

Aberlour Child Care Trust

Monitoring Officer: Elaine Costello, Integration Support Manager

Introduction

The Aberlour Child Care Trust is a charitable organisation which aims to help those children in Scotland who are in most need. They have a particular focus on:

- Children and families affected by disability
- Children and families affected by drugs and alcohol
- Young people at risk
- Parent and child development

They have been offering services in Falkirk for twenty-five years with the opening of Langlees Family Centre.

Background Information

The Aberlour Outreach Service was established in November 2007. It initially received funding through the Regeneration Outcome Agreement until March 2008. It was then successful in gaining transitional funding through the Fairer Scotland Fund from April until June 2008. Since then Social Work have funded the project through grant funding.

The outreach project provides services to families where parental substance misuse is a major issue affecting outcomes for children. The project provides intensive family support services to over thirty families many of whom live in our most deprived areas.

Aberlour Outreach provides individualised and integrated packages of support following referral and assessment to:

1. Families where parental substance use places children at risk of neglect and/or harm.
2. Pregnant women.
3. Parents with new born babies.

Work undertaken includes problem-solving, household budgeting, nutrition, parenting skills, relationships, harm reduction, lapse and relapse management, time out, play, activities and one to one work with children.

It is not intended that this service develops into a crisis intervention service therefore maintaining a balance between the differing demands is critical in ensuring the service maintains its capacity to offer intensive support to bring about change. Nonetheless there is a capacity to work outwith core hours, for example early mornings, evenings and weekends where the need is identified through ongoing assessment of families' needs and progress.

The focus of the work is to:

- Ensure that the best interests of children remain to the fore in work with families where parents experience problematic substance use.
- Enable parents to address substance use related problems by effecting positive changes and to enhance their parenting skills.
- Provide support, preventative and therapeutic work with children affected by parental substance use.
- Enhance the effectiveness of services to families affected by problematic use.
- Providing individual holistic intervention to parents and children while recognising power issues resulting in the negative impact of social deprivation, isolation, poverty, gender and race.

For this to be successfully achieved work is undertaken across three specific groups:

Work with Parents

- To support parents in developing and maintaining links with specialist community drug/alcohol and other services as appropriate.

- Address problematic substance use and the issues arising from it and its effect on children, parenting and families.
- Monitoring and supporting parents in developing more consistent positive parenting skills.
- Family work with parents and children together to develop positive and consistent relationships and routines.

Work with Children

- One to one support and small group support.
- Enable children to explore issues arising for them from their parents' substance use.
- Assist children in understanding and developing coping strategies in terms of their parent's substance use and in keeping themselves safe.
- Provide age appropriate substance awareness education.
- Develop self-esteem and confidence.
- Provide time and space for children to relax and have fun!

Work with Professionals

- Undertaking joint assessments, care planning and monitoring of care plans.
- Advising social work and health care staff of appropriate interventions
- Providing information on substance use and the range of services available.

The Aberlour Child Care Trust is also funded through Education Services for the CLASP project and Langlees Family Centre. In addition they receive funding from Social Work Services for the Aberlour Young Women's Project and until May 2009 Breaking the Cycle Service, which closed when Government funding to Falkirk Council came to an end.

Funding

The service initially received funding totalling £61,000 from two separate funding streams, reflecting previously ring fenced budgets as they were received by the Council – £45,695 (Changing Children's Services Fund) and a further £15,305 (Regeneration Outcome Agreement funding/Fairer Scotland Fund). The removal of ring fencing led to a single grant amount of £61,000.

A successful application was made in September 2008 to the Fairer Scotland Fund for an additional £11,698 in 2008/2009 and assuming a continued contribution from Social Work Services in future years; £35,972 in 2009/2010 and £37,770 in 2010/2011.

Aberlour Child Care Trust with approval from the then Forth Valley DAT made an application to Lloyds TSB in October 2008 to expand and develop the service. Unfortunately this was unsuccessful in most part due to the excessive number of applications received. Comment was made as to the value of the service and a suggestion to make a further application in 2009 when a greater proportion of secured matched funding would be in place. Recent indications from Lloyds TSB are that they too are having to review their budgets and spending plans for 2009/10 but nevertheless, an application could be made in the next round.

Key Achievements

Since November 2007 the Service has built up a strong working relationship with Social Work Teams across Falkirk and continues to receive high volumes of referrals. As the service has been operating over three financial years, some patterns of demand and service user profiles are available for comparison. In total between November 2007 and July 2009, 64 parents with 124 children have been referred to the service. In 2008 a full twelve months of service delivery saw 36 parents referred with a total of 73 children. In the first six months of 2009, 19 adults with 30 children have been referred. During this period there has been a consistent rate of referral of parents with children aged 3-4years but latterly increased referrals of children under 3 years. There was an increase in referrals of one parent families in 2008, with two out of every three referrals falling into this category. However unlike Aberlour's experience in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee, just under half the families referred have two parents actively involved in parenting. There is also a prevalence of problematic alcohol use amongst those parents referred, with just under half of referrals having problematic use.

Heroin and methadone remain the main drugs of preference but like other areas poly substance is an increasing feature.

The total number of families actively engaged with include:

- 24 children offered an individual service independent of parent
- 9 pregnant women provided with support during and after the birth of their baby
- 29 children worked with were subject to child protection registration.

The main issues identified following assessment include

- Positive play experiences
- Parenting
- Accessing health services
- Socialisation for family
- Housing issues
- Self esteem (parents and children) including mental health and well-being
- Trauma and poor attachment leading to difficulties in the parent /child relationship.
- Domestic Abuse
- Substance use stabilisation, reduction, harm reduction and Recovery

Intervention with families has included Art Therapy and Counselling, as a result of the added value of having other Aberlour services within the Falkirk Council areas who have been able to develop links to access these services. Children and families teams continue to regard the impact as being very positive.

Key Difficulties

The main challenge facing Aberlour is increasing demand but we continue to work with them to manage capacity to maximum effect.

Future Plans

Aberlour Outreach Falkirk has recently had to move premises, having been temporarily 'housed' with other Aberlour services in Falkirk. There has been recognition of the need to revisit the infrastructure and longer term future of the service provision, given that it had initially been funded on a six month basis. This will be done as part of a process looking at the range of services presently commissioned by Falkirk Council from Aberlour in line with Council priorities and Falkirk residents' needs.

Addictions Support & Counselling (ASC) – Forth Valley

Monitoring Officer Peter Anderson, Social Work Services

Introduction

The organisation began in 1975 as the then Central Scotland Council on Alcohol serving the whole of Forth Valley. In 2000 it changed its name to the Counselling & Support Service for Alcohol & Drugs (CSSAD) and there was a second name change in 2006 to Alcohol Support and Counselling (ASC). The current name, Addictions Support & Counselling (ASC) – Forth Valley, was adopted in 2008.

Background Information

The organisation provides support services across Forth Valley to anyone affected by substance misuse. They have two premises, a main office in Stirling and their Go Forth service that is based in Falkirk. They currently provide the following five main services;

- a) **Counselling and Support Service (also known as the core service):** information, advice and counselling and support are available to individuals, families and carers affected by substance misuse accepting referrals from any sources including self referrals.
- b) **Criminal Justice Service:** Offering individual counselling and support services accepting referrals from the local Criminal Justice Social Work Services.
- c) **GP Counselling Service:** accepting direct referrals from GPs and health centres for people mainly affected by alcohol misuse and they provide counselling services in various health care settings.
- d) **Go Forth – Community Rehabilitation Services:** offers a range of group based programmes to improve access to educational, training, volunteering and employment opportunities. They currently provide an Introduction to Change course in Stirling and Falkirk, a joint course with Forth Valley College leading to an SQA award in core skills Intermediate level 1 or 2 and a job shop course that helps people to prepare for employment.
- e) **Alcohol Social Norms Schools Project:** Based in Denny High schools and using Grangemouth High School as a control group this is an innovative, one year pilot research project to investigate whether a social norms approach is effective in reducing young people's alcohol use. A social norms approach understands that much of young people's behaviour is influenced by their perception of how their peers behave, which in turn leads young people to misperceive and exaggerate the behaviour of their peers. In simple terms, if young people believe that heavy drinking is the norm within their peer group then they are more likely to engage in that type of drinking behaviour. By surveying and analysing the actual behaviour of young people and feeding that back to them through appropriate and credible messages that heavy drinking is in fact not the norm that will lead to a decrease in alcohol consumption.

