



ADDICTIONS SUPPORT & COUNSELLING
Working across Forth Valley
www.asc.me.uk

Addictions Support & Counselling (ASC) – Forth Valley

12 month report on the Forth Valley Recovery Community (FVRC)

1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020



1. Introduction

This report describes the main activities of the Forth Valley Recovery Community (FVRC) for the financial year, 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

2. Background

The FVRC began in 2015 as a geographically based community of people who are committed to making recovery from addictive behaviour a reality. It is a community that hosts weekly events and regular activities that supports people in various stages of recovery from substance misuse. FVRC is open to anyone who is affected by substance misuse and that the main requirements for anyone attending a recovery event or activity is that he or she must be drug and alcohol free on the day that they attend, they must not engage in any drug seeking behaviour and that individuals must show respect to each other at all times. Attendance is purely voluntary and the FVRC has been developed to complement substance misuse treatment and support services and to encourage involvement with mutual aid: the FVRC is not an alternative for service led and individual professional interventions.

- 3.** The recovery community's structure is that it is an unincorporated membership organisation. It is well established and is well known across local substance misuse services. The FVRC is not a service; it is a geographical based community of common interest and it is run on a day to day basis by its members. On behalf of the FVRC, partner agencies and the FVADP, ASC employs a team of development workers to help promote and develop the recovery community. As the FVRC currently has no legal identity, ASC manages the community's financial and administrative affairs on behalf of the community.

4. Staffing

In 2017 there were two dedicated development worker posts funded by the FVADP and employed by ASC to promote and develop the recovery community.

- In January 2018, one new part time post (24 month fixed contract 0.5 WTE), of Assistant Recovery Development Worker was created through Falkirk Alcohol & Drug Partnership funding. This post became a fulltime post in August 2018 and was regraded in November 2019 as the post-holder achieved SVQ level III qualification. This post was due to expire in Jan 2020 however additional funding from FVADP has extended the contract of this post until the end of August 2020.
- In August 2018, further two Assistant Recovery Development Worker posts (24 month fixed contract 0.5 WTE) were created through the Clackmannanshire & Stirling Alcohol Drug Partnership. These posts became fulltime post in January 2019 and were regraded in November 2019 as the post-holders achieved SVQ level III qualification. These posts are due to expire in August 2020 however operational savings achieved in 2019 would enable us to extend the terms until November 2020

- A further post (18 month fixed contract 0.6 WTE), was established in July 2019. This post is due to expire in December 2020

The post-holders are listed in appendix one of this report.

5. Main activities

Since the FVRC inception it has focused on two main aims – creating teams of peer supporters and community volunteers, and developing a network of recovery cafes across Forth Valley. Peer supporters are individuals who have lived experience of their own substance misuse, and who are at least one year free from problematic alcohol use and/or non-prescribed drug use & misuse. Community volunteers are individuals who, similarly have lived experience of problematic substance misuse, who are at least 6 months free from problematic alcohol use and/or non-prescribed drug use & misuse. Peer supporters and community volunteers may also be people affected by a loved one’s substance misuse. Both teams of volunteers and peer supporters receive in-house training to equip them with the skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities. In common parlance such individuals are usually described as being substance free and stable in recovery. Through deploying peer supporters they can act as a bridge between substance misuse treatment and support services, and recovery activities, mutual aid and self-help resources in the community. Recovery cafes are held on a weekly basis and they are community based, alcohol and drug free environments that offer recovery support in an informal setting. There are now seven recovery cafes across Forth Valley and each café has three main aims; a) to improve the health & wellbeing of those who attend, b) to provide social support through several leisure and recreational activities and c) to introduce attenders to the benefits of mutual aid and twelve step fellowships in pursuing recovery from substance misuse.

