



# a year in FDAMH

with reporting  
April 2017 to  
March 2018



“ONE SMALL CRACK  
DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE  
BROKEN:  
IT MEANS YOU WERE  
PUT TO THE TEST AND  
DIDN'T FALL APART”

(POINDEXTER)

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[www.fdamh.org.uk](http://www.fdamh.org.uk)  
On facebook look for Falkirk's Mental Health  
On twitter we're known as @FDAMH



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## A Year of Change

Changes in FDAMH are not uncommon to both FDAMH staff and to the people who use our service but this year has been particularly 'eventful'! But we don't change just for the sake of it. We are constantly considering if we can improve our services, do things differently, introduce new ways of working, improve on waiting times for services etc. and this year we have introduced a raft of changes across several services. For more information visit our website ([fdamh.org.uk](http://fdamh.org.uk)) as some of the services that you may think you are familiar with are likely to have changed!

We are offering more group work with courses such as Communication Skills, Positive Wellbeing, Seasons For Growth, Mindfulness and Anxiety Management. We are actively encouraging people to participate in group work, learn some self-care skills and gain a better understanding of mental health and wellbeing.

But not all change was positive. Regrettably, we had to stop taking referrals to the Third Age Befriending Service from October 2017. Funding for this service was via a grant from the Big Lottery and it was due to come to an end in March 2018.

Although a further grant application had been submitted, there was no guarantee that it would be successful therefore we had to put a halt to referrals and work towards ending the service altogether. However, there was a significant positive in all of this.

We had, under the terms and conditions of the original grant, been required to commission an independent report on the TAB service. It was a glowing report which clearly supported further funding for the service and although delighted to have our work validated in such a positive way, we considered if there were changes that we could make to further improve it.

As a result, our next grant application to the Big Lottery was not to fund the same TAB Service but rather a more inclusive service. We are delighted that in March 2018 we were advised that our application was successful: the TAB service has now become The Social Spark! We are at the very early stages of rolling out this exciting new service and ask that you visit our website to keep up with the changes that we will be introducing over the next few months.

# A word from our Chair

Our last year at FDAMH has again seen much change and continued growth. Our main aim throughout is to ensure we support and care for people with mental ill health and their families.

Our organisation's approach has developed over the years so that we now seek to encourage the means to aid people's recovery or to build strategies to enhance their resilience.

We are indebted to all our supporters both local and national and I would especially want to thank them. We have always had good support from our community and as funding to maintain and develop our services is becoming more limited we will be asking them to trust us with their donations more and more to keep vital services available for people who need to turn to us in their time of crisis.

I have been really privileged over the last 8 years to chair our Board of Trustees as FDAMH has offered more and varied services to our community. I have also seen how dedicated our staff and volunteers are to the cause. So finally I would want to thank our General Manager Angela Price and all our staff and volunteers for their hard work which is sustained week in week out throughout the year.

David McClements

Chair of FDAMH's Board of Trustees

## WHY DO WE NEED A SERVICE LIKE FDAMH?

Consider, if you will, the excellent NHS campaign that seeks to encourage people to think about what 'resource' they need when they are physically unwell – should you self-care for a minor injury or common cold, contact NHS 24, ask your local pharmacist for advice or go to your GP prior to attending A&E?

Well, this 'stepped approach' can be used when considering how to manage a mental health problem too and that's why we need a resource like FDAMH.



Like the '5 a-day fruit and veg' message for your physical health, see our Top Tips on how to care for your mental health at the back of this report!

## How sharing your experience of getting help can help others!

Recently a brave young woman who had used FDAMH's services decided to share her experience of having a mental health problem and her recovery on Facebook. Over a thousand people responded to the post, not just with 'likes' but with positive comments and messages of support that were heart-warming.

However, another great impact of her sharing were the many messages from people telling her how this had encouraged them to go and seek help too.

## Willie

*Willie, aged 78 years, was referred to the Third Age Befriending Service (TAB) by his GP. Julie and Michele (our TAB team) subsequently arranged to meet with Willie in his own home.*

Although in great physical shape, Willie said that he rarely saw anyone and that at times, not only did he feel very lonely, he also had frequent bouts of weeping which he found distressing and embarrassing to admit.

Julie and Michele chatted with Willie for a long time and managed to convince him to join one of the TAB's small peer support groups.

However, during that meeting, he also told them of one of his fonder memories – of singing with his family when he was young. He never pursued this interest but when told about FDAMH's Freedom of Mind Choir, he smiled and said that he just might enjoy that!

Never missing an opportunity to bring a little light into someone's life, Julie and Michele, mentioned to some other members of Willie's TAB group that he enjoyed singing. They sprang into action and Willie joined them at the next choir rehearsal!

At a subsequent meeting Willie said that he thoroughly enjoyed his time with the choir and had made new friends through it and his TAB group. He said, "I have a real sense of belonging again".

Indeed, so much so that Willie has joined two other local choirs and regularly performs with them and the Freedom of Mind Choir throughout Forth Valley.

It is great to listen to Willie talking about the difference in his life now that he has rekindled his love of singing and socialising again. No time for tears now Willie...you're too busy bringing joy to others with your song and cajoling others to do likewise!

## IN PARTNERSHIP

FDAMH works in partnership with a host of other agencies. We can signpost people to the right organisation to meet their needs if we are unable to help or we may work in conjunction with another agency to support someone.

Two examples of this are our partnership working with Grangemouth Citizen's Advice Bureau and the NHS funded Keep Well Programme. Both services can be accessed by those using FDAMH's other services. Indeed, our delightful Keep Well practitioner offers her health advice and support to staff and volunteers at FDAMH too, when she has spare capacity in her busy schedule of appointments.

For further information, please ask any member of FDAMH staff how you can access either service.

