home instead of in care. There would be an impact on the ability for the service to succeed with the priorities of Closer To Home.
10. Overall risk rating (Low/Medium/High). Please note this should note the risk to the Council not the organisation. Low, although reducing or stopping funding that currently reduces escalating need will increase demand on already stretched council services.

F. Monitoring Officer Details
Name: Cathy Megarry
Designation: Service Manager
Service: Children's Services
Date of Report 27/9/21

Appendix 4

FALKIRK COUNCIL
FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT 2020/21

Organisation Name	Home-Start Falkirk
Project	Home-Start Falkirk
Agreement Dates	1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021
Name of Monitoring Officer	Cathy Megarry

A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

1. Summary of key aims & objectives of organisation

UK wide there are 269 independently run locally provided Home Starts. Home-Start recruits, trains and matches volunteers with disadvantaged families who have young children. Volunteers visit families at home each week, supporting parents in situations as diverse as isolation, bereavement, multiple births, illness, disability or those who are just finding parenting a struggle. They provide non-judgemental practical and emotional support for as long as is needed.

Home-Start Falkirk's aims are:

- To visit families in their homes, where the dignity and identity of each adult can be respected.
- To develop a relationship with the family using a flexible approach to take account of differing needs.
- To reassure parents that difficulties in bringing up children are not unusual and encouraging them to enjoy family life.
- To encourage parents' strengths and emotional wellbeing for the ultimate benefit of their children.
- To encourage families to widen their network of relationships and to use the support services in the community.
- To manage and develop the service in-line with Children's Services Closer to Home strategy.

2. What is the purpose of the funding provided by the Council?

Home Start empowers the local community in a sustainable and cost effective way. They train volunteers to provide non- stigmaising support, in the recipients' home, to disadvantaged families with young children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Home-Start Falkirk has traditionally focused in the Denny, Bonnybridge and Banknock communities but does also work in partnership with local agencies where the need arises elsewhere, in order to complement other available services.

3. Why does the Council fund this?

Home-Start Falkirk recruits, trains and develops volunteers to support otherwise hard to reach, disadvantaged parents.

Using volunteers is a cost-effective way to provide early intervention support to parents at a time of difficulty in their lives.
Falkirk Council funding supports the co-ordination of these volunteers.

This type of early intervention delivered locally and for as long as is needed, is an effective means of preventing escalation of need and more intrusive and expensive interventions.

Funding is supplemented by The National Lottery, Henry Smith Charity, Robertson Trust, Wm Grant Foundation, donations and fund raising.

4. How long has the Council funded this organisation to deliver this Service?
Falkirk Council has funded the Home-Start Falkirk service for 18 years.

5. Set out the funding provided by the Council over the last five years.

Year	Annual Funding	Support in Kind	One Off Support
2020/21	£28,014	£6,000(accommodation)	
2019/20	£28,014	£6,000	
2018/19	£28,014	£6,000	
2017/18	£29,488	£6,000	
2016/17	£29,488	£6,000	

B SERVICE DELIVERY

1. **What does the organisation deliver and to whom i.e. typical service users, customer group targeted etc?**

Home Start offer a wide range of services to disadvantaged families with young children. The reasons families are referred to the service include assistance with:

- Physical and/or mental health difficulties
- Parenting skills
- Disability
- Isolation
- Poverty, debt and financial management
- Engagement with support services

Home visiting volunteers are matched with a family and spend 2-3 hours with them each week providing tailor-made, one-to-one support including:

- Emotional support to find ways to manage and resolve problems.
- Practical help with making and getting to appointments.
- Help with shopping, budgeting, nutrition, meal planning, cooking and making the home safe.
- Direct support to children, including playing, listening, having fun, establishing routines, encouraging development and providing opportunities for outings and treats.
- Outreach and Family Group work so parents can get out, meet others and become more involved in their local communities.
- Information and links to other organisations including health and educational services.
- Parenting advice and skills.

Home-Start provide weekly Family Group Hubs in 5 areas where parents and children can access a range of supports including CAB, Credit Union, Speech and Language Therapy, Peer support, Budgeting, Cooking, Health, Parenting advice and courses, Play Together sessions along with a varied range of speakers from other services.

Staff provide one to one and group Baby Massage sessions to inexperienced parents and their babies, improving their attachment and reducing risk of abuse or neglect of the children.

Trained Staff and volunteers provide Sleep Scotland sessions to families struggling with bedtime routines which can impact the whole family.

Staff have recently trained in VIG and have begun delivering this to parents.

Trained staff and volunteers support separating or separated parents, promoting more positive communication between parents at a very difficult time for the benefit of their children and also themselves.

COVID-19

At the start of lockdown a number of measures and procedures were put in place to ensure the continued support for families. Clearly, the service had no idea at the time how far reaching the pandemic might be but did appreciate the impact that it would have on families already experiencing difficulties.

Staff took on most of the responsibility for remote support – weekly (sometimes daily) video

and telephone calls, dropping off food, nappies, prescriptions etc., to families who were shielding, self-isolating or who were unable to get to the shops with their children.

They sourced and provided a wide range of wellbeing packs and activities for both parents and children – Resilience Alphabet packs and videos, Craft bags, Seasonal Activity bags and Advent bags with a new activity/treat for each day.

They immediately moved their Family Groups online using Zoom which allowed the most isolated families to remain in contact with staff, volunteers and the parents and children they had begun to build relationships with.

As restrictions allowed, they started doorstep and garden visits, walks to the local park and moved their Family Groups from online to Walking Groups. Everyone enjoyed the outdoor activities following such a long period of isolation and they have remained an integral part of the volunteer visits and Family Group sessions.

1. **How many people directly benefit from the organisation?**
In 2020/21 the organisation supported 87 parents with 145 children – 82 under 5.

Initial advice and signposting was provided to a further 11 families.

Families were supported by 16 volunteers.

Both the families and those who volunteer directly benefit from the organisation. The benefits to those who volunteer are well researched, with volunteers gaining confidence, experience and a sense of purpose as well as making significant contributions to the local community and economy.

Impact on families
Families are regularly reviewed by staff to ascertain if the Home Visitor's support is meeting the needs of the family and tackling difficult issues. The Home-Start Monitoring and Evaluation System and the Charity Log data tool clearly indicates that life has improved for all families in at least one area of their lives. The average figures for 73 families supported over the last 2 years are shown below. NB Families may give feedback against more than one support criteria.

At each visit families are asked how well they are managing key aspects of their family's life. Scoring is from 0 - not coping at all, to 5 - Coping very well.

Coping Area	Initial Visit Scores	Mid Support Scores	End of Support Scores
Parenting skills	2.4	3.0	4.2
Parental Physical and Mental Health	2.1	3.1	4.3
Child Physical and Mental Health	3.2	3.8	4.6
Family Management *	2.6	3.2	4.2

*(Family Management includes finances/budgeting, managing routines and the home, conflict and accessing additional services)

Of 45 families experiencing difficulties in parenting, 82% were managing their childrens' behaviours and development better.

Of 68 parents experiencing health difficulties - physical health improved by 58%, mental health by 86%, a reduction in isolation of 75% and an improvement of self-esteem by 91%.

Of those families who engaged with Home-Start Falkirk over the last 2 years:
3 parents went on to volunteer with Home-Start Falkirk in a home visiting, groupwork, fundraising or admin role.
4 parents became volunteers with other charities/organisations including charity shops, Parent and Child groups, story-telling in the library and befriending at local elderly care home.
5 joined college courses in Health and Social Care, Hospitality and Childcare.

Following support, most parents become confident enough move on to more mainstream services – library sessions, parent and toddler groups, courses in schools etc. See figures above for those moving on to more formal pathways.

In terms of reductions in families' involvement with statutory services – 12 children have ended voluntary support from social work services and the families of 35 children are no longer receiving intensive support from Health Visitor and/or Education Services. This reduction in need for intensive support directly relates to better outcomes for children - in their health and wellbeing, development, attainment and resilience. By supporting parents to improve their attachment and responsiveness to their children, Home Start breaks the cycle of poor parenting, poverty and poor health experienced by families.

Ongoing support during the pandemic has prevented further breakdown in families who weren't coping prior to lockdown. Comments from parents tell of their despair at being confined to their homes for weeks on end without relief – "Erin (staff member) saved my life – I would not be here now if it wasn't for her calls" - from a mum with depression, on her own with her 3 yr old and no family or friends to support her. On doorstep visits – "It was brilliant to speak to another adult" "Her visits and the craft packs were a godsend when I was giving up trying to entertain the children" "I felt I was a rubbish mum because the kids were fighting and crying all the time. She helped me see that I wasn't useless and that everyone was in the same boat." "She read books and sang songs with the children on Zoom to let me feed the baby – they loved it".

The service continues to adapt to meet COVID-19 restrictions while providing support to the most vulnerable families in our communities.

2. Set out what other similar and or complementary services are provided that are similar in function or support the same client / communities. Include any differences in service.

There are no organisations carrying out similar work locally. Home Start compliments the work of other organisations in both the statutory and voluntary sector, by providing longer term support following more intensive, short term interventions.

Due to the nature of service delivery and the long-established relationships within the communities where they work, Home Start are able to work effectively with hard to reach families and those with children who might be described as being "on the edges of care" They work intuitively with families, flexibly responding to their needs and with varying intensity and for as long as support is required. This approach consolidates change and prevents escalation of need.

3. How does this organisation support the Council achieve its priorities?

Home Start contribute to the following strategic priorities:

- Addressing the impact of poverty on children
- Improving mental health and wellbeing
- Maximising job creation and employability
- Reducing the impact of Substance misuse
- Inclusion – live, learn and thrive in Falkirk
- Implement 6 corporate parenting duties in the Act
- Earlier identification and response to childhood neglect
- Aligning fully with the Closer to Home strategy

4. How are service users involved in the design and delivery of services?

Home Start have a Project Development Group which includes staff, trustees, volunteers and current and former service users. All of the PDG members have had involvement in the project at some time in the last few years. They participate in a range of tasks and take account of the needs and interests of service users. They collect information on a regular basis from a variety of sources to ensure the work is current and relevant to the needs of the families, referrers and local and national policy.

All families participate in regular one to one reviews. The reviews address the difficulties the family is experiencing and any progress or barriers in addressing them. The review is also an opportunity to gather information from families about their local area - services they might need but which are either unavailable locally or too difficult or expensive for families to access. Families also participate in regular Focus Groups, sharing information and ideas with staff and Trustees. This information is used alongside the work of the PDG to inform any changes or developments the service may require.

Staff and Volunteer Support and Supervision sessions are used to assess progress of each family, identifying any gaps in the support they are accessing and creating a more complete picture of their progress. Staff are members of a wide range of Forums and Committees across Falkirk. This allows Home Start to keep up to date with changes in all areas affecting or likely to impact on families including changes to benefits, services and work opportunities. They are then able to keep parents informed about these changes, losses or additions. This early knowledge and support to manage it, helps vulnerable parents cope with changes or new opportunities in a more positive and effective way.

5. What specific geographical areas does this service / organisation cover within the Council area?

The service covers mainly the Denny, Bonnybridge, Banknock and surrounding villages. However, where there is a need for a Home-Start service in the wider Falkirk Council area, they respond to this.

C ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

1. Set out current agreed performance information alongside previous years and future years. If there is any benchmarking information provide that.
(Performance reports can be attached as appendices.)

The organisation is funded to provide support to 35 families on the following basis;

10 Initial advice and sign posting
15 Home visiting/ volunteer service
8 enhanced support with multiple elements
2 Specialist support of high intensity/ long duration.

As described above, the service exceeded expectation in 2020/21, despite the pandemic, by nearly double. This is reflective of previous years.

2. **Exception reporting - Note any areas where there is exceptional performance outstripping expectation or where performance is below what would be expected.**
Home Start consistently support a greater number of children and their parents than the agreement with the Council states.

They do not operate a waiting list – recognising that support is generally more effective if it is received as quickly as possible after the difficulty is identified.

They rely on the support and good will of Trustees, Staff and Volunteers working to take on additional families and carry out fundraising activities and apply to trusts and foundations.

3. **When was the last time the service was reviewed and what plans are there to review this?**
Date of most recent review - Home Start are reviewed through the Home-Start UK Quality Assurance Review System on a 3-yearly basis with regular self-assessments during that period. Our last review was in 2019.

Next planned review - Home Start's next review will be in 2022. The service continues to be reviewed under the priorities of Children's Services Closer to Home Strategy.

4. **Are there any improvements in efficiency or effectiveness that could be achieved?**
Home Start has continued to work under significant financial restraint this year and with a much reduced staff team. They are already an extremely cost-effective organisation and any further cuts to funding would mean the service was not viable.

5. **Is the organisation covered by any external regulation or inspection? If so please provide a link to the most recent inspection report noting any improvements etc?**
No

D FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

1. **Set out Falkirk Council funding as a % of the organisations budget. Including financial and in-kind contributions.**
In the year 2019/20 which is the latest they have audited figures for, Falkirk Council provided almost 30% of the funding for Home-Start Falkirk West.

2. **List other sources of funding the organisation has and how much is provided by source.**

Big Lottery	£47,000
Co-op	£2,000
RS MacDonald Trust	£8,000
Donations and fundraised	£7,400

Total £64,500

3. **What is the amount of uncommitted reserves held by the organisation?**
£9,000.

