



Falkirk's Mental Health Association

6 Month Service Update:

1st April 2015 to 30th September 2015

This report is FDAMH's brief update on service activity half way through the current financial year. Once again we are highlighting the comments of people using our services. Key facts and figures are reported in the shaded areas and the short sections of text will update you on any developments, changes or challenges.

Services continue to be experiencing high levels of demand, with some still seeing increases after many years of year-on-year rises. We continue to actively manage that demand in a variety of ways in preference to closing waiting lists or restricting services. Although increasing capacity may sometimes be possible, this report demonstrates how new services are providing alternative options. This is helping us to provide people with that often all-important prompt response, reducing the need for them to face long waits for traditional services or at least providing them with some support while waiting.

For a full description of what our services offer please visit our website (fdamh.org.uk). You can also access a comprehensive description and evaluation of project activity for the previous financial year in our Projects' Report 2014-15 available from the 'About Us' section of our website.

Falkirk's Mental Health Association (FDAMH)

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Health and Wellbeing Drop-In Service

“It has made a massive difference to me coming to the centre. And an even bigger difference completing my anxiety management course and the branching out project. I am now waiting to begin the Next Steps college course. The different things that go on within FDAMH are great and my confidence has started to build. I don’t know where I would be without FDAMH.” Service user

“I was very depressed with low confidence before my doctor advised me to come to Drop-In. Since coming here my confidence has grown with the help of the staff. They are always there for me and advise me about the next steps to take in my recovery. I know how much I have changed since coming here and know now that I can do things.” Service user

The Health and Wellbeing Drop in Service, an open-access service, continues experiencing high-levels of attendance. Staffing changes have seen the part-time project assistant moving into another role in FDAMH and the appointment of a new full-time Group Worker thereby allowing us to increase the number of group activities offered to those using the service. The aim of recruiting a dedicated group worker was to widen out opportunities to more people, and all new groups are available to any of FDAMH’s service users, not just Drop-In members. New workshops being offered so far encourage and support people to express themselves creatively and include drama, drawing and painting, singing and creative writing.

Members are currently being surveyed on how we can maintain and/or improve the service we deliver. This includes any new group activities members would be interesting in participating in. Consultation with those using the service is via monthly members meetings and an open suggestion process. Recent decisions include the spending of a small grant on activity equipment and a summer trip.

Visits: 4266

Average visits per week: 164

Received service: 170

The overall number of visits has reduced slightly due to the closure of Drop-In on Thursday afternoons to allow us to expand our activity programme.



Link/Social Prescribing Service

“Patients receive valuable practical support within a short timescale and this can prevent return appointments and medication” GP

“This service in many ways may have been a true life saver for me. The support, positivity and understanding gave me the help and push to take charge of my life again. Personally this has helped the balance of my life return and also made me see a future for myself once more. Thank you!” Service user

This service continues to demonstrate very positive results in terms of patient outcomes and in reducing prescribing and other impacts on GP surgeries. Original Alliance funding has now come to an end, however the service will now be sustained for another year thanks to support from the Integration Care Fund.

Skilled staff offer people a range of therapeutic interventions, using a holistic approach model, to improve their mental wellbeing. Whilst not a ‘signposting’ service, where necessary, staff do refer people to other agencies e.g. CAB or to another of FDAMH’s services.

At present we have one social prescribing practitioner working within a GP surgery in Denny and another working in Stenhousemuir. Our third practitioner is now providing a social prescribing service ‘in house’ i.e. within FDAMH. This is proving to be an excellent addition to the range of services on offer within The Victoria Centre but referrals can only be made, at present, by other FDAMH staff.

Referrals: 144*

Personal Development courses provided:

Anxiety Management Courses - 10 students

Mindfulness Course - 12 students

*The number of referring health centres was reduced from 3 to 2 as a result of long-term staff sick-leave from May 2015 to mid-July. This is reflected in the reduction in the number of referrals, reduced by approximately one third. Referrals to this staff member are now reinstated and expected to return to previous levels.



