



FDAMH Half Year Service Update

1st April 2018 - 30th September 2018

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

For a full and up-to-date description of what our services offer please visit our website.

Our Annual Report for 2017-18 is available from the 'About Us' section of our website.

www.fdamh.org.uk

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All statistics, quotes and case studies cover the reporting period 1st April 2018 to 30th September 2018.

Introduction

FDAMH is a charitable, community mental health organisation that has been operating since 1981 and provides services in Falkirk and Forth Valley. Whilst most of our focus is on adults' needs we have also seen a surge in demand for support from children and young people who have poor mental health.

The FDAMH Training Academy is FDAMH's separate social enterprise which provides mental health and wellbeing training to all age groups and provides its services widely across central Scotland.

The people who come to use our services are at the heart of everything we do and every decision we make. Over our many years of experience, we understand that there are a core set of requirements that are vital for us to offer to help people improve their mental wellbeing:

1. Access to a range of different interventions

We are all different. What is ideal for one person is far from ideal for another. FDAMH offers a range of different and adaptable services to be able to provide people with a service that meets their particular needs.

At FDAMH this variety comes from some seven service areas which are further enhanced with sub-groups, courses and activities. Our services support individuals, families or groups and are located at FDAMH and in the community. They range from providing crisis emotional support to enabling people to engage more actively in their communities, with quite a lot in between!

2. A local, confidential, welcoming and readily accessible service

"Regular contact with flexible times and dates allowed for easy access and was able to fit in with my work schedule" Person using the Social Prescribing Service

"I felt in a safe and secure environment, where I was given support and empathy, which has helped me to relax, be myself" Drama group member

"The centre is lovely and has a calming feel" Visitor

FDAMH is a trusted local service that many people are confident to approach when they need our support.

We know that approaching a mental health service can be daunting and recognise the importance of making this as easy and comfortable as possible so that people are successful in asking for and engaging with help. First impressions count and our front-line staff work hard to make sure that people have a positive experience from the outset.

We do our best to accommodate people with daytime commitments by including evening provision in our Counselling Service and Support Groups.

While people are using our services, we continue to cultivate a welcoming, trusting and safe environment to help people engage positively with services and their recovery.

3. A chance to talk

“I have really benefited from expressing my fears/life/circumstances with someone neutral and who knew nothing of my difficulties” Person using the Counselling Service

“I feel lighter having been able to talk to someone, I needed to talk to someone who I didn’t think was going to judge me” Person using the Immediate Help Service

“The Service has helped identify problems as well as provide tools which have proven useful in dealing with them. Just having the opportunity to have someone to come and discuss these issues with is often a good deal of help in itself” Person using the Family Support Service

“My doctor got in touch with FDAMH as I live alone and was not seeing anyone, it sometimes felt that I was the only person on earth. That is how lonely I felt. When I got the letter about FDAMH’s visit I panicked as I did not know what to expect. When they came out we had a good chat and it was great to have people who were there to listen to me. I was offered a fortnightly Tea and a Bletcher group, at first, I was very reluctant to come along as I wasn’t sure if I would fit in or have anything to say as it was so long since I had talked to people. When I did go everyone was really friendly, though it took me a good few times before I felt at ease to talk. Now I have the fortnightly plus a monthly group I go to and we all have a great time, we support each other if someone is not feeling so good” Person using The Social Spark

Even people with good informal support networks will often feel like they want to speak to an independent, non-judgemental person who understands how they feel. People often comment that speaking to our staff has been the first time they’ve felt ‘heard’. And where day-to-day opportunities to talk with others are limited due to isolation, FDAMH’s services provide a variety of ways to experience and develop vital social networks.