6. In 2015/16 the two Recovery Development Workers, ASC and the FVADP agreed to set five main objectives for the fledgling recovery community. These are
 - Increase peer support opportunities within addictions services.
 - Develop a range of community based recovery cafés and activities to enhance service engagement and promote personal recovery.
 - Establish a Forth Valley Recovery Community (FVRC) identity and create a social media platform and web access.
 - Create a training and personal development pathway for peer supporters and recovery volunteers.
 - Introduce the electronic collection, storage and dissemination of all relevant records

These five objectives have been achieved and they are now discussed as follows:

7. Increasing peer support opportunities within services

The development of the current group of 20 peer supporters and community volunteers has been central to the community's success in providing specialist, compassionate support from experts by lived experience. The group of peer supporters and volunteers have developed their voice and influence and have arguably, helped to challenge and reduce societal and institutional stigma in Forth Valley. Peer supporters and community volunteers are deployed across Forth Valley to offer lived experience, a listening ear and to demonstrate that recovery is possible to people that are accessing addictions and support services. The aim is to engage with those who have little or no knowledge of recovery, mutual aid, the recovery community or a wider support network and to develop a three-way engagement process between individuals, the supporting agency and the recovery community. Training to become a peer supporter runs over six full day sessions and three days to become a community volunteer.

The success of programme of deploying peer supporters within partner organisations is reflected in the ongoing and ever-increasing demand for peer support slots. We have, at times struggled to meet the demand. The success of the pathway of personal development, education and improved employability has meant that the number of peer supporters can decrease as these individuals move on to employment or further education. In the past year there have been no reports of community peer supporters falling away due to relapse. Over the last year peer supporters have been deployed to the following venues:

- ASC offices Falkirk 12 Step Information Group and Recovery Support Group.
- Castings Hostel.
- Springkerse House
- DWP Job Centre Plus Falkirk.
- SMS Titration Clinic at St Ninian's Medical Practice.
- Forth Valley Royal Hospital.
- Falkirk Salvation Army.

8. Develop a range of recovery cafes and recovery activities

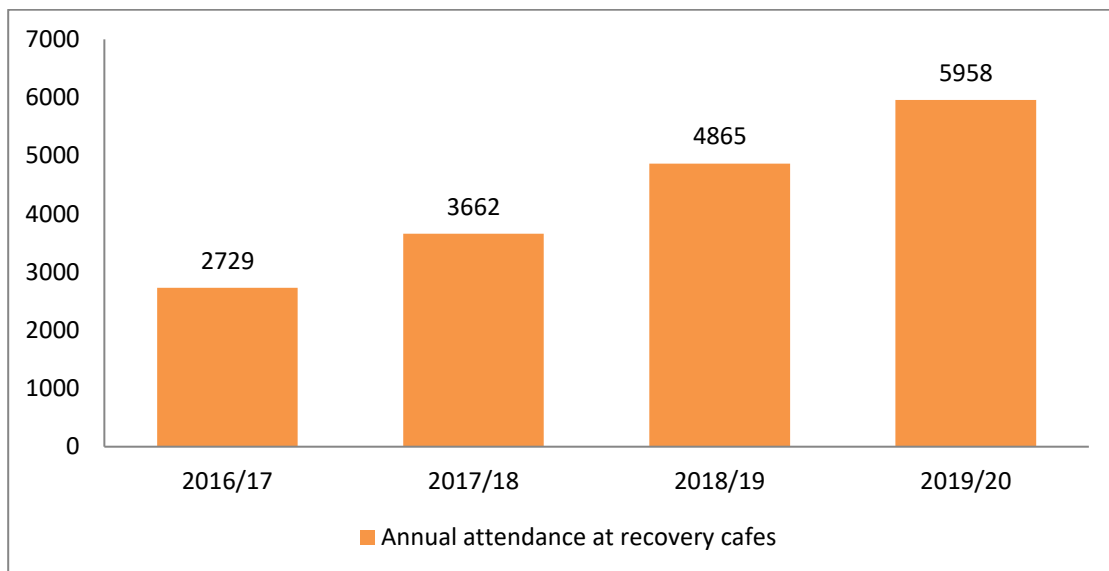
October 2018 saw the opening of the sixth café, in Sauchie and the following month saw the development of the seventh recovery café in Forth Valley – the Women's Recovery Café in the Raploch, Stirling. Three of the cafes are in the Falkirk Council area, two are in the Stirling Council are and two are in Clackmannanshire. The cafes are

- Monday 16:00 – 21:00 The Gate, Alloa
- Tuesday 10:30 – 13:00 St Mark's Church, Drip Road, Raploch, Stirling
- Wednesday 13:00 – 16:30 The Tryst Community Centre, Stenhousemuir
- Thursday 12:00 – 16:00 Sauchie Recovery Café, Mar Place, Sauchie
- Friday 13:00 – 18:00 Mayfield Community Centre, Stirling

