



# Falkirk Integration Joint Board

1 May 2020

## Information Bulletin

### Introduction

This Information Bulletin provides the IJB with an update on the Partnership's response to the COVID Pandemic. The bulletin will provide an overview of work being done by the service, in partnership with the Council, NHS FV, Third and Independent Sectors.

There have been some excellent examples of how we have worked together to support people who most need our services, and their carers. The efforts of staff across all partners and communities have been inspirational, uplifting and humbling, and some of these examples will be set out in the report.

The Bulletin also provides an update on the IJB 2019/20 Draft Financial Outturn Position.

## 1. HSCP Service Overview

- 1.1 As with all other HSCP's, in the face of the levels of staff absence due to shielding, self-isolation and the increased effort to reduce delays in discharge from hospital, we have reviewed packages of care. This has been done with service users and their families to identify, with their agreement, where we have been able to alter packages of care. This is kept under review and has enabled us to redeploy staff where appropriate to support other vulnerable citizens.
- 1.2 In recent weeks we have redeployed staff across our services to maintain care in our care homes and care at home. Our teams are in contact with families and continue to provide support. The day care services had to stop due to social distancing, our staff are in contact with the service users and families to maintain support.
- 1.3 We have invested in additional capacity to temporarily block book care home beds and care at home packages with independent providers to help sustain care (this will be kept under review as the situation evolves). However as with other sectors, there is a limited supply of available trained staff. We are working with council colleagues to train other council workers who have volunteered to augment our care workforce and likewise with NHS Forth Valley.

- 1.4 We have increased our 24/7 staffing in MECS service to extend care at home and have invested in increasing the supply of equipment.
- 1.5 The situation is very fluid, and our approach so far has enabled us to keep the services safe and to respond to emerging urgent need to support independent care providers and unpaid carers through our work with the carers centre. In the last fortnight we have been able to provide significant staffing support from our integrated teams to support Independent care homes that have had significant staff absence and levels of Covid in residents.
- 1.6 At the HSCP mobilisation team we are in contact with all services and care homes on a daily basis to ensure they are safe and to provide support through mutual aid if required. Our local teams continue to deliver care and are in contact with families. We are working with partners to sustain community health and care services and to have the capacity to step in where required by other services to continue caring for Falkirk citizens and supporting our staff.

## 2. Leadership

- 2.1 In response to the pandemic, a number of structures and meetings have been instigated, in addition to those already in existence. These are set around:
  - Regional Resilience Partnership
  - Local Resilience Partnership, and Care for People Group
  - Falkirk Council CMT
  - NHS FV SLT
  - NHS FV Command Structure – Gold, Silver and Bronze levels
  - NHS FV Pandemic Incident Management Team
  - NHS FV Shielding Co-ordination Group
  - HSCP SMT
  - HSCP Mobilisation Centre
  - HSCP Partnership Management Group
  - Care Home Liaison Group
  - NHS Forth Valley Primary Care Group
  - NHS FV Acute Care Group.
- 2.2 There are also regular national groups which we support:
  - IJB Chief Officer Group
  - IJB Chief Officer / Scottish Government
  - IJB CFO group
- 2.3 The Adult Support and Protection Committee has met this week and the Public Protection Chief Officers group is scheduled.

## **Mobilisation Centre**

- 2.4 The HSCP has an established Covid-19 Incident Management Team, with representation from all partners, which is working to an agreed action plan. The HSCP convene a COVID-19 Control Room Huddle each weekday where updates are provided by services and capacity to respond to COVID-19 is co-ordinated.
- 2.5 The HSCP Mobilisation Centre was put in place on Monday 23 March 2020 and is based in Denny Town House. This is operational 7 days a week and is managed on a rota basis by a Duty Manager and Staffing Coordinator. There is an agency decision maker on call 7 days a week if required. The Mobilisation Centre operates as Bronze Command.
- 2.6 The Mobilisation Centre holds daily teleconferences for service updates and decisions taken where required for deploying staff to ensure safe service delivery.
- 2.7 A chronology, issues and decisions are recorded on a daily basis in both hard copy and electronic logs books. These logs will form learning and aid recovery and business continuity plans.