4. A person-centred, holistic approach

“The big thing for me was being treated like a human being, an equal, actually being listened to, no advice or suggestions, but able to explore with support to come to my own decision. What resonated with me was these things; being treated like an equal rather than a freak. The use of the word WE and not YOU made me feel at ease, and again not a freak. Not treated with a patronising tone or attitude used, nor judgemental. There was no time restriction/ hurriedness about the discussion, I felt totally in control, supported, and ‘normal’. I called FDAMH with what I thought was a desperate unmanageable situation, and hung up feeling empowered and decisive” Comments from a call to FDAMH’s Family Support Service

Case Study, Social Prescribing Service:

David presented with low mood and anxiety. He felt increasingly isolated only having his girlfriend for company having moved into the area to live with her. Being unemployed with limited finances he was unable to visit family and friends back home as he would

like. He felt he lacked routine and motivation, which had affected his confidence and had turned day into night as he spent most days in bed with negative thoughts and worrying about his future.

He wanted to make some changes and felt that he was ready to do so but didn't know where to start. The practitioner and he discussed what anxiety and low mood was and then looked at his thinking habits, coping strategies, routines, diet and interests and explored the changes he could make to improve how he was feeling. David began using meditations for relaxation and positive self-talk to manage his anxiety and embraced the suggestions and small goals set in between the four sessions. These took place monthly to give him time to accomplish the goals, which started with changing his sleeping routine and reducing caffeine intake. As time progressed he was encouraged to get a Go Card for swimming and look for volunteering opportunities.

By the last session David was enjoying being active and was volunteering on two outdoor projects and stated, "I've learned loads of new things and I'm sleeping better because I'm out in the fresh air". He no longer felt so isolated having formed friendships with other volunteers and had a more positive outlook for his future.

Mental health and wellbeing can be influenced by a vast array of factors. We treat each person as a unique individual and strongly believe that it is only by looking at the whole person and understanding their circumstances that we can achieve the best outcomes. Our services focus on the inherent strengths, skills and experiences that people already have, and use these as building blocks for future success and problem solving. This means that people aren't defined by their poor mental health, instead they are defined by their capacity for growth and change. This approach is the most effective approach to support individuals achieve their goals and shifts thinking to building from opportunities rather than responding to problems.

5. Enabling self-management

"The service has shown me new ways to think about things. I have also learned new strategies to cope with when I have been feeling anxious and down. The overall experience has been fantastic, and I will continue to use the strategies in the future"
Person using the Social Prescribing Service

"My experience gave me a new perspective for dealing with issues in my daily life"
Person using the Counselling Service

"A service user has just told me that he went shopping directly after finishing one of our group Building Self-Esteem sessions. He felt a panic attack brewing but because of the training he was more alert to the signs and he realised he was holding his breath. He told himself to breathe and moved to a quiet part of the shop until he felt better, then he resumed his shopping! He was really proud that he'd managed to do this as he said before he would have just put down his shopping and run out of the shop" FDAMH Service Manager

"I have learned how to relax and take better care of myself through a number of techniques including adding meditation in to my daily life" Person attending FDAMH Training Academy Course

Our aim is always to equip people with the skills and self-knowledge they need to become better at managing their own mental wellbeing. Each service provides opportunities and encouragement to build this sort of independent ability so that people can get on with their lives and apply the skills they've learned whenever they need them.

During our 6-month reporting period we further enhanced people's self-management and coping skills by running 3 personal development courses covering the topics managing anxiety, enhancing communication skills and Mindfulness. In the same period the FDAMH Training Academy, with its clear ethos of early intervention and prevention, has provided 93 courses to develop mental wellbeing skills to members of the public, private organisations and school pupils.

6. Community involvement

"This group has boosted my confidence and self-esteem, enabling me to interact socially and start rebuilding my life" Person attending Creative Women's Group

"The groups have given me the chance to get out and about again. No more sitting in the house feeling lonely..... I got myself a dog and take him out for walks and sometimes chat to people I meet" Person using The Social Spark

"I enjoy being out in Nature – enjoying the simple things in life, with no technology around me. The Rangers are great and I have seen my concentration levels improving" Person using FDAMH services referred to 'Branching Out'

"College is a real hoot and the lecturer is really understanding. I'm using this course as a stepping stone to future full-time courses. This is giving me the push and the boost in confidence that I need" Person using FDAMH services referred to Forth Valley College Moving Forward Course

"I am now getting out and meeting people. It improves my CV and opens up more options for me for the future. We certainly have a laugh and I can slowly see my confidence increasing" Person using FDAMH's services encouraged to take up a volunteering opportunity at a local project

The importance of helping people tap into community and social resources to support their mental wellbeing is well recognised. Linking people in with community resources has been a long-standing aspect of FDAMH's activity and is now an important role within every single service we provide.