- Saturday 10:30 – 15:00 Weekend Recovery Café, ASC’s Falkirk premises
- Sunday 12:00 - 16:00 Rainbow House, Grangemouth

9. The cafes are drug and alcohol free environments that provide support for recovery in an informal setting. Each café provides some recreational activities from music and entertainment to home cooking, gym based circuit training and Tai Chi, Yoga and holistic therapies. The attendance figures for the cafes have shown steady and sustained growth; for the past year they are as follows;

Cafes 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020 ¹	Attendance	Average weekly attendance ²
Alloa Monday	940	20
Stirling Tuesday Women’s Cafe	470	10
Stenhousemuir Wednesday	821	17
Sauchie Thursday	707	15
Stirling Friday	1640	34
Falkirk Saturday	955	20
Grangemouth Sunday	425	9
Totals	5958	18



¹ All recovery cafes were closed due to government guidance relating to Covid-19 pandemic from 18th March (inclusive)

² Accounting for 2 public holiday closures and two weeks closed due to Covid-19.

10. Recovery Ramblers and Recovery in the Wild



These two groups provided several outdoor activities for recovery community members during the past year including the popular health walks and hill climbing, to conservation work in partnership with Callander's Landscape and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. These activities provide opportunities to develop group cohesion, social integration and to contribute towards improved health and well-being.

There are three regular Recovery Ramblers' walks during the week – Stirling on a Tuesday, and Alloa and Falkirk on a Wednesday. The FVRC volunteers who lead these activities have all been trained as walk leaders by Paths for All. (Paths for All is a partnership of organisations that are committed to promoting walking for health).

11. Award winning community

FVRC won the SVE Inspire Volunteering Award for 'Sport and Physical Activity' for the Mayfield Recovery Café. FVRC is delighted to have won this award, recognising the effort and passion of FVRC volunteers to develop a series of sports and fitness activities every Friday to benefit the whole community's health and well-being.

12. Fitness Fridays

An ongoing, productive partnership with Active Stirling inspired the beginning of this group in October 2018; community members have benefited from weekly fitness sessions, including curling, badminton, five-a-side football, soft archery, indoor climbing and basketball. Special thanks to



Development Officer Tom Gebbie of Active Stirling for his energy, enthusiasm and professionalism when working with FVRC.

13. Tai Chi and Qigong

Recovery Development Worker Joe Doherty runs two sessions every week, of this martial art with proven health benefits. Tai Chi and Qigong can improve mobility and coordination while reducing stress and anxiety. This activity has proven to be an excellent way of building strength and fitness to enable community members to engage with Recovery Rambles and Recovery in the Wild events.

14. Circuit training fitness

FVRC runs two Circuit training sessions per week (Stenhousemuir and Mayfield cafes). These sessions are run by community members that have been trained and qualified with Active Stirling's kind assistance. These sessions are tailored to meet the needs of members in early recovery to improve general fitness levels and to build strength for Recovery in the Wild and Fitness Friday sessions.

15. Fitness sessions in partnership with Active Stirling and Change Grow Live (CGL)

Another exciting development in the last year has been the new fitness sessions on the Raploch Community Campus in partnership with Active Stirling and CGL. Stuart Cairns and Lynette Smith facilitated these popular women's and unisex sessions. We look forward to developing these partnerships further to provide health and well-being opportunities for our community members.

16. Establish a Forth Valley Recovery Community (FVRC) identity and create a social media platform and web access

The FVRC has an established and recognised logo and a consistent presence on social media through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. There is an impressive stream of posts including several photographs of outdoor activities, events and training courses and there are links to other recovery resources. The social media presence has become an important focus of the community and it has proved to be an effective means of communication within and across the community. Thanks to the tireless and creative work of Mikey Dickerson and James Sludden there has been rapid growth in the number of followers on Facebook over the past year up from **399 to 1214**. The Twitter account has doubled from **295 to 595** followers and Instagram **498** followers. We are currently in discussion with a web developer to enhance the content of the FVRC webpage and connect online calendar of events and blogs.