Counselling Service

“It’s difficult at the start trying to be an open book for someone you don’t know, but when you feel like everything is going down and there’s no hope, having the Counselling Service makes the difference from drowning to just floating – you can breathe even if at first it’s that hour a week.” Service user

“The counselling sessions I received helped me identify my problems and allow me to find methods of solving them. The atmosphere was friendly and welcoming and I thank FDAMH for their help.” Service user

Despite the fact that GPs (and others) are increasingly directing their patients / clients to our Immediate Help Service and Social Prescribing Practitioners, our Counselling Service continues to receive a significant number of referrals – 410 people referred in a 6 month period!

Our Young Person’s Service has proved a huge success allowing us to offer more free sessions to our 16 to 24 year old clients, after receiving additional funding via the Lottery’s Young Start Programme. This scheme has enabled us to provide very prompt access to counselling for this group and attendance levels have been very good, in line with counselling for ages 25+. Unfortunately our funding for these sessions is due to cease in February 2016.

We are delighted to have met the monitoring standards of the COSCA Recognition Scheme for Organisations as a Counselling Organisation for the 9th year and were delighted to receive excellent feedback from our assessor.

Referrals: 410

Received Service: 232

Sessions offered: 1381



Befriending

“Befriending is a vital service used to help people to take the first steps towards meeting new people, rediscovering old hobbies and developing new interests. It helped me a great deal by working on combating my sense of isolation, anxiety and other combined mental health issues. It worked on my self-esteem and gave me more opportunities for social interaction. I would thoroughly recommend the experience” Service user

“I'm glad I went for it as I found it extremely helpful. It's a simple idea but it does help to get you out of the house - meeting people and doing things. I feel it did benefit my mental health.” Service user

The Befriending Service was reliant on some 28 different volunteers in the period to deliver the service. The addition of a dedicated Volunteer Support and Development service at FDAMH is providing increased opportunities for volunteer recruitment and is also allowing us to deliver our compulsory volunteer training programme more frequently, which helps to get new volunteers on stream more quickly.

It appears that the cases being referred to the Befriending Service are becoming increasingly complex. It is common for the service's clients to have mental health problems in conjunction with additional physical illness or disability and volunteer training is taking these additional demands into account. In addition to our 28 volunteers, we have, at present, 3 sessional befrienders who have professional skills or additional experience that allows us to offer a befriending service to those with more complex needs / illnesses.

Befriending procedures are currently under robust review as the sister project 'Third Age Befriending' works towards 'Quality in Befriending' accreditation.

Referrals: 39

New Service Users: 18

Received Service: 52



Third Age Befriending Service

"It's just wonderful that you are here to provide this service. It's just what I need at just the right time. Thank you so much."

Service user

"If I hadn't have met the Stepping On group, I don't know what I would have done with myself." Service user

The Scottish Parliament's Equal Opportunities Committee recently launched its report on how loneliness is blighting the nation and found that its effects were as significant as low income and poor housing. The report goes on to say that a loneliness epidemic haunts Scotland and could get more severe unless society pulls together and supports those most at risk from social exclusion. Our service is working hard to combat isolation among older people.

Welcome funding provided by the Big Lottery has allowed continued provision and development of the project. The recruitment of a second member of staff is allowing us to expand the work of the social contact groups which are very popular with clients. In addition we have been able to launch our new Telephone Befriending Service which will meet the needs of clients who are unable to leave their homes, primarily due to mobility issues. Other excellent developments include the recruitment of a volunteer bus driver for the group and we are also re-launching our popular Theatre Group in time for the winter season of performances.

We are pleased to have partnered up with other local organisations in the new Forth Valley-wide Loneliness Network which aims to bring attention to loneliness and promote opportunities to reduce social isolation within the community.

Our active volunteer recruitment plan, targeting peer volunteers, is currently benefiting from the support of external organisations. We are also grateful to Strathcarron Hospice for providing free training to volunteers in palliative Befriending.

Finally, with support from our Befriending Service, TAB is currently working towards 'Quality in Befriending' accreditation.

Referrals: 29*

New service users: 16

Received service: 38

*Referrals closed in August 2014 as original funding for the service came to an end, so there were only 5 referrals in the same period last year. Nevertheless, increasing levels of referrals emphasise the importance of continuing to develop our volunteer base.



Family Support Service

“Thank you for coming along today, it gave me the confidence to speak up for myself. Just knowing that you were sitting across from me, made me feel that I could talk openly about my condition and how it affects me and I haven’t felt able to do that before...ever....thank you so much!” Parent with severe and enduring depression supported by the service for a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting.