But there are reasons why people are not already using these community resources when they come to FDAMH. Whilst our staff are a knowledgeable source of information about the sorts of opportunities that are available and have a good set of community contacts, the first step is often getting people to a stage in their recovery where they have the confidence and abilities to be ready to engage with such opportunities and strengthen their existing social networks.

Within FDAMH, community involvement is a two-way process, so not only do we encourage people who use services to tap into whatever community resources may benefit them, we also encourage the local community, as volunteers, to become involved in FDAMH.

FDAMH's ethos and this approach in the services that we offer, reflects local and national strategic outcomes. We know that mental health and wellbeing does not stand in isolation – our mental health influences, and is influenced by, all aspects of our lives including housing, income, employment, our physical health and our connectedness to our community. That's why we endeavour to offer a holistic service that considers all aspects of a person's life.

Reflected within local and national policies there is also recognition that prevention is better than cure and, if too late for that, early intervention is the next best thing! We have recognised this for several years and indeed introduced services that address those very views. Hopefully, the information contained within the following report will reflect that and demonstrate our commitment to providing high quality services to the people in our community.

Social Prescribing

Up to 5 one-to-one hour-long sessions providing people with the tools to self-manage their own mental wellbeing and identify support and resources in the community.

Comments on Service

“The work given allowed me to work on various things at home with the option to contact via email so that waiting for the next session wasn't necessary. This reinforced my confidence in the service that you provide. Even though this is my last one, I have all the resources and tools ready for me to continue working on myself” Person using the service

“The service given has been really good I have benefited from it a lot” Person using the service

“The service I had, I really do not think I would be the person I am today - the strength the courage I was given. Though my visits were very emotional at the time I managed to overcome it and with the support I have become a strong person” Person using the service

Service Update

The Social Prescribing Service currently offers support to people at FDAMH and patients at Camelon Medical Practice. Referrals to the in-house Service are via FDAMH's staff and at the Medical Practice GP's can refer or patients can self-refer.

Feedback surveys and results from the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale indicate that the service continues to perform well, as expected.

Unfortunately, due to an increase in referrals the difficult decision was made to temporarily close the waiting list for the In-House Service to prevent clients waiting over 6 months for an appointment. As always priority has been given to those clients experiencing suicidal ideation and they are contacted as soon as possible. The temporary closure has allowed the Practitioner the time to dramatically reduce the waiting list and we anticipate that we will be accepting referrals again in the near future.

The Social Prescribing service is currently funded thanks to Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership's Integrated Care Fund.

In the 6-month period:

182 people used
the service

239 referrals

Mental Health and Wellbeing Drop-In

A group drop-in service and structured activities for those particularly seeking a safe and supportive social setting to aid their recovery.

Comments on Service

“Fantastic support and networking” Person using the service

“It’s what I get up for in the morning! I look forward to it and if I didn’t have this place, I don’t know where I would be”
Person using the service

“It’s my safe-haven. I come because I know that the people there will brighten me up. The staff are friendly, the other service users are friendly and it makes me smile. There’s helpful support, I can talk anytime and get a different perspective on things. The best thing I ever did was take the big step to come here” Person using the service

Service Update

We have been working to reduce the excessively high levels of attendance this service was accommodating and have seen a successful reduction in the number of visits in this period to more manageable levels.

Key to this has been building on existing work to develop the service’s recovery-focus. This has been supported with the introduction of Personal Development Plans (PDP’s) for existing and new users of the service. PDP’s allow staff and individuals to work together to identify their aims and goals and to highlight the support they require to achieve these. The format allows people to plan and record their own recovery and to document how FDAMH can support them in achieving this. Once the PDP is complete, regular one-to-one reviews are held with a continued focus on moving forward.

