



Falkirk's Mental Health Association

Half Year Service Update:

1st April 2016 to 30th September 2016

This report is FDAMH's brief update on service activity half way through the current financial year. We've highlighted 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.

As has been the case for some years many of our services are experiencing increasing levels of demand. As this report shows we continue to deal with these challenges in a variety of ways, whether by adapting provision or finding new ways to increase capacity.

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 2015-16 available from the 'About Us' section of our website.

Falkirk's Mental Health Association (FDAMH)

Victoria Centre, 173 Victoria Road, Falkirk, FK2 7AU

Telephone: 01324 671600

Email: admin@fdamh.org.uk

Website: www.fdamh.org.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/falkirksmentalhealth>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/FDAMH>

Charity No. SC011889, Company Limited by Guarantee No. SC151357

Health and Wellbeing Drop-In Service

“The Drop-In has helped me come out my shell. I’m more confident about myself than I was before. I have taken part in the outdoor group, I really enjoyed it. I have met really nice people in the centre and the staff are really nice as well.”

“The Drop-In is comfortable and friendly. I always feel welcome. It helps me socially and I have made friends. I take part in the pool tournaments and the trips, it has helped my confidence. It has been a life line for me.”

The Health and Wellbeing Drop-In Service continues to be open-access and there has been an increase in the number of people who have accessed the service in the period. Promoting recovery, it offers a friendly and safe place for people who attend and invites them to take part in a variety of activities within the Drop-In setting. Participation is entirely voluntary and people are also consulted in determining what activities will be offered.

Staffing changes have seen a new Support Worker being recruited to work with the Service Manager in offering a supportive service user focused and led service.

People who use other services also have access to our various Activity Groups. Our expanding Activity Group provision is proving popular with people using Drop-In. As a result overall visits to Drop-In have reduced slightly as people spend some of their time engaged in Activity Groups rather than in Drop-In. This has achieved the intended consequence of helping to relieve some of the pressure on Drop-In service.

Drop-In attendees are encouraged to make suggestions in how the service can be sustained and/or improved, both in discussions with staff and also at the monthly members meetings.

Visits: 3725

Average visits per week: 138

Received service: 192



Social Prescribing Service

“I didn’t know quite what to expect when I first came but right from the minute I walked through the door, I felt welcomed and that mattered. My self-esteem/confidence was very low. The Social Prescribing Practitioner was encouraging in her contacts with me and this helped to lift me into a ‘can do’ attitude as I had been ‘hiding myself away’ and getting further and further disconnected with other people and with my own self. I was able to follow the tools and techniques given and subsequently my confidence started to grow and I started to actively participate in ‘living’ again. Life isn’t always easy but it can and does get better but it does take time and effort. I have been able to go back to work a stronger, wiser person”

The excellent reputation of the service has led to more and more requests from GPs for a Social Prescribing Practitioner to be available to their patients. In response to this we decided to offer the service on a rotational basis and planned to move workers to new locations (Camelon Medical Practice and Richmond Practice, Bo’ness) in summer 2016. A reduced service to Stenhouse Practice was agreed to support the practice in a time of crisis.

Unfortunately subsequent sick leave affected plans. However we now have one practitioner in Camelon Medical Practice and service to Stenhousemuir resumed in October offering support to people across the Larbert/Stenhousemuir area. Plans for a service in Bo’ness are currently on hold. We also made the decision to pilot a self-referral process at GP surgeries which is going well.

In addition to practitioners in the community we are also now providing an in-house service. This is proving to be an excellent and very popular addition to the range of services on offer within The Victoria Centre but due to demand, referrals can only be made, at present, by the Immediate Help Service Worker and other FDAMH staff.

Funding has been approved for a further 1.5 years thanks to support from the Integrated Care Fund.

Referrals: 178*

No of unique individuals given a service: 188

Personal Development courses provided:

Anxiety Management Courses - 7 students

Mindfulness Course - 15 students

*Referrals were reduced due to long-term sick-leave and staff rotation between practices



Counselling Service

“For me the counselling I have received has saved my life. Sounds dramatic: this has for the first time in my life encouraged me to be more honest about how I really feel on the inside regardless of what I show or say on the outside.”

“My Counsellor has been a fantastic support and has provided me with hope for my future as well as recognising how to encourage me to cope with situations when they arise.”

Due to our lengthy waiting list we have encouraged people contacting us to consider accessing our Immediate Help Service. This allows them to promptly discuss their needs with our dedicated Initial Assessment Practitioner and be directed to the appropriate service at FDAMH – which is not always Counselling. This appears to be proving successful in reducing referrals to the service.