**DO THINGS WITH OTHERS - THERE'S STRENGTH IN NUMBERS!**

## COMING SOON...

The Social Spark: FDAMH's 'old' Befriending Service has amalgamated with our Third Age Befriending (TAB) and re-emerged as **The Social Spark!**

But that's not the only change – this new service will be offering a range of activities and options for support to people aged 16 and over, who may have a mental health problem or are at risk of developing them.

The service will continue to offer one-to-one befriending but there will be a drive towards encouraging people to form and join social contact, shared interest groups.

Please check our website regularly for further information or contact FDAMH's Social Spark staff (should we call them the Sparklets?) on 01324 671600.

# Young people and mental health



*Two years ago, following an increase in the number of enquiries to provide help / support to younger people, FDAMH began to accept referrals for counselling from those aged 14 -16. Since then the number of young people coming forward for help has increased beyond our expectations.*

Whilst many need that level of intervention and support, others don't, but we are simply not able to offer them any other form of help.

That's why we are trying to find alternative accommodation for our adult services and want to use our current building to create a service for younger people who may need support other than counselling or CAMHS (the NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services).

This is, in our view, crucial as there is growing evidence that a range of mental health disorders may in fact begin to develop earlier in life than was once thought - so early intervention and support for young people (and their parents) who are experiencing difficulties may prevent the development of some disorders ([www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)).

We support and contribute to the awareness raising campaigns that educate young people about the importance of caring for their mental health, but the impact of raising awareness means that more and more young people are seeking help. A good thing? Of course, but we need to be able to follow through on our requests for them to come forward and seek help by being in a position to direct them to the appropriate help or support.

It is evident that this is needed. School teachers, parents, GP's and young people themselves tell us so. Indeed, it seems that the whole country has come to realise that we need to invest in supporting young people's mental health and wellbeing. We actively support that 'call to arms' and will continue to work in partnership with others to realise our vision of a young person's community based mental health service a reality in Falkirk.

## CARERS EDUCATION COURSE

Sometimes people who care for others need more than support: more than a 'friendly, supportive chat and a cuppa' and that's why FDAMH has been running the Carers Education Course for several years.

This course, (which was devised by Neil Sowerby of the Carers and Family Support Service), seeks to increase carers' knowledge and understanding of mental health problems, consider their role and

behaviour in respect of living with or caring for someone with poor mental health and, perhaps most importantly, learn of the importance of caring for themselves!

Some comments from participants in the last course:

"You have been my haven! You made my bad days better and my dark days brighter. Thank you."

"It's powerful to hear other's stories and share experiences.

The course provided food for thought..."

"Has helped me in many ways..."

"I now know that I need to take care of myself too".

Courses are held regularly throughout the year so if you are interested in joining, please visit our website ([fdamh.org.uk](http://fdamh.org.uk)) for future course dates or call 01324 671600 and ask to speak to the Family Support Service.

# Sometimes it's not quite as we would like!

## We want to say sorry...

To all of you who have come along to FDAMH and found yourself talking to one of our staff in a large meeting room with big tables and lots of chairs, in the kitchen or even on the staircase (yes, that has happened!).

At times we have simply run out of suitable office space to speak with people who are seeking our help. We all feel embarrassed when having to tell someone that the only place to talk is in the kitchen but we would rather do this than turn people away or ask them to come back at some other time. We are trying to get bigger premises (more on that topic elsewhere in this report) but until we do, please bear with us and accept our apologies.

## Waiting lists: you have told us how you feel about them....

You have told us via social media, irate and frustrated telephone conversations and by email...."It is unacceptable that you are not open weekends..." - "I have been on the waiting list for months for counselling, how much longer do I need to wait?" - "Have you forgotten about me?"

We appreciate that it has probably been hard to make that call and ask for help in the first place and we sincerely regret that you may have to wait to be seen certainly in respect of services such as counselling or our social prescribing service but we are doing everything possible to keep waiting times to a minimum.

We have limited resources (and not just cash resources: space and human resources too). You will see from other articles in this report the efforts that we have made, and are continuing to make, to improve waiting times.

## Did you know that... your feedback is really important?

We don't like asking for feedback and many who use our services don't get around to telling us about their experience of FDAMH.

However, feedback is the only way in which we can develop our services. We want to know if we are providing a good service: if there is something that we can change, do better, do more or less of something - and it is only feedback from those who use our services that can tell us that.

In addition, when we are applying for funding for our services we are asked to 'evidence' that there is a need for the service, what people who have previously used it think about it, has it been helpful, successful etc. Your feedback is the only way we can provide that information and it helps funders to decide if they want to support what we do!

So next time you are asked to tell us about your experience, be assured that if you take 5 minutes to do so, it will not be just for the sake of polishing our egos! You will be helping us to continue to be there when people need us.

### What sort of people volunteer?

We are really lucky to have people from a wide range of backgrounds - health professionals, students, people looking to gain employment, people in work, others busy raising a family, those that are retired - all sorts of people at all different stages in their lives and actually that variety is really important.

### Why do people volunteer?

Often they have an interest in mental health, but for others its more about what's involved in the role, so it could be the actual appeal of maybe sharing an activity they enjoy, a skill they have or more social contact.

For a lot of people it's about gaining experience to help them in the world of work or to access education. We also have retired people who want to stay active and engaged in the community. A common theme for lots of our volunteers is that of 'giving something back'.

### Why do people pick FDAMH in particular do you think?

I think there are so few places to gain knowledge in this sort of field locally where they'd actually be involved directly with people that use the services. I also think our strong reputation goes a long way.