Funding

Falkirk Council SWS provided funding amounting to £27,470 in 2008/09 for Counselling and Support Service. An additional £13,000 was paid from Corporate and Commercial services. ASC receive £13,474 from the Forth Valley Criminal Justice group to provide counselling and support services to people affected by substance misuse who are the subject of statutory contact with Criminal Justice services.

Falkirk Council along with Stirling Council and Clackmannanshire Council and Forth Valley NHS jointly provide core funding for ASC's Counselling and Support Services: the total for 2008/09 was £119,705

Forth Valley NHS through what was previously called the Fort Valley Substance Action Team and is now Forth Valley Alcohol & Drug Partnership contributes £101K for ASC to provide counselling & support services across GP surgeries and health centres in Forth Valley

Key Achievements

A new service has been piloted in Falkirk and Stirling Council areas – The Introduction to Change group work service. This service is running for 12 months from October 2008 to October 2009 and evaluations to date have been very favourable. The Introduction to Change group work service is aimed at those people who, having recognised that they have a problem with substance misuse, have decided that they want to change their behaviour and have taken steps to do so, and are looking for practical support, guidance and help in maintaining such a change. Referrals are accepted from any route and are assessed with particular reference to ascertaining a person's motivation and his or her progress through the cycle of change.

By participating in a group based programme that focuses on key themes such as developing self confidence, improving communication skills and understanding and applying techniques of relapse prevention, it is anticipated that successful participants will leave the course more confident and competent in maintaining a successful behavioural change.

For 2008/09 ASC received 2,181 referrals for all their services of which some 1,069 or 49% came from the Falkirk area. This compares with 1,717 referrals for 2007/08 of which 790 or 43% were from Falkirk

ASC improved the quality of their assessment and care planning procedures and systems and improved significantly the quality of its recording and documentation.

In addition ASC carried out a strategic review of how they deliver services across Forth Valley and the use of premises at Pitt Terrace, Stirling and Vicar Street, Falkirk. After a careful options appraisal it was decided that they shall leave Pitt terrace in November 2009 and rent smaller premises in Stirling city centre. This should lead to efficiency savings of the order of £10K from next year onwards.

Key Difficulties

Towards the end of 2008/09 financial irregularities were identified within the organisation which have been addressed by the organisation and which did not impact on Council funding. ASC have implemented a series of changes to protocols to mitigate against similar issues arising in future and we will closely monitor the service over the next twelve months to ensure the service remains robust and reliable in all areas.

ASC still have a major property issue to resolve regarding communal roof repairs at their premises at 32 Vicar Street, Falkirk. ASC share the roof space with seven other owners and there is a complicated problem of ascertaining which properties are responsible for which roof repairs that is compounded by different owners having different interests in the building. This problem has been ongoing for the past two years and progress to date has been slower than anticipated.

Future plans

ASC have nearly completed a review of their volunteer counsellors and will bring forward plans to improve and strengthen the counsellors' training and practice development.

They currently provide Tuesday evening counselling and support services from Falkirk Royal Infirmary and in light of the hospital being reprovisioned will relocate this evening service to their Vicar Street premises.

NHS Forth Valley has a comprehensive Substance Misuse Treatment Services Redesign underway and ASC are involved with this. It has been agreed that four new additions workers posts be deployed in Clackmannanshire within the next year 2010/2011 and that these posts be employed by ASC.

Advocacy into Action

Monitoring Officer Carole Jones, Service Manager – Community Care

Introduction

Advocacy into Action was originally established in response to the recommendations from the 'Same as You' review of learning disability services. Initially the priority of work was with adults with a learning disability moving out of the Royal Scottish National Hospital, and more recently the main focus has shifted to people living within the community and as the organisation has become more established there has been an increased demand for service. Advocacy into Action have a management board which includes people with a learning disability.

Background Information

Advocacy into Action provides an advocacy service to adults with a learning disability. The Status of the organisation changed from an unincorporated association to a company limited by guarantee by charitable status in December 2000.

A Joint Working Agreement is in place for the financial year 2009/2010. In addition to the grant funding from Falkirk Council Advocacy into Action receive grant funding from and provide an advocacy service to people with a learning disability in Clackmannanshire Council. They also receive grant funding from NHS Forth Valley to provide a service to people who are detained within Loch View, the specialist learning disability hospital in Larbert.

More recently Advocacy into Action has provided support to the Quality Action Service in Stirling for which they have received funding.

Falkirk Council provides grant funding to Advocacy into Action to provide citizen advocacy and issue based advocacy. Advocacy into Action recruit, train and support volunteers to provide citizen advocacy, issue based advocacy and housing linked advocacy.

Falkirk Council also provide grant funding for a dual diagnosis post of 21 hours to work with people who have both a learning disability and mental illness.

Funding

In the financial year 2008/2009 Falkirk Council Social Work Services contributed £51,500 towards the core service and a further £22,870 for the dual diagnosis post equating to a total grant payment of £74,370.

Audited accounts are considered by the monitoring officer and an officer of Falkirk Council Finance Services. Audited accounts for the financial year 2008/2009 have been submitted. Elected members will be advised if any issues are identified by officers.

The service received an inflationary uplift of 1.5% for this financial year of 2009/2010. The grant payment agreed for 2009/2010 is a total of £75,493 (made up of £52,280 for the core service and £23,213 for the dual diagnosis post). Payments are monitored and authorised quarterly.

Key Achievements

Advocacy into Action continue to support 9 citizen advocacy partnerships. At the time of writing this report Advocacy into Action are actively working with 91 people on issue based work including adults at risk situations, workplace bullying, supporting parents with learning disabilities in child protection situations and statutory detention.

Advocacy into Action are also working with an additional 54 people who would like to have either a citizen advocate or a house link advocate.

Advocacy into Action were also successful in receiving a Big Lottery Grant for 5 years for a young persons project. The grant will fund 2 posts – one for Falkirk and one for Clackmannan. The project is for young people with a learning disability delivered as both individual and group work. The aim being to develop a power tool to enhance self-esteem and enable self-advocacy.

Key Difficulties

There has been an incremental increase on demand for the service in addition to an increase in the running costs of the service. This has resulted in significant pressure for the service. They currently run with a waiting list for non issue based advocacy. Advocacy into Action are also advising that they will not be able to provide the same level of service in the next financial year without a significant uplift in the grant payment. In this financial year they have not been able to maintain the self advocacy group.

Future Plans

A review of advocacy services within the Forth Valley area is currently underway. NHS Forth Valley has lead responsibility to prepare an advocacy plan with partner organisations. The outcome of which will be the development of an agreed Forth Valley Advocacy Strategy including future plans for the service and funding arrangements. This is being undertaken with partners from NHS Forth Valley, Clackmannanshire Council, Stirling Council and the advocacy providers.

Advocacy services to people with a learning disability will be included within this review. Any funding implications arising from this review would be reported to Members as appropriate.

Alzheimer Scotland

Monitoring Officer Susan Nixon – Service Manager – Community Care

Introduction

Alzheimer Scotland is a voluntary organisation whose aim is to help people with dementia and their carers and families through the provision of a range of services. They provide a range of services such as day centres, home support, drop in centres, support groups, carer's education, one to one support, a welfare rights service and information and advice on a wide range of dementia related subjects.

Background Information

The Falkirk service of Alzheimer Scotland provides day care and home support services which are considered to be person-centred quality services. The day care in particular is well received and has a waiting list to ensure occupancy levels. Home support provides a flexible service tailored to meet the changing needs of service users. Both services are well received by users, carers, community care teams and the Care Commission; the recent inspection scored high in all areas of the inspection. The service also provides information and advice, carer's education courses/groups and supported breaks, all of which support family members and carers to continue in their caring role. The Maples day care receives grant funding and provides day care Monday to Friday for 8 service users each day. In addition Bo'ness Community Care Team purchase 10 places of day care run locally within Dean Court Sheltered Housing Complex.