## **3. Covid-19 Mobilisation Plan Financial Returns**

- 3.1 Financial returns are currently being submitted to the Scottish Government on a weekly basis in a bid to capture the additional costs associated with covid-19. The returns reflect the financial implications of all actions currently being taken forward by the IJB as part of the local mobilisation plan to respond and support resilience during the course of the pandemic.
- 3.2 The total projected costs included in the most recent return for Falkirk IJB are significant and include potential unachieved savings (savings amount to 20% of the total projected costs and reflect a number of projects and initiatives that are expected to be delayed or unable to proceed due to covid-19).
- 3.3 The vast majority of the estimated costs are expected to be incurred in financial year 2020/21 and include provision of additional health and social care capacity in order to meet increased demand and cover staff sickness absence, delivery of ongoing PPE requirements, facilitation of timely discharge of patients from hospital and support for external providers (in terms of staffing issues and financial sustainability). However a small element of the estimated costs relates to the previous financial year 2019/20, largely due to increased GP prescribing costs following early reordering of repeat prescriptions during March in response to lockdown arrangements.
- 3.4 The cost estimates will be refined in conjunction with the Scottish Government in due course (it is anticipated that the projections will reduce). For financial planning purposes, it is assumed at this stage that all covid-19 related costs will be fully funded by the Scottish Government.

## 4. Care Homes

- 4.1 In response to COVID-19, we have focused on enhancing and augmenting the current support and care offered to those living and working within our care homes to protect our residents as well as their families and carers.
- 4.2 Community Nursing support all care homes as and when there is an identified need and request. There is daily contact with the care homes, supported by the Council Procurement and Contracts Team. Care homes provide a daily update report and appropriate actions are taken in response to any emerging issues. Over recent weeks, this has included additional support to some care homes in the area. More recently Public Health has convened a daily Care Home meeting, and we are working together to ensure the combined resources are supporting care home residents and staff.
- 4.3 The support provided to care homes is set out below.

### Clinical support and leadership through General Practice and Community Nursing

- 4.4 Three consultant Geriatricians have joined the Enhanced Community Team (ECT). They are working with the ECT to support patients presenting through the Covid19 triage hub who require a home assessment of their condition due to frailty or significantly limited mobility. They are looking to further refine the frailty pathways within the ECT to ensure patients have access to early comprehensive geriatric assessment. They will also be support care home residents by linking with the Care Home Liaison nursing team.
- 4.5 Advanced Nurse Practitioner's (ANP's) within GP practices will also be assisting GPs to support care homes through triage and visits as required.
- 4.6 Care Home Liaison Nurses and Care Home Practice Education Facilitator support care homes as this is their role and function. The Nurse Consultant for Palliative Care and Dr Paul Baughan have produced guidance and training information on verification of death, end of life care and end of life care planning.
- 4.7 Local proactive support arrangements for infection control, training, practice and supervision are in place.
- 4.8 There are 4 aspects of Public Health management:
  - Education prior to any event – sending out guidance on infection control and prevention and when to contact public health
  - Managing an outbreak, - testing etc immediate basic information collecting to determine an appropriate response from public health when a manager from a care home contacts the department

- Collecting appropriate information –funnel into the health board STAC (scientific and technical advisory cell)
- Resilience planning.

### Community Care Home Group

- 4.9 A Community Care Home Group has been set up to review and consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in community care homes across Forth Valley. The group will also support residents and staff with appropriate assessment, management and good palliative care in care homes.
- 4.10 The group will work in partnership to oversee activities to ensure:
- Information is available on the Key Information Summary (KIS) for each care home resident. This will support NHS 24, Covid hubs and unscheduled care staff in the delivery of care.
  - Care homes have access to 'Just in Case anticipatory medication' should it be required to support good end of life care.
- 4.11 The Care Home Liaison Group will ensure any urgent operational issues are responded to timeously whilst providing a governance framework and assurance to the Partnership. This has focused on enhancing and augmenting the current support and care offered to those living and working within our care homes. This is a multi-disciplinary team which consists of Clinical, Nursing and Adult social care staff. Where possible this multi-disciplinary group draws on our existing resources, and they will undertake the monitoring role should any care home be identified as requiring additional support to manage an outbreak and in extreme circumstances, work collaboratively to keep people safe.
- 4.12 The multi-disciplinary team have representation, or be able to draw on the relevant expertise, from the following professional groups:
- General Practitioners
  - Advanced Nurse Practitioners
  - Care Home Liaison Nurses
  - Adult Social Care (Council officers)
  - Social Care Officers
  - Palliative care
  - Infection control
  - pharmacy