17. Forth Valley Recovers Smartphone App

Working closely with the Clackmannanshire and Stirling ADP, the Recovery Development Team alongside FVRC peer supporters and volunteers all played an important and influential role in the design and development of this important app. It provides unparalleled ease of use

for Forth Valley residents to be able to access all the important information related to finding appropriate support for themselves or their loved ones who may be affected by addiction. Several community members shared their own written stories of recovery within the app to help to reach out and offer hope to newcomers.

18. Create a training and personal development pathway for peer supporters and recovery volunteers.

It has long been one of the Community's aims to develop suitable pathways for people in recovery who could progress from contemplating a career in the caring professions to acquiring suitable experience and then begin relevant employment.

Since the Community began this has been an area of notable success with four securing employment through Change, Grow Live and five who have formed the Forth Valley Recovery Development Team located within ASC. Two community members have become employed with North Lanarkshire's Recovery Development Team, also within ASC and another member is now in post with Resilience Learning Partnership (Clackmannanshire). The UK SMART Recovery Community Coordinator for Central Scotland is an FVRC member, and another is employed with Cyrenian's Hive Project, another works as a part-time carer whilst completing his university studies. Another community member has returned to a job in mechanical engineering and is regularly travelling around Europe as a highly skilled worker.

Two FVRC members have continued to work in the voluntary sector as peer supporters for organisations including FDAMH, The Hepatitis C Trust and the British Liver Trust

As many as ten community members have gone on to further education at Forth Valley College and universities, thus enabling them to continue their recovery, personal and professional development and chances of future employment.

The significant development and success, of the personal development pathway for peer supporters and community volunteers has developed something of a retention problem which has at times impacted our capacity to provide peer support; this only highlights the need for continued publicity and awareness growth within our population and a reliance on a clear pathway for new community members coming from partner addictions and support services in Forth Valley.

19. Change, Grow, Live (CGL)

October 2019 saw a significant change in the provision of addiction support services in Forth Valley. CGL won the contract to provide the support previously provided by Signpost and ASC. FVRC team has welcomed CGL and worked to build upon already well-established relationships. FVRC is excited to work alongside CGL and to work together to best support the Forth Valley population.

20. DWP

Members of the Recovery Development team have worked closely with the DWP in Clackmannanshire to review the process of supporting individuals affected by harmful substance-use in their applications for universal credit through journal writing.

21. Introduce the electronic collection, storage and dissemination of all relevant records

All FVRC data is now collated and stored electronically. This has been a significant achievement as previous monitoring reports have reported that capturing accurate data is time consuming and the successful management of that must be incorporated within effective time management practices.

An additional report about FVRC development and improvement plan will be submitted separately.

Other significant events and achievements

22. Mutual aid support – Self Management and Recovery Training (SMART)

From one SMART meeting in 2015 there are now seven weekly meetings across Forth Valley. The Recovery Development Team has been instrumental in promoting and encouraging FVRC members to consider SMART as a means of supporting members' recovery. Currently there are sixteen trained community member SMART facilitators with ten of them who are active at any one time. In line with last year, on average there are seven people attending each of the seven weekly SMART meetings. (As with most statistics pertaining to FVRC activities and support, figures given refer to attendances rather than individuals as some people may elect to attend more than one meeting or visit more than one café in any given week).

23. Residential Rehabilitation Peer Support Group

The FVRC has not received referrals through this pathway during the reporting period however the FVRC and the RDWs continue to be willing provide expert support to any individuals who are preparing to be admitted to residential treatment. This group has been replaced by the 12 Step Information Group.

24. Women's Café

Recovery Development Worker Becky Wood opened the women only café in November 2018 and it has grown steadily since this time. The café holds yoga classes, arts and crafts, cookery classes and holds a SMART Recovery meeting and fitness session after yoga on Thursday. The development of the Women's café has been a significant success with steady growth in numbers of women attending and the breadth and scope of community development and activities the group has organised over the past year. They have formed an excellent relationship with the library at Stirling Community Campus which has lead to visits from two renowned Scottish writers Alan Bissett and Lin Anderson. They have created a cinema group,

arts and crafts group, music group and the sense of ownership and dedication of the community volunteers at this café has been exemplary.