Funding

Alzheimer Scotland receives Grant Funding of £201,413 from Falkirk Council for their day care unit. They also receive Mental Illness Specific Grant of £59 280 and Carer's Strategy Funding of £5,708. In addition Community Care Teams spot purchase services although accounts for this year have not yet been submitted but will be forwarded for review by the Council's Finance Section when available and members will be advised if there are any issues arising.

Key Achievements

- (a) Carers Education Courses continue to run regularly and are well attended by carers.
- (b) One-to-one support – both individual and telephone support.
- (c) Information: Joint work with Council and DSDC to produce an information booklet which will also be available on Falkirk Council website. The booklet continues to be well received by both carers and professionals and has been reprinted this year.

In addition four talks about the work of Alzheimer Scotland were delivered to a number of groups, such as Community Pharmacists and GP Create Session.

- (d) Post diagnostic support and forward planning.
Alzheimer Scotland has worked jointly with the Community Mental Health Team (Elderly) and this has resulted in more referrals for carer support.
They are currently looking for additional funding to develop a secondary Post Diagnostic Group that can offer support and information to a small group of younger men with dementia.
- (e) Income Maximisation - Providing information and support in relation to Attendance Allowance and Council Tax.
- (f) Day Care - Occupancy levels at day care have been maintained at a high level and received a very positive inspection report from the Care Commission.
- (g) Staff Training - They have also managed to train 8 staff in SVQ Level 2 & 3 with 6 staff still to train.

Key Difficulties

The main challenge Alzheimer Scotland have faced this year is that of staff sickness which has resulted in additional pressure to the service. However they were able to minimise the impact to service users by effectively redistributing the workload.

Future Plans

- Alzheimer Scotland nationally is in the process of recruiting Dementia Advisers. These are new posts and the advisors will hopefully act as a guide to help people with dementia and their families navigate the care and support system throughout their illness.
- Continue to explore the opportunity to develop a weekend drop in service.
- Deliver three Carer's Information courses over the following year with follow up support groups

Barnardos Cluaran Service

Monitoring Officer Matthew Davies – Service Manager, Children & Families

Introduction

Cluaran provides individual and family support (including education) to 11 to 16 year olds. The service works with young people at risk of social exclusion or already excluded from their families, schools and communities, so that they can remain safely and securely within their families, schools and community.

Background Information

Cluaran works in partnership with other agencies to provide a service within the Falkirk Council area to young people of secondary school age to ensure that as many young people as possible can remain in, or can return to their families, community based placements, schools and communities, when safe and appropriate to do so.

The service contributes positively to the council's work to prevent the following service user groups from being placed in residential schools.

- Young people at risk of being Looked After Away from Home
- Young people at risk of being taken into residential school or a residential unit outwith the Falkirk area as a result of combined education and foster placement difficulties
- Young people who have been in residential schools/residential units outwith Falkirk or secure accommodation and require an integrated package of support to return to the Falkirk Council area

Funding

The current Cluaran Service Level Agreement is a transitional arrangement until March 2010 based on the previous agreement covering the period between April 2007 and March 2009. This was agreed as a result of the ongoing Children's Services review and the potential impact this may have on Cluaran's service design. The current Service Level Agreement is subject to inter agency review.

The total cost of the service for the period 2008/2009 was £799,291. The Social Work cash component of this was £319,620. Social Work Services also made a staffing contribution in kind of £117,744.

The Education Services contribution to the service was £202,069.

Individual programmes of support can vary significantly and are dependent on need. However, the average cost of a placement at Cluaran between April 2008 and March 2009 was £22,202. (Falkirk's contribution being £17,762 and Barnardo's contributing £4,440). In comparison, the cost of a residential school placement for a child during the financial year 2008/2009 ranged from £94,188 to £259,671.

Key achievements

- 70 young people (30 female, 40 male) received a service during the period 2008/2009. This figure shows a slight increase on last year's figure of 67. Cluaran have an agreed target of 60 young people per year with a capacity of 35 – 40 young people at any one time.

Strengths, Ability and Coping Mechanisms

- 68% of young people showed an improved ability to deal with difficulties and challenges.
- 64% of young people showed an improvement in their ability to manage peer relationships.
- 53% of young people demonstrated improved ability to managed family relationships.
- 53% of young people displayed improved confidence.

Family Strengths, Ability and Coping Mechanisms

- 56% of families reported improved attitudes towards the young person
- 53% demonstrated enhanced ability to care for young people
- 69% of families demonstrated an ability to deal with challenges and difficulties effectively
- 53% of families reported improved relationship.

Education

- 55% of young people demonstrated improved educational experiences with greater ability to complete work within the classroom
- 62% of young people improved their ability to manage school environment.
- 48% of young people increased acceptance of teacher's authority
- 50% of young people showed improvement in behaviour at school

Impact on Use of Residential Care

- 98% of young people attending were maintained within the community
- 2% of young people were placed in residential school
- 0% of young people went into secure accommodation.

(Figures were recorded at the end of March 2009 and include those young people continuing to receive support as well as those who completed programmes).

Key Difficulties

Cluaran continues to experience issues relating to capacity and the inability to provide a service to all of the young people referred at the point of referral. This results in delayed referrals and within the period of delay a young person's circumstances may have deteriorated to the point where a placement in residential school is required. It also results in priority being given to those most at risk of moving out of the authority and not at a level of earlier intervention.

Future plans

Cluaran's Service Level Agreement is currently subject to review, with consideration being given to areas of service delivery in the context of service redesign within Falkirk and to the level of voluntary funds contributed by Barnardo's.

Cluaran continues to operate a system of self evaluation and improvement. They have utilised the integrated assessment framework and are involved in the redesign of Children's Services.

Crossroads

Monitoring Officer Suzanne Thomson, Service Manager – Community Care

Introduction

Crossroads Falkirk support carers, by providing alternative support for someone with care needs. Until September 2008 it operated as a charitable voluntary organisation, and a Company Limited by Guarantee. The service is now directly managed by Crossroads Scotland.

Background Information

The overall purpose of Crossroads Falkirk is to provide respite for the carers of people who have a disability or condition that means that they need the care of another person. They provide a break for carers of people of any age, gender and disability. They aim to provide a break from caring on the day and at the time the carer wishes.

Funding

The main bulk of service provision is based on Care at Home which is spot-purchased by Falkirk Council Social Work Services. However, this is underpinned by core funding from Falkirk Council through three sources – a core grant, Carers Strategy grant funding and the previously referred to Specific Mental Illness Grant. In 2008/09 funding from Falkirk Council amounted to a total of £390,890. This incorporated:

£84,030	- Core Grant
£22,000	- Carers Strategy Fund
£16,480	- Specific Mental Illness Grant (SMIG)
£268,380	- Spot Purchase

There is a Joint Working Agreement in place which has been extended on an annual basis to March 2010. This has provided officers the opportunity to assess whether there has been an impact on the service as a result of the management changes to Crossroads Scotland. Early indications are that there has been no negative impact for service users and carers accessing services.

Crossroads Falkirk is on the Framework for providing Care at Home services. The organisation has historically received core funding for certain costs, including care hours. To ensure the Council are dealing with external organisations in a transparent and equitable manner, Crossroads revised their hourly rates to include on-costs, in line with normal practice. In line with our commitment to continuity of care the level of core funding will be adjusted over time, with existing service users funded through this grant element remaining, but all new work being spot purchased under the Framework. It is not anticipated therefore that there will be a reduction in overall services provided by the organisation. In addition, a similar approach is proposed for the previously known SMIG monies.

Audited accounts for 2008/09 are not yet available from Crossroads and when received will be checked by an officer within the Council's Finance section. Elected members will be advised if any issues are identified by officers.

Key achievements

In total there were 25,574 hours of care provided over 2008/09. The vast majority of these hours were spot purchased (18,380 hours) with the combination of core funding providing 5199 hours, SMIG 518 hours and Carers Strategy funding 1477 hours.

Crossroads recently had their Care Commission inspection report, using the new grading system in operation. The service received scores of 6 across key inspection areas.

Key Difficulties

There were no significant difficulties identified.