Supporting people to access community resources has also been vital and the service has been working with FDAMH’s Social Spark service to help people engage positively with community-based social activities. We also promote and support members to engage with other community services such as: Forth Valley College’s Moving Forward course; Revive Falkirk Healthy Eating and Cooking courses; Branching Out.

Added to this our Psychoeducational group courses are continuing to help cement the plans the people using our service are making for their recovery.

In the 6-month period:

112 people used
the service

Average of 76
visits per week
(2,112 visits in
total)

25 people have
benefitted from
courses

Counselling

One-to-one short term generic counselling for adults, with a Young Person's service supporting those aged 14 to 18 years. Daytime and evening access.

Comments on Service

"This counselling has helped me a great deal. It has helped to open up dark secrets and make them more real. I can look to the future and try to find the end of it all" Person using the service

"My counsellor was the perfect balance of empathy and questioning. She has definitely helped me reframe some of my thought processes" Person using the service

"I feel that the counselling has helped me to explore my situation and to see things differently" Person using the service

"Great experience. Been able to open up fully for the first time and discuss my problems" Person using the service

"As a non-believer in counselling, I have changed my mind and have found it extremely useful. Thank you" Person using the service

Service Update

We have continued to work towards reducing referrals to our Counselling Service to achieve more acceptable waiting times. People enquiring about counselling are invited to attend our Immediate Help Service for a prompt assessment and if counselling is not the most appropriate service to help support people with their mental health, we will offer an alternative intervention.

Thanks to additional funding from BBC Children in Need and Radio Forth Cash for Kids, we have continued to support young people aged 14-18 years within the Forth Valley area - in the report period this age group made up 30% of people using the service.

Three additional volunteer counsellors have joined our counselling team in this period to help manage our current waiting list.

We have successfully met the monitoring standards of the COSCA Recognition Scheme for Organisations as a Recognised Counselling Organisation for the 12th year running.

In the 6-month period:

220 people used the service
(66 of whom were young people aged between 14 and 18)

154 referrals

1,201 sessions were offered



The Social Spark

Tackling loneliness and isolation by offering social one-to-one and group interventions based in the community.

Comments on Service

"I have joined the Social Spark Pool Group and am really enjoying it. Normally I wouldn't go to a pool hall due to my anxiety but I've been able to go along with the support of the group. It gets me out of the house and is a good reason to get out of bed. I am more likely to go myself now as this has given me the confidence to go" Person using the service

"We laugh and chat about anything, it is amazing when one person says something and they all come back with reassurance that they're there for each other. It's clear the Tea and a Blether group helps everyone who comes. When I retired I wanted to volunteer, it's my way of communicating and stops me from being lonely" Social Spark Volunteer

Service Update

Previous befriending services have been replaced with this combined and enhanced service which is in high demand.

Experience has shown us that although many people get a lot from traditional one-to-one befriending joining a group is very beneficial for confidence building, peer support, and user involvement. People see the benefits and the change in themselves much quicker in groups than in one-to-one matchings. Nevertheless, when needed we provide one-to-one befriending before encouraging moving on to groups.

With an age range of 16 to 91 years to support we offer a wide range of social activities including intergenerational groups, small social contact groups, and various activities – in this period adding new 'Creative Women' and 'Pool' groups. The service listens to the people who use it and develops and tests their ideas for new groups thanks to our adaptable army of volunteers. We see people's wellbeing being enhanced through this sort of input.

We also continue to offer people who use the service other support if needed, particularly our self-development courses.

Due to funding, we will be offering some of our services to new areas within Forth Valley. As this becomes more established across Forth Valley we hope to offer more of our small group work which is proving to be such a success across the Falkirk area.

In the 6-month period:

151 people used the service

142 referrals

11 groups
Stepping On (2),
Tea & A Blether (3),
Sunday Group,
Theatre Group,
Fishing Group,
Creative Women,
Pool Group,
Contact Group

40 one-to-one matchings

Family and Carers Support

Providing individual support to families impacted by mental health issues that are struggling or in crisis and offering group support and education separately to carers and those bereaved by suicide.