Unfortunately the service saw a reduction in counselling sessions offered due to increasing numbers of Counsellors taking extended breaks at times throughout the year. However we are taking steps to counter this with 3 new Counsellors recruited in the period and an on-going recruitment campaign.

Service capacity has been further aided by funding from NHS Forth Valley, providing a temporary part-time counsellor two-days per week and an evening receptionist to increase out-of-hours provision.

Funding for our very popular Young Person’s Counselling Service ceased in February but new funding via Children in Need has allowed us to continue to offer increased provision of free counselling to young people up to the age of 18 years.

We are delighted to have met the monitoring standards of the COSCA Recognition Scheme for Organisations as a Counselling Organisation for the 10th year.

Referrals: 318

Received Service: 189

Sessions offered: 1119



Befriending

“Befriending has been a really positive experience for me. Over the time I have had my befriender I have gone to places I never thought I would go to like Callendar and Stirling. Thanks to my befriender I now have an interest in gardening. I enjoy spending time in my garden, making it a space that I love being in and after the hard work can relax in.”

“I am glad to have met my befriender and have enjoyed the time we spent together. I know it is better for me to get out of the house and I am trying to get involved with more things (now my befriending is over). Having a befriender has helped me to have a little more confidence to do this.”

During this period a new Manager (Sandra Walsh) has come into post and has spent considerable time meeting clients and the volunteers who work with the service. This has provided an ideal opportunity to review the established service model, explore how best to meet the changing complex needs of individuals referred, manage our waiting list and support next steps after the Befriending is completed.

Following the success of the Third Age Befriending's (TAB) popular social contact groups, a proposed pilot of small 'meet up' groups for Befriending clients over the coming months aims to broaden the service and address some of these challenges.

After listening to feedback from our volunteers, we have joined together with TAB and introduced bi-monthly volunteer group support sessions. Facilitated by a member of the team, these provide additional opportunities for befriending volunteers to be supported by the organisation and, importantly, share experiences and gain support from peers.

Responding to requests from both clients and volunteers, we held our first social event for befriendees, befrienders and individual clients with an end of summer BBQ. TAB volunteers, clients and staff joined in and the evening was a great success with 36 volunteers and clients coming together; great feedback means that we hope to do more of these events in the future.

Referrals: 34

New Service Users: 16

Received Service: 44



Third Age Befriending Service

"I just love it (Stepping On group). It gets me out of the house and chatting to people. I don't feel so isolated and that is a real Godsend to me. I love the trips: it is magic, a wee lifeline to me."

"David was very well matched with your volunteer and I cannot say strongly enough how much we appreciated your intervention." Carer of client

Third Age Befriending (TAB) attained Befriending Networks Quality In Befriending Good Practice Award last year. We are delighted to have now achieved the 'Excellence Award' after being encouraged to apply by our assessor. We are now one of only 9 organisations in Scotland to hold this Award.

Our ever popular Social Contact groups, The Stepping On groups, continue to be appreciated with each group meeting monthly to either lunch together or go on an outing. Stepping On group members had indicated that they would like a chance to meet up together more frequently for a small lunch. In response, we developed the "Tea And A Blether" groups. These small groups meet up fortnightly and have become so popular we currently have two Tea and a Blether groups, with a third ready to start up. New clients enjoy the frequency of the fortnightly group meet up and, currently, this is the most popular activity we run with old and new clients alike.

Our Theatre Group continues to prove a success. Recently we also introduced a Fishing Group. We became aware of the fact that several clients had previously enjoyed fishing but due to declining mobility and confidence, they no longer felt able to participate in this relaxing hobby. With the support of a keen volunteer, we have been able to support 3 fishing trips to local trout fisheries, where our clients have revived their long lost love of fishing. The delight felt by those who thought their fishing days were over is heart-warming.

Referrals: 27

New service users: 21

Received service: 75

1 – 1 Matchings: 26

Social Contact: 44

Phone Befriending: 5

Social Contact groups:

2 Stepping On

2 Tea & A Blether

Additional Groups:

Theatre Group

Fishing Group



Family Support Service

“Before I attended FDAMH’s Family Support Service I was petrified, a bit concerned and arrogant. I was lacking in confidence, angry and helpless. I didn’t want to ask for help. I was isolated; made poor choices in friendships. I had even thought about ending my life. After receiving support at FDAMH I’ve increased in confidence significantly. I still struggle with some situations but I now have coping strategies. My self-belief has improved: I won’t be afraid to ask for help. I’m more fun to be around. I need to be careful when it comes to relationships as I’m now aware that I can be clingy. I’ve even joined a band!”