4.	**What proportion of operation cost do reserves represent?** 10%
5.	**Last period of submitted audited accounts** 2019/20
6.	**What other services does the Council fund that are similar to this organisation including Council provision and to what level are those activities funded?** The Council does not fund any other services offering this model of service delivery. Other in-house and commissioned family support services complement the approach.
7.	**Future sustainability- Are there ways in which the organisation can improve resilience and decrease the money required from the Council?** No, the service could not operate with reduced funding from the Council
8.	**How can reductions in funding be achieved?** Reductions cannot be achieved without making the service untenable
9.	**What is the risk to the Council if these services are not funded?** Disadvantaged and hard to reach families who benefit from the service would not have their needs met at an early stage, their needs would escalate and they would require more intensive and expensive interventions in the future.
10.	**Overall risk rating (Low/Medium/High). Please note this should note the risk to the Council not the organisation.** Low
E	**CONCLUSIONS**
1.	**Summary of the future activities of the organisation that will allow services to continue to be delivered.** Home start had reduced funding from April 2017 which necessitated redundancies for staff and a heavier reliance on fundraising activities and pursuing grant funding from trusts and foundations. Despite this reduction in capacity, the service has continued to provide a highly cost effective and impactful service which supports the Council's key priorities including Closer To Home.
F.	**Monitoring Officer Details**
Name:	Cathy Megarry
Designation:	Service Manger
Service:	Children's Services
Date of Report:	06/10/2021

Appendix 5

FALKIRK COUNCIL
FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT 2020/2021

Organisation Name	NHS Forth Valley CAMHS
Project	Clinical Psychology Service for Looked After Children
Agreement Dates	1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021
Name of Monitoring Officer	Gayle McIntyre

A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

1. Summary of key aims & objectives of organisation

To provide a specialist clinical psychology assessment and therapy service for: -

- Children and young people who are Looked After by Falkirk Council, either at home or accommodated away from home, and who are the responsibility of Falkirk Council, even when they are living outwith the area.
- Children and young people residing in the Falkirk Council area whose family placement is at high risk of breakdown, which could lead to them becoming accommodated, whether or not they are at that point Looked After by the Local Authority.

To provide professional consultation to staff including social workers, foster carers and residential staff with the aim of: -

- Promoting therapeutic care for children and young people in their day to day lives.
- Helping to sustain children and young people at home or within their local care placements.
- To minimise the risk of escalating behaviours and reduce the need for more intensive externally purchased care placements.

2. What is the purpose of the funding provided by the Council?

The purpose is to provide services to meet the above key aims and objectives. The requirement for this service reflects that Looked After children have significant mental health needs that may not always meet the criteria for a mainstream mental health service. Looked After children often experience difficulties in engaging with such services and in addition, access to appropriate mental health support can be difficult to secure for children who are placed outwith Falkirk Council's geographical area.

The continuation of this service reflects the commitment to addressing the support needs for those working with this extremely vulnerable group, e.g. foster carers, residential care staff and social workers, thereby enhancing their capacity in developing skills in supporting young people to either remain at home or within a local Falkirk care placement. The psychology service is an important contributor to the care planning for children and young people Looked After by Falkirk Council and for whom the Council hold corporate parenting responsibilities for.

This service has been particularly important over the last 18 months as the pandemic, and the consequent lock down restrictions, have had a significant impact on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. This is especially relevant for young people who were already in need or accessing wellbeing and mental health supports and intervention.

3. Why does the Council fund this?

This post is a partnership arrangement with NHS Forth Valley Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The post holders are employed by the NHS. This ensures that the clinical psychologists have access to the necessary level of professional support, supervision and clinical governance. It is funded by the Council as part of our commitment to meeting the mental health needs specifically of our Looked After children and young people and those at risk of becoming Looked After.

4. How long has the Council funded this organisation to deliver this Service?

9 years

5. Set out the funding provided by the Council over the last five years.

Year	Annual Funding	Support in Kind	One Off Support
2020/2021	£78,500		
2019/2020	£33,100		
2018/2019	£64,904		
2017/2018	£68,472		
2016/2017	£67,401		

- **Please note that in financial year 2019 – 2020 the spend on this service was significantly less than previous years. This was due to the clinical psychologist who worked full time reducing her working hours to 18.5 hours (0.5 FTE post). There was a long delay in backfilling the other 0.5 of the post so we had a reduced service over that financial year.**

- **A new part time psychologist was recruited and took up post in the LAC psychology service in May 2020.**

B SERVICE DELIVERY

1. What does the organisation deliver and to whom i.e. typical service users, customer group targeted etc?

The service delivers a specialist Clinical Psychology service to children and young people who are Looked After. This is delivered on a one-to-one basis with children living at home and those in foster care, residential placements and secure care. Support and consultation services are also provided for other professionals working directly with these vulnerable groups including foster carers, residential workers and social workers. The service contributes to risk assessment and risk management of young people who are assessed as a risk to themselves or others. The service provides written reports and assessments to various statutory forums including Looked After reviews, Children's Hearings and Court. The psychologists also contribute to permanence planning for children and young people including assessments of parents capacity for change, sibling and contact assessments and reports.

2. How many people directly benefit from the organisation?

The service is delivered by experienced and highly skilled clinical psychologists. The psychologists regularly have student psychologists on placement which offers additional resource to the organisation at no additional cost.

Throughout the last financial year, the psychologists worked with **112** young people. This is 43 more children and young people than the year before.
324 professional consultations were provided, this is 174 more than the previous year.

As a result of the pandemic there were 102 less face to face appointments with children and young people, but 199 video calls were provided as an alternative when lock down restrictions were in place.

Age and gender demographics

Age (years)	Number	Gender	
		Male (M)	Female (F)
1	2	0	2
2	3	0	3
4	3	2	1
5	6	4	2
6	3	3	0
7	4	2	2
8	6	4	2
9	8	6	2
10	8	4	4
11	3	3	0
12	6	3	3
13	7	5	2
14	12	5	7
15	5	2	3
16	12	6	6
17	13	6	7
18	7	2	5
19	3	1	2
20	1	1	0
	Total	**59**	**53**

Service delivery

Individual therapy		SW Consultations	Foster carer/ parent/ residential /school Consultations	Attendance At TAC/ Review Meetings
Face To face	Video/phone call			
204	**199**			
Total	**403**	**131**	**193**	**62**

3. **Set out what other similar and or complementary services are provided that are similar in function or support the same client / communities. Include any differences in service.**

The service is located within NHS Forth Valley. CAMHS provide a specialist service for children and young people across Forth Valley with a mental disorder or other symptoms of psychological distress and manage referrals from the broader populations of Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire. They do not provide a specialist mental health service for Looked After children and young people.

The specialist Looked After psychology service offers much more flexibility in terms of working with this vulnerable and difficult to engage group. Appointments are offered within a range of venues to meet the needs of the young person and the psychologists will travel outwith the area to external care placements if required. Appointments are also offered in the early evening rather than the traditional 9 – 5 office hours to accommodate the needs of children and young people. There is flexibility and 'stickability' with young people so supports are not withdrawn when appointments are not attended or engagement is limited or intermittent.

4. How does this organisation support the Council achieve its priorities?

The service supports the achievement of a number of the Council's strategic priorities including:

The Council's Integrated Children's Services Plan (2017 – 2022) is committed to:-

- Outcome – Our population will be healthier

  Actions to achieve this:

  - We will work with young people and adults to improve their health and wellbeing.
  - Individuals have access to specialist mental health services

- Outcome – Our children with develop into resilient, confident and successful adults.

  Actions to achieve this:
  - Children with additional support needs and with disabilities receive appropriate support.

The Children's Services Closer to Home strategy which is a key project within the Council's transformational change programme aims to:

- Work alongside other professionals to keep vulnerable children and young people at home where it is assessed as safe to do so.
- Provide therapeutic services to Looked After children to support them to maintain local care placements.
- Support transitions of young people from external commissioned residential care placements and secure accommodation to in-house care provision closer to the home.
- Supporting return home assessments and transition plans during and after an episode of care.

5. How are service users involved in the design and delivery of services?

The service has previously undertaken regular audit activity to seek anonymous feedback from service users and professionals who have had involvement with the service. Service users can also provide feedback through other mechanisms including Looked After reviews and Children's Hearings. There has not been any routine structured feedback system or audit activity in place over the last 2 financial years due to the temporary reduction in service in 2019 and the pandemic in 2020.

6. What specific geographical areas does this service / organisation cover within the Council area?

The service is provided across Falkirk Council geographical area. The service also supports children and young people whose care needs cannot be met locally and who require a placement outwith the Council area.

C ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

1. Set out current agreed performance information alongside previous years and future years. If there is any benchmarking information provide that.
(Performance reports can be attached as appendices.)

The requirements and expectations of the service have not changed since the service started. The mental health needs of Looked After children continue to be a key priority. The

service continues to deliver on its aims and objectives and has remained focused on providing a specialist service to this vulnerable group, that cannot be met elsewhere.
The focus of the service is towards clinical work, however the service has been responsive to the wider strategic needs as they develop, for example CAMHS liaison with broader service for children and young people with mental health needs.

2. Exception reporting - Note any areas where there is exceptional performance outstripping expectation or where performance is below what would be expected.

The service has been consistently viewed very positively by children and young people as well as by professionals who use the service on a consultancy basis. The flexibility and responsiveness of the service is a major contributory factor to the high value placed on the service by these groups.

3. When was the last time the service was reviewed and what plans are there to review this?

The service has not been subject to formal review. Quarterly contract monitoring meetings take place to ensure that the service continues to deliver on the key aims and objectives.

Feedback has been provided by foster carers about the consultancy service and how positive and helpful this. The flexible support has helped to sustain foster placements where children have complex needs and are displayed challenging and distressed behaviours.

Evaluation tools are being explored to routinely seek feedback from children and young people, but this work has been delayed due to the pandemic. This feedback will be used to inform service improvement.

4. Are there any improvements in efficiency or effectiveness that could be achieved?

Administrative support for the service does not allow for full data gathering and other quality assurance activities. Administrative processes are challenging to maintain without impacting on direct service delivery. Involvement in strategic planning groups is also limited due to the demand for direct work with children and young people.

5.	**Is the organisation covered by any external regulation or inspection? If so please provide a link to the most recent inspection report noting any improvements etc?** The service is not inspected on a standalone basis, however the LAC Psychology service was recognised positively within the last Care Inspectorate Joint Inspection of Services for Children in 2016 who commented that: - "the highly personalised flexible approach had demonstrated considerable success in overcoming barriers to accessing and sustaining engagement with vulnerable young people."
D	**FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW**
1.	**Set out Falkirk Council funding as a % of the organisations budget. Including financial and in kind contributions.** Post funded 100% by Falkirk Council.
2.	**List other sources of funding the organisation has and how much is provided by source.** N/A
3.	**What is the amount of uncommitted reserves held by the organisation?** N/A
4.	**What proportion of operation cost do reserves represent?** N/A
5.	**Last period of submitted audited accounts** N/A
6.	**What other services does the Council fund that are similar to this organisation including Council provision and to what level are those activities funded?** This is a specialist Clinical Psychology Service. The Council has an Educational Psychology Service which is a different professional discipline with a focus on improving the development and learning of all children and young people with additional support needs across Falkirk Council's education establishments.
7.	**Future sustainability- Are there ways in which the organisation can improve resilience and decrease the money required from the Council?** The post holders are employed by NHS Forth Valley. The posts are funded by Falkirk Council and are key elements of the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities. NHS Forth Valley also has corporate parenting responsibilities. Any reduction in the financial commitment from Falkirk Council would result in a reduction in service delivery.

8. How can reductions in funding be achieved?

The service was provided by one full time clinical psychologist from 2014 – 2019 when the psychologist reduced her hours of work to part time, working 0.5 of the full-time post. There was a delay in the recruitment process, so the service operated at 50% capacity over the financial year 2019 – 31st March 2020. This reduction in service had a direct impact on the number of vulnerable children who could be offered a service and the number of staff and carer consultations that could be offered to those working to support children in their daily lives.

Any reduction in service long term would impact directly on the children and young people who access the service. The need for specialist mental health services is increasing and the covid-19 pandemic has impacted greatly on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, even more so, for this already marginalised and vulnerable group.

9. What is the risk to the Council if these services are not funded?

Were the service to be discontinued there would be a significant negative impact on the mental health and wellbeing of Looked After children for whom the Council, along with other agencies, has corporate responsibilities for. The withdrawal or reduction in the service may lead to an escalation of the difficulties children and young people face and this could contribute to an increase in the number of children Looked After away from home or the need for more expensive external placements if local ones cannot be sustained.

10. Overall risk rating (Low/Medium/High). Please note this should note the risk to the Council not the organisation.

Low.

E CONCLUSIONS

1. Summary of the future activities of the organisation that will allow services to continue to be delivered.

The clinical psychology service is critical in addressing the needs of vulnerable children and young people who are at imminent risk of being accommodated or who are already Looked After by the Local Authority. Looked After children are significantly more likely to have mental health needs than their non Looked After peers. The service has developed a very positive reputation with young people, carers and other professionals who value the responsiveness and flexibility of the service which is free from restrictive criteria or long waiting lists.

The need for the service continues to be consistently evidenced in the care planning for children and young people and has and will continue to work exclusively with this targeted group of vulnerable young people with complex needs, in line with the existing aims and objectives.