Comments on Service

“All in all, when you reflect back I cannot believe how far we have come, ‘course we have our moments but that is normal, we fall out, we say sorry and we move on” Main carer in family that received individual family support

“As a teacher, it helped me understand the family dynamics involved in attendance and anxiety. Personally, the course helped me cope positively with my son’s diagnosis and my daughter’s emotional struggles. I now see this as who they are and not a ‘deficit’. It has helped me appreciate how they experience the world” Attendee of Carers Education Course

“Mindfulness is a good tool to have in the locker and I am still using it, especially to help me sleep. I find I am able to focus more, sleep easier and in general cope better. Generally life is a lot easier in our household” Attendee of Mindfulness for People Bereaved by Suicide

Service Update

Individual family work is the bulk of service activity and tries as far as possible to include all family members. However, work with even one individual in a family can influence the dynamics and communication patterns within the family for the better. Families are a ‘system’ and we try to activate individual and family resources to help them find their own solution to their unique circumstances. Our role is to offer input where patterns of interacting have resulted in stress and disharmony, so we can help restore family function.

In this period we ran our first Mindfulness course specifically for people bereaved by suicide in Forth Valley. It was not without its challenges and there were some darker moments as people’s minds wandered to painful memories, but with encouragement and practice all participants gained new skills to find moments of calm and a degree of peace. In the facilitators’ observations all seven participants showed a marked change. Attention was given to keeping participants safe and the facilitators were acutely aware that they had to be vigilant. Because of the success of the course we have been asked to run it again.

In the 6-month period:

194 families registered

60 referrals

115 families received individual support*

2 groups Bereaved by Suicide Group, Carers Support Group

2 personal development courses

*Where staff work directly with the family concerned, often in response to or to avoid crisis.

Immediate Help Service

Supporting people in emotional crisis or who are unsure of where to turn by providing prompt access to a skilled staff member.

Comments on Service

"I found the FDAMH service very helpful, I was made to feel very welcome and the staff were very friendly.

Once we started chatting it was clear that my symptoms were very common and I wasn't alone in my situation and with help from FDAMH I could teach myself to relax myself and learn how to deal with my feelings.

Thanks for your help" Person using the service

"On having nowhere else to go to seek help for my daughter I got an emergency appointment and spoke to a lovely lady called Liz. After explaining everything she advised and provided me with lots of information regarding getting help. From the very first phone call to making an appointment the process was sensitive and hopefully in dealing with this service in the future this will help myself and my family with our concerns that we have" Person using the service

Service Update

The Immediate Help Service continues to receive funding from the Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership's Integrated Care Fund, which has allowed us to provide this service for 641 people in the 6-month period. This is an increase of 21% on the same period last year. The vast majority of people accessing the service (85%) have never been to FDAMH before.

35% of people using the service said they have suicidal thoughts and almost half of those (105 people) had made a previous suicide attempt. The amount of young people attending continues to grow: increasing again, with 177 under-25-year olds using the Immediate Help Service within the last 6 months.

In the 6-month period:

641 people used the service

85% had never used FDAMH before

1 in 3 people experiencing suicidal thoughts (35%)

Activity Groups

Providing group-based creative opportunities to enhance mental wellbeing, combat isolation, build confidence and generate positive experiences.

Comments on Service

"I went from scared to speak in public to soloist, a massive boost to my confidence" Choir member

"Choir got me out of the house and has helped me to make new friends" Choir member

"I feel the drama group is helping with my anxiety and confidence" Drama group member

"The thought behind the script was wonderful – I laughed, I cried, I reminisced" Audience member

Service Update

Whilst funding changes see reduced activity groups provision compared to this time last year we continue to provide valuable creative opportunities to people using FDAMH's services.

The FDAMH Creative Arts Group, brought together our writers and actors to develop FDAMH's latest play 'A Cup 'o Kindness', which had its inaugural performance to an audience of 50 people during the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival in May.

The Drama Group remains very popular and individuals are encouraged to build upon their skills and consider joining in other community-based creative drama projects as they are able. This creates capacity for new members and improved opportunities for individual growth.