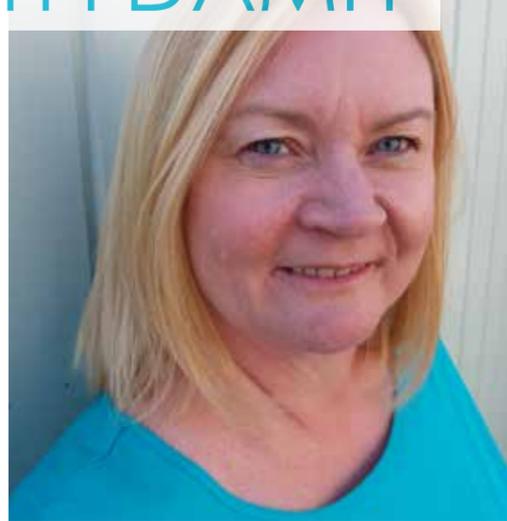
### How does FDAMH support it's volunteers?

Starting out, we have one-to-one contact with people to explain the roles and get a good insight into what they want to do and why. And then, once through the initial stages they join our 6-session induction and training programme.

Thereafter, they've got opportunities to develop their skills through ongoing training at FDAMH and in partnership with other organisations. If need be we will tap into specialist training to support volunteers dealing with a specific issue.

**“I THINK OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE ALL AMAZING... CAN WE HAVE MORE PLEASE?”**

# Get the low down on volunteering with FDAMH



*Our Volunteer Coordinator, Morag Fullard, reveals why you should think about volunteering (with FDAMH!)*

Our volunteers always know they have a point of contact, whether through me or staff in the service they volunteer with. I think that's really important for them, that they know that there is always someone to speak to, for reassurance, to raise concerns and make suggestions.

We also hold volunteer social events and meet ups. These allows us to catch up with our volunteers as a group and gives them the opportunity to bring ideas to us and to learn from each other.

Our volunteers should never be out of pocket because of what they do for us - so their expenses are all covered.

We like to make a bit of a fuss when we can - Volunteers Week and Trustees Week are good opportunities to thank our volunteers and remind them how great they are!

### Why is volunteering important to FDAMH?

Without our volunteers we could not see and

support the volume of people that we do. They are absolutely fundamental – an integral part of FDAMH and the service delivery.

### Why do people stop volunteering?

I don't think we've had anyone that's ever left because they didn't like it! Mostly it's changes in their own availability. If they've come in to specifically gain experience, it's often that they've achieved their work or education goal and don't have time to volunteer anymore! It's one of the reasons we always need new volunteers.

### Are there any misconceptions about volunteering?

I think people expect that they're going to have to give massive amounts of time, but actually we only need a couple of hours a week to make a huge difference to somebody's life.

People can also be reluctant to apply because they think that they need specific skills or knowledge, but really the key things are life experience and to have a genuine interest in people.

### What's the hardest bit of your job?

We have to make sure people are suited to the roles, that's just as important for our volunteers as it is for the people who use our services. It's hard turning someone away if they're not the right fit or I feel it's maybe not the right time for them, but I always use my connections and knowledge to try to signpost them to other opportunities. I think people should see this as a positive and feel reassured that we wouldn't send them into a role if we didn't think they were ready for it.

### What's the best bit of your job?

Everything! I love to see the volunteers coming through the training and then meeting up with them once they're actually in their role and just seeing the sheer satisfaction they're getting from it.

It's so rewarding to see how our volunteers are helping people and I am always thrilled when volunteers reveal how their growing knowledge and skills have helped them in other areas of their lives, as often happens.

I think our volunteers are all amazing, they give up their time so selflessly ...can we have more please?



## How could YOU VOLUNTEER WITH FDAMH?

*Love a chat but good at listening too? Social Spark volunteers get involved in running small social groups (with other volunteers) or give one-to-one support to people, helping them engage in the community.*

*Are you a motivator and a bit of a live wire? Join our team supporting our efforts in community fundraising!*

*Do you have hobbies and interests to share? Our services run a variety of activities that may be right up your street - these currently include choir, drama, creative writing, fishing, theatre trips, days out and going for Sunday Lunch!*

*Have you got professional skills or insight into managing organisations? Our Board of Trustees, a group of volunteers who meet every 2 months and are ultimately responsible for FDAMH, are always on the look out for new members.*

*Are you a qualified counsellor? Our respected Counselling Service offers a varied case-load and operates in day time and evenings.*

## Did you know that... FDAMH has a choir – The Freedom of Mind Choir?

'Born' approximately 3 years ago, The Freedom of Mind Choir, led by Scottish singer-songwriter Kim Edgar and our volunteer (retired music teacher) Mariot Dallas, is going from strength to strength. A regular 20-25 committed 'chanters' meet weekly to rehearse, develop their techniques and repertoire so that they can, well.....

To make them feel good – it's hard to be 'sad' when you are singing. To be part of a group who share a common interest. To forge friendships.

And to prepare for performances in venues such as Strathcarron Hospice and Forth Valley Royal Hospital (where other local choirs joined them in what was a truly uplifting event). Our choir have also been excited this year to contribute to SMHAF October 2017 (Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival), host their first full Christmas concert and

produce a film about the choir and the benefits it brings. In December 2017 the choir sang at The Scottish Parliament at the request of The Bank Of Scotland – what a thrill! More recently, the choir was in full song at the 2018 SMHAF event 'Words are the Message'.



Our choristers say,

"Choir means a lot to me: if I didn't have choir to come to, I don't know how I would cope"

"I love that we get to make others happy with our concerts"

"The choir is fun, friendship, love, belonging and recovery".

Sandra, one of our Initial Assessment Practitioners, tells us about FDAMH's

## Immediate Help Service

### Why do people use the service?

Reasons vary hugely, people present when they are feeling suicidal, in crisis, with depression and anxiety, following a life event, such as a bereavement or a relationship breakup and so much more.

Many people want someone to talk to as they do not feel they can burden their family and friends with how they feel and often people know they want help they just don't know where to find it.