## 5. Supporting Discharges

- 5.1 The partnership has made significant progress in working towards the national target of 0 people delayed in their discharge. There is daily monitoring of the number of people who are delayed and senior leadership involvement in decisions where this is necessary. The HSCP has considered the implications

of the legislative changes made under the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, to facilitate discharge, particularly for those people where the Adults with Incapacity legislation applies.

- 5.2 At 30 April, there are 20 people awaiting discharge, with 2 people in Forth Valley Royal Hospital (FVRH) with the remaining in the community hospitals.

### **Discharges to Care Homes**

- 5.3 The list of Care Home vacancies is reviewed daily through the Mobilisation Centre, and supported by the Council PCU Team.
- 5.4 However, the availability of care homes accepting new admissions has recently changed due in part to the advice that Covid-19 patients discharged from hospital to a care home should have given two negative tests before transfer. It is now expect all new admissions to be tested and isolated for 14 days in addition to the clear social distancing measures as the guidance sets out.
- 5.5 As a result, hospital discharges are experiencing delays, which accounts for the additional tests.

## **6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Testing**

- 6.1 The Board will be aware through the national press of the issues with the availability and distribution on PPE to front-line health and social care staff.
- 6.2 Access to PPE has been improving and we expect regular deliveries of PPE to the area. We are continuing to work with the Scottish Government and PPE providers recognising this is a national issue.
- 6.3 At all times the HSCP has worked to the available national guidance on the use of PPE. This has changed frequently as more information has become available on the spread of the virus, and the service has responded accordingly. This however has generated some confusion and uncertainty, at both a local and national level for staff about what should be used. The HSCP has worked closely with HR, Trade Unions, NHS FV to address these concerns and issue communications and guidance to staff.

### **Distribution**

- 6.4 The Scottish Government has asked HSCP Hubs to distribute PPE across all social care requirements from this week (27 April 2020).
- 6.5 We have now moved the PPE stocks to central stores in Grangemouth (Inchyra Depot). The stock will be delivered from there to both internal services/teams and external providers that have a base in Falkirk. If there is no provider base in Falkirk they will be able to pick up PPE, by arrangement only, from Central Stores.

- 6.6 Providers should continue to order PPE from their usual route and phone the NHS Triage (0300 303 3020) if they can't get supplies to arrange for a delivery. Indications are that this will change soon and they will be able to come directly to the Hub but details have not yet been confirmed.
- 6.7 If they are not sure they can contact the HSCP mailbox or dedicated phone number and the service will advise them. The mailbox is **PPEFalkirk@falkirk.gov.uk** and tel: 07483 452492. This is managed by Social Work Adult Services.
- 6.8 The HSCP is working closely with the Procurement and Commissioning Team and is effective in getting communications out to all our providers. The service is also working in partnership with SDS Forth Valley to support PA employers with PPE. This is working well so far and improving all the time.

### *Unpaid Carers and PPE*

- 6.9 The HSCP is working with Falkirk Carer's Centre to issue a guide on access to PPE for unpaid carers.
- 6.10 Falkirk Carer's Centre has agreed to provide a triage service for making referrals for PPE to the HSCP. This will enable them to pick up any other issues for carers and is in line with the NSS guidelines for issue of PPE to unpaid carers.
- 6.11 All requests and enquiries regarding PPE for unpaid carers can be referred to the Carer's Centre on 01324 611510. They will then discuss the requirements and refer on to the PPE team through email: [ppefalkirk@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:ppefalkirk@falkirk.gov.uk) or telephone: 07483452492
- 6.12 Scottish Government information announced on extending PPE access to unpaid and family carers and personal assistants can be found [here](#).