“I’ve been attending carer’s meetings and the support I’ve had has really helped me look at my situation differently. I’m really counting all my blessings and even though it’s really hard, I’ve realised, okay this wasn’t planned or expected but you know, I still love my partner just as much and feel very lucky that I can be there for him the way he has for me in the past. It is still hard, but we get there!” Family member

We have received a funding award of £3,655 from Shared Care Scotland, from the Creative Breaks Programme Budget. This will allow us to provide activities e.g. Mindfulness training and social activities for family members which, in turn, will benefit the people that they care for.

We have been delighted with the results from our Mindfulness for Carers course, returned evaluations for those in the ‘clinical population’ at the start of the course demonstrate an impressive 75% recovery rate using CORE.

Referrals: 34

Registered Families:
258

Direct Support to: 62
families

Groups and courses:

3 regular Carers Support
Groups

Carers Education Course
(13 students)

Mindfulness for Carers
(22 students)



Service User and Carer Involvement

The revised and revamped Involvement Group has recently taken on several significant projects that will have real impacts on services. In particular the group is applying the Scottish Recovery Indicator 2 to FDAMH helping to assess the recovery-focus of our organisation. This is the first service-user led implementation of SRI 2 in Scotland. In another first, the group has become the first third sector organisation to work in partnership with NHS staff on the 'Triangle of Care' scheme which aims to achieve better collaboration and partnership between health services and carers. The period has also brought consultations on GP services and the Scottish Patients Safety Programme.

This project continues to explore ways to get more people involved in opportunities to shape the future of services. The Coordinator is working closely with our Family Support Service to develop the involvement of carers in this area. The Coordinator has also been working with the local Mental Health Admission Ward to raise the profile of FDAMH and the services on offer to people following their discharge from in-patient care.

Consultation groups: 2
(12 individuals)

Regular Forums: 3

Additional Events & Consultations: 2



Welfare Benefits

The Welfare Benefits service is provided at FDAMH by Grangemouth Citizen's Advice Bureau. During 2015 this service was temporarily suspended following the sad death of our dedicated colleague, John Niblo. However, in May 2015, Liz from CAB joined the FDAMH team. Our CAB worker is based with us one day per week and offers vital support to many of our service users. As is apparent from the figures, many of those who use the service receive help with more than one issue.

Individuals: 139

Enquiries (separate issues raised): 381



Immediate Help Service

“Having referred a client to FDAMH during a crisis episode I felt that the time and support afforded to my client was of extreme benefit. As a result of the referral and the client subsequently visiting the FDAMH service a needs led response was then generated which involved multi agency discussion and intervention. The client had become frustrated waiting for other services and as Immediate Help Service was able to speak with her almost immediately this made all the difference and she will now hopefully continue to engage with FDAMH services. I would not hesitate to encourage future clients to utilise this service.” Intensive Family Support Worker

Data analysis highlights that 44% of people using the service are telling us that they have suicidal thoughts. This is an increase of 5% compared to last year. FDAMH had provided this service for a number of years without a dedicated member of staff but thanks to funding from NHS Forth Valley, during this period we have been able to recruit an Initial Assessment Practitioner to deal with the majority of cases. However, to ensure no one faces an extended wait, a ‘shadow’ rota system still operates among other staff members who may be called upon at busy times and during holiday periods.

With a dedicated staff member in post we are able to make more use of this service. We are actively reducing direct referrals from external referrers to some projects and directing people to this service where their needs will be assessed more quickly and referrals on to appropriate services can be made.

When not engaged with a client, the new Initial Assessment Practitioner is working alongside the Counselling Service by conducting telephone assessments of people referred for counselling and, where appropriate, directing them to other services.

No. of supports: 261*

Never used FDAMH before: 162 (62%)

Experiencing suicidal thoughts: 114 (44%)

*The number of people requesting support continues to show substantial increases, up by 27% on the same period last year.



Volunteer Support & Development

“I really enjoy volunteering with FDAMH and would encourage anyone to join FDAMH as a volunteer. The training is relevant and prepares one for volunteering in any capacity” Volunteer

“I have found the training offered to be most appropriate and extremely useful as well as being delivered to a very high standard” Volunteer

As the demand for services in FDAMH continues to rise and each project expands to meet that demand, so too does the requirement for volunteers. Recruitment is an on-going process and we continue to promote our volunteer roles as widely as possible.