### What happens in a session?

It depends on the need of the individual but it is a safe opportunity for them to talk about their concerns and to see if we are the right service to help. We can make a referral to one of our services or provide information and signpost onto other services that would be more helpful. If someone is feeling suicidal we assess the risk for that person

and help them to identify strategies and a plan that can help them to feel safe.

### Is it a difficult job to do?

It can be demanding as it is important to give each person your full attention but the most difficult part of the job was addressed when we recently moved to an appointment system. Previously it had been a walk-in system and we frequently had several people coming in at one time. We aim to see people within 20 minutes and this placed a lot of pressure on the team and room space, but now it seems more manageable.

It is a rewarding role, often when I initially meet people I can physically see the weight of their problems in the way they carry themselves. For many having had the opportunity to talk, often for the first time about how they are feeling, they can appear lighter when leaving. Though their problems have not been solved there is a sense they are at the beginning of their journey to manage them better. There aren't many roles that give you that experience.

# Mark

*Following a particularly heated argument with a family member, Mark came into FDAMH looking to speak to someone because, he said, he was considering ending what he described as a 'miserable life'.*

Now aged 70, Mark shared, at that first meeting, his 'life journey': that of an angry, resentful man who always resorted to defending himself with outbursts of rage which sometimes led to violence.

He acknowledged that his pattern of behaviour had led to destructive family, work and social relationships, several encounters with the criminal justice system and subsequent referrals to Anger Management Courses and a range of other therapeutic interventions.

Despite all of this, Mark said that he remained 'angry all of the time' and was now of the view that the world would be a better place without him.

With some gentle persuasion, he agreed to give one more thing a try and was referred to the Third Age Befriending Service. He was

subsequently introduced into one of the services very supportive and more 'established' groups and became a 'regular' at their fortnightly meet ups.

However, it was of note that Mark's topic of conversation during the first few times he attended the group was telling others of his various fights and arguments and the consequences of his 'angry self'. The group let him 'vent' and listened to him for a while but they also encouraged him to talk about the more positive aspects of his life – of good memories, what he enjoyed and was good at.

Encouraged by the group, (and the supportive volunteer who facilitates it), Mark found that he could simply have a chat without replaying his 'angry past' and, in a relatively short period of time, Mark became known as "The Cheery Bloke".

After being in the group for some months, Mark approached the TAB staff and said that he now felt that he wanted to talk about his life and try to work out why he had "always been so angry".

At this age and stage in his life, Mark has begun counselling but continues to meet the group of people who helped him find the courage to seek help after all those years!

## Did you know that...it's not just counselling?

Counselling is one of the first things people think of when they imagine getting help for their mental health. But counselling is not the right choice for everyone or sometimes it's just not the right time. FDAMH provides lots of different services because we're not all the same and we can benefit from different types of support.

Our services also include: Immediate Help Service, Family Support, Social Prescribing, Health and Wellbeing Drop In, The Social Spark, a variety of Activity Groups, Support Groups for Carers and those Bereaved by Suicide, plus a variety of education and training opportunities.



Gratuitous use of a cute dog? For sure, but it's pleading puppy eyes are much better than ours!

We hope this report gives you an insight into what we do and why we do it.

We'll be so happy if you can support us in any way. There's a donations button on our website if you'd like

to give online. But there's a whole host of other ways you can help out, by being sponsored, supporting our community fundraising or, of course, joining our 100-strong team of volunteers! Just visit the 'support FDAMH' section of our website - or call us on 01324 671600 for more.

On behalf of our community - Thank You!



# Vital Fundraising

An interview with our Fundraising Manager, Stuart McCallum, explains how and why FDAMH raises money

Thanks to funders who have given us grants to enable us to deliver such high class services including:

- Agnes Watt Trust
- AMW Trust
- Bank of Scotland Foundation
- BBC Children in Need
- BIG Lottery Awards for All
- BIG Lottery Improving Lives
- BIG Lottery Investing in Ideas
- Creative Scotland
- Falkirk Council
- Falkirk Integrated Joint Board
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Hugh Fraser Foundation
- KPMG
- NHS Forth Valley
- Pixel Fund
- Radio Forth Cash For Kids
- Santander
- Schuh Foundation
- The Robertson Trust

### When did you join the FDAMH team?

I joined the FDAMH team about 6 years ago. I had been a fundraiser with several organisations for over 25 years, working mainly in Third Sector organisations who provide services for young people so joining FDAMH, a mental health charity, was a ‘new venture’ for me.

### What does your role entail?

Clearly, my main job is to ensure that FDAMH has sufficient funds to be able to meet the costs of running the Association and to identify sources of funding that support the development and growth of services.

We are fortunate insofar as Falkirk Council and the NHS contribute to the work that we do but the money we receive does not cover all the costs so we need to identify additional funding.

### How do you do that?

Thankfully, there are 100’s of trusts and foundations who provide grants and my job is to identify those who support the type of work that FDAMH does, check if the criteria set for applying meets our ideas and then commence the process of completing an application form.

Sounds simple, yes, but it’s not. There is fierce competition for grants so we must be able to provide evidence of why we need the funds we are applying for, exactly what we will do with it, what we anticipate the outcomes will be. If we’re successful we will need to provide reports to the funders either quarterly, half yearly or annually on all aspects of how we have spent the grant and what the impact of receiving the grant has been.

Given that FDAMH had over 20 different funding streams last year, you will appreciate that this adds up to a whole load of work! Add to that the fact that we apply for many more grants than we actually get....PHEW!

We also rely on donations from the public! Some people raise funds or give donations to us and tell us what they would like us to do with the money, for example young people raising funds to support counselling for other young people or to support a specific service area such as the Bereaved by Suicide Group. Other funding is not ‘restricted’ in this way and that lets us decide what to do with

the funds.

### What is the hardest bit of your job?

Being able to continue to fund services!