F. Monitoring Officer Details

Name:	Gayle McIntyre
Designation:	Service Manager
Service:	Children's Services
Date of Report:	12 October 2021

Appendix 6

FALKIRK COUNCIL
FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT 2020/21

Organisation Name	NHS Forth Valley Speech and Language Therapy
Project	Service Level Agreement for Children with Additional Support Needs
Agreement Dates	1 November 2020 – 31 March 2021
Monitoring Officer	Kerry Drinnan

A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

1. Summary of key aims & objectives of organisation

The overall aim is to enable young people to fulfil their potential and communicate to the best of their ability. The Speech and Language Therapy Team aims:

- to maximize the child's communicative potential within the context of education and the home environment
- to reduce the impact of children's communication and eating and drinking difficulties for children with complex and enduring additional support needs
- to facilitate effective communication and learning through skilling and empowering the child and those who communicate with the child on a regular basis.
- to move children and their communication partners towards independent self-management of long term communication support needs
- improve outcomes for all children and young people in the Getting It Right For Every Child areas of safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included (Service Level Agreement, 2020/21)
- advise the Team Around the Child on methods and resources that can support progress in meeting additional support needs arising from speech, language , communication and eating and drinking difficulties

Additionally

- to support the Falkirk Council Education Services in providing Continuing Professional Development for its staff
- to support Falkirk Council Education Services in closing the spoken language gap for children in poverty and positively impacting on attainment.
- to support Falkirk Council deliver on their priorities related to

  - children to grow into resilient, confident and successful adults
  - addressing the impact of poverty on children and young people
  - including children, improving mental health and wellbeing
  - maximising employability

Transformational Review
In May 2019 Speech and Language Therapy embarked on a transformational review in partnership with Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire councils. The process aimed to answer the fundamental question of; 'What do children with communication needs require in order to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included?' The first phase of review was completed in November 2019. Speech and Language Therapy continue to work closely with representatives from all 3 local authorities in the Implementation phase of the review.

Process
The process was framed using quality improvement methodology and the solutions have been co-produced in partnership with Families, Health and Education. The team took time to stop and listen to families, education and health partners to ask what was important to them. This ensured that the transformational change ideas were driven by the needs and views of the local population.

Vision
Following on from the review a joint vision was developed. The vision helps to answer the fundamental question. 'By July 2022 Children and Young People in Falkirk will demonstrate improved outcomes through access to a Speech and Language Therapy service that is based on relationships, is accessible, person centred, outcome focused, integrated and delivers quality universal, targeted and individualised support.'

How will we achieve the vision?
In order to truly deliver positive and sustainable outcomes for children, communities require a whole systems approach that includes quality approaches across Universal, Targeted and Individualised levels and across five key areas of Family Support, Environment, Workforce, Identification and Intervention.

What does this mean practically?
- The majority of the health staff resource has been merged with the education resource and will be delivered in an integrated way based within educational establishments.
- Each educational establishment will have a link SLT aligned to them who will develop approaches across the 5 strands of Family Support, Environment, Workforce, Identification and Intervention
- The therapist will develop a bespoke offer based on the unique needs of the children

2. What is the purpose of the funding provided by the Council?

The purpose of the funding is to deliver on the joint vision, as above.
Speech and Language Therapy is directly helping Falkirk Council to deliver their responsibilities under the Children and Young People(s) Act 2014 and ASL Act
The Service Level agreement between NHS Forth Valley and Falkirk Education Services recognises the need for improving spoken language for all children, and therefore mitigating the significant impact that poor spoken language has on attainment, behaviour, and wellbeing and future life chances.

3. Why does the Council fund this?

To enable the Council to meet its statutory duties under the Additional Support for Learning Act 2006- 2014.
Speech and Language Therapists are central to supporting Falkirk education deliver on the recommendations outlined in the recent review of additional support for learning implementation (June 2020).

4. How long has the Council funded this organisation to deliver this Service?

There has been a long standing joint service level agreement in place between NHS Forth Valley and Falkirk Education Services for over twenty years.

5. Set out the funding provided by the Council over the last five years.

Year	Annual Funding	Support in kind from health	One Off Support
2020/21	515,040	684,515	
2019/20	465.040	663,614	
2018/19	465,040	641,634	
2017/18	465,040	581,342	
2016/17	465,040	575,110	

- For the business year 2020/21, 57% of the funding for Speech and Language Therapy in Falkirk is from Health and 43% from Education.

B SERVICE DELIVERY

1. **What does the organisation deliver and to whom i.e. typical service users, customer group targeted etc?**

   Speech and Language Therapy uses a framework to underpin the offer that supports communication and/or eating and drinking for children and young people. The framework provides an overarching set of outcomes across five strands:

   - Supporting parents, young people and **families**
   - Enhancing and adapting **environments**
   - Developing the **workforce**
   - **Identifying** need
   - Providing appropriate **interventions**

   Roles / Remits of Speech and Language Therapy in relation to above:

   - identification of range of needs
   - assessment of needs
   - development of appropriate programmes
   - direct implementation of programmes [targeted support]
   - indirect implementation of programmes [universal support]
   - monitoring of pupils' progress
   - reporting and identifying next steps
   - risk assessment
   - staff training and development
   - joint working with staff, parents and colleagues
   - input to IEPs and CSPs
   - development of augmentative communication systems
   - use of IT and software

2. **How many people directly benefit from the organisation?**

   1 November 20 to 31 March 21: 883 unique children, with 3570 contacts during this period. The total number of requests for assistance was 425. 38% of these requests were from education staff.
   The number of self-requests has increased significantly this year as education staff often direct parents to self-request. Self-requests in this period made up a further 32% of the requests made.

   Specialist Caseload: In March 2021 there was an active caseload of 823 children.

   Training of Education Staff: In the 5 month period of November 2020 – March 2021 Speech and Language Therapy provided 566 training places to Education staff.

3. Set out what other similar and or complementary services are provided that are similar in function or support the same client / communities. Include any differences in service.

No services are similar in function currently. Parents may commission independent speech and language therapists by private arrangement.

4. How does this organisation support the Council achieve its priorities?

Speech and Language Therapy contributes to all of the councils priorities:

- our children will develop into resilient , confident and successful adults
- our area will be fairer and more equal place to live
- our population will be healthier
- successful business investment and employment
- our area will be a safer place to live

Through

- improving the communication and spoken language of children can significantly improve children's attainment.
- interventions designed to break the intergenerational cycles of children in poverty who are presenting with poor spoken language skills linked with poor life outcomes.
- improved spoken language to mitigate against lifestyle and health risks
- development of communication skills in order that young people have the requisite skills for college and/or employment
- improved spoken language skills reducing communication problems which link to poor behavioural problems, reducing the risk of developing challenging and offending behaviour self-esteem and general wellbeing.

5. How are service users involved in the design and delivery of services?

The new transformational plan included a robust review of Speech and Language Therapy services across Forth Valley and included 354 respondents including education staff, health staff and parents. 1460 comments were themed and analysed.
The review resulted in the development of principles, a vision and change ideas which included

1. Further integration with Education. The majority of the service, including the fully health funded parts of the service, will be delivered within educational placements and in the local community
2. Remove the barrier between the Speech and Language Therapy Community, ASN and Project teams
3. Develop a cluster / locality approach in line with children's service developments
4. Utilise a broad model of service delivery

Improve the equity and quality of Speech and Language Therapy support within specialist provisions

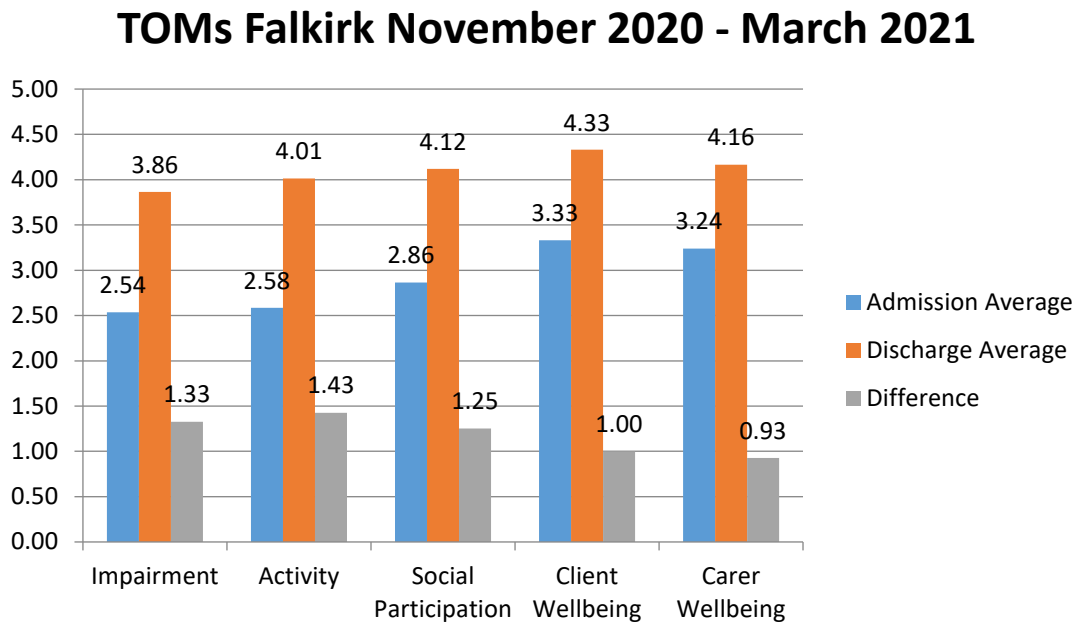
6. What specific geographical areas does this service / organisation cover within the Council area?

All Falkirk Council and Partnership nurseries and schools across the entire Council area.

C ASSESMENT OF PERFORMANCE

1. **Set out current agreed performance information alongside previous years and future years. If there is any benchmarking information provide that.**
(Performance reports can be attached as appendices.)

Specialist Caseload- Therapy outcome measures
Professionals and families use Therapy Outcome Measures to rate progress based on four key dimensions. Each dimension is rated from 0 (severe end) to 5 (normal). These rating scales are used at the beginning and end of a child's journey through the service. Data shows significant improvement in outcomes for children in regard to social participation, activity, wellbeing and impairment.



Performance Indictors
Speech and Language Therapy report performance data, based on the SHANARRI indicators to Falkirk Education Services every four months.
Over the 5 month period, an average of **97.7% episodes** of care resulted in a satisfactory outcome.

Training of Education Staff
Between 1 November 2020 and 31 March 2021, Speech and Language Therapy provided 566 training places. 97.7% of attendees were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the course and 100% of attendees would recommend the training to a colleague.

Services delivered during COVID-19: Activity during lock down (January – February 2021)
The staff have provided a range of supports including;

1. Individualised support for Children & Young People – clinic, phone & video conferencing
2. Speech and Language Therapists maintained contact with educational practitioners and offered support in the form of key messages and ideas for home learning.
3. Helpline was extended and was available Monday to Friday
4. Expansion of quality social media contact

Activity prior to and following full lock down (November-December 2020, and March 2021)
Visits resumed to 100% of Early Learning and Childcare Centres, schools and nursery classes.

2. Exception reporting - Note any areas where there is exceptional performance outstripping expectation or where performance is below what would be expected.

NHS Forth Valley in partnership with Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire is the only area in Scotland that has delivered such radical and transformational changes to the Speech and Language Therapy service.
Speech and Language Therapy have been able to demonstrate exceptionally high performance as evidence by the SHANARRI performance monitoring data reported above.
Following the review, Speech and Language Therapy are now delivering the majority of the fully health funded work with educational establishments.

3. When was the last time the service was reviewed and what plans are there to review this?

The transformational review started in May 2019 and was complete in November 2019. The changes have been accelerated due to the pandemic and the service is already delivering the majority of these changes in Falkirk educational establishments. Speech and Language Therapy continue to work in partnership with representatives of the 3 local authorities to ensure a quality service is meeting the needs of children and young people in Forth Valley.

4. Are there any improvements in efficiency or effectiveness that could be achieved?

The transformational review highlighted a number of change ideas that have been delivered during this period, we are continuing to monitor, improve and measure change to ensure our partnership can maximise effectiveness and outcomes for children and young people, with an early years and early intervention focus.
This year the service has made significant progress in developing the service for our most vulnerable children in line with the ambition of the 'Closer to Home Strategy.'

5. Is the organisation covered by any external regulation or inspection? If so please provide a link to the most recent inspection report noting any improvements etc?

Individual staff are fully regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council, NHS targets and quality assurances processes.

D	FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW
1.	**Set out Falkirk Council funding as a % of the organisations budget. Including financial and in kind contributions.** For the 2020/21 business year Falkirk council funded 43% of the Speech and Language Therapy service. NHS Forth Valley funds 57%.
2.	**List other sources of funding the organisation has and how much is provided by source.** Speech and Language Therapy service in Falkirk does not receive any additional funding apart from the core funding from NHS Forth Valley outlined above.
3.	**What is the amount of uncommitted reserves held by the organisation?** The speech and language therapy service does not have separate reserves from the NHS.
4.	**What proportion of operation cost do reserves represent?** Not applicable for the NHS.
5.	**Last period of submitted audited accounts** NHS accounts are audited annually and are made public.
6.	**What other services does the Council fund that are similar to this organisation including Council provision and to what level are those activities funded?** None
7.	**Future sustainability- Are there ways in which the organisation can improve resilience and decrease the money required from the Council?** The transformational review of this service in partnership with the three local authorities in Forth Valley will ensure the partnership can maximise effectiveness and outcomes for children and young people. A decrease in funding will have a significant impact on service delivery and reach and outcomes on young people. Further negotiation will be required with NHS Forth Valley.
8.	**How can reductions in funding be achieved?** The monitoring officer and the service will be required to work collaboratively to reduce the service delivery as appropriate.