Future Plans

We are currently working with Crossroads to ensure that any grant funded activity is distinct from spot purchased care and that both reflect the strategic and operational requirements of the Council. We therefore are not recommending any changes to Carers Strategy grant funding levels, with core and SMIG funding continuing with current service users and carers on a diminishing basis, with new work picked up through spot purchase.

Independent Living Association (Forth Valley) - Forth Valley Direct Payments Support Service

Monitoring Officer Margaret Petherbridge, Community Care

Introduction

The Independent Living Association (Forth Valley) works to promote the needs and benefits of disabled people and their dependents and carers and operates its Direct Payments Support Service across Forth Valley with funding provided by all three Local Authorities. It is a user-led organisation which is a Company Limited by Guarantee and registered Charity. It has a Board of Directors as its management structure.

Background Information

The Independent Living Association (Forth Valley) manages the Forth Valley Direct Payment Support Service. The most recent Scottish Government Guidance (2007) has changed the name of this policy area from 'Direct Payments' to 'Self Directed Support'. The Support Service employs staff to advise, support and assist service users in the field of self directed support (direct payments), Independent Living Fund and those who opt purchase care privately. The Support Service also supports Social Work staff and, through consultation, contributes towards the development of Falkirk Council policies and procedures on direct payments. The Joint Working Agreement set out the following objectives:

1. To provide service to 60 social work service users (minimum)
2. Participation in the national and local development of self directed support (direct payments) through working with Falkirk Council, Self Directed Support Scotland and other agencies
3. Ensure staff are appropriately trained
4. Conduct a minimum of 8 public presentations to Falkirk Council staff and others to develop and increase the awareness of Self Directed Support
5. Provide Accessible information about the service
6. Encourage the development of issue based groups
7. Provide support to Social Work staff to develop and maintain self directed support care packages

Funding

In 2008/09 Falkirk Council (Social Work) contributed £23200 grant funding to this service. The amount of funding was less than projected due to an underspend in the year to 31 March 2008 of £6925. In addition the service benefited from free use of office space in the Dundas resource Centre (financial value £6000).

This service is covered by a Joint Working Agreement (April 2009 – March 2012).

The audited accounts are available and are being reviewed. Any matters arising will be brought to Members' attention.

Key achievements

The service supported 76 clients in receipt of a direct payment during 2008/09 with the majority of these (54) living in the Falkirk area. Of the Falkirk service users the majority (46) are adults and the remainder (8) children. There were 13 new Direct Payment clients during the year.

The telephone service has continued to be very successful with a total of 1001 enquiries being made – 369 were from Falkirk Council (Social Work) and the remaining 263 were from the public. Of these enquiries 36 related to new potential Direct Payment arrangements.

The service is recognised across Scotland as a good example of a user-led Direct Payment Support Service.

The service is recognised locally for its expertise in direct payment processes and procedures and is often asked to assist with unusual or complex cases.

Feedback from service users and professionals has continued to be very positive.

Key Difficulties

The service struggled with outdated IT equipment, however this has been resolved with the supply of two new PCs by Falkirk Council as part of the ongoing support .

Desk space was an issue as Stirling Council is no longer providing a part-time office space. However, a change in working hours of staff has eased this. Falkirk Council has also provided Health and Safety advice in relation to work stations.

Recruitment difficulties and hourly rates provided for direct payment care packages were restricting the uptake of direct payment by some service users, however an increase in rates from April 09 will help to improve this situation.

Employment of suitable staff for individuals who want to use a direct payment for a very small care package e.g. 30 minute visits, continues to be difficult.

Future plans

With the promotion of Self Directed Support and other similar initiatives there is likely to continue to be an increasing demand on this type of service. While there are no plans to expand the service significantly the ILA intends to continue development to meet need in the most appropriate way.

Where there are ongoing changes to national guidance and legislation in this field the ILA will work to remain at the forefront of development to ensure that they are at all times capable of delivering the most up to date and relevant advice and guidance.

Falkirk and District Association for Mental Health

Monitoring Officer Carole Jones, Service Manager – Community Care

Introduction

Falkirk District Association of Mental Health (FDAMH) provides support to individuals experiencing or recovering from mental illness. They also provide support to carers. The Association maintains a range of services that includes Counselling, Drop-in Provision, Befriending, Service Users Reference Group, Carers support and development, resource library and Individual Link Worker Support. FDAMH also operationally manages and provides the “Time Out” crisis out of hours service. (see appendix 2)

Background Information

FDAMH provides a range of services through employed members of staff and volunteers.

The Befriending Scheme matches trained volunteers with people who have been referred from specialist mental health services and Social Work Services. The aim of the relationship is to help by: relieving loneliness and isolation; listening and understanding; and helping establish links with the local community through social, leisure and recreational activities. The befriending team has Approved Provider status from the Befriending and Mentoring Foundation.

Service provision ranges from 1 to 1 counselling to group work to “drop in” social activity. This is particularly beneficial to service users with a mental illness who can engage with support flexibly and in a number of ways.

The Counselling Service is funded by the Falkirk Community Health Partnership. The service is person centred and Counsellors will have completed, or be in training for a Diploma in Counselling, or equivalent qualification. The service has COSCA (Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland) recognition and is reviewed regularly to ensure standards are maintained.

The Drop In service at the New Victoria Centre offers people a place to meet and enjoy a chat and a coffee with others, or discuss any worries or concerns. There are a range of activities available throughout the day, from pool and football to crafts and day trips.

The Link Worker project aims to assist mental health service users through individual work to access community services and resources that meet their needs identified through their care plans. It is recognised that people experiencing a mental illness need additional support to access the services necessary to improve or maintain their mental health. Services and resources accessed can include social activities, self help initiatives, training, volunteering and work opportunities.

FDAMH continues to raise awareness of mental health issues both locally and nationally. It also maintains a dedicated database “In Touch” with resource information particular to mental health.

FDAMH is a well known and respected service within Falkirk with representation on both Local Authority and NHS Forth Valley strategic planning groups.

FDAMH support Service Users and Carers to attend and contribute to strategic and service development meetings both locally and nationally.

The organisation currently has no elected members on their Board of Directors.

Funding

In the financial year 2008/2009 FDAMH received grant funding from Falkirk Council Social Work Services of:

£137,110 for the core service
£2,600 for service user support worker
£18,000 carers' strategy monies
£90,000 for the "Time Out" out of hours project.
£5,000 for the "In Touch" database
£12,970 for befriending service (health board transfer monies)

Audited accounts are considered by the monitoring officer and an officer of Falkirk Council Finance Services. Audited accounts for the financial year 2008/2009 have been submitted. Elected members will be advised if any issues are identified by officers.

The core service and the service user support received an inflationary uplift for this financial year of 2009/2010 increasing the grant payment from £139,710 to £141,807.

The grant funding for the "Time Out" Service, "In Touch" database and carers strategy remains the same as previous financial year and is currently under review.

Payments are monitored and authorised quarterly.

Key Achievements

FDAMH have successfully moved to a newly built specialist accommodation which has been welcomed by service users and carers. This has enabled FDAMH to offer more opportunities to the members.

FDAMH have also supported an employment initiative within the walled garden at Callendar House.

FDAMH continue to support service users and carers to participate in both national and local service planning.

The counselling service assists in meeting targets in the delivering for mental health strategy. GPs refer directly for this service as part of a treatment plan. Currently there is a waiting list. FDAMH continue to provide a service which directly contributes to meeting the targets and commitments within the Delivering for Mental Health National Strategy and Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland.

Key Difficulties

FDAMH were unsuccessful in their bid for Fairer Scotland funding. The consequence of which is that the physical activity post previously funded through regeneration monies has now come to an end and has stopped.

The employment project within the walled garden at Callendar House may not be sustainable in the future without continued funding for the part time support worker post.

FDAMH is experiencing an increased demand for services with an increase in the costs associated with running the service. They are advising that they cannot continue to provide the same core service without a significant uplift in grant funding.