### *Communications*

- 6.13 We have written to home care service users asking them and their family members, to let us know immediately if they or someone in their household begin to show symptoms of COVID-19. Where this is known staff are told in advance of their visit. They are provided with appropriate PPE. Staff have been asked to alert managers as soon as they visit a service users who is displaying the signs of COVID-19 – high temperature and persistent dry cough.
- 6.14 We have written to home care staff about PPE guidance and published information on the Council website that they can access. This includes detailed information on using PPE; infection prevention and control and a film on putting on and removing PPE and what equipment should be used in what circumstances. This site is regularly updated and can be accessed using this link: [Employee Guidance](#)

## **Testing**

- 6.15 The HSCP has a process in place to give staff, including external providers, care homes and personal assistants access to testing following a decision matrix and prioritisation process with NHS FV Public Health team.

## **7. Third and Voluntary Sector Response**

- 7.1 An update on the Stronger Communities group work is included as a separate paper in this Information Bulletin.

## **8. Adult Support and Protection**

- 8.1 The Adult Support and Protection Committee met on 30 April 2020. This will ensure the profile of ASP continues to be raised for people who are at risk of harm.

## **9. Falkirk Council Support for People Team**

- 9.1 The Support for People Service has been established as part of the Local Authorities humanitarian response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Scottish Government support to people who are receiving shielding letters due to their medical conditions, or because they are self isolating or have other personal circumstances.
- 9.2 The service can assist people who need help to access food, prescriptions and other essential services. This service will be prioritised for those who have no other way to access these. The team will put people in touch with support providers in their community who can help. This includes voluntary groups.
- 9.3 This service is only for people who do not have other means of accessing these services. If people have family, friends, neighbours or other services assisting them, then the team is encouraging this to continue. People can call 0808 100 3161 and online at <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/covid19/support-for-people> and request support. Lines are open every day, including the weekend from 9am to 6:30pm.
- 9.4 As at 27 April 2020, the service has received 2085 enquiries. For those people who have received shielding letters from the NHS, the team has made 353 referrals to the Scottish Government for their weekly food parcel delivery. Of these referrals, 99 people have advised they will need help to move food parcels into their homes, and this support is being provided.

- 9.5 In total, 4500 people in the Falkirk area received shielding letters as they were recognised as being the most on need. By 27 April 2020 the team had contacted everyone on the list at least once. The team will continue to attempt to contact those still outstanding (c.500) by calls, then text and finally by letter to let them know what support is available from Falkirk Council and the voluntary sector locally.
- 9.6 As additional people are identified for shielding the team will contact them to make them aware of the service and to check whether they need support.

## **10. Drug and Alcohol Services**

- 10.1 The Social Inclusion Project (SIP) project will be work very closely with Community Alcohol and Drug Service (CADS) / CGL (Change Live Grow - new addiction support service) to provide additional support to those in need, particularly with medicines etc for those on opioid replacement therapy (ORT).
- 10.2 The extended Harm Reduction Service has been approved (on a temporary basis) to distribute IEP, this is an additional back up for Falkirk. We will use their mobile vehicle too, to reach the rural outlying villages.
- 10.3 CADS and CGL are working together to ensure that there is a package of support for those who are ill and cannot pick up. This is a challenge, as it is with all medicines, due to reduced Community Pharmacy capacity through illness etc. There is a contingency plan which lays out various levels that we can go to, to make sure that ORT is provided.
- 10.4 The CGL Harm Reduction Service is also prepared to seek and find those who are in need and provide necessary injecting equipment. They will still accept new clients but will operate more of a Harm Reduction model. This will mean services can identify those people most at risk (out of treatment) and try to keep them safe with Naloxone, signposting people to the foodbank etc.
- 10.5 Forth Valley Recovery Community has made themselves available to all of the services. There will be no Cafes open due to isolation rules. They have good Facebook footprint too, and this will prove invaluable. We are also advising people of the Safebase Service, the team offered additional manpower to support those affected yesterday, hopefully we can do all of this in a co-ordinated way .
- 10.6 Forth Valley Family Support are also supporting and liaising with services on behalf of families and will alert key workers as required.