9. What is the risk to the Council if these services are not funded?

A reduction in funding will mean that the current model of service delivery within educational establishments will be unsustainable and therefore will have to be reversed, with services reverting back to being clinic based.

Cost for Children and Young People

- A reduction of Speech and Language Therapy services will have an impact on the wellbeing, behaviour, learning and positive destinations of children in Falkirk both in the short and long term.

Cost to Education

- Reputational risk for the council and potential increase in costs related to tribunals and complaints and ASL Act legal challenges.

Cost for Parents and Families

- By reducing SLT services, parent's ability to support the speech, language and communication development of their child will be affected.

Cost for Teachers

- Increased stress and workload for teaching staff without support from SLTs.
- Objectives for learning, attainment and behaviour will be impacted if schools are not able to access adequate support from their local SLT service.

10. Overall risk rating (Low/Medium/High). Please note this should note the risk to the Council not the organisation.

Medium – further reductions in funding is likely to decrease the availability of the service, reducing the level of assistance to a number of children and young people with communication difficulties associated with high risks such as poor health, poor mental health and anti- social behaviour**.**

E	CONCLUSIONS
1.	**Summary of the future activities of the organisation that will allow services to continue to be delivered.** NHS Forth Valley Speech and Language Therapy Service have provided a valuable service to children and young people, families, nurseries and schools. Service delivery objectives set for the funding from Falkirk Council have been achieved. The Service Level Agreement will be continually monitored.
F.	**Monitoring Officer Details**
Name: Kerry Drinnan	
Designation: Service Manger ASN	
Service: Children's Services	
Date of Report: 10th September 2021	

Appendix 7

FALKIRK COUNCIL
FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT 2020/21

Organisation Name	One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS)
Project	One Parent Families Scotland, Falkirk
Agreement Dates	1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021

A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

1. Summary of key aims & objectives of organisation

The key objectives of One Parent families Scotland are:

- Single parents have the capacity and resilience to deal with the complex issues they face and are equipped to ensure that their children can grow up and flourish within a healthy, stable, and supportive home environment.
- Single parents have the disposable income required to ensure a good standard of living and the opportunity to achieve their aspirations and ambitions, for themselves and their children.
- Single parents can participate fully in decision-making in their families, their communities, and the wider society.
- Scottish and local governments and partner organisations have a comprehensive understanding of the issues affecting one parent families, resulting in the delivery of effective and appropriate services
- OPFS is a resilient and responsive organisation, delivering quality-assured services, embracing a culture of learning and development, supported by a sustainable financial strategy

2. What is the purpose of the funding provided by the Council?
The funding provided by the Council enables One Parent Families Scotland, Falkirk to contribute to the following:

Support for families
Families contribute to planning and decision making.
Parents take responsibility for their children's welfare.
Parents and children have a positive attitude to learning.
Families live in households free from low income.

Early Education and Childcare
Children are mentally and emotionally healthy
Children achieve stretching national educational standards at a childcare setting
Children achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation
Children develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges.

3. Why does the Council fund this?

One Parent Families Scotland, Falkirk, offers support to disadvantaged families across the 16 villages that make up the Upper Braes area. The area is characterised by low-income families and does not have good public transport links.

The centre is well established and trusted in the local area and meets the needs of otherwise hard to reach families. By delivering Family Support and Early Education in the Upper Braes area of Falkirk, OPFS are addressing issues around parenting, attachment, poverty, poor mental health and attainment in early years, Primary School and High School. These are priorities for the Council.

By offering early intervention locally, the service prevents escalation of need and the requirement for more intrusive and costly interventions.

There is no other comparable support service available in the local vicinity.

4. How long has the Council funded this organisation to deliver this Service?

The Family Centre has supported people in the Upper Braes area for over 30 years. The service has attracted additional funding to allow for a comprehensive service for children and families based on the evolving needs and requirements of the local area.

5. Set out the funding provided by the Council over the last five years.

Year	Annual Funding	Support in Kind	One Off Support
2020/21	£82,523	£6000 (property costs)	
2019/20	£82,523	£6000 (property costs)	
2018/19	£82,523	£6000	
2017/18	£92,523	£6000	
2016/17	£115,654	£6000	

B SERVICE DELIVERY

1. **What does the organisation deliver and to whom i.e. typical service users, customer group targeted etc?**

OPFS Falkirk provides Early Education for children aged two to three years. In addition, families accessing the childcare are offered a package that comprises in-house and outreach support.

OPFS supports parents, especially single parents, with issues which include parenting, debt, budgeting, low mood and poor mental health, isolation, managing household tasks and identifying and addressing risk taking behaviour.

They offer support to children in group settings as well as on a one-to-one basis. Group work addresses issues around Transition, Friendships and Nurture.

One to one support for children and young people is centred on their individual needs and can include developing strategies to enable them to deal with anger or risk-taking behaviour, improving school attendance and attainment or building confidence and resilience to deal with difficult situations, being IT aware or developing strategies that will keep them safe from harm.

Support is delivered systemically and where possible includes both school and parents.

The organisation's early education and childcare targets children aged two to three years of age.

Through other funding streams, OPFS normally develops this service by offering a Drop-In / Hub which offers a variety of different services which aim to maximize family's income. Holiday activities are usually run as these allow staff to role model healthy eating and provide advice on purchasing affordable meals. Fruit is normally provided as many parents report that this improves their children's diet as a result of being better informed. The benefit to families on low incomes is significant. Along with a free healthy meal, families can access an Emergency Store which offers free essential household, hygiene, baby and sanitary items and a school clothing bank. This is delivered in a sensitive and non-stigmatising way.

Sessions, where parents and their children normally come along and enjoy some time with their peers, include story and song times, physical activities, cooking, outdoor play and messy play. There are different themes each term which enable children to develop a range of skills. These group supports parents understanding of their child's development and guides a wide variety of issues.

Addressing the issue of social isolation and low-mood, families will access the communal area at any time allowing them to mix with, and be supported by, other parents, speak to staff or access support from the range of other services including advice on benefit maximisation and home energy.

Because of lockdown and COVID restrictions the service were unable to offer the above during 2020/21.

However, they supported families via telephone, zoom and through social media platforms as parents and children were not permitted to be inside the Family Centre, and they could no longer run our weekly groups such as Family, Food & Fun, Gardening Group and so on.

They decided the best way to support parents digitally was through their existing Facebook Page and Zoom groups. They did this in a variety of ways. They spent time searching for and sharing and posting anything they thought parents would benefit from hearing about or getting information on, such as, links to government grants, tips on potty training, and dealing with temper tantrums.

They also recorded, edited and uploaded videos of staff delivering content to spark the interest of parents. These videos included sessions of baby massage, play at home and messy play ideas and

a sleep tips video. Limited start up packs for baby massage and bedtime routine packs were also available for parents to collect safely from the Centre. Zoom coffee mornings, mindfulness and cooking groups were also offered and attended by parents who were struggling with feeling of isolation and loneliness.

As restrictions lift, they are starting to introduce their normal services and when allowed, will reintroduce groups sessions.

They continued to offer financial support through help with benefits, access to their emergency store and school clothing bank to 37 families. Families accessed financial help 130 times and the financial gain totalled. £14,838

In addition to the financial support noted above, the service distributed £57,140 worth of grants, activities and devices to support digital inclusion, making payments or delivering goods to families living in the Falkirk area 353 times.

The service continues to offer a bespoke confidential, non-judgmental support for single fathers and their children, helping dads to reduce feelings of isolation, increase their sense of family wellbeing and parenting skills, and build confidence and self-esteem. Whilst issues addressed are similar to how they work with mothers, they acknowledge and work to fight the stigma facing lone fathers.

Otherwise hard to reach and isolated families have a well-established social venue within their village which they trust and value, breaking down many barriers to engagement and inclusion.

2. How many people directly benefit from the organisation?

This year OPFS – Falkirk supported
137 parents and 264 children accessed one to one and group work support
19 children have accessed the Eligible 2's service
81 families accessed our service for one off support

- Through Pupil Equity Funding they have supported children within Slamannan Primary School through One to One support and Friendship, Life skills and Transition Groups. These figures have not been included.

Latterly, the service has continued to support families though the covid 19 pandemic and lockdown.

Impact on families

Parents report improvement in their mental and physical health as a result of the support offered through the pandemic. Support included:

- One-to-one support to parents by telephone, text, email, Facebook, Facetime and WhatsApp

- Advice on Universal Credit claims, Benefit Applications, Money Advice and Housing
- Information and advice on money, food and heating and lighting.
- Help with crisis applications for fuel, food and essential item items
- Hints and tips on managing your worries
- Ideas for activities you can do at home to keep you and your family occupied
- Early years provision for children aged two to three who are entitled to free childcare.

Families also received financial gains of £71,978

"The family centre have helped me out so much, I have been taken back with how much they have supported me though this difficult time and how they have supported me with family issues and my own personal issues, knowing that they are just one call away."

"They have been calling me each week to check how I have been doing and I feel completely comfortable telling her how crazy my feelings have been knowing that she is listening and helping me each way possible. I have a mental health worker [but] I feel if it wasn't for the family centre I wouldn't have got any help and I would have been stuck in a big hole."

"I really can't thank them enough for all the care and support they have given my family during this tough time, the staff are just the loveliest group of people and everything they do is from the heart, the work they do is incredible and I'm so lucky to have the support they offer, not just financial and practical support, but especially the emotional support they give".
"They really do an amazing job, I can't thank them enough for all they do".

3. Set out what other similar and or complementary services are provided that are similar in function or support the same client / communities. Include any differences in service.

In normal circumstances, the local area has a functioning Community Centre which offers activities for young people and toddlers. The Salvation Army offers youth groups and sessions for parents and toddlers. The local church offers activities for primary school children and a parent and toddler group. These services complement the Family Centre by offering universal support to families who have fewer barriers to engagement. This enables the Family Centre to support families into mainstream provision as their circumstances and capacity improves.

4. How does this organisation support the Council achieve its priorities?

The organisation aligns with the Council's priorities the aims and priorities outlined in the Children's Services Closer to Home strategy.

5. How are service users involved in the design and delivery of services?

The activities and developments within the service have been increasingly co-produced with the families who use it. The organisation reports that a less directive and more facilitative approach with families has empowered them to take a more active and innovative role in decision-making and planning. Families have directed several activities and workstreams over the past year and the sense of community buy-in and value placed on the family centre is noticeable when visiting.

6.	**What specific geographical areas does this service / organisation cover within the Council area?** The Centre offers support mainly in the Upper Braes area of Falkirk, however, they support families out with the geographical area if support cannot be provided more locally. The Father's project covers the wider Falkirk area.
C ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE	
1.	**Set out current agreed performance information alongside previous years and future years. If there is any benchmarking information provide that.** **(Performance reports can be attached as appendices.)** The organisation continues to exceed the performance targets outlined in the service level agreement. As funding has reduced, alternative funding has been accessed to enable an adapted model of service delivery. Whilst the proportion of funding from the Council has reduced, the organisation has managed to sustain the number of people directly benefitting from the services they provide.
2.	**Exception reporting - Note any areas where there is exceptional performance outstripping expectation or where performance is below what would be expected.** As described above, expectations have been exceeded in terms of how many families the service worked with. Of those who engaged with the service, the vast majority have made positive progress on their own and the organisations measures.
3.	**Are there any improvements in efficiency or effectiveness that could be achieved?** The organisation has been subject to cuts in funding from the Council in recent years which have led to reductions in staffing and increasing operational staff time spent fundraising and seeking other funding sources. External funders match local authority funding and therefore less statutory funding received reduces the overall amount that can be attracted. External funding is also often offered on a short term basis which impacts on the organisation's ability to plan strategically on a medium-term basis. There would not appear to be further opportunities to increase efficiency at present.
4.	**Is the organisation covered by any external regulation or inspection? If so please provide a link to the most recent inspection report noting any improvements etc?** The Care Inspectorate Inspection in September 19 rewarded OPFS a score of 5 for the two areas inspected – Quality Care and Support and Quality of Staffing.

D FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

1. **Set out Falkirk Council funding as a % of the organisations budget. Including financial and in kind contributions.**
   55%

2. **List other sources of funding the organisation has and how much is provided by source.**

Falkirk Council	£82,523
Eligible 2's	£70,000
PEF	£20,000
Robertson Trust	£10,000
Tampon Tax	£20,000
Grants	£10,100
Earned	£1500
Grants for devices	57,140
Total	£271,263

3. **What is the amount of uncommitted reserves held by the organisation?**
   Uncommitted reserves were £617,416 as at March 2021. (As per the draft accounts)

4. **What proportion of operation cost do reserves represent?**
   OPFS' reserves are equivalent to 3 months' operating costs to cover fluctuations in cash flow, any unexpected deficits in local services and redundancy obligations.

5. **Last period of submitted audited accounts**
   A draft copy of OPFS accounts for the Year-end March 2021 have been submitted to the council. This is embargoed until the OPFS AGM, after which date the final copy will be received.

6. **What other services does the Council fund that are similar to this organisation including Council provision and to what level are those activities funded?**
   Various in-house and voluntary organisations offer family support across the Council area although none are established within the Upper Braes to the extent of this organisation.