When you do get a grant, it is for a limited amount of time: one or two years perhaps. This means that we need to find another source of funding to keep a service going. Work on that needs to begin months before funding runs out.

When I see that a service is having a positive impact on people’s lives and we are getting close to not being able to offer it because we are

running out of funding, well, that hurts and puts pressure on everyone in the organisation. Some services are wholly funded from external grants and it is difficult for the staff who work in those services to focus on their job whilst worrying about having a job at all when funding ends.

### What’s the best thing about your job?

Oh that’s easy: seeing the change in the client’s and feeling that I have, in some way, helped them.

## Did you know that... FDAMH is an independent charity?

We are often told that people believe that we are part of the NHS. Indeed, even some people who work for the NHS think that we are! We are not. Yes, we receive some funding from the NHS and from Falkirk Council via the Integrated Joint Board for our adult service provision (and we are grateful for their support) but that does not cover the costs of all the services that we deliver.

That’s why donations from members of the public or local businesses are always gratefully received and put to good use! It is this type of ‘unrestricted’ funding that pays for providing things that are not covered by our formal grants.

We rely on the kindness of the public and business to help us with all of those little things that mean a lot. We don’t earn money in the way that a traditional business does: we don’t sell goods or services except through the Training Academy, our subsidiary business. After covering the cost of the staff who run the Academy, it’s trainers and venues etc., any profit made by the academy supports the work of FDAMH. If you choose to pay for any of the courses on offer you are, in effect, helping FDAMH be there when people (maybe even you) need us.

## Thanks to 1000’s of people, this year has been one of our most successful community fundraising years ever...

More than 100 walkers who took part in No Men Nevis 2 plus all the supporters who sponsored them

Students and teachers at St Modan’s who voted for us and raised £3000 through the Youth Philanthropy Initiative

Customers and staff of both Marks & Spencer’s Falkirk Stores who appointed us as their “Charity of the Year” for 2017

Runners, mudders, kettlebell lifters and everyone else organising and taking part in events and challenges

Customers and staff at numerous other companies and organisations including: ASDA Grangemouth, Antonine Investments, Alexander Dennis Ltd, 50+ Club Denny, DWP, 62nd Larbert Scout group, PGDS Bonus Ball Scheme, The Co-op, TESCO’s, Bank of Scotland Grangemouth, Falkirk Bohemian Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society and Falkirk Community Trust

And not forgetting the 100’s of individuals, families and groups of friends who gave us very generous donations during the year.

# Educating the public...

## A small taster of the courses offered by FDAMH Training Academy



Gain a better understanding of stress, anxiety and depression and develop techniques and relaxation methods to improve your everyday life.

*'I gained a better understanding of anxiety and strategies to deal with my anxiety.'*



Understand what positive mental wellbeing is and how you can 'stay well', as well as learning more about common forms of mental illness.

*'I've learned about ways to keep myself well, and how other people might suffer from mental illness.'*



Develop a deeper understanding of mental health and equip yourself with the skills and knowledge to provide initial help.

*'An invaluable course for me. Everyone should seriously consider doing this to gain a better understanding and beat the stigmas surrounding mental health and illness.'*



Learn how to reduce stress, handle your thoughts and emotions more effectively, and live a happier and more balanced life.

*'I've learned how to be kind and compassionate towards myself and others, to be more accepting and live in the moment.'*



Develop more effective communication skills, enhance your listening ability, increase your self-awareness and learn more about counselling.

*'I have been surprised at how much it challenges our current beliefs, attitudes, thinking and understanding.'*



**WITH 36+ COURSES AND BESPOKE TRAINING, WHAT COULD YOU, YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY AND COLLEAGUES BE LEARNING TO MAKE LIFE BETTER?**

## FDAMH Training Academy is championing Mental Wellbeing...

Mental health and wellbeing has never been more 'popular' than it is right now. We are surrounded by articles and news features about the number of people experiencing mental health problems, the services on offer (or lack thereof) and a call for increased resources to address what appears to be a mental health epidemic.

There is also an equal amount of attention to the benefits of prevention and early intervention in relation to mental health and wellbeing. FDAMH's Training Academy is passionate about early intervention and offers a range of courses to educate people about the importance of mental health, how to help and support friends and family, colleagues, even yourself if you are experiencing poor mental wellbeing.

Our skilled and experienced team can even tailor courses specifically to meet the needs of businesses or organisations who recognise that investing in their people's mental wellbeing is equally as important as investing in any other aspect of their business development.

**And while we're here let's just get rid of a common geographical misconception!...**

FDAMH is our proud origin, but the great news is you don't need to be anywhere near Falkirk to benefit from our courses! Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen? We've got it covered – with a team of 15+ skilled trainers dotted across Scotland let us worry about the geography!

**Our customers include:**

DWP Forth Valley and Edinburgh, Falkirk Council, Skills Development Scotland, third sector organisations (e.g. CAB, Re-Union Canals), businesses, Further and Higher Education (including St Andrews University and Dumfries & Galloway College) and staff, parents and children at nurseries, primary schools and high schools.

**For more visit [fdamh.org.uk/academy](http://fdamh.org.uk/academy) or call Diane, Nicola or Lisa on 01324 671600.**

# Hazel

Hazel popped into FDAMH to seek some advice about how to help her son who had mental health problems. She said:

*"I came into FDAMH to make an appointment, expecting to wait weeks before I could get seen. Someone said to me, if you'd just like to go and take a seat and showed me to the waiting room. Well, I was in tears because I never expected to be seen straight away"*

Hazel explained her situation: her son was engaged with NHS psychiatric services and was struggling with his mental health condition. However, she wasn't expecting to be asked how she was coping. Hazel said,

*"I told the person I saw about my son and the situation we were in, and then she said to me 'tell me about you'. I said that it wasn't about me, but she asked me how it was for me. Well...I didn't expect that and I told her, and she just sat and listened to me. She listened to me! I can't tell you how that felt. I've been everywhere as a carer for my son and nobody is interested in what I have to say. I can't believe you have this service, there's nowhere else that does this"*

**"I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU HAVE THIS SERVICE, THERE'S NOWHERE ELSE THAT DOES THIS"**

Hazel was referred to FDAMH's Carers and Family Support Service and participated in the Carers Education Course. She has told us that not only has she benefited but she notices that her son is coping better too! Changing the way that you think and behave does impact on others so perhaps the changes that Hazel made have helped her son too.