Forth Valley Advocacy

Monitoring Officer Suzanne Thomson, Service Manager – Community Care

Introduction

Forth Valley Advocacy provides an independent professional advocacy service to people with mental ill-health, older people and young people living in the Forth Valley area. Referrals to the service are from a range of agencies including Mental Health Officers, Social Workers, psychiatrists, self-referrals and relatives. The service supports people to deal with a range of issues, many of which involve problematic, complex and time-consuming casework.

Background Information

Funding provided by Falkirk Council to Forth Valley Advocacy has been covered by a Joint Working Agreement over the reporting period April 2008 – March 2009, and has been rolled-forward on an annual basis for 2009/10. The service also receives funding from NHS Forth Valley, Stirling Council, Clackmannanshire Council and the Big Lottery. It also includes Forth Valley Area Partnership funding, which was previously Forth Valley Mental Health Act partnership monies. The funding from Falkirk Council provides advocacy services to Falkirk people with a mental health problem, prioritising those people who are subject to statutory interventions under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003.

Funding

Over the course of the 1 year agreement the service received annual funding of £27,428. The service received an inflationary uplift in 2009/10 to £27,839 to take account of the actual costs of the service. Audited accounts for 2008/09 have been submitted by Forth Valley Advocacy and are being checked by an officer within the Council's Finance section. Elected members will be advised if any issues are identified by officers.

Key achievements

Over the 12 month period from 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009, the combined funding from Falkirk Council and NHS Forth Valley has enabled Forth Valley Advocacy to provide services to 328 older people and 801 adults with a diagnosed mental health condition. Of these, 58 older people and 97 adults with a mental health condition were new referrals to the service.

Key difficulties

There are clear indications that demand and service usage have incrementally increased, particularly for older people, over the period of the Joint Working Agreement and Forth Valley Advocacy Service has indicated that a waiting list is now in operation for the Falkirk area. This is due to the increasing demand placed on the service following the implementation of the new Mental Health legislation. There has been agreement with Forth Valley Advocacy on priority areas for advocacy services to manage demand for the service.

Future plans

NHS Forth Valley has lead responsibility to prepare an Advocacy plan with partner organisations, and work has now commenced to review the existing Forth Valley plan. It is anticipated this work will conclude late 2009. This will lead to an agreed Forth Valley advocacy strategy outlining current advocacy provision and future plans for services and funding arrangements. This is being undertaken with partners from NHS Forth Valley, Clackmannanshire and Stirling Councils and the advocacy providers. In addition, the planning partners within Forth Valley have commenced work to review the services provided by Forth Valley Advocacy under the Area Partnership monies. Any funding implications arising from this review would be reported to Members as appropriate.

Forth Valley Sensory Resource Centre

Monitoring Officer Alec Graham, Service Manager.

Introduction

The Sensory Resource Centre opened for business in Autumn 2005.

The Centre, is a Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status and was registered in April 2003. The Company is managed by a Board of Directors which meets quarterly and has responsibility for all the work of the Company and, in particular the planning, design, and building of the Resource Centre, its subsequent completion and management.

The Board of Directors represents a formal partnership between the main funding agencies in the statutory and voluntary sector, and representatives of service users.

The Board of Directors currently consists of the following voting members:-

Royal National Institute of the Blind (Chair)	-	2 members
Falkirk Council (Company Secretary)		
NHS Forth Valley (Treasurer)	-	2 members
Service Users	-	2 members
Royal National Institute for the Deaf	-	4 members
Stirling Council	-	1 member
Clackmannanshire Council	-	1 member
Guide Dogs for the Blind	-	1 member (no vote)
	-	1 member (no vote)

The Board receives reports and recommendations from the Finance Group, the Operational Management Group (chaired by a Falkirk Council officer), and Service User Groups.

Background Information

The Company was established to take forward a partnership development for people with sensory impairment in Forth Valley. This partnership was based on the recommendations of the Scottish Office Report, "Sensing Progress".

The objectives were to build a Resource Centre in the area which would:

- provide a friendly, hospitable place, encouraging social interaction and participation to improve the quality of life of local people with sensory impairments.
- provide assessment, support, information, advice, diagnosis, treatment, practical help, training, education and access to equipment for people with sensory impairment.
- enable people with sensory impairments to develop, manage and run services and contribute to them and, in so doing, improve the appropriateness and sensitivity of services to their needs.
- promote and develop partnership working between agencies which would benefit everyone with a sensory impairment and their carers.

Facilities

The Centre contains the following:

- Meeting and conference room facilities
- Multi-sensory room
- Sensory garden
- Consultation and low vision clinic assessments
- Interview/counselling rooms
- Accessible IT suite
- Equipment and product display units
- Guide-dog run

Funding

In 2008/9 Falkirk Council (Social Work) contributed £57,445 to the revenue funding. Funding also came from Stirling Council, RNID, RNIB, and NHS Forth Valley.

Key achievements

In the last year the activities within the centre have been consolidated and new initiatives have also been developed.

The café continues to be a hub of activity and a very useful meeting place for our users.

The numbers of volunteers has continued to grow. We now have 61 volunteers working in a variety of settings both in the centre and on an outreach basis, providing an invaluable service to service users. A typical month provides in the region of 500 volunteer hours service which is an immense achievement, given, that the project has only been in existence for 2 years.

Fundraising continues to be key to our success and continued growth and development. In the last year we have benefited from a number of successful bids.

Partnership working is also key to our service performance and development. All of our partners have embraced our philosophy and many initiatives have been sustained a number of new partnership initiatives have been implemented as a result, to include the following

Coalfield Regeneration Trust

The company were successful in being awarded for the purchase and maintenance of a minibus. This will enable those from outlying areas, or unable to travel independently to visit the centre, join classes and generally participate as they wish in any events.

This will mean that we can make the centre accessible to a wider population. We expect to take delivery of the bus in October.

Big Lottery

Once again the company has received funding from the Big Lottery. On this occasion the funding is to enable the company to recruit a part-time development worker for 3 years. This worker will audit existing groups, identify gaps and develop new groups to suit the needs of our service users. The worker will work across Forth Valley and improve services and opportunities for the client group.

It has been recognised by the company that fundraising will become an increasingly important function of the company to sustain services and in order to continue to grow and improve.

Partnership working is also key to our service performance and development. All of our partners have embraced our philosophy. Many initiatives have been sustained while new partnership initiatives have also been implemented.

RNIB Welfare Benefits Helpline

The RNIB Scotland Benefits Helpline based in the centre was launched in November 2007. The helpline was funded for 3 years and has been very successful to date at both providing information on services and benefits advice to partially sighted people and maximising their income.

RNIB and RNID are now discussing expanding this service to provide this information and advice across sensory impairments.

Sign Language Interpreter Services

NHS Forth Valley, Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils have jointly commissioned Sign Language Interpreter Services. This has proved successful to date, providing continuity of interpreters for our service users. We hope to continue with this way of working in the coming years.

Social Work Services

Falkirk and Stirling Councils have an agreement in place to provide specialist Social Work Services by means of social workers, rehabilitation, mobility assessments, including the provision of equipment and Support Worker services, jointly from the Sensory Centre. This is

proving an effective way of delivering highly specialist services to the population in these areas. More recently Clackmannanshire Council have joined the partnership to deliver rehabilitation and mobility services to blind and partially sighted people and so enhancing services in the Clackmannanshire area.

Website

In the last year we have added 'signed' web clips to our website to make it more accessible to the deaf community. Feedback from the group has been very positive and partners have also developed similar clips on their websites improving access to the deaf community across services.

Key Difficulties

Unfortunately there are a few areas of the building which have not reached the desired standards and are the subject of ongoing discussion between the builders, design team and the Board.

These are: Chilled beams (ventilation)
 Acoustics (in some areas)

The Board is endeavouring to resolve these issues.

The Sensory Centre is continuing to find it difficult to balance excellent service provision with reduced revenue available.

The partners are revisiting the financial contributions from partners. Floor space, building usage and Falkirk's management contributions are three areas being examined.

Charging for services and fundraising are also being actively looked at as well as new funding partners like Clackmannanshire Council and Guide Dogs.

At the moment to maintain services, the Centre's costs are likely to increase by 2.5%. Falkirk Council's contribution however is likely to reduce or remain the same once the other factors outlined are taken into consideration.