7. **Future sustainability- Are there ways in which the organisation can improve resilience and decrease the money required from the Council?**
   The organisation has received a reduction in funding from the Council over the last 5 years. They now attract 50% of their total income from other funders, many of whom are short term. The impact of any further reduction would, in effect be doubled as it would mean a loss of matched funding by the same amount.

   Alongside the people who use the service, the organisation continuously redesigns its services and they are now supporting more families than they were 5 years ago.

   It is of note that funding from Tampon Tax, and Robertson Trust ceased in December and March 2021.

8. **How can reductions in funding be achieved?**
   The organisation has indicated that they would struggle to manage any further reduction in funding as indicated above.

9.	**What is the risk to the Council if these services are not funded?** There would be no holistic support service for hard to reach, disadvantaged families living in the Upper Braes area or provision for entitled twos in Maddiston. The capacity of council staff to identify children at risk of harm at an early stage in this vicinity to intervene effectively would be reduced. The reduction in access to early intervention and non- stigmatising support would lead to an escalation of need and an increase in the requirement for more costly and intensive interventions in the future.
10.	**Overall risk rating (Low/Medium/High). Please note this should note the risk to the Council not the organisation.** Low
E	**CONCLUSIONS**
1.	**Summary of the future activities of the organisation that will allow services to continue to be delivered.** The organisation has continued to perform exceptionally, despite reduced funding and a need to adapt its approach to service delivery. They continue to seek funding from other sources to support their work but it should be noted that their capacity to do so is reduced as this is often matched to statutory funding. The extent, impact and the reach of the work undertaken continues to represent good value for money
F.	**Monitoring Officer Details**
Name: Cathy Megarry	
Designation: Service Manager	
Service: Children's Services	
Date of Report: 20/09/2021	

Appendix 8

FALKIRK COUNCIL
FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT 2020/21

Organisation Name	Quarriers
Project	Falkirk Children's Rights Service
Agreement Dates	1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021
Name of Monitoring Officer	Sharon Laing

A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

1. Summary of key aims & objectives of organisation

- To develop and deliver a comprehensive Children's Rights Service in the Falkirk area in partnership with Who Cares? and Falkirk Council.
- To promote, protect and uphold the rights of children and young people from birth to 21 years within the Falkirk area as stated within the UNCRC and Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and associated guidance.
- To collate client feedback and assess this information to identify needs.
- To develop a pool of volunteers to supplement information/advocacy services to children and young people.
- To develop and maintain a service profile and target vulnerable and marginalised children and young people from the Falkirk area in line with the service agreement.
- To work with the Champions Board to uphold and develop the voice of Falkirk's looked after children and young people, in line with the Children and Young People (Scot) Act 2014 and Falkirk Councils Corporate Parenting Strategy.

The Children's Rights Service is accessible to all children and young people normally resident within the Falkirk Council area, with vulnerable groups and particularly those looked after, being prioritised**.**

Agreed Outcomes

- Provision of a service to children from Falkirk to ensure that their rights are upheld both individually and within policy developments
- Evidence of addressing themes from across services which require attention in relation to children's rights, especially concerning corporate parenting duties.
- Close work with Who Cares? local advocacy service to ensure that, together, the rights of children who are looked after are maintained and upheld
- Evidence of challenge to the Council and its partners where appropriate, where children's issues are not being properly upheld or developed.
- Evidence of involvement in and initiation of developments which uphold and enhance the rights of children within the Council.
- Ensuring that key priorities in the ICSP, and particularly our new Children's Rights and Corporate Parenting duties are being taken forward and involve young people.
- Evidence of a key role in developing and sustaining the Champions Board model in relation to corporate parenting.

These aims align with the Children's Services Closer to Home Strategy and the Council Corporate Parenting Strategy and contribute to the inspection priorities in relation to hearing the voice of the young person.

2. What is the purpose of the funding provided by the Council?

The funding ensures that the Council fulfills its statutory duty to provide a Children's Rights Officer and children's rights service to our vulnerable children.

The post of Children's Rights Officer and the related service is intended to provide independent rights and advocacy for children. Priority is given to those who are:

- looked after,
- on the child protection register
- have a disability
- are involved with the youth justice system.

The service also has a scrutiny role in terms of ensuring that the council adheres to the UNCRC principles in our actions and policies. Given this, it is good practice for the service to be provided by an external agency.

3. Why does the Council fund this?

This function is a statutory duty as detailed above. Provision of the service internally would not provide the level of independence required to meet what is also a core priority for the council.

The views of looked after children are sometimes overlooked and due to their status, we have a responsibility to actively seek their views and provide them with the support required to ensure their voice is heard. The Children's Rights Officer ensures that this duty is fulfilled in relation to both individual children and young people and wider policy and practice developments

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 also extends our duties in relation to children's rights, with a requirement to have such a service available to all young people, and detail this in a children's rights plan. The Children's Rights service work to develop the first plan with young people commenced during the 2019/20 financial year.

4. How long has the Council funded this organisation to deliver this Service?

14 Years.

5. Set out the funding provided by the Council over the last five years.

Year	Annual Funding	Support in Kind	One Off Support
2020/21	£86,200	-Access to national training and events -Provision of practical assistance to support the work of the Champions Board	Provision of registration fee to allow council schools access to Rights Respecting Schools (this has shifted in to 20/21 due to covid)

2019/20	£86,200	-Access to national training and events -Provision of practical assistance to support the work of the Champions Board	Provision of registration fee to allow council schools access to Rights Respecting Schools (this has shifted in to 20/21 due to covid)
2018/19	£86,200	-Access to national training and events -Provision of practical assistance to support the work of the Champions Board	Access to Creative and Active post to assist n accessing the views of young people
2017/18	£86,200	Access to National Training and events. In kind and financial assistance with Champions Board work	£10,475 (full year costs,) for half Champions Board participation worker costs) Access to Life Coach Access to Creative and Active Post
2016/17	£86,200	As above	As above

B SERVICE DELIVERY

1. **What does the organisation deliver and to whom i.e. typical service users, customer group targeted etc?**

   This service is statutory, and includes challenging and championing a rights-based approach in policy and practice. The service identifies themes in relation to both good practice and areas for development e.g., leading work on hearing the voice of young people as we develop our first Children's Rights Plan as part of our duties under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 identifying what was contributing to inconsistency of opportunity to celebrate and promote rights based practice across our schools, resulting in the a service level agreement for UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award across the council. This gives equality of opportunity, best value and assists schools by providing external support to promote the awards within schools.

2. **How many people directly benefit from the organisation?**

   All children normally resident in Falkirk Council area can access the Children's rights Service. However, the service is not of a size to cover all need and the following children and young people are given priority:

   - All our looked after children population
   - Continuing Care young people
   - Care leavers
   - Children on the child protection register.
   - Those with a disability – almost a third of children referred to the service have additional needs in this area.

   For period April 2020 to March 2021 – 82 children & young people directly supported
   25 enquires where advise was given or sign posted

   Residential Homes:
   - Throughout 20/21 (pandemic) fortnightly telephone contact
   - September 21 started physically dropping in

   RRSA:
   - 8 high schools supported
   - 33 primary schools supported
   - Inclusion & Wellbeing service

   Scottish Youth Parliament:
   - Supporting 14 young people to become members of the SYP to represent Falkirk's children & Young people

   Children's Rights & Engagement Group
   - Over 200 young people within secondary and primary setting engaged through teams call to discuss their involvement in children's rights planning

   The development of Right Respecting Schools ensures that every pupil of those schools who have participated have benefited from The Children's Rights Service.

3. Set out what other similar and or complementary services are provided that are similar in function or support the same client / communities. Include any differences in service.

The Quarriers service is only one part of the Falkirk Children's Rights Service. The full service is made up of the Children's Rights Officer and a participation worker support provided by Quarriers, plus a part time Advocacy Worker provided by Who Cares? Scotland (subject to a separate Following the Public Pound report).

The involvement of two agencies in the Councils Children's Rights Service is not duplication as the service itself is a combination of two aspects of children's rights; the one agency specialising only in advocacy for young people looked after away from home, and the other providing the statutory Children's Rights Officer function (which encompasses a wider advocacy remit for vulnerable groups). This partnership approach has allowed the council to achieve best value in terms of resources, and to access significant additional benefit via both organisations.

Examples of additional benefits from Quarriers:

- 50% contribution to funding for a participation worker for Champions Board until May 2019
- Locating a Mentor Program for looked after at home young people aged 8 – 14 years in Falkirk - funded by Scottish Government and run in Forth Valley by Quarriers
- Access to Life Coaching Scheme for care experienced young people. This funding was able to be accessed specifically due to Quarriers existing Children's Rights presence in Falkirk and had a significant impact on improving destination outcomes for young people. This work also contributed to Falkirk's success in achieving funding for a Family firm Coordinator from Life changes Trust who commenced during the 2019/20 financial year
- Access to a creative and active worker who focuses on health and wellbeing of our looked after children and young people. Again, this funding was accessed due to the basis of the existing arrangements with Quarriers
- Access to property support in identifying alternative workspace when the existing council property is closed.

4. How does this organisation support the Council achieve its priorities?

Corporate Parenting is a priority for the council, and this is reflected in the planning structure. The Children's Rights and corporate parenting duties of the council are outlined in detail in the Integrated Children's Services Plan.

The Children's Rights Officer chairs our Children's Rights and Engagement Group which are tasked to co-produce a Children's Rights Plan with the children and young people of Falkirk, as well as develop on going engagement platforms to work with children and young people to develop Falkirk's approach to supporting their participation in co design and co-production of services.

The Children's Rights Officer currently carries out the role of strategic lead for the Rights Respecting School Award within the council area. This includes supporting individual schools to access and progress through the award with support provided locally due to the current service level agreement in place. The ongoing promotion of the award will support the council in achieving their duties of reporting on their progress of Children's rights under The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Children's rights are an increasing area with a statutory duty now placed on councils and with the introduction of the UNCRC into Domestic Law, the role of the Children's Rights Officer and Children's rights Service is therefore of increasing importance and the current model will be at the core of developments in this area.

5. How are service users involved in the design and delivery of services?

The Children's Rights Service is designed to reflect the views of children and young people. They raise both individual and general issues relating to children's rights with the council and corporate parent partners, and this influences practice and developments via the steering group.

The service report quarterly to the Children's Rights and Champions Board Steering Group on the themes and feedback from everyone who receives a service, thus influencing priorities and actions in line with their remit to challenge and influence policy and practice. Reporting and monitoring is joint with Who Cares? Themes are reported into the Champions Board where these relate to this area of work, and to Children's Commission in relation to the developing work towards meeting the duties of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The Children's Rights Service will be at the heart of Children's Rights Planning with the coproduction of the ICSP/children's rights plan with children and young people.

6. What specific geographical areas does this service / organisation cover within the Council area?

The service covers the full council area, and is available to any child or young person who is normally resident in this area i.e., children and young people in the Falkirk area and those looked after and placed out with the council boundary.

C ASSESMENT OF PERFORMANCE

1. **Set out current agreed performance information alongside previous years and future years. If there is any benchmarking information provide that.**
   (Performance reports can be attached as appendices.)

   The service reports on a quarterly basis to a Children's Rights and Champions Board steering group made up of all relevant partners and stakeholder. Alongside this the service managers for Who Cares? and Quarriers meet to review contractual details and service focus. Reports are provided to these meetings using an agreed format which is developed to allow reporting which demonstrates both the statistical information required and the practice and quality aspects of the work.

   These reports demonstrate:
   - Constant referrals to Falkirk Children's Rights Service
   - Closer work with partner agencies in relation to corporate parenting duties and influencing of related initiatives nationally and locally
   - Ongoing support for the Champions Board work
   - Inclusion of the Children's Rights Officer at initial child protection case conferences.
   - Benefits of the 'drop in' facility at local schools which has led to the Rights Respecting Schools initiative referred to earlier in this report.
   - Core work with young people to develop the Children's Rights Plan
   - The Children's Rights Officer or colleagues visit young people in Falkirk Council in house and contracted residential houses monthly, and link with children in foster and kinship placements. Collation and feedback on issues is provided at the monitoring meeting and impacts on priorities.

   The service, alongside Who Cares? and the council has reviewed the working protocol and the service now focuses on the most vulnerable groups of young people.

2. **Exception reporting - Note any areas where there is exceptional performance outstripping expectation or where performance is below what would be expected.**

   The Children's Rights Service receives positive feedback from the young people who access the service. The ongoing growth in the service referrals have demonstrated the impact the service is having on Children and young people's lives within the council area.

   Falkirk Council's partnership approach to children's rights is considered best practice nationally.

3.	**When was the last time the service was reviewed and what plans are there to review this?** **Date of most recent review -** 25th November 2020 **Next planned review -** Re-tendering of the service in 2022/23
4.	**Are there any improvements in efficiency or effectiveness that could be achieved?** The Children's rights service will be recommissioned in 2022/23 a single provision of a Children's Rights service in Falkirk.
5.	**Is the organisation covered by any external regulation or inspection? If so please provide a link to the most recent inspection report noting any improvements etc?** The service is not a registered service with the care inspectorate.