So a 'shout out' to those living with and caring for someone with a mental health problem, maybe we can help!

## Did you know that... all of the counsellors at FDAMH are volunteers?

It takes years of study and hard work to become a qualified counsellor (and let's not mention the cost of undertaking the courses!).

The rules and regulations governing counselling state that counsellors must be able to evidence that they have worked a specific minimum number of hours each year with clients. That's why a significant number of counsellors are willing to volunteer and only receive reimbursement for their travelling expenses.

In addition, counsellors must undergo professional supervision for their work and pay

for these sessions! In short, it costs a lot of money to become and continue to practice counselling.

Our volunteer counsellors contract with us to give a minimum of 3 hours of their time each week to work with the people who use our services. The sessions are free, no fee is charged to the person being supported. However, 3 years ago FDAMH introduced a Fast Track counselling service which offered people the chance to pay for counselling.

When someone elects to use this service, our counsellors provide that time over and above their voluntary sessions and are paid directly by the client for doing so.

We appreciate that this may seem an unfair system – if you can pay, you will be seen more quickly. But the reality is that those that choose to use FDAMH's Fast Track Service are simply choosing to visit our counsellors for 'private' counselling in our premises rather than seeking 'private' counselling elsewhere.



Margaret Lee tells us why she volunteers as a counsellor at FDAMH

### Why did you want to become a counsellor?

I've always enjoyed helping people, that's been one of my purposes in life. I wanted to help people on a face-to-face basis. I thought I had good listening skills and that I would be able to use my training to help people - I really wanted to help make a difference.

### What did you have to do to become a counsellor?

It took three years. I already had a degree, so I was able to do a Diploma in Counselling, I did mine specifically with CBT. Then during my training I had to do practise hours too, that was volunteer practise and I was fortunate enough to

have a really good placement with an addictions service. That was during my final year of study and when I'd completed my training hours that developed into a sessional paid role with the organisation.

### Why do you volunteer with FDAMH?

I came to FDAMH to work as a trainer with FDAMH Training Academy – training gave me some variety on top of the counselling. Then I took up the opportunity to do counselling at FDAMH as well, as an unpaid volunteer. One of my values is to de-stigmatise mental health, it's a big thing for me, I really wanted to be able to try to do that and it's a key reason for joining. And FDAMH has such a good reputation in the community, I wanted to be part of it.

### What do you think of counselling at FDAMH?

It's very rewarding. It's a very safe and welcoming place to work. I enjoy seeing the change in people. If they commit to the process and turn up for all of their appointments you usually see a change. People really seem to value that someone is taking an interest in what they are saying and you build a relationship with the person that has a therapeutic quality.

Seasons for Growth is a programme for young people and adults who have experienced significant change or loss... and is based on the belief that change, loss and grief are normal and valuable parts of life...that we can learn to live with and grow from such experiences. ([www.seasonsforgrowth.org.uk](http://www.seasonsforgrowth.org.uk)).

Whilst not a new therapeutic intervention, it is only within the last year that FDAMH has been able to offer Seasons courses for children, young people, adults and parents.



We now have 5 staff trained to deliver the various Seasons courses and have delivered 2 courses to young people aged between 6 and 10 years and one adult course. The feedback from the young people and adults who have attended courses (and indeed the parents of the young people) has been outstanding.

Our staff have loved being involved in the training and delivery of courses too and are eager to continue to deliver them.

### So why did we decide to offer Seasons?

We recognised that there was often a common theme running through many of the referrals that we receive - loss, bereavement, the effects of divorce – and as waiting times for one-to-one sessions with our skilled and trained volunteer counsellors or our social prescribing team was growing, we sought other ways to work with people. Seasons offered us the opportunity to work with a small group of people who shared a common bond – the effects of significant change or loss.

### A significant change for FDAMH....

We are not able to offer services to people under the age of 16 (with the exception of our young people's counselling service which can offer people from aged 14 years individual counselling).

But by investing in having staff trained to deliver Seasons for Growth for younger people, we have been able to work with little, emerging adults aged 6 and over, giving them the opportunity to explore their feelings about what has happened to or around them in their short lives. Some of those experiences have truly touched the hearts of

our staff and the resilience displayed by the young people has been humbling to all involved. Within a supportive, structured, safe environment, our young participants and

their parents have told us...

### The most important thing I have learned:

'I am not alone'  
'It is ok to share'  
'Change is a part of life'

### What I'd tell a friend about the course:

'It helps you to not feel trapped'  
'If you struggle with tough times come here!'  
'It is a good place to go for big problems'

### The changes parents have seen:

'I have noticed a big improvement in my child's behaviour since starting Seasons'  
'He has learned a lot, especially patience'  
'He has become more able to listen'  
'The group taught him self worth'

### Are the courses free to access?

As the saying goes, nothing in life is free. So far, we have been able to secure some grant funding and used donations from people in the community to fund the purchase of the materials required to deliver the Seasons courses. We will continue to seek funding to enable us to offer more courses through the coming year, but if you are interested in helping us fund a course, then please get in touch with us! Information on future courses will be advertised on our website at [www.fdamh.org.uk](http://www.fdamh.org.uk) We hope to be able to offer more courses soon!