Future plans

The Board of Directors and its Sub-Groups have worked very hard in the last four years to establish and develop the Centre. In the last year a great deal of time has been spent consolidating the services from the Centre. The Board is now in a position to take stock and plan for the years ahead. To this end, the Directors have created a 3 year plan which will enable continued growth to take us into the next decade.

With the arrival of a minibus and the recruitment of a development worker, it is anticipated that the Centre will be able to deliver services fit for purpose and also engage with those not previously using the Centre. There is an ongoing commitment to continue to fundraise, in order to maximise revenue and the services that are on offer.

A questionnaire has been developed. It covers all of the activities covered in the Centre and is available in a variety of formats. The information received from this will inform our plans for the coming year. It is also hoped that new partnerships will be formed, which will continue to improve services while reducing pressure on the existing funding partners. The Sensory Centre remains a flagship service and is continuing to improve the services locally for people with a Sensory Impairment. Its location in the Falkirk area is a bonus for the Council.

Open Secret

Monitoring Officer: Carole Jones, Service Manager – Community Care

Introduction

Open Secret was established in 1994 to work with survivors of childhood sexual abuse. It provides a service across the Forth Valley area including the local authorities of Clackmannan, Falkirk and Stirling. Open Secret receives grant funding from Falkirk Council for the service it provides within the Falkirk area.

Open Secret is an independent community based organisation offering:

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

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

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

Background Information

When Open Secret was first established in Falkirk the arrangement of the service was a combination of seconded staff posts from Falkirk Council and grant funding. Open Secret has progressed to independent management of the service in that Falkirk Council no longer provides seconded staff posts. Open Secret receives an annual grant payment from Falkirk Council. This grant payment is specific to service provision within the Falkirk area and is enhanced by the organisation's commitment to external and additional fund raising activities.

Open Secret has a strategic development plan (2008 – 2010) which is aligned with the Scottish Government's National Strategy for Survivors of childhood sexual abuse (2005). They have actively audited staff skills in relation to achieving the aims and objectives of the service with a view to addressing identified gaps through recruitment and training. In relation to this most workers are trained in ASIST, Drug and Alcohol first aid, Mental Health first aid and child protection level 1.

Funding

Open Secret received a grant payment of £157,868 for the financial year 2008/2009. An inflationary uplift of 1.5% was awarded for the financial year 2009/2010 taking the grant awarded to £160,236. Grant payment is monitored and authorised quarterly.

Audited accounts for the financial year 2008/2009 have still to be received and are currently being progressed by chartered accountants. Once received the accounts will be checked by the monitoring officer and an officer from Falkirk Council's finance service. Elected members will be advised if any issues are identified by officers.

Key Achievements

Open Secret continues to receive positive responses to the evaluations carried out with the users of their service.

Their expertise is sought from other organisations.

Open Secret moved premises to more accessible accommodation with more cost effective running costs.

Open Secret received grant funding to be the lead partner for a new support service for adults who suffered childhood abuse in care and their families – The In Care Survivors Service Scotland.

Key Challenges

Some grant funded sources have now come to an end and have not been renewed. Therefore the organisation needs to consider other possible sources of grant funding. Falkirk Council has asked Open Secret to consider working with people who have experienced other forms of abuse. Open Secret is actively considering this.

Future Plans

As part of their strategic development Open Secret plan to set goals and objectives for individual projects as well as the organisation as a whole which are SMART and reviewed annually. They aim to be competitive in their service delivery and intend capacity building particularly in terms of a qualified and skilled workforce to offer a quality service.

Princess Royal Trust – Central Carers Association

Monitoring Officer Suzanne Thomson, Service Manager – Community Care

Introduction

The Princess Royal Trust Carers Centre, managed by Central Carers Association (Falkirk and Clackmannanshire), provides information and support to carers and former carers in all ages and care groups in Falkirk and Clackmannanshire areas. Central Carers Association also encourages the development of local services, which improve the quality of life for carers, and those for whom they care.

Background Information

The Centre's aims are to:

- Identify carers, including young carers, and provide support and information
- Encourage mutual support through the establishment of carer's support groups
- Raise awareness of the needs of carers
- Promote services which will help carers
- Assist carers to liaise with all relevant agencies
- Collate and disseminate information relevant to carers, professionals and local organisations
- Promote good communication, collaborative working and partnerships with statutory voluntary and community organisations
- Encourage carers to contribute and participate in community care and health planning.

Funding

A 3 year Joint Working Agreement is in place from 1 April 2007 – 31 March 2010. Over the course of 2008/09 the service received an increase in funding to £143,621 to take account of the actual costs of the service. In 2009/10 the service will receive funding of £145,775. Audited accounts for 2008/09 are not yet available from the Carers Centre and when received will be checked by an officer within the Council's Finance section. Elected members will be advised if any issues are identified by officers.

Key achievements

Over 2008/09 the Centre has:

- Provided information and support to adult Carers – with a total of 561 enquiries over the year. There were 223 new contacts and 338 enquiries from carers known to the centre. The remaining were more general enquiries. The profile of care groups represented by these enquiries shows that physical illness, disability and sensory impairment account for 37%, children with additional needs 30%, frail elderly 16% and learning disability and mental health account for 17%.
- Organised a range of monthly groups and events. These offer a chance for peer support, learning and information sharing. A number of events were also organised, including a residential experience for young carers, sports and games organised in partnership with the Sports Coach and Christmas lunches for adult and young carers
- Produced a quarterly newsletter which has been well received by carers. Over 2000 copies were distributed each quarter, therefore ensuring that the profile of the service is very high across both Falkirk and Clackmannanshire.
- Provided specialised support to parents and carers of children with additional support needs. Two support groups take place each month, one in the morning and one in the evening, to provide a regular opportunity for parents to access peer support. Between 6 -12 parents attend these groups.
- Young Carers Project has continued to support approximately 150 young people aged 8-18 years (across Falkirk and Clackmannanshire). This service provides regular breaks for the young carers to spend time with other young people who live with caring responsibilities. There are 5 monthly Time Out groups and a 16+ group as well as social events. These services provide the opportunity to discuss and support young carers on a range of issues. There are also opportunities for one-to-one support for any young carer who needs this.

- Carers Befriending Project has increased the number of befrienders linked with carers. There are currently 34 volunteer befrienders supporting 36 carers. The centre hosted 4 induction training sessions to recruit and train volunteers. Importantly these sessions included topics such as child protection and dealing with sensitive issues. In addition there were 23 volunteer befrienders supporting 25 young carers. The project supported a number of social events over the year for both adult and young carers.

Key difficulties

The additional funding in 2008/09 has assisted the Carers Centre to address some budget pressures and the Board has been active to review current and future funding pressures and to put in place a management plan. There is ongoing contact with the Board and Carers Centre manager to ensure the Council is aware of any likely impact on service delivery arising from budget pressures.

Future plans

The Board is continuing to work with the Council and partner agencies, including NHS Forth Valley and Clackmannanshire Council, to deliver and develop services that will support carers to continue in their caring role. The Centre has obtained short-term (2 year) funding through the NHS Carers Information Strategy to provide services to identify carers in a hospital and primary care setting and to work with partners to deliver carer training and learning opportunities. In addition, the Carers Centre have moved to new premises in Falkirk Council, that brings the carers and young carers services together and provides opportunities for efficiencies in the way services are managed and delivered. The above will assist the Carers Centre and partners to address the needs of carers, including young carers, and respond to the national policy drivers for carers.

While it is acknowledged that funding beyond April 2011 is unclear and likely to be very challenging, we are clear that we will prioritise the type of work carried out by the Carers Association. Without a strong support network for carers the Council would face significantly increased pressure on Day care and Care at Home services. This service is therefore a key preventative function and the recommendation is that we enter into a 2 year JWA to ensure the stability of the service.

Quarriers Children's Rights Service

Monitoring Officer Kathy McCarroll, Children's Services Integration Manager

Introduction

Quarriers has been a registered charity since 1878, which provides practical support and care for children and young people and their families through a range of projects across Scotland and beyond.

Quarriers commit to employing highly trained, professional staff who can provide the support that best suits the individual's needs and who can be creative and flexible in their response to changing needs. This is the first service provided by Quarriers in the Falkirk area.