Of one of the group activities:

“Time to relax. It made me realise I’m good at something again. I really enjoyed mixing with the people in the class. I could arrive stressed and go home so relaxed” Group attendee

Whole family support is now firmly embedded in the service model and in practical terms this means our resources are spread more widely and not solely on the ‘carer’. Consideration of the family unit has always been part of the service ethos however formalisation of this approach has taken the service into activities which demand a wider remit and brings it into contact with a growing range of agencies. An obvious resulting consideration is the development of networks and best practice in line with national duty of care standards for both children and adults.

Thanks to funding from Shared Care Scotland’s Creative Breaks Programme we have been able to deliver extra courses to adult family members this year including our highly regarded Carers Education Course. This has proved both exciting and extremely beneficial to participants. The courses offer respite and introduce further self-help strategies to benefit individual, family and community resilience. This has brought our service into contact with many new carers and has increased the network of supports available to them and their families. We are delighted that further funding has been awarded from the same source to provide more education, training, activities and outings as respite for carers next year.

Referrals: 53

Registered Families:
313

Direct Support to: 96
families

Groups and courses:

3 regular Carers Support
Groups

8 Personal Development
Courses, 374 instances
of attendance

Bereaved by Suicide
Group, 10 regular
attendees



Immediate Help Service

"I just wanted to call you back and say thank you for your support, I don't know where I would have turned if I hadn't come down to FDAMH. I feel more positive than I have for ages and wish I had heard of you sooner."

"This service is crucial and one which we rate very highly at Larbert High School. Every time we speak about working with other agencies or dealing with at-risk children the Immediate Help Service comes up. I hope that this service is not under threat in any way as I feel that it seems more solution-focused and supportive when compared to taking young people who are struggling directly to A&E." John Doherty, Depute Rector, Larbert High School

Immediate Help had traditionally been provided by a rota system across all services. However over the last year the service has had a dedicated member of staff, thanks to funding from NHS Forth Valley. A back-up rota of qualified staff have provided the remaining 30% of supports to cover annual leave and ensure that no one has to wait longer than 15 minutes to be seen.

The number of people requesting support continues to show substantial increases, up by 48% on the same period last year, which was up by 27% on the previous year. The majority of people accessing the service have never been to FDAMH in the past.

38% of people using the service said they have suicidal thoughts and nearly half (71 people) of those had made a previous suicide attempt.

As demonstrated in the comment above we have also seen growing numbers of young people. 74 under-25 year olds used the Immediate Help Service in the last 6 months, almost double on the same period last year.

IHS continues to direct people to useful services externally and within FDAMH and is making good use of the in-house Social Prescribing Service which offers a very useful option for some IHS clients.

No. of supports: 387

**Used FDAMH before: 36
(9%)**

**Experiencing suicidal
thoughts: 147 (38%)**



Volunteer Support & Development

"It's good to try and put a little back to society, in a simple but worthwhile way. It also makes me think about my own problems, and puts them into a more realistic perspective."

Volunteer

"It's the best place for doing voluntary work"

"The training is so comprehensive, excellent and thorough."

Volunteer

We have successfully continued to recruit and train volunteers to meet increasing demand from our services. Our volunteers come from all walks of life and all bring different skills.

Considerable effort goes into advertising roles and encouraging people to consider volunteering. Social Media is helping us to reach out to the wider community and support from local philanthropic organisations not only brings charitable donations but provides excellent opportunities for us to attend meetings and generate interest in volunteering and support roles.

Promoting volunteering wherever possible, we will also mention it when we talk to organisations about our services and this too has generated new volunteers. For example we are actively working in partnership with the DWP in the Falkirk area and are delighted that several staff have come forward to join us as volunteers.

We are keen that our volunteers feel valued and know that their input and feedback is important to us. Following volunteer feedback we have recently introduced monthly volunteer meetings for our befrienders. This allows volunteers working in the community to meet with other befrienders, discuss any issues, give us feedback and for us to update them on any news or changes. Also introduced this year was our first ever volunteer and service user summer BBQ. With music, a bit of dancing and great food it was a huge success. Our small way of saying thank you to our amazing volunteers for their continued support.