Increasingly we are using social media as a platform to advertise volunteer vacancies and at the same time we continue to develop our networks in the community. Local businesses and community centres freely give us advertising space in their premises and, through our links with the local third sector interface and the NHS, we have been fortunate to have been allocated the use of the community advertising area in the local hospitals. In addition, local council and statutory contacts have assisted with the promotion of our volunteer vacancies through their intranets.

We take every opportunity to raise awareness of the fantastic job that our volunteers do and encourage them to participate in information events as they are inspirational to others. They are able to discuss, with first-hand knowledge and experience, the role that they do and what they achieve from volunteering; and also what it means to the person or people that they are supporting and the impact it has on their recovery. Volunteers are regular speakers to local government employees and support their clients to share their experiences of poor mental health and how it affects them and their journey to recovery.

New volunteers: 10

Current volunteers: 98

Volunteer training in period:

Volunteer training course (12 students)

First Aid Awareness (9 students)

Self-Harm Awareness (3 students)

Mindfulness (2 students)

ASIST and SafeTalk promoted to all volunteers



Training Academy

"Learned how to deal with employees who are upset and angry, the scenarios were good – made me think about real life issues" Student

"If you are considering applying for this course, be prepared for your life to change....for the better!" Student

FDAMH's Training Academy is a new branch to FDAMH and was officially launched on 25th August 2015 by Jamie Hepburn MSP Minister for Sport, Health Improvement and Mental Health. He was quoted as saying "I am very impressed with the facilities and the aims of the training academy".

The Training Academy offers a growing selection of courses available to individuals, employers and volunteers providing information and knowledge needed to improve general wellbeing and resilience at home and in the workplace. Our training is designed to give people the skills to recognise the signs of mental distress and provide them with the confidence to request help when needed. This early intervention can reduce the impact of poor mental health, assist in reducing mental health stigma and build more productive relationships with and between colleagues.

We also recognise that organisations are unable to release large numbers of staff at once to attend training therefore we offer 'in-house' training. This allows staff to learn in a setting where they'll use their skills whilst saving the cost and disruption of sending staff externally to train. As organisations are unique, we can develop and deliver bespoke training packages, meeting the training needs of the employer and staff and helping to assist in developing mentally healthy workplaces.

New Service

Training Hours: 997

Training Courses:

Introduction to Mental Health Awareness – IMHA (1 day)

Scotland's Mental Health First Aid – SMHFA (2 day)

Understanding Self-Harm (3 hours)

Boundaries (3 hours)

COSCA Certificate in Counselling Skills (One year part-time study)

Bespoke Packages:

Mental Wellbeing and the Art of Supportive Communication (3 hours)

Mindfulness for Teaching Staff (2 sessions)

Exam Stress to S4, S5 & S6 Students (5 sessions)



Activity Groups

“Yoga has changed my life. I feel much fitter and more flexible and it sets me up for the week. If I don’t do it I suffer and my wellbeing drops. I realise that it is an important part of taking care of myself physically and it keeps my mood up. It’s also the one time in the week that is ‘me-time’ so I really appreciate it.”

Group participant

Our activity groups provide a range of different opportunities to meet a variety of needs. For example some of our groups are based around gently introducing people to social contact while others allow people to find and develop new interests, building confidence and facing challenges along the way.

In this period we ran the following groups (figures show the number of people who have used the groups in the period):

Women’s Group (Weekly) – 38 people

Arts and Media Group (Weekly) – 11 people

Mindfulness Card/Craft Group (Weekly) - 9 people

Yoga Group (Weekly) – 25 people

Film Group (Fortnightly, now ended) – 4 people

Creative Writing (Fixed-term project) – 5 people

Network Rail Drama Project (Fixed-term project) – 11 people

Our new Group Worker has helped to expand our provision and taken over responsibility for the groups that previously were add-ons to other staff roles. The Arts and Media Group in particular was an activity group that had started out as a small weekly group but soon evolved, through the enthusiasm of its members, into a group tackling a wide variety of demanding arts projects. Whilst becoming unmanageable for staff with established services to run, the recruitment of the Group Worker has helped to ensure that participation in Arts activities can continue to thrive and those benefitting from them can be expanded.

Continuous activity groups: 5

Fixed-term activity groups: 2