## **11. Staff Wellbeing**

- 11.1 The HSCP is working with HR colleagues in the Council and NHS to develop and put in place a range of provisions to support staff during the pandemic. This includes:

- access to information and useful self-help guides
- HSCP virtual staff room that meets twice a week. This is encouraging colleagues to take a break to engage with colleagues that will support personal resilience and help people feel more connected. It is the chance to chat with other colleagues about anything and everything.
- HSCP dedicated staff wellbeing contact number where staff can call in if they are feeling anxious and need support. This went live on 27 April 2020.
- a resource pack for staff is being put together to provide staff with different coping mechanisms.

## 12. Public Information

### 12.1 NHS Inform

NHS Inform (the most useful and reliable source of public health information for Covid-19) has launched new digital services that will help the public. These include:

- a new chat bot: this lets people ask COVID questions directly on the website – it's available here <https://ask.nhsinform.scot/>
- a COVID webchat: currently, this is an option offered to people who call the COVID helpline
- the new NHS 24 COVID app, this is available to download from the App store and Google Play Store

Full information on support is available at the [NHS inform website](#).

### 12.2 HSCP website

The HSCP website has been updated with service information, including links to relevant services and information. The content is under regular review and updates provided as identified.

## 13. 2019/20 Draft Financial Outturn Position

- 13.1 In line with the projection previously reported to the IJB, an overspend of £3.58m is expected to be reported at 31 March 2020, subject to external audit. This is comprised of a £0.76m overspend in respect of adult social work services (largely due to pressures within home care and residential care) and a £2.82m overspend in respect of health services (primarily within primary care prescribing and set aside areas).

- 13.2 Both partners have confirmed risk sharing arrangements for 2019/20 and have agreed to make additional payments to the IJB which will deliver an overall breakeven position. The IJB year end process is now underway, with draft annual accounts are expected to be presented to the Audit Committee in June.
- 13.3 This Information Bulletin provides an overview of work being done by the HSCP, in collaboration with partners, to ensure people who use services, and their carers, and staff are supported in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Falkirk Integration Joint Board

## Information Bulletin Stronger Communities Update

### Executive Summary

The purpose of this information bulletin is to provide IJB members with an overview of the community mobilisation and partnership working that has taken place during the Covid19 Pandemic.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Local third sector service providers and community organisers came together quickly in their actions to offer assistance to support the wellbeing and health needs of Falkirk's residents. These groups and organisations formed and/or adapted quickly to constantly changing circumstances and formed a safe and effective public support response within the first few weeks of this crisis.
- 1.2 In line with our commitment to supporting community led health initiatives in an enabling and asset based approach, HSCP partners have supported the leadership and empowerment of the third sector to provide a front line community response. A Community Response Co-ordinating Group has been established and has led on offering support that created the conditions for community activity to grow:
  - The partnership set up an immediate and quick funding source for these groups and organisations
  - Falkirk Council CLD coordinated emergency food supplies and set up hubs to work with third sector foodbanks, pantries and the many new temporary food support projects that have opened specifically for this crisis
  - Falkirk Council established the Support for People helpline and chaired a dial-in coordinating group with partners to ensure we shared information and solved problems as they emerged from all operational aspects of the work
  - CVS Falkirk provided capacity building work, networking and coordination support as well as creating a Covid19 information and resources guide for the sector and partners to use

- Public Health has supported groups to set up and manage their new roles, created food hygiene and safety course for food projects, sourced a private supply of hand sanitiser for food projects and is helping food projects to create health and appetising recipes using the contents of a shielding food box or an emergency food parcel.