D	FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW
1.	**Set out Falkirk Council funding as a % of the organisations budget. Including financial and in kind contributions.** Falkirk Council provide £86,200 to Quarriers. Overall income for Quarriers in 2020/21 was £42.6 million.
2.	**List other sources of funding the organisation has and how much is provided by source.** Quarriers is a large Scottish Charity and is funded by a range of authorities to provide social services, primarily in relation to epilepsy, adult disability, and children and families. They also have a small amount of income from donation and legacies which are detailed in their accounts.
3.	**What is the amount of uncommitted reserves held by the organisation?** Free reserves at 31 March 2021 amounted to £3.9m.
4.	**What proportion of operation cost do reserves represent?** At the current level of annual expenditure of £40.6m this representing approximately 5 weeks (2020: 4 weeks).
5.	**Last period of submitted audited accounts** 12 months to 31st March 2021.
6.	**What other services does the Council fund that are similar to this organisation including Council provision and to what level are those activities funded?** Who Carers? (Scotland) £27,970 per annum.
7.	**Future sustainability- Are there ways in which the organisation can improve resilience and decrease the money required from the Council?** The stand still nature of the funding since the inception of the service means that there is no flexibility remaining to reduce cost without impacting on the basic service and thus the council's statutory duties in terms of corporate parenting and provision of a Children's Rights Officer. Quarterly monitoring allows the service to be reviewed regularly to ensure best use is made of the available resource, and that the service is provided within budget. The monitoring process also allows the service to be alert to future funding streams which may contribute or compliment the service.

The Children's Rights Service will also support the council in ensuring the work undertaken within the Council of the Future workstreams and the transformational change programme is complaint with UNCRC by offering consultation on the production of Children's Rights Equality Impact Assessments.

8. How can reductions in funding be achieved?

The funding for the service, £86,200, primarily covers staffing costs for the two staff – the Children's Rights Officer and the admin/participation worker post. These costs equate to just over £60,000, leaving £26,000 for activities and related expenses. An application of even a 5% cut would therefore inevitably mean a reduction in what is already a very small staff compliment, and therefore threaten sustainability of the service.

Work is underway on a procurement exercise to place the Children's Rights Service on a stronger footing, and ensure that both this statutory duty and the continuation of the Champions Board work are fit for the future.

9. What is the risk to the Council if these services are not funded?

We would fail to meet our statutory duties in terms of provisions of a Children's Rights Officer, and the duties in the Children and Young People (Scot) Act 2014. These duties would require to be undertaken by the council and would not have the independence that provides an important element to children's rights. Duties in relation to children's rights across all groups are also increasing and the council is required to show how we are developing our services to cover all groups of children and young people.

10. Overall risk rating (Low/Medium/High). Please note this should note the risk to the Council not the organisation.

Medium as the council may be subject to legal challenge now or in the future.

E	**CONCLUSIONS**
1.	**Summary of the future activities of the organisation that will allow services to continue to be delivered.** The re-tendering of the service for a single provider.
F.	**Monitoring Officer Details**
Name: Sharon Laing	
Designation: Service Manager	
Service: Children and Families Social Work	
Date of Report: October 2021	

Appendix 9

FALKIRK COUNCIL FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT 2020/21

Organisation Name	Transform Forth Valley
Project	Time 4 Us
Agreement Dates	1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021

A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

1. Summary of key aims & objectives of organisation

Transform Forth Valley offer a wide range of services to support individuals and families who are impacted by substance misuse and/or societal, financial or health inequalities. They respond to identified need in the Forth Valley and in partnership support individuals and families to tackle inequalities that diminish life chances. The organisation engages with people at the earliest opportunity to prevent issues from worsening. They provide direct interventions and support to meet personal objectives and work in partnership and provide coordination to ensure all needs are being met.

Aims and Objectives of Transform FV:

Identify and support the most vulnerable and hard to reach individuals in Falkirk
Develop awareness of the impact of substance misuse on young people, children and families
Increase self-confidence, self-management and self-determination.
Improve access to the right support services.
Work in partnership to achieve better life chances and improved outcomes.

Time 4 Us

Time 4 Us is funded by the National Lottery and Falkirk, Stirling, and Clackmannanshire Councils. The service offers support and focused interventions to children and families affected by a significant family member or carer's drug and or alcohol use. They work with adults who have care of, or contact with, their children aged 0-16 years and who are stable in their recovery and engaging with substance misuse services and support children and young people aged 5-16 years who have been impacted by the substance use of a family member.

Aim & objectives

- To Improve the outcomes for children and families affected by substance use.
- To enhance children's emotional and mental wellbeing.
- To reduce risk and harm in relation to substance use.
- To support children and families to make positive choices.
- To work alongside parents to improve their capacity and skills.
- To support parents through child welfare and protection procedures.

2. Why does the Council fund this?

Time for Us is funded by a combination of external funding from The National Lottery, Falkirk, Stirling, and Clackmannanshire Councils. The external funding supports Time 4 Us to deliver an enhanced service to families across Falkirk and the wider Forth Valley. Falkirk's Child protection data identifies parent or carer substance use year on year as a significant risk indicator for children considered 'at risk'.

Falkirk Council's Strategic Outcomes and Local Delivery Plan 2016-2020 and the Falkirk Community Planning Partnership 2019-2024, have identified that *minimising the impact of substance misuse, addressing the impact of poverty on children, reducing stigma, and Improving mental health and wellbeing* are all key priorities. The work delivered by Time 4 Us sits under these priorities, aiming to engage children; young people and families affected or involved in substance use and support them to make positive, sustainable change in their lives.

3. How long has the Council funded this organisation to deliver this Service?

12 years

4. Set out the funding provided by the Council over the last five years.

Year	Annual Funding	Support in Kind	One Off Support
2020/21	£38.870		
2019/20	£38,870		
2018/19	£38,870		
2017/18	£38,870		
2016/17	£42,375		

Other 2020-2021 funding:

National Lottery	£59,818
Transform Forth Valley	£ 7,986
Stirling Council	£15,000
Clacks Council	£ 8,500

B SERVICE DELIVERY

1. **What does the organisation deliver and to whom i.e. typical service users, customer group targeted etc?**

Time 4 Us continues to work across the whole of Forth Valley supporting children, young people and families affected by drug and or alcohol use. The service has operated for over 12 years within this area and is viewed across professional boundaries as an essential service for children, young people, and families.

Time 4 Us over the past difficult year has continued to provide therapeutic supports to children, young people and adults with emotional dysregulation, low confidence, self-esteem and little to no resilience. The service works holistically with families to eliminate relational contagion and break cycles of poor parenting.

The service continues to build trusting positive relationships with children, young people and families to achieve the best possible outcomes for each individual. The service has continued to work in close partnership with social services providing supports, which have had a direct benefit to all children, young people and their families for whom substances have had a harmful impact on their everyday family lives. The service supports clients to identify their issues through assessment processes, helping them to build coping strategies to strengthen their resilience, with the aim of empowering them to respond more effectively to any future exposure to traumatic or stressful events..

Children affected by parental or familial substance misuse, experience trauma rand can have trouble in regulating emotions, difficulty understanding other people's emotions, intense feelings of shame, rage, behavioural and neurological difficulties. Many children and young people living in the care system or living in unpredictable households, where neglect and damaging behaviours are prevalent have been supported by the service.

Through learned behaviour, children have also been at increased risk of harm from developing the same or similar risky behaviours, especially in relation to alcohol and drugs. We know from research that children who live with substance misusing parents as part of their everyday life, may run a higher risk of having mental health problems themselves, a greater use of alcohol and drug in adolescence.

Time 4 Us adopt a strengths-based approach within all areas of the service. We believe that by understanding a child, young person, or adult's story, helps the practitioner better understand the behavior that is presented. We therefore support clients to explore their world, their emotions and experiences taking each session at their own pace, which all helps to build their resilience and ensure positive outcomes for the future.

The COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately amplified the difficulties that already exist for the children, young people and the families we work with. It created highly challenging conditions for families due to food insecurities, fuel poverty, the lack of supports and with online learning being a critical part of education during the initial lockdown, the digital exclusion, highlighted a huge concern. The service arranged digital devices, and data packages, so that children were not further disadvantaged and ensured that all clients within the service were given access to learning and video call facilities. This enabled children and young people to

access their online schoolwork and the families to be seen by the practitioners on a weekly basis.

The service supported families to ensure food and essentials were sought through local foodbanks, that prescription and medical supplies were organised and that basic needs were being met. Families have also been supported to apply for additional welfare benefits and community care grants etc.
Time 4 Us successfully applied to the 'Connecting Scotland Fund' for our disadvantaged families and care leaver experienced young people, to receive a digital device with 24 months unlimited data, which has supported their education, college, and job applications. Mobile phones and iPads were also provided to families to keep virtual contact possible and allow them to keep contact with their extended families. The service applied for additional funding from the National Lottery, NHS, Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) to purchase iPads, phones, additional visual and interactive resources to make virtual learning more purposeful.

Over the past several months the service advises it has witnessed an increase in isolation for families, as well as children and young people struggling due to their difficult home environments. Time 4 Us ensures that safety planning and a network of trusting adults are always established with each child and or young person and consolidated during each session, this was especially important during the lockdown period

Time 4 Us have been back visiting children and young people in schools, since October 2020 but have continued to see children and families on a virtual basis also. Seeing families on a virtual basis has proved successful and allowed the service to continue to have an eyes and ears on approach to help mitigate risk and harm within households. This blended approach has significantly increased children and young people's engagement, so the service going forward aim to offer a mix of virtual and face to face physical contact appointments, especially to young people who can have sporadic school attendance.

Time 4 Us has supported children and young people to feel connected by increasing direct contact with them. These contacts have allowed adults, children, and young people to feel supported, as they have been seen and heard. The service increased all appointments during lockdown by 40% with an additional 45% increase in overall virtual attendance.

At Christmas the service was fortunate to be one of the chosen charities to be a part of the Stirling Observer's 'Give a Gift' appeal, which allowed staff to choose many gifts and toys to pass on to families across the Forth Valley, who were struggling to provide for their children. In addition, with support from the Transform Forth Valley Board, the service was able to provide 20 families with Christmas day dinner hampers, resulting in a total of 83 individuals from our most in need families across Forth Valley.

examples of the feedback to date-

- **"Oh my, no one has ever given me and my girls a Christmas food hamper before, it's amazing, thank you so much".**
- **"Thank you very much for the Christmas hamper, it had great food in it. You helped me out big time, it means a lot"**

Time 4 Us continue to use varying approaches and tools such as the following but not limited to…

- Brief Interventions.
- Practical supports to enhance nursery/school attendance.
- Handling Children/Teenage Behaviour.
- Five to Thrive.
- Alcohol Focus Scotland (CHAT Programme)
- Motivational Interviewing techniques.
- Aspects of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.
- Integrated Assessment Framework (Getting It Right for Every Child- Including the use of the SHANARRI -wellbeing indicators).
- Adverse Childhood Experiences Scoring.
- Emotional Dysregulation/Intelligence work.
- Dan Hughes –PACE Model

We note that service users have increased their emotional regulation, allowing children, young people, and adults to take more control within difficult situations, which has provided direct and indirect opportunities for learning.
It was also noted in post evaluations that across home and school contexts, children and young people had increased confidence, self-esteem, and resilience.

The service has also been contributing to reducing recidivism by supporting families with their financial troubles by recognizing their need for specialist interventions. The service secured additional funds to support children, young people and families with digital and fuel poverty, emergency food provisions, clothing, thus ensuring all service users were digitally connected, so that ongoing virtual contact could be achieved during lockdown periods. This support reduced the likelihood of them getting involved in criminal activities.
By reducing isolation, which families have felt due to their substance misuse, the service has lessened the stigma towards them.

Outcomes:-

Outcomes in relation to all clients discharged within the Falkirk area April 2020 – March2021
Objective 1:
Children affected by parent, carers and or older sibling substance misuse will have
improved self-esteem, resilience, and social functioning.

- **9** Children fully met this outcome showing an increase in their self-esteem and resilience.
- **9** Children fully met this outcome where improved attendance and achievement within education was noted.
- **9** Children fully met this outcome where their well-being in accordance with the well-being indicators were improved.

Objective 2:
Safeguarding children reducing risk and harm.

- **9** Children fully met this outcome where they were able to identify risk and harm, increasing their awareness around safety planning.
- **9** Children fully met this outcome where they were more able to communicate with significant adults in their life…e.g., Parent/carers, teachers, social workers etc.

Objective 3:
Children will have at least one positive relationship with a significant adult, who can support them to make positive and healthy choices in their future.

- **9** Children fully met this outcome where their social functioning was significantly improved
- **9** Children fully met this outcome where they could now identify their support networks.
- **9** Children fully met this outcome where positive change was evidenced through assessments /evaluations

Objective 4:
Parents/families experiencing issues of substance misuse have improved parenting capacity, skills and understanding, and are better able to meet the needs of their child/ren.

- **3** Parents fully met this outcome by increasing their parenting capacity.
- **3** Parents fully met this outcome where their motivation, confidence, and feelings of self-worth were all increased.
- **3** Families fully met this outcome where they were supported to stay together in the best interest of the child, whilst reducing statutory involvement.