## It's good to talk...



Yes, it is good to talk but who to? Whilst sharing your worries or concerns with a friend, colleague or family member often helps and gets you through a difficult time, sometimes it just isn't enough. That's where our Immediate Help Service comes in.

If you are struggling to get through the day, feel anxious, stressed or worried about something then why not call us to make an appointment or simply come along to The Victoria Centre and speak to one of our skilled staff? You will receive a warm welcome, be given the time to talk about what is going on for you and, if necessary, be referred to one of FDAMH's services or directed to the right source of support for you.

Over 1,000 people used this service last year.

## Working towards independence

It is, or should be, the goal of every organisation who works with people at difficult times in their lives, to be mindful of the 'risk' of inadvertently making a person 'dependent' upon the organisations support.

Oh, that it was that simple! People are complex, have different needs and move at a different pace through periods of difficulty; they cannot be 'slotted' into boxes and 'told' that they must 'get better' within a pre-set period of time and if they cannot, they will be denied further help.

Balancing this against a backdrop of limited resources (both human and financial) and increasing demand is all too familiar for most organisations. But manage it they must, and not simply due to limited resources but also for the sake of the individual involved.

Research on what constitutes dependency, how it develops and how can it be avoided is plentiful

but there is also a growing acceptance that for some people dependency is not always a negative thing.

For some people, contact with a community based mental health service will become their 'lifeline': it will become their 'community' and this can develop very quickly after a person starts using services especially if they are without family or friends out with the service.

A dilemma for staff? It certainly is, particularly considering short term funding for service provision. The best that we can do is to ensure that staff are conscious of inadvertently creating dependent relationships and continue to encourage people to forge links with the wider community: to provide and encourage people to engage in self-management courses, where appropriate, and to remember that our role is to enable – not further disable people who seek our support.



**STILL THINKING ABOUT OUR PUPPY?  
GO TO [FDAMH.ORG.UK](http://FDAMH.ORG.UK) TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT  
SUPPORTING FDAMH OR CALL 01324 671600**

# The year in numbers...

All of the following facts and figures relate to our financial year running from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018

## IMMEDIATE HELP SERVICE

A prompt first point of contact providing crisis support and access to services

Numbers accessing the Immediate Help Service (IHS) continue to grow year on year.

- ✧ 1098 individuals were supported,
- ✧ A 41% increase compared to last year.
- ✧ 552 were directed to FDAMH by their GP
- ✧ 9 in 10 people had never been to FDAMH before
- ✧ 1015 people were supported in person at our centre, the remainder by phone
- ✧ People were given whatever time they needed with an average session time of 40 minutes

Of the 1098 people supported:

- ✧ 654 self-assessed great distress
- ✧ 380 were having suicidal thoughts – 65 had a plan to end their own lives
- ✧ 170 had previously tried to end their own life
- ✧ 351 were under 25 years (more than double the previous year)

In many cases people are encouraged to get further support for the issues affecting them:

- ✧ 810 referrals to FDAMH's other services
- ✧ 331 signposted to appropriate external organisations.

## COUNSELLING SERVICE

A COSCA approved one-to-one talking therapy for those aged 14 and over, regardless of the presenting issue

- ✧ 429 people used the service
- ✧ 133 young people aged between 14-18 used the service
- ✧ 51 young people aged 19-24 also received counselling support
- ✧ The age range was 14-78 years

97 participants in CORE Outcome Measure<sup>1</sup> evaluation showed that:

- ✧ At the start of counselling 99% were in the clinical population (i.e. had scores that indicate a need for professional help), one quarter of whom were in severe distress
- ✧ 75% demonstrated reliable recovery or improvement

In addition:

- ✧ 15% of those accessing the service reported overwhelming suicidal ideation
- ✧ There was an 83% attendance rate to counselling sessions

<sup>1</sup>CORE is a widely used measure of outcomes for psychological therapies. We had 86 complete CORE-34 data sets for adults and 11 CORE-10 data sets for young people, the results are combined.

# The year in numbers...

## SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

*One-to-one therapeutic intervention that takes a whole person approach*

- ✳ Delivered in 2 GP Practices and within FDAMH
- ✳ Our Mental Health Recovery Practitioners worked with 391 people
- ✳ 65 people self-referred at their GP practice
- ✳ The age range was 16-82 years

Wellbeing outcomes:

- ✳ On average people moved from 34 on the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS<sup>2</sup>) to 46 - signifying a large improvement to their wellbeing (154 data sets)

69 returned evaluation surveys showed:

- ✳ 94% now feel better about themselves
- ✳ 99% said it was a useful source of information and techniques on managing their anxiety
- ✳ 97% said it was a useful source of information on activities and local services that they would continue to use
- ✳ 100% of clients said their views were taken into account

<sup>2</sup>The average WEMWBS score for the Scottish population is around 51, and a cut off of 42 and below is used to indicate below average mental wellbeing.

## FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

*Providing a range of interventions including one-to-one support, group work and education courses*

- ✳ 235 households/families were supported
- ✳ 112 people identified as carers
- ✳ 173 households received intensive support, while others used the service on a more sporadic basis - making telephone calls or visits to the Family Support Service team
- ✳ 137 young people (aged between 0-18 years) were part of the households given intensive support, including 3 young carers under the age of 16
- ✳ 134 new families used the service and 103 cases were closed

In addition, this service offered:

- ✳ An evening monthly support group to 24 people, and a fortnightly daytime support group to 12 people
- ✳ A 6-week Carers Education Course to 11 people and 2 Mindfulness courses to a total of 20 people

## BEREAVED BY SUICIDE GROUP

*Working in partnership with the Pastoral Care Team at NHS Forth Valley, FDAMH's Family Support Service offers a Bereaved by Suicide Group.*

- ✳ 24 people were supported over the course of the year with an average monthly attendance of 12 people

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING DROP-IN

*Provides a calm, friendly environment, incorporating structured group work, designed to restore people's confidence, encourage independence and re-connect them with their communities*

Open access on 3 days each week:

- ✳ 282 individuals...
- ✳ ...visited on 4,810 occasions...
- ✳ ...an average of 94 visits per week.
- ✳ 56% of people using Drop-In identify as male
- ✳ The age range was 17-76 years

Courses and support:

- ✳ 54 people benefited from courses in 'Positive Wellbeing', 'Living Life the Mindful Way' and 'Improving Communications'.
- ✳ All attendees received regular one-to-one reviews and support.