Background Information

The partnership agreement between Quarriers and Falkirk Council states that a service will be provided which promotes and advocates for the rights of children and young people ordinarily resident in the Falkirk Council area. Falkirk Children's Rights Service has been operating since May 2006. The third Annual Report is currently in draft form and will be available shortly.

The aims of the project are to:

- to develop and deliver a comprehensive and effective Children's Rights Service in the Falkirk area;
- to promote, protect and uphold the rights of children and young people by a commitment to the principles and ethos of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and associated guidance;
- to actively promote and disseminate the standards set out in the Framework for Standards child protection charter and standards;
- to collate client feedback and questionnaires and assess this information to identify needs;
- to evaluate the service offered and assess this information to identify needs.

The Children's Rights Service is accessible to children and young people normally resident within the Falkirk Council area at both a strategic and operational level. On an operational level the Children's Rights Officer will have contact with the young people who are placed in residential schools or foster placements outwith the Council area, (whose home address is within the Falkirk Council area), in terms of ensuring their rights are met.

A young person may access the service up to the age of 18, or beyond where children's legislation and planning continues to apply. This is seen as the most effective way of influencing policy and attitudes and ensuring that Children's Rights are upheld throughout the Council area and become integrated into our thinking.

Funding

In 2008/09 Falkirk Council (Social Work Services) contributed £86,817. The Joint Working Agreement ended in March 2009. A further Joint Working Agreement is in draft form. Audited Accounts are available and are now being reviewed by the Council's Finance Service.

Key Achievements

- The Children's Rights Officer continues his role within Falkirk Children's Commission which is to challenge and report.
- The Children's Rights Officer has been successful in highlighting children's rights to the services and agencies working within the Falkirk area and is enabling ALL "falkirk's bairns" to have a voice.
- The Children's Rights Service has been successful in improving it's visibility for young people and parents/carers and other agencies through the move to the new High Street premises.
- The Service is now receiving regular self-referrals occurring through young people's ability to drop into the High Street premises.

- The Children's Rights Service has had 42,000 hits on the website this year and work to update and improve the website is due to be completed by the end of October.
- Targets for 2006-2009 for individual work with children and young people were exceeded.
- Children's Rights Service wallet cards have been designed for young people which put an emphasis on provision for the 5-25 years age range.
- Two volunteers have now been recruited to provide advocacy services.
- The Children's Rights Service has been successful in assisting parents and carers of children and young people in the Falkirk area.

Key Difficulties

Communication will always remain a challenge as one of the primary roles of the Children's Rights Officer is to develop and maintain effective links with and between services/agencies. This work is ongoing and regular meetings are now held with a variety of partner agencies to facilitate these effective links which also assist in dealing with issues as they arise.

There continue to be difficulties over the joint lease of the High Street premises, and the possible future suitability of the building. This could identify previously unforeseen budgetary implications.

Future Plans

The Joint Working Agreement continues to be in draft format because of ongoing work with both Quarriers and "Who Cares?" to integrate the two services to provide a more holistic Children's Rights Service. "Who Cares?" is a national organisation who provide an advocacy service for children and young people who are looked after away from home.

Relationship Scotland

Monitoring Officer Paul Donnelly, Service Manager - Community Care

Introduction

Relationship Scotland is a charitable organisation that supports couples, individuals and families. Relationship Scotland was formed in 1955 and its charity number is SC001181. Relationship Scotland specialises in couples counselling and operate across the whole of Scotland.

Background Information

Relationship Scotland offer counselling and support to clients with relationship difficulties. Relationships Scotland has also been successful in a bid to secure funding from the Scottish Government to run a three year project called "Violence Against Women". Relationships Scotland have employed a full-time Project Worker with the grant funding secured.

Funding

Falkirk Council currently provides funding of £10,000 to Relationship Scotland. A Service Level Agreement has been in place since 2003 and has been rolled forward annually including covering 2008/09.

Key achievements

Relationships Scotland have been involved in a wide range of service delivery in 2008/2009. They had 65 staff and volunteers working with them in the past year. They received 600 referrals, seeing approximately 840 individuals with 600 children. This has involved relationships Scotland working closely with the Children's Reporter, Criminal Justice and Children and Families Social Work Services. This service has had proven benefit in preventive work with families and actively assisting woman get out of violent and difficult relationships. This project helps supports Falkirk Council's key aims of sustaining individuals in their community and in promoting zero tolerance towards domestic violence. The service has had over 100 requests for help in the past year and worked closely with the police.

Key Difficulties

The loss of the Manager of the service earlier in 2008 had a negative impact. The assistant manager has now been promoted to the manager's post which has created a degree of stability.

Future plans

Relationship Scotland will continue to build on their counselling goals and they have good support and training for staff in this area. They are developing the Community aspect of their work through the Choose Life National Agenda and in working with domestic abuse forums. This will assist in continuing to bolster their current resources.

SACRO Restorative Justice Service

Monitoring Officer Matthew Davies, Service Manager, Children & Families

Introduction

SACRO (Safeguarding Communities Reducing Offending) provides a range of services in the Falkirk area including: Restorative Justice services. Restorative Justice provides victims with a voice and enables people to say sorry to their victims and to try to repair the damage they have done.

Background Information

SACRO's Restorative Justice Service came into operation in 2003. It provides a direct service for young people involved in low level offending behaviour. The programmes provided by SACRO include: shuttle dialogue, face to face meetings, restorative conferencing and victim awareness work. SACRO have also provided training to local authority staff, such as Social Workers, school staff and community wardens, in relation to restorative justice and restorative approaches

Funding

In 2008/2009 Falkirk Council contributed £86,100 to the SACRO Restorative Justice Service. This contribution was consistent with the previous year's funding, with no inflationary uplift. There is a 3 year joint working agreement in place covering 2007-2010.

Key achievements

- During the period 1st April 2008 - 31st March 2009, SACRO received 125 referrals involving 102 young people from the Children's Reporter Service. The service has a capacity figure of 120 referrals.
- The Procurator Fiscal Service agreed Restorative Justice interventions as a suitable diversion from prosecution for 16 and 17 year olds.
- SACRO have trained four volunteers during this period. One volunteer is now employed in another SACRO service which is based in Falkirk.
- SACRO have co-delivered training with Falkirk's Youth Justice Service to Children's Panel members.
- SACRO staff continue to be involved in schools' training to extend restorative approaches to all High Schools in the Falkirk Council area.

Key Difficulties

- Short term funding continues to impact on long term planning in the service.
- Accommodation problems still exist in the Meeks Road office. This is currently being addressed by senior management at both local and national level.

Future plans

- SACRO are now providing a schools' on-call service to deal with high tariff conflict referrals. This is funded by Education Services on a "spot purchase" basis. Anti Social Behaviour funding continues to provide the Restorative Acceptable Behaviour Service which can now be accessed by local housing offices.
- SACRO are offering additional low level offending services through the Youth Justice Referral Group – This represents a widening of the scope of the service and complements services which have been reconfigured following the review of youth justice provision in the Council area.

Signpost Recovery

Monitoring Officer – Peter Anderson, Social Work Services

Introduction

Signpost Recovery is a Voluntary sector community based addiction service working across the Forth Valley. It provides non-judgemental support for anyone above the age of sixteen with drug and or alcohol issues. Every client is treated as an individual and supported by their own key worker throughout their recovery programme. This approach involves looking at a wide range of issues surrounding each client's condition, including their lifestyle. Signpost Recovery work with a wide range of organisations and people, including Housing Service, Doctors, other drug and alcohol services.

Signpost Forth Valley it was set up in 2001 as a direct, community based, access service offering support, advice and initial assessment. In April 2008 the service changed its status to a company limited by guarantee and changed its name to Signpost Recovery. Its major sources of funding are still the three local authorities, the health board and the police service. Since its inception the organisation has undergone considerable development.

Background Information

The service plays an important role in the community safety strategies of its partners and is an integral part of the Forth Valley prescribing model. It delivers six separate services and in doing so attracts an accumulated income of approx £800,000 annually:

Alcohol Link

As the name suggest this service offers assessment and ongoing support to people with alcohol issues. It also provides drop-in facilities in the three local authority areas within the Forth Valley Health Board area as well as providing Line Management to the Arrest Referral service.