New volunteers: 13

Current volunteers: 100

Volunteer training in period:

Volunteer training course (9 students)

Understanding Boundaries (3 students)

Child Protection Training (12 students)



Training Academy

"We thought the trainer was excellent in delivering the course with many saying that it was the best training they have received in some time" Falkirk Council

"I gained a greater understanding, awareness and how to approach to mental health in the workplace" Falkirk Community Trust Staff

The FDAMH Training Academy became a separate company, a social enterprise, in August 2016. The ethos of the Academy is early intervention and prevention, and it adheres to the recovery ideals of FDAMH. Our team of 6 sessional trainers offer a vast amount of relevant skills and experience.

In response to expressed need the Academy offers a growing selection of courses available to individuals, employers and volunteers. The training offers information and knowledge needed to improve general wellbeing, resilience at home and in the workplace and an understanding of mental health issues. Our training is designed to give people the skills to recognise the signs of mental distress and develop confidence and knowledge about requesting help. All training courses are interactive, embedding learning through safe practise.

To reduce the burden on organisations we also offer 'in-house' training. Designing and delivering bespoke training packages to organisations ensures training is tailored to the specific needs of the employer and staff, helping to assist in developing mentally healthy workplaces and better customer outcomes.

Following the successful delivery of a pilot mental wellbeing programme to senior pupils at Braes High School last year, we were invited to develop and deliver an expanded 25 week course which is now incorporated into the school curriculum for S6 pupils at the school. The scheme hopes to lead to the development of a peer support programme of 'Wellness Buddies' within the school.

The Training Academy has recently secured training requests from a variety of organisations out with the Falkirk area e.g. Glasgow, Fife, Alloa, Dumfries & Galloway and St. Andrews.

Training Hours: 5,788

Training Courses:

Keeping Yourself Mentally Well

Scotland's Mental Health First Aid – SMHFA

Understanding Self-Harm

Understanding Eating Disorders

Boundaries

Understanding Hoarders Disorder

COSCA Certificate in Counselling Skills

Bespoke Packages delivered to clients:

Drumchapel Nursery Parents

Falkirk Primary Schools

Primary School Parents

Teaching Staff / Pupils at several Falkirk Council High Schools

Scottish Autism

Falkirk Community Trust

Employment Training Unit

Castings Hostel Staff

Crossroads, Fife

Activity Groups

“I started doing creative things that I thought I would never do again” Group member – now taking commissions for art work

“I have managed to get myself motivated and feel really good about the work I’ve done that helped me win my John Muir award.” Group member – now volunteering at Scottish Canals

“I really enjoyed this class. It made me feel so relaxed and I made some good friends. Emily was such a big help to me when I was going through a very bad patch and got me the help I needed.” Group member

With a dedicated worker in place group activities from FDAMH offer an exciting and increasingly varied provision, including art, crafts, music, outdoors and exercise. The groups are devised to offer a broad appeal, thereby supporting a range of people on their recovery journeys. This improved provision is however leading to increased demand and has seen the creation of small waiting lists. Consequently most activities are time-limited, generally running in short 2-3 month blocks.

With little space available at FDAMH a variety of community venues are in use to accommodate activities; however a key limit on capacity at the current time is the availability of volunteers. The Group Worker sees a real benefit to course participants from volunteer involvement and efforts continue to increase the number of volunteers from the current 5.

External showcasing of work through events such as exhibitions and performances acts as a great confidence-booster for participants and is also effective in generating more support and tackling stigma.

Feedback from participants in regard to long-term benefit is encouraging: all respondents (46) said classes had improved their confidence and 96% agreed it had reduced anxiety. Participants are encouraged to continue activities in the community and 92% of respondents said they would consider this. To assist people to engage with mainstream activities they are provided with “what’s on” packs containing tailored information on classes or activities that might interest them.

Number of individuals using groups: 80

Number of groups offered: 9

External showcases of work: 5



Friends in FDAMH

We are delighted to partner up with other local organisations to provide additional expert support in FDAMH:

Welfare Benefits Advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau (Grangemouth). Our advisor provides 5, 1-hour appointments in FDAMH each week. Additional support for clients is also available at CAB's Grangemouth offices.

The Keep Well Nurse (NHS) offers 3, 1-hour consultations each month as well as follow-up appointments. These provide the opportunity for people attending FDAMH to receive a comprehensive health check and address issues around healthier life styles.

Y-People provide an advisor visiting on a monthly basis to provide support and advice on tenancy related issues.

Regular External
Advisors: 3