The Freedom of Mind choir has had a very busy and successful period, with two large-capacity venue performances and reaching the UK finals for the National Lottery 'Best Health Project' 2018. Then in September, they performed alongside professional international folk band Cara, an unforgettable experience for choir members.

Feedback from participants in regard to long-term benefit continues to be very positive, in our most recent survey 100% say it has improved their confidence, 97% said they felt less isolated and 87% said it had reduced anxiety. Importantly 80% feel more positive towards pursuing other opportunities in the community.

In the 6-month period:

44 people used
the service

Volunteer Development

A dedicated staff member recruits, supports and develops our volunteers who are vital to the delivery of FDAMH's services.

Comments on Service

"I feel I've been lucky to have had the opportunity to be a part of the organisation as I think the work undertaken is of great value to the community" Volunteer

"I learned that I am not here to tell someone how to get better, but how to listen and help them through their journey" Trainee Volunteer

"I wish I could do more" Volunteer

Service Update

In the last 6 months our volunteers have given over 3000 hours of their time to our services. This incredible amount excludes the time they also give to attend training, meetings and events. We are completely humbled by their generosity and ongoing commitment. So far this year volunteers have honed their skills by participating in more than 150 hours of training, including mandatory volunteer induction training, First Aid and additional mental health training.

We have continued to use our fantastic links with organisations in the local community to take advantage of opportunities such as public events to highlight the great work that our volunteers do and encourage new volunteers. Our volunteers come from many walks of life, some looking to gain new experiences as they head into further and higher education or others who are hoping to change careers. While some people find themselves with time on their hands that they want to fill, others juggle their work and life commitments to give their time. Volunteers regularly tell us of how proud they are to support people in their local community. The whole of FDAMH are proud, and so fortunate, to have every one of them support our work.

It is important for us to recognise and thank our volunteers and once again we did this by celebrating 'Volunteers Week' in June. A targeted social media campaign highlighted our volunteers' wonderful work and we ended the week with volunteers receiving a card and small gift to show our appreciation. Our latest recognition event was our celebratory volunteer get-together in September.

In the 6-month period:

83 current
volunteers

14 new volunteers



FDAMH Training Academy

This self-funded social enterprise provides training that promotes prevention and early intervention whilst adhering to the recovery ideals of FDAMH.

Comments on Service

"I am not alone" Seasons for Growth participant, age 8

"I've gained tips for looking after me! As well as a better understanding of how to deal with people and react in situations" Keeping Yourself Mentally Well participant

"Thanks to the course I discovered new strengths that I never knew I had that I now use daily" COSCA Counselling Skills participant

Service Update

As FDAMH Training Academy continues to grow and develop, it has doubled the training hours compared to the same period last year. Our ethos to promote early intervention and prevention continues to be as important to us as ever, especially with an increase of mental health issues amongst children and young people.

We are delighted to be selected as a provider to deliver training through the Scottish Government's 'Fair Start Scotland' initiative. Our new training programmes include Building Confidence & Self Esteem, Motivational Coaching and Positive Wellbeing for the Workplace. These are proving to be essential in preparing clients' mental health for the journey into sustainable employment.

The 'Tackling In-Work Poverty' project funded by the European Social Fund has led us to be selected by the Scottish Government to undertake a research project to help address the needs of people with poor mental health, who are currently in work, but affected by in-work poverty. The project has provided crucial learning and a report will be going to the Scottish Government by the end of November.

The next 6 months will be a very busy period. We will be working with the Scottish Benevolent Fund to provide mental health awareness training to the hospitality industry locally. We are also delighted to announce that we are working hard to become an SVQ approved Centre so we can start to provide SVQ courses and qualifications in 2019.

In the 6-month period:

9,969 training hours

921 delegates

Courses for the public included:

COSCA Certificate in Counselling Skills

Keeping Yourself Mentally Well

Managing Stress & Anxiety

Mindfulness

Introduction to Mental Health Awareness

Suicide Awareness

Managing Emotions Positively & Effectively