## WOMEN'S GROUP

*Offering safe, social interaction, activities and opportunity to restore lost self-belief*

- ✳ 69 women have participated

We have been assessing the best way to help generate positive long-term outcomes for women referred to this group. As a result the group based at FDAMH will come to an end this year and be replaced with new community-based opportunities.

## THIRD AGE BEFRIENDING

*Designed specifically as an early intervention and prevention service for older people deemed at risk of developing mental ill health, this service offers a range of diverse activities*

- ✳ 136 people used the service...
- ✳ ...77 people were supported in groups and..
- ✳ ...50 people received one-to-one support.
- ✳ 8 different groups met 70 times, and included a fishing group, tea and a blether, stepping on group etc.
- ✳ The age range was 55-95 years

For people engaging in the service:

- ✳ On average people moved from 36 on the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS<sup>2</sup>) to 48 - signifying a large improvement to their wellbeing

## BEFRIENDING

*Offering one-to-one and group befriending to people with mental ill health, the service seeks to encourage people to regain social confidence and reconnect with their community.*

- ✳ 58 people used the service
- ✳ The age range was 16-76 years
- ✳ People met with their volunteers weekly or fortnightly

For people engaging in the service:

- ✳ On average people moved from 32 on the WEMWBS<sup>2</sup> to 44 - signifying a large improvement to their wellbeing

# The year in numbers...

## ACTIVITY GROUPS

*A range of activities that can complement other therapeutic interventions for those experiencing reduced psychological wellbeing*

- ✧ 10 different groups included choir, drama, creative writing, ceramics and drawing
- ✧ 125 places provided creative opportunities for 90 individuals
- ✧ 9 external 'exhibitions' of work took place including drama, film, music and art.

Feedback across all activities showed 85% of respondents experienced reduced anxiety, 93% improved confidence, 90% made connections with other people and 78% felt encouraged to seek out similar activities in the community.

## VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

*Recruitment, training and support to develop and grow our prized volunteer team.*

- ✧ 96 active volunteers
- ✧ 49 new applications resulting in...
- ✧ ...5 Volunteer Induction Courses and
- ✧ ...23 successful graduates
- ✧ 119 hours of additional in-house training completed by volunteers

Volunteers support us in:

- ✧ Befriending services (48)
- ✧ Counselling (21)
- ✧ Other areas (27) including Drop-In, Activity Groups, Day Trips, Fundraising and Administration.

## TRAINING ACADEMY

*Offering a suite of training to promote mental wellbeing and mental health awareness in all walks of life*

- ✧ Delivered 96 training courses...
- ✧ ...to 1,551 delegates...
- ✧ ...with a total of 9,876 training hours.
- ✧ 15 experienced FDAMH Training Academy trainers working across Scotland...
- ✧ ... in 21 different organisations and to members of the public.

Feedback from all courses showed:

- ✧ 96% gained a better understanding of mental health and wellbeing
- ✧ People said knowledge gained would be useful in the workplace (94%) and in their personal life (92%)
- ✧ 95% would recommend the training

Bespoke training is very popular, helping to address the specific needs of individual organisations.

Currently 36 courses in the 'menu' including:

- ✧ 'Seasons for Growth'
- ✧ COSCA Certificate in Counselling Skills
- ✧ Scotland's Mental Health First Aid
- ✧ Mental Wellbeing courses for children, teens and adults e.g. Chill Skills for Teens
- ✧ Life skills courses e.g. Advanced Communication, Assertiveness Skills
- ✧ Courses on mental health topics e.g. Understanding Self-harm, Suicide Awareness
- ✧ Mindfulness

**“YOUR PRESENT  
CIRCUMSTANCES  
DON'T DETERMINE  
WHERE YOU CAN GO;  
THEY MERELY  
DETERMINE WHERE  
YOU START”**

(QUEBIN)

## Treat yourself with **KINDNESS & RESPECT**

*You are worthy of it even if it doesn't always seem that way.*

## Set **realistic** goals

*Small achievements are rewarding, make us feel good and act as motivators.*

## Get connected

*To your friends, family or join a social club. Seek out opportunities to meet with other people. Not always easy to do, but do try!*

## Volunteer

*with us, of course!*

*For information on opportunities to support our work by giving us a little of your skills and time, see the volunteering page on our website.*

## Top tips for looking after your mental health

## Learn to deal with **STRESS**

*This is one of the most common things that people seek help for but believe it or not, stress is a part of life. The trick is to learn how to manage stress before it 'manages' you!*

## Give your brain a rest

*Sure Mindfulness, meditation, relaxation and yoga can help - but so can simply listening to music or engaging in an absorbing hobby or activity.*

## Take Care of your Body

*You know what they say: Healthy body, healthy mind! There's a lot of evidence to support that well-worn phrase. Even small changes to your diet or level of activity can make a difference.*

## Break the monotony!

*Do something different from your usual routine. Life can get 'boring or humdrum' but only if you keep doing what you've always done, so try something different!*

## Get help when you need it

*Don't be afraid or embarrassed about asking for help.*

*Consider this, people who are there to help have invested their time learning how to help, so make use of their knowledge, skills and experience. That's what they are there for.*



**FDAMH**  
LIGHT IN A DARK PLACE