Examples of Feedback

- "I feel that I now understand my mum's addiction better, which has helped our relationship, I am closer to my mum now". (Child 13 years)
- "I have learned about good and bad medicines and how to keep myself safe". (Child 9 years)
- "Working with you guys has made me realise that if Time 4 Us had been around years ago then maybe I would not have ended up in 13 residential units but at least my kids got your help". (Adult- Falkirk)
- "I felt listened to and involved and it was good talking about my feelings, my family and things. I now know the effects of drugs, understand the difference between good and bad drugs and addictions and I liked that we talked through stuff that needed to be spoken about." (Young Person -14 years)
- "Time 4 Us helped me change my life around and believed in me and showed me real understanding always valuing my feelings. (Young Person – 16 years)
- **"**Working with Time 4 Us has been really helpful and I feel my bond with my children is now much stronger, I feel more confident with my parenting now". (Adult – Falkirk)
- Things are better now as my dad is not drinking and we can have fun ". (Child – 9 years)

Stakeholder comments

- Time 4 Us works really hard and ensure the child's voice is heard within meetings etc. (Social Worker – Falkirk)
- "Time 4 Us have been very good working with two of our currently referred pupils". (Headteacher -Stenhousemuir Primary School)
- "The thing that was particularly helpful and stood out was the timely communication from the Time 4 Us worker between school and home". (Class teacher Carmuirs Primary School)
- "It was a relief to know that the child was working with Time 4 Us, who have been around for a long time and always deliver positive results for children, young people and families. (Safe guarder)
- "Many thanks for the work and support given to this young person, it has been so beneficial". (Social Work – Falkirk)

2. How many people directly benefit from the organisation?

April 2020 – March 2021 =32 Falkirk families
Children and Young People's referrals accounted for 93% of referrals received.
92% of appointments offered were attended.
Social Services were our main referrer into the Time 4 Us service, accounting for 73% of the total referrals received.

April 2019- March 2020 = 42 Falkirk families
Children and Young People's referrals accounted for 92% of all referrals received.
87% of appointments offered were attended.
Social Services were the main referrers into the Time 4 Us service, accounting for 50% of the total referrals received.

3. Set out what other similar and or complementary services are provided that are similar in function or support the same client / communities. Include any differences in service.

Complementary services available within the Falkirk area are:

- Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs (SFAD)
- Barnardo's Axis Service
- Barnardo's Falkirk Pathways (Family Group Decision Making)
- Intensive Family Support Service
- Young Carers
- Braes Children and Family Centre
- Quarriers
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Falkirk's Mental Health Association (FDAMH)

4. How does this organisation support the Council achieve its priorities?

Time 4 Us contributed to Falkirk Council's Strategic Outcomes and Local Delivery Plan 2016-2020 as well as the Falkirk Community Planning Partnership 2019-2024, through the delivery of therapeutic interventions to children, young people and families affected by substance misuse and the many adversities this brings to their lives.

Time 4 Us over the past year also contributed to the following priorities:

- **Minimising the impact of substance misuse**
- **Addressing the impact of poverty on children**
- **Improving mental health and wellbeing**
- **Maximising job creation and employability**

As well as the following Outcomes:

- **Outcome 1: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live.**
- **Outcome 3: Our children will develop into resilient, confident, and successful adults.**
- **Outcome 4: Our population will be healthier.**
- **Outcome 5: People live full, independent, and positive lives within supportive communities.**
- **Outcome 6: Our area will be a safer place to live.**

Falkirk Community Planning Partnership (2019-2024)

- **Fairer Access** – Our service focuses on supporting people in or at risk of poverty and when someone comes to us for support, we deliver services around their needs, looking for opportunities to provide additional supports.
- **Fairer Money** – We ensure people are getting the benefits they are entitled to and that they have access to advice, support, and appropriate financial products to help them make the most of the income they have.
- **Fairer Childhood** – We provide activities during school holidays and other interventions to support families to help reduce the impact of poverty on children.
- **Fairer Culture** – We support people to have a basic understanding of poverty and the impact it can have, so that we reduce the stigma that can be associated with living in poverty, making sure our service is inclusive.

Falkirk ADP Priorities (2020-2023)

- **Fewer people will develop problem drug use**- Time 4 Us provide interventions to break intergenerational cycles of substance use.
- **People access and benefit from effective, integrated person-centred support to achieve their recovery**- Time 4 Us support children and families to help them heal from their past traumas.
- **Children and families affected by alcohol and drug use will be safe, healthy, included and supported**- Time 4 Us holistically support families, work in partnership to safeguard children and young people and reduce stigmatising behaviours.
- **Vulnerable people are diverted from the justice system wherever possible, and those within justice settings are fully supported** – Time 4 Us work with family's, to reduce recidivism and break poor intergenerational cycles.

- **A Scotland where less harm is caused by alcohol**-. Time 4 Us work hard to uncover hidden harm, stop negative behaviours through positive role modelling, therapeutic supports, understanding and education.

Mental Health Strategy (2017-2027)

- Time 4 Us support children, young people, and families to **increase their resilience to help them cope with life's ups and downs.**
- Time 4 Us support individuals in **developing coping strategies to help them manage stress.**
- Time 4 Us support children and young people **to build good peer relationships.**
- Time 4 Us mediate between children and parent/carers **to promote good healthy positive relationships.**
- Time 4 Us **educate children, young people, and adults around behaviours, like substance use, alcohol use and smoking**.
- Time 4 Us develop support networks with each child/young person, **so they Know who they can speak to at school or in their community when they are not coping, to allow them to get the supports needed as soon as possible.**

The Promise (2021-2024)

- Time 4 Us **care** about children and families and value what matters to them.
- Time 4 Us **Listen** to children and families and **advocate** their needs and wishes.
- Time 4 Us is a **responsive** and flexible service.
- Time 4 Us works **holistically** with full families in a **therapeutic** manner.
- Time 4 Us are **relational, patient** and **understanding** and work hard to **reduce/eliminate stigmatizing behaviours.**
- Time 4 Us **advocate for families to remain together,** where it is in the child's best interest to do so.

5. How are service users involved in the design and delivery of services?

Time 4 Us is committed to gathering feedback from all service users and stakeholders involved with the service on a routine basis. Each person engaged with Time 4 Us service is asked to complete an evaluation of their experience and the quality of support received, as they exit the service. This routine collection of feedback has given service users a voice in evaluating the service, inviting them to contribute to the shaping and ongoing development of Time 4 Us. By incorporating feedback and evaluation into the ongoing review of the service, also ensures that the interventions and supports offered are fit for purpose and that they meet the needs of each service user.

Time 4 Us on occasion involve children and young people in the recruitment and selection process for new workers. This involves children and young people in the setting of interview questions and tasks and it was observed that the children and young people brought a different skill set to the recruitment process as they looked for qualities in the candidate that were different to that of the professionals involved. This therefore strengthened and refined the interview process and contributed to improving outcomes for all clients supported by the service.

Children, young people and families are also consulted at times when elements of the service are changing e.g. designing a new logo for the service and developing new assessment and evaluation forms. This involvement sought to ensure that their

	engagement and influence was reflected in the development of the Time 4 Us service, and that the service continued to be relevant.
6.	**What specific geographical areas does this service / organisation cover within the Council area?** The Time 4 Us service works across the whole of the Forth Valley Area. The Falkirk local authority area accounted for 52% of all referrals received into the service in 2020-2021. The Falkirk area accounted for 53% of the Time 4 Us caseload at any given time during this timeframe. Form the Forth valley contribution, Falkirk Currently contributes significantly more than 50 % of the total forth Valley spend and it is proposed Falkirk contracting arrangements are put in place.

C ASSESMENT OF PERFORMANCE
1. Set out current agreed performance information alongside previous years and future years. If there is any benchmarking information provide that. (Performance reports can be attached as appendices.) Time 4 Us submits quarterly reports to the Transform Forth Valley board. Time 4 Us reports annually to each of the three local authorities (Falkirk, Stirling, and Clackmannanshire). Time 4 Us reports performance against key indicators to the National Lottery as part of the annual monitoring requirements. Time 4 Us recently submitted the end of year funding report to the National Lottery for October 2020- September 2021. As Time 4 Us is a Forth Valley wide service, the monitoring reports combine information relative to entire service delivery.
2. When was the last time the service was reviewed and what plans are there to review this? Date of most recent review – September 2021 Next planned review - December 2021
3. Exception reporting - Note any areas where there is exceptional performance outstripping expectation or where performance is below what would be expected. The service increased all appointments during lockdown by 40% with an additional 45% increase in overall virtual attendance, this was needed due to the Pandemic circumstances and re the level of support needed. Time 4 Us notes that children are presenting to the service with more complex issues, which impacts on the length of time a child is engaged with the service, as the depth and duration of work required has become greater, with young people's mental health significantly affected. This does have an impact on waiting list length and times. Time 4 Us currently has 7 children and 3 adults on the waiting list with the average wait time being 16 weeks.
4. Is the organisation covered by any external regulation or inspection? If so, please provide a link to the most recent inspection report noting any improvements etc? Transform Forth Valley is registered by the Care Inspectorate for housing services only not part of this service delivery.

D FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

1. Set out Falkirk Council funding as a % of the organisations budget. Including financial and in-kind contributions.

Total Funding per annum for Time 4 Us for 2020-2021 was £130,174 of which £38,870 was provided by Falkirk Council. This is 30% of the total annual income for the core element of Time 4 Us.
Time 4 Us successfully received a 2 year 'Improving Lives' community grant from the National Lottery, which will end September 2023.

2. List other sources of funding the organisation has and how much is provided by source.

For the 2020-2021 Financial Year we had the following funding:

* Please note that the National Lottery (Time 4 Us) includes £1500 that was for COVID-19 support and is not part of the core fund

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2021 (continued)

Incoming resources from charitable activities

	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Funds £	2021 Total £
NHS (Substance Misuse Service)	-	-	-
NHS (Harm Reduction Service)	-	-	-
NHS (Custody Arrest Referral)	-	-	-
NHS (Addiction Recovery Services)	-	-	-
NHS (Enhanced Addiction Case Work)	-	-	-
Falkirk Council (Time4US)	-	38,870	38,870
Stirling Council (Time4US)	-	15,000	15,000
Clacks Council (Time4US)	-	8,500	8,500
Big Lottery (Time4US)	-	61,318	61,318
CJA Falkirk (Criminal Justice Worker)	-	-	-
CJA Falkirk (SIP South)	78,480	-	78,480
Falkirk Health & Social Care Partnership (SIP South)	36,016	-	36,016
Stirling Council (SIP North)	44,973	-	44,973
CJA Falkirk (TIIOP)	72,365	-	72,365
Falkirk Council (Assertive Outreach)	32,019	-	32,019
FVADP (ARDB Social Care Co-Ordinator)	-	31,367	31,367
FVADP (Project Evaluation Facilitator)	-	-	-
Stirling Council (Project Evaluation SIP)	-	-	-
NHS (BBV Testing)	5,000	-	5,000
Falkirk Council (Housing First)	-	17,183	17,183
COVID-19 Funding	9,670	-	9,670
Total	278,523	172,238	450,761

3. What is the amount of uncommitted reserves held by the organisation?

Please find below the draft figures for year ended 31st March 2021:

Funds		
Restricted income funds	**14**	**3,089**
Unrestricted funds -		
Designated Fund income	**14**	**21,391**
General Fund	**14**	**644,970**
Total charity funds		**669,450**

4. Last period of submitted audited accounts

2019/2020

5. Future sustainability- Are there ways in which the organisation can improve resilience and decrease the money required from the Council?

It is proposed that Falkirk enter a direct contract award for a Falkirk only service at a reduced cost. The provider acknowledges that currently Falkirk is disproportionately funding a Forth Valley service due to reduction in contribution from neighboring local authorities, which is actively being pursued by the provider.

As a 'Third Sector' organisation Transform Forth Valley can attract grant funding. They have just secured a further 2 years of funding from the National Lottery which is based on match funding. This funding significantly reduces the reliance upon Falkirk Council.

6. How can reductions in funding be achieved?

It is proposed and agreed in principle by the organisation that a contract be put in place with an annual contract of 37K for x2 year with an option to extend for a third year. This would deliver a reduction of 5.61k over 3 years

As stated above the reliance in Falkirk Funding is mitigated by other funding streams. Time 4 Us is currently supported by a combination of funding from The National Lottery, Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Falkirk Councils, with most of the income coming from the National Lottery 'Improving Lives' Fund.

7. What is the risk to the Council if these services are not funded?

Time 4 Us contributes to the delivery of key priorities within the Strategic Outcomes and Local Delivery Plan 2016 – 2020, the reduction in service provision could impact on the achievement of the Council's key priorities.

8. Overall risk rating (Low/Medium/High). Please note this should note the risk to the Council not the organisation.

Low

CONCLUSIONS
1. Summary of the future activities of the organisation that will allow services to continue to be delivered. Transform Forth Valley and Time 4 Us continue to be committed to the delivery of a high quality, responsive service. The organisation has successfully secured a further 2 years continued funding for 2021-2023 from the National Lottery. The service also received additional funds from the National Lottery to provide an Early Intervention worker, who will work in partnership with Police Scotland to address low level vulnerable Person's Database concern reports. These additional posts and much needed interventions will provide added value to Falkirk Council going forward. It is proposed that Falkirk enters a direct contract award to reduce costs of 1.89Kper year and ensures monitoring of the contract against agreed outcomes for Falkirk with a contract specification to deliver targeted services to children and their families affected by substance misuse solely for Falkirk. Currently there are low numbers of referrals form adult addiction services working with parents who care for children. It is agreed this will form part of activity over the next 12 months to raise awareness and seek and increase in referral numbers.
F. Monitoring Officer Details
Name: Lesley James
Designation: Senior Manager / Depute CSWO
Service: Children's Services
Date of Report: 11th October 2021

Appendix 10

FALKIRK COUNCIL
FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT 2020/21

Organisation Name	Who Cares? Scotland
Project	Advocacy and Participation for Care Experienced People
Agreement Dates	April 2020 – March 2021
Name of Monitoring Officer	Sharon Laing

A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

1. Summary of key aims & objectives of organisation

- To deliver an effective independent advocacy, advice and support service to children and young people who are looked after away from home.
- To liaise with other relevant service providers and particularly to work alongside the Falkirk Children's Rights Officer in the provision of a Children's Rights Service for Falkirk
- To collate feedback from looked after young people and assess this information to identify needs and inform the Council's approach.
- Alongside Falkirk Council, consult with looked after children and young people about the services they receive to enable those who need a stronger voice to have their views listened to and actioned where appropriate.
- To enable looked after children and young people to be involved in decisions about their care.
- To challenge discriminatory views and practice.
- To support looked after children and young people in ways that improve their confidence.
- To act in the child/young person's best interests.
- Where required to act as an intermediary between children/young people and Council services.
- To involve children and young people in the wider work of Who Cares? Scotland to ensure Falkirk's young people are represented nationally.