Arrest Referral

This is a court based service providing direct access to treatment for substance misuse clients involved in a criminal activity. This service also provides direct liaison for clients of other Forth Valley Addiction services such as CADS and Fastrack.

Drug Support Service

This is Signpost Recovery's core service and it offers the same provision as the alcohol service except focussing on drugs issues. In addition to this it provides key workers to the GP prescribing service.

Forth Valley Tox

This is a short community based intervention service. It provides a short detoxification programme, employing its own GP, and is targeted mainly at new substance misusers or those with a short history with no other serious issues.

Harm Reduction

This service provides assessment and ongoing support to more chaotic clients. Also staffs and distributes injecting equipment out of community facilities.

Time 4 Us

This is a partnership involving Falkirk Council, Aberlour and Signpost Recovery and involves working with families with drug using parent(s).

Funding

The service received £125 000 in 2008/09 from Falkirk Council Social Work services to provide the core services within the Falkirk Council area , at present there is not a separate Falkirk Council Joint Working Agreement as the contract is administered through the Forth Valley Drug and Alcohol Partnership.

Key achievements

- Referrals from Falkirk Councils remain consistent with a total of 727, (341 drug / 386 alcohol) referrals for the period 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009.
- Despite the inquiries involving the manager and assistant manager, no client appointment has been postponed or missed.
- They have increased our community access points throughout our service area and in particular have reached agreement with a church in Falkirk Town centre that will allow us to see alcohol clients.
- They have recruited two extra drug key workers which will increase their capacity to work with clients in the Falkirk Council area.
- They have recruited two further alcohol key workers which will increase their capacity to work with clients in the Falkirk Council area.
- They have moved to new premises better suited to their core purpose.
- Signpost Recovery have recruited a GP from a Denny practice that will allow them to continue the FV Tox service.
- A member of staff obtained a certificate in higher education, drug and alcohol practice.

Key Difficulties

During 2008 irregularities were identified within the organisation and police involvement was required. The matter is ongoing at present and outcomes therefore unknown at this time. The organisation have put amended some key protocols since this time to ensure that similar issues are less likely to arise. We will continue to closely monitor this service to ensure that the quality and reliability of services delivered are acceptable to the Council.

Future plans

The service is currently investigating a range of options for future developments and resources. Two examples are; (a) in terms of working with children and families services, increased specialist staff training, (b) creating greater links with Falkirk College.

Tayavalla NCH

Monitoring Officer Vivien Goodbrand, Service Manager – Children & Families

Introduction

NCH Action for Children (now Action for Children) is a national charity who provides childcare services across the country. Tayavalla provides short breaks (respite) for children and young people with a complex disability, to allow their families to continue to care for them. It operates from a purpose built unit in Falkirk, but provides a service for the whole Forth Valley area.

NHS Forth Valley, Clackmannanshire, Stirling and Falkirk Councils provide funding. Falkirk Council is the lead authority. Places are provided on a 5:3:2 basis. The service has been operational since the early 1990's.

Background Information

Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils, along with NHS Forth Valley agreed a Joint Working Agreement with NCH Scotland to provide a residential respite and family support service to young people with a disability aged between 5 and 19 years, regardless of age, race, religion, marital status or sexual orientation. The Tayavalla service operates from 54 Brown Street, Camelon, Falkirk and covers the geographical areas of Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils. 4 spaces are available at any one point.

The service is well established and in addition to the core service a communication service is provided, funded by lottery funding.

Funding

The service is contracted by the 3 councils and Forth Valley Health Board. The current contract is for the 3 years from April 2007 to April 2010. NCH Action for Children as with many charities are now seeking full cost recovery for services, and the contract moves to this position in the final year of the contract. The cost of the service is as follows:

2007/2008	Partners Contribution	£493,722	Falkirk element	£199,877
2008/2009	Partners Contribution	£534,410	Falkirk element	£216,299
2009/2010	Partners contribution (full costs)	£590,391	Falkirk element	£239,039

The above costs allow Tayavalla to provide for the most complex young people with a disability, who would otherwise require more expensive out of council placements.

Audited Accounts have been received in relation to future position, consideration is being given to the best way of providing residential respite for children with complex needs. To allow this work to be completed a one year contract is being drawn up with Action for children for 2010-2011. Costs for this are being discussed, and are likely to be around £600,000, only slightly above the 2009/2010 level, of which Falkirk council pay approximately 40%.

Key achievements

- Provided support to a minimum of 35 families who have a child aged between 5 and 19 years who have a disability and a Social Work assessment from their own Council area to determine their needs and priority for this service.
- Offered support and care for the young people.
- Worked in partnership with Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils and with NHS Forth Valley to meet the needs of the young people.
- Collated information from service users and assessed this information to identify needs.
- Provided an award winning service to allow young people with communication difficulties to express their views

The existing contract outlines the key performance measures. These include occupancy rates, stability of staff group, reviews of care plans, timescales for vacancies being filled and

eligibility criteria. These performance measures are reported on at quarterly monitoring meetings and are successfully achieved.

The service is also inspected by the Care Commission and has achieved an 'excellent' grade. In 2007 the service was also successful in winning a SSSC Care Accolade.

Key Difficulties

Over the past few years the numbers of young people with complex disabilities has increased. Additional resources were required to allow Tayavalla staff to meet the often complex needs of those young people, thus increasing the spot purchase expenses for the councils and health board. The existing contract allowed Tayavalla to increase the staffing to meet these needs, thus avoiding the spot purchase costs to the partners. The cost effectiveness of this is being reviewed with discussions ongoing about the most cost effective way to meet the needs of young people with complex disabilities. The move amongst charities to full cost recovery has had significant consequences for the partners, and may result in a shortfall in funds available to meet projected costs for future years. Discussions around future provision are underway as part of negotiations for provision beyond 2010, and it is possible that depending on available funding, the service may require to be reduced.

Future plans

The contract for Tayavalla for 2007-2010 is currently being reviewed and a new one year contract being put in place with a needs assessment being undertaken to confirm if the service is still required in its current form. Contracts staff are also involved considering options for the most effective way of providing this service. No major changes in need are anticipated, given the increase in young children with complex health and disability issues. As a service, Tayavalla meets the performance measures and the current identified need, and access additional funds from community groups and lottery to improve the provisions.

This service has been in transition during the period 2007/10, moving from partnership grant funding to a full cost recovery model covered by a full contract. This means that while we are currently re-negotiating a new contract we will only report to Members on activity for 09/10 in November 2010 and that will be the last time the service is covered under Following the Public pound reporting. Any future re-awarding of contract will be notified to Members separately.

WRVS

Monitoring Officer Elizabeth A. McGhee, Service Manager – Community Care

Introduction

WRVS is a charitable organisation. They have assisted us with the delivery of our meals on wheels service in Falkirk for many years. The specific support they provide is in the provision of volunteers to assist our meals on wheels drivers in the delivery of meals. WRVS is a large organisation who specialise in this type of assistance and operates across the whole of the country.

Background Information

WRVS assist in the provision of a delivery of approximately 45,100 meals annually to service users who reside within the geographical area of Falkirk Council. The service user groups include Frail Elderly, Learning Disability and Physical Disability and any other service users assessed as requiring the service.

The main aims of the input are to

- To assist in the delivery (to the service users home) of a nutritious meal within a specified time period on a set day or days
- To ensure contact with the service user and confirm their safety and well-being

Funding

Falkirk Council has had a formal Joint Working Agreement with the WRVS on an annual basis since 1999. The current agreement has been extended to cover to 31st March 2010. Grant funding of £10,868 was paid to WRVS in 2008/09. An inflationary uplift of 1.5% was applied in 2009/10.

Key Achievements

WRVS continue to maintain local provision of volunteers to assist our meals on wheels drivers in the provision of meals within most of our communities across Falkirk. The contact officer has recently managed to recruit a small number of new volunteers for this service.

Key Difficulties

There are currently no key difficulties identified at this time.

Future Plans

Work continues with the local co-ordinator in identifying areas where currently there are no volunteers and targeting recruitment in those areas.