## 2. Third Sector Community Response

- 2.1 The first two weeks of this crisis saw residents, elected member and third sector organisations working in their immediate spheres to make sense of what was happening and work out what might be needed to support the people they cared for, be it their neighbours or their clients. It should be noted that a very high volume of new people and groups came together to collaborate during this period and that local social media groups drove the organising and volunteering recruitment during this time both quickly and effectively
- 2.2 By the end of April, there were over 20 **third sector community focused groups and organisations** undertaking direct local response services relating to Covid19 at neighbourhood and geographic levels. A range of Falkirk wide services also grew quickly to pick up referrals for more vulnerable individuals where PVG and higher levels of established risk management were already in place. The priorities of the community response groups are access to food and supplies, shopping and errands as well as maintaining social contact over the phone and virtually.
- 2.3 Many **third sector service providers** re-organised their services to operate from home wherever possible. These services are working directly with vulnerable client groups and have focused on ensuring contact with their existing clients and expanding to others in their group where possible. They have also offered one-off emergency provision and support while taking time to signpost or refer to local community focused organisations where and when appropriate.
- 2.4 CVS Falkirk provided capacity building support, networking, connecting and coordination support as well as creating a Covid19 information and resources guide for the sector and partners to use. Other partners also offer support in their respective areas of operational expertise and continue to work in partnership with the response.

## 3. Volunteering

- 3.1 We have been amazed at the community spirit driving forward initiatives to provide a caring and supportive role. Our most recent estimate is of **1200 people actively volunteering** in the area in Covid19 related roles. In addition, we have 1200 more offering and waiting to be called up when needed.

- 3.2 CVS Falkirk opened a Volunteer Falkirk phone line and email matching service on 31 March 2020. The phone line is staffed by volunteers who are mainly local professional Volunteer Coordinators currently working from home. They work to a daily volunteering opportunity list collated from our local research and the Volunteer Scotland Website.
- 3.3 A test tweet of the online registration form yielded 130 responses in 48 hours and within 3 weeks 345 volunteers had registered. This number has increased to over 800 with the addition of Falkirk's allocation of the 'Ready Scotland' campaign volunteers for Falkirk.
- 3.4 The figures below are directly linked to Covid19 and the response from local people wanting to volunteer in their local community immense.

Week ending	Volunteer Registrations	Welcome Email	Phone call	Signposted	Withdrawn
20.03.2020	10				
27.03.2020	160	31			
03.04.2020	176	287	121	92	3
10.04.2020	59	60	22	32	2
17.04.2020	*765	169	180	40	1
24.03.2020	107	**847	80		9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1277</b>	<b>1394</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>15</b>

- \* This number includes potential volunteers who registered through Ready Scotland.
- \*\* This number includes email sent to volunteers who had registered with both CVS Falkirk and Ready Scotland

#### 4. Ready Scotland Volunteers

- 4.1 This national service opened on 29 March 2020 encouraging people to sign up as *"a volunteer to tackle the coronavirus crisis and for offering to support your local charities and groups"*. The response was phenomenal with 594 people from Falkirk signing up in the first week (29.03.20 – 4.04.20) and while they received an email acknowledging their application they have not received any further information to help them get involved and volunteer their time in their community.
- 4.2 We are beginning to plan work with the local third sector on considering recovery phase needs for volunteers as face to face services will need to adapt to observe continued social distancing once they are re-opened.

### **Flexible, Adaptive, Connected and Reflective**

- 4.3 Bi-weekly Third Sector Covid19 Forums and weekly Community Food Network forums have offered a place for partners across sectors to learn about one another's activities, share problems to solve, and discuss emerging issues from the front line. Emerging concerns include:
- worsening mental health and wellbeing
  - support for young people
  - domestic violence
  - financial inequalities that impact on the cost of being able to be at home all day
  - access to online services and support
  - access to food.

## **5. Support for People Helpline**

- 5.1 The Support for People Team has been set up in response to the request from the Scottish Government to set up Humanitarian Assistance Centres. The service is manned by Falkirk Council. Support is available by phone and webform.
- 5.2 The service is available across Falkirk Council area to those who need it most. Priority is, however, given to those identified by the Health Service as the most vulnerable. Support includes provision of food, medicines and basic supplies/services.
- 5.3 Since the service launched on 25 March 2020, there have been 2,508 contacts. 1,440 people received advice at the time and did not require further support. 1068 people required support from one or more services. The majority of onward referrals are supported by the third sector and community groups. Details of contacts and referrals are provided in Appendix 1.