These aims align with the Children's Services Closer to Home Strategy and the Council Corporate Parenting Strategy and contribute to inspection priorities in relation to hearing the voice of the young person.

2. What is the purpose of the funding provided by the Council?

In conjunction with Quarriers, the service provided by Who Cares? ensures that the Council fulfil its legal obligations to provide a Children's Rights Service. Who Cares? focus specifically on advocacy for children who are looked after away from home.

The combined Children's Rights Service provided by Quarriers and Who Cares? also has a scrutiny role in terms of ensuring that the council adheres to the UNCRC principles in our actions and policies. Given this, it is appropriate and best practice for the service to be provided by an external agency.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act also require Councils to provide a children's rights service in line with the UNCRC and to produce a plan and report on this plan. The work of Quarriers and Who Cares? contributes significantly to the Council's ability to meet these duties.

3. Why does the Council fund this?

Provision of the Children's Rights Service internally would not provide the level of independence required to meet what is a core priority for the Council.

It is a statutory requirement that looked after children are supported to ensure their views are heard and taken into consideration.

4. How long has the Council funded this organisation to deliver this Service?

Who Cares? has been funded to provide advocacy services to children looked after away from home since the inception of Falkirk Council in 1996.

5. Set out the funding provided by the Council over the last five years.

Year	Annual Funding	Support in Kind	One Off Support
2020 - 2021	£27,970	Covid related developments: National Helpline, Winter Aid direct payments, Counselling service access, Christmas wish programme.	National remote platform engagement opportunities during Covid restrictions.
2019 – 2020	£27,970	National events, inclusion in events related to independent care review Access to networking events.	Christmas lunch and other similar events, contribution to work of champions board
2018 – 2019	£27,970	Access to national events + research e.g., thousand voices	Provision of support to develop Family Firm Options
2017 - 2018	£27,970	Access to national events + research. Funding to equivalent of £10,725 for trainee	Provision of training and support for Champions Board work.
2016 - 2017	£27,970	Access to national events + research. Funding to equivalent of £10,725 for trainee	Assistance with developing bid for Champions Board

B	SERVICE DELIVERY
1.	**What does the organisation deliver and to whom i.e. typical service users, customer group targeted etc?** Who Cares? provide, in conjunction with Quarriers, a children's rights service to children and young people up to the age of 21 who are normally resident in the Falkirk Council area. Who Cares? focus on those who are looked after away from home, Kinship Care or in Continuing Care/After Care.
2.	**How many people directly benefit from the organisation?** At any point the following young people are eligible to access the service: • Children and young people aged from 0 – 18 years who are looked after away for home or in Kinship Care arrangements. • Care leavers. • Young people in continuing care placements The Who Cares? Advocacy worked with approximately 28 young people over each quarterly reporting period and dealt with 154 advocacy issues in the reporting year.
3.	**Set out what other similar and or complementary services are provided that are similar in function or support the same client / communities. Include any differences in service.** The Who Cares? Advocacy worker is only one part of the Falkirk Children's Rights Service. The full service is made up of the Children's Rights Officer and participation/admin support provided by Quarriers, (subject to a separate Following the Public Pound report) plus the part time Advocacy Worker provided by Who Cares? Scotland. This is not duplication as the service itself is a combination of two aspects of children's rights, the one agency focusing only on advocacy for young people looked after away from home and in Kinship care arrangements, and the other providing the statutory Children's Rights Officer function plus additional advocacy for vulnerable groups. The partnership approach has allowed the council to achieve best value in terms of resources, and to access significant additional benefit via those organisations. Examples of Additional Benefits: • Supported employment opportunities for Falkirk Care Experienced People • National Helpline for Care Experienced People (Covid) • Winter Aid Direct payments for Care Experienced People (Covid) • Accelerated access to Counselling programme for Care Experienced People • Christmas Wish programme for Care Experienced People (Covid) • Initial Care Experienced Trainee post for the first three years of the champions Board • Direct link into the Independent Care Review • Opportunity to benefit from Who Cares? family firm experience. • Access to Champions Board experience and training.

4. How does this organisation support the Council achieve its priorities?

Corporate Parenting is a priority for the council, and this is reflected in the planning structure. The Children's Rights and corporate parenting duties of the council are outlined in detail in the Integrated Children's Services Plan, within which is embedded our Corporate Parenting Plan. The Children's Rights Service, provided by Quarriers and Who Cares? is a core aspect of our Champions Board development and support structure and the current resources form the basis of our plans for continuing this work.

Who Cares advocacy service also supports the Closer to Home strategy by ensuring the children's right are upheld and that their views are taken into account in decision making.

Advocacy provision is also central and core to The Promise, launched in February 2020. This details a 10-year plan, signed up to by all Local Authorities in Scotland, which outlines the standards to be achieved for Scotland's Care Experienced community. The importance of Voice is very much evident throughout the five foundations of The Promise and having advocacy provision available is important in working to this end for the Care Experienced People within Falkirk.

5. How are service users involved in the design and delivery of services?

The service reports quarterly to a Steering Group, which has cross discipline and agency membership, on the themes and feedback from everyone who receives a service, thus influencing priorities and actions in line with the agreed remit to challenge and influence policy and practice. Reporting and monitoring is undertaken jointly with Quarriers and in conjunction with monitoring of Champions Board.

Additionally, the support provided to the Champions Board provides direct access to young people who are becoming involved in the design and delivery of the services which affect them.

The Children's Rights Service is designed to reflect the views of children and young people and Who Cares? core work is advocacy on behalf of care experienced children and young people. They raise both individual and general issues relating to children's rights with the council and corporate parent partners, and this influences practice and developments via the steering group and Champions Board.

From 2020, where relevant, themes arising from the Children's Rights Service which may require policy or practice work in relation to care experienced children and young people have been taken to the Champions Board for consideration.

6. What specific geographical areas does this service / organisation cover within the Council area?

The service covers the full council area and is open to any child or young person aged 0 – 21 who is looked after away from home, or in a Kinship care arrangement or previously looked after away from home and who is normally resident in this area. This includes those looked after and placed out with the council boundary.

C	ASSESMENT OF PERFORMANCE

1. Set out current agreed performance information alongside previous years and future years. If there is any benchmarking information provide that.
(Performance reports can be attached as appendices.)

The service reports on a quarterly basis to a steering group made up of all relevant partners. Alongside this the Service Manager (Children and Families) meets the service managers for Who Cares? and Quarriers to review contractual details and service focus. Reports are provided to these meetings using an agreed format which is developed to allow reporting which demonstrates both the statistical information required and the practice and quality aspects of the work.

These reports are joint with Quarriers and for Who Cares? and demonstrate the numbers of children and young people accessing the service in total – Who Cares? Scotland's recorded figures for this reporting period are detailed below for each quarter:

- Q1 – 12 YP accessing advocacy support with 26 individual advocacy issues progressed.
- Q2 – 8 YP accessing advocacy support with 37 advocacy issues progressed.
- Q3 – 10 YP accessing advocacy support with 39 individual advocacy issues progressed.
- Q4 – 22 YP accessing advocacy support with 52 individual advocacy issues progressed.

- This equates to 154 individual advocacy issues progressed by Who Cares? with young people.

Point of note: Who Cares? adjusted to a new method of deployment in response the restrictions resulting from the Covid- 19 pandemic. Who Cares? adapted to remote engagement with children and young people rather than traditional face-to-face, relationship-based practice model. There was a period of adjustment for this new way of working and this is reflected the figures for the earlier part of this year.

- Themes are collated against the service priorities and reported to the Steering Group and include issues related to children living out with the authority area, time with family and additional support needs.
- Who Cares? Scotland continues to work in partnership with Quarriers Children's Rights Service to jointly provide a Children's Rights and Advocacy service for Falkirk Council's children and young people. This has included joint service development work in relation to the future of the Champions Board, joint allocation and project monitoring reports and provision of training to staff. Both parts of the service have been co-located with the Champions Board staff and provide additional support to this area of work.

Additional support and activities included:
- Young people supported to participate in Children's Hearing Training for Panel Members from the Falkirk Office, this was done on a virtual basis due to Covid – 19 restrictions.
- Young Person's Worker remit focused on areas where advocacy is most needed such as issues in relation to older young people, including purchased placements out with the Local Authority area to ensure that young people's rights are upheld.
- Additional agreement for the worker during 2020/2021 to work with the kinship care worker to link and support children in kinship are placements. This is an important and developing area of work.

- Who Cares? would normally be reporting on national events such as, summer camp, Care Experienced Week, Christmas Day celebration and Care Day activities, however, due to Covid restrictions in 2020/21 this type of event was not possible.
- Who Cares? were able to diversify and offer additional support and activities within the limitations of Covid-19 restrictions and in response to the challenges it posed for our Care Experienced communities: They facilitated a Care Experienced Helpline was an early response and remains in operation. Scottish Government funds were distributed through the Covid Care Experienced Winter Aid programme. This was supplemented by access to a Counselling programme for those in need of mental health and wellbeing support. Who Cares? also ran a 'Christmas Wish' programme around the end of 2020 where Care Experienced families had access to funds to provide gifts, food stuffs and other Christmas necessities for the period, including financing transport arrangements to bring families together on the day. Falkirk Care Experienced people were supported by the staff to access all of these supports on offer during this most challenging year.

2. Exception reporting - Note any areas where there is exceptional performance outstripping expectation or where performance is below what would be expected.

Part of our response to the pandemic, saw Who Cares? work in partnership with Falkirk council to support Care Experienced People from Falkirk to access Scottish Government emergency funding for all of Scotland's Care Experienced communities. Who Cares? initially provided 'First Responder' support where families and individuals could access funds for fuel and food payments. The 'Winter Aid' project provided payment fuel/food purchases but also to support the purchase of white goods and equipment for home schooling purposes.

In total, Care Experienced People from Falkirk accessed this support on 45 different occasions receiving funding or purchases to the total of £6,897.15.

3. When was the last time the service was reviewed and what plans are there to review this?

Date of most recent review – 25th November 2020.

Next planned review - The Children's Right provision within Falkirk will be put to tender in the next financial year.

4. Are there any improvements in efficiency or effectiveness that could be achieved?

The Children's Right provision within Falkirk will be put to tender in the next financial year. There are likely to be efficiencies in having one service only provide advocacy and a children's rights service for Falkirk Council.

It has been agreed that the age range that Who Cares? Will offer the service to will start at 0 years, ensuring younger children who do not have a voice can access non directive advocacy and that there is independent oversite of their rights being upheld.

5. Is the organisation covered by any external regulation or inspection? If so please provide a link to the most recent inspection report noting any improvements etc?

Who Cares? Scotland is not a registered service.

D	FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

1. Set out Falkirk Council funding as a % of the organisations budget. Including financial and in-kind contributions.

0.55%

2. List other sources of funding the organisation has and how much is provided by source.

Individual Giving	50,000
Trust Donations Restricted	993,452
Trust Donations Unrestricted	240,000
Corporate Giving	20,000
Community Fundraising unrestricted	136,000
Central Government Grants	434,500
Local Authority Grants	2,241,219
Other Grants	682,981
Training Income	48,320
Other Income	156,581
CJS	46,938
Total Income	**5,049,991**

3. What is the amount of uncommitted reserves held by the organisation?

£809,149

4. What proportion of operation cost do reserves represent?

17%

5. Last period of submitted audited accounts

31st March 2021.

6. What other services does the Council fund that are similar to this organisation including Council provision and to what level are those activities funded?

Falkirk Council provide £86,200 to Quarriers.

7. Future sustainability- Are there ways in which the organisation can improve resilience and decrease the money required from the Council?

The plan to tender for one service to provide an advocacy and children's right service may not result in savings but may increase the reach of the service and improve resilience.

8. How can reductions in funding be achieved?

See above.

9.	**What is the risk to the Council if these services are not funded?** Falkirk Council will not meet it's statutory duties as a Corporate Parent.
10.	**Overall risk rating (Low/Medium/High). Please note this should note the risk to the Council not the organisation.** Medium as Falkirk Council could be open to legal challenge now or in the future.
E	**CONCLUSIONS**
1.	**Summary of the future activities of the organisation that will allow services to continue to be delivered.** Who Cares? (Scotland) will no longer report alongside Quarriers. This will increase monitoring of activity and accountability to ensure that the children and young people of Falkirk received the best possible service, and that the Council achieves Best Value. This is particularly important as we move to re-tender the contract.
F	**Monitoring Officer Details**
Name: Sharon Laing	
Designation: Service Manager	
Service: Children and Families Social Work	
Date of Report: 13/10/2021	