## **6. Covid19 Community Action Fund**

- 6.1 On 23 March, Falkirk HSCP and Falkirk Council launched the Covid-19 Community Action Fund. The scheme is supported by HSCP Partnership Funds previously allocated to Falkirk Council to enhance health and wellbeing within communities. The fund was then enhanced by funds previously allocated to the Falkirk Council's Holiday Food Fund and also the Council Community Grant Scheme. The total budget for 2020/2021 is approximately £110k.
- 6.2 The fund contributes towards activity that organisations are planning to carry out or are currently carrying out within the local community in response the Covid19 pandemic. Appendix 2 provides a summary of funds allocated as of 28 April, by ward.

- 6.3 The mobilisation of this fund was swift. The Scottish Government have now allocated funds to support community activity. Falkirk's Covid19 Community Action Fund will continue to be used where Scottish Government, or other funding is not available.

## **7. Falkirk Volunteer Expenses Fund**

- 7.1 From the 1 April 2020, community organisations have been able to apply directly to a volunteer expenses fund, administered by CVS. The fund is supported by £20k Partnership Funds, which has been matched by Falkirk Council.
- 7.2 This fund intends to reduce the administrative burden on community groups and speed up the process of volunteers being able to claim expenses. In addition, by paying for volunteer expenses directly, we are able to effectively track the overwhelming contribution of communities during this time.

## **8. Emergency Food Project**

- 8.1 Falkirk Council, CVS Falkirk and the HSCP have been working together with local third sector providers to deliver an emergency food project across the area. Although this project is supported and facilitated by agencies, it is important to note that the third sector providers are playing a critical role in the provision of food to people most in need across the Falkirk area. For local food providers providing pre-cooked meals for the most vulnerable people, Environmental Health and NHS Forth Valley are providing an additional package of support.
- 8.2 There are 3 Temporary Emergency Community Food Centres in Falkirk Council area, which are co-ordinated by Community Learning & Development staff. Food is delivered to these locations from Fare Share and is also supplemented via direct purchase from Asda by Falkirk Council. The food is then distributed to 16 local third sector community food providers, who distribute food boxes to vulnerable households. This commenced during the week beginning 6 April, however local groups mobilised and were planning and providing initial support before that time.
- 8.3 During the first 2 weeks of the project, 555 households received food boxes, feeding over 2,500 people. Demand for emergency food boxes continues to increase, with an estimated 450 households in Week 3 of the project. The project is costing £10-£12k each week, however increased demand will increase these costs could increase to £15k each week. This is supported via Scottish Government and Falkirk Council funds.

- 8.4 There are in the region of 4,800 children currently eligible for free school meals within the Falkirk Council area. Third sector partners maintain a critical role in the delivery of a school meal, underpinned by partner agencies. Work is currently ongoing to consider options for ongoing provision during the summer holiday period.
- 8.5 The main challenges ahead will be to ensure that the community food points have sufficient food to meet the increasing needs of their local vulnerable households who are experiencing food in-security. Emerging trends suggest that more families are requesting emergency help as a direct result of issues relating to changes in employment, causing financial hardship.

## 9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The third sector and community response to the Covid19 pandemic has been outstanding. HSCP partners have worked closely to help the sector effectively upscale capacity in communities.
- 9.2 We know that the social, health and economic impact of the pandemic will continue beyond the immediate crisis. We are starting to look at planning exit strategies with temporary support services and developing a recovery plan with communities.
- 9.3 What has become clear through this process is the great collaboration across Falkirk is what has driven and supported the high quality and fairly co-ordinated support response. Likewise we've now seen how the third sector is uniquely placed to support very vulnerable people and communities through both the crisis and its continuing impacts. The increased community capital and connections of trust build up by community groups with residents over the past 8 weeks is an excellent foundation to build on.