25. Social policy developments

On behalf of the FVRC, the Recovery Development Team continued to contribute towards social policy developments such as liaising with the FVADP, their membership of the Falkirk ADP, the Clackmannanshire and Stirling ADP, Forth Valley Drug Related Death Strategic and Adverse review groups. Stirling Council's multi-agency steering group in response to the spike in drug related deaths and NFOs (near fatal overdoses) in the Stirling area, and Clackmannanshire Criminal Justice Partnership and at a national level in submitting response to the Scottish Government's refresh of its drug strategy.

The Recovery Development Team Leader, Tom Bennett joined the Board of Directors of Alcohol Focus Scotland, the national charity working to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm. This has helped to raise the profile of FVRC yet further on a national platform.

26. Scottish Drug Deaths Crisis Conference

Team Leader Tom Bennett and Recovery Development worker Becky Wood were invited to speak at this widely-publicised and televised event, co-hosted by Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership and the Scottish Government. Their presentation highlighted the continued change in attitude to experts by lived experience and FVRC's place as one of Scotland's most respected and high profile recovery communities. STV News covered Tom and Becky's story and made a short news feature with a visit to the Mayfield café where they spoke to, and interviewed, many community members.

27. The Recovery Worker, Expert by Lived Experience and the Drug Death Task Force

The Drugs Deaths Taskforce was established in July 2019 by the Minister for Public Health and Sport, supported by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, to tackle the rising number of drug deaths in Scotland.

The primary role of the taskforce is to co-ordinate and drive action to improve the health outcomes for people who use drugs, reducing the risk of harm and death.³

Becky Wood, Recovery Development Worker sits on this group as an expert by lived and professional experience. She is an excellent representative of FVRC and the Recovery Development Team and is in regular contact with the DDTF members including the group's chair Prof. Catriona Matheson and the Minister for Public Health and Sport Joe Fitzpatrick.

28. The Recovery Worker and the UK Parliament

In May 2019 Scott Ferguson was invited to advise the UK Parliament Scottish Affairs Committee Inquiry on Drugs. This was another significant reminder of Scott's personal and

³ <https://www.gov.scot/groups/drug-deaths-task-force/>

professional development since he joined the community, and the growing influence of expertise by people with lived experience.

29. Recovery Olympics

On the 5th July 2019 at the Mayfield Community Centre in Stirling, the fourth annual Forth Valley Recovery Olympics was held on a relatively rain free afternoon. The Recovery Community is grateful to the FVADP, Active Stirling and other partners who supported the event. The Forth Valley Recovery Olympics has become a major event on the calendar of recovery communities in Scotland and once again the turnout was very impressive with approximately 250 people attended on the day with 16 teams registered, including recovery communities and services from across Forth Valley, Linlithgow, Fife, West Lothian, Glasgow, Aberdeen and South Lanarkshire. Congratulations must go to Active Stirling who were the Gold Medal Winners on the day.



This was a free event designed to bring together workers, people in recovery and their families. The FVRC volunteers worked hard on the day to provide everyone with refreshments and lunch and to make sure that it was an enjoyable and a memorable event. Without doubt this was a successful and enjoyable event as witnessed through the many photographs and smart phone films taken on the day. A significant

development made with a view to expanding the capacity for future Recovery Olympics, FVRC have booked Forthbank Stadium with the kind assistance of our partners at Active Stirling.



30. National Recovery Walk

In 2019 the walk was held in Inverness on the 21 September. Thanks to the generosity of the FVADP, a coach was hired to transport Recovery Community members to the walk. Other people made their own travelling arrangements and some Forth Valley substance misuse workers also attended making over fifty people from the Forth Valley area present.

31. 12 Step Information Group

This group runs every Monday morning in ASC's offices to help introduce community members to the 12 Step program, to provide accurate information about 12 Step fellowships and to help encourage involvement in mutual aid.

32. Christmas party

The FVRC Christmas party 2019 was another memorable success. Held in the Recovery Café premises in Sauchie town hall there were over approximately 75 people who attended with everyone sitting down for a first class, three course Christmas meal prepared on site by our Community Volunteers, with peer supporter Stephen Feighan acting as head chef in the kitchen.



33. Paul Mooney

FVRC would like to take this opportunity to extend its heartfelt thanks to its friend, colleague and biggest fan, Paul Mooney. FVRC wishes Paul the very best in his retirement. Paul's role as Addictions Support and Counselling Chief Executive gave him responsibility to provide line management, guidance and support to the Recovery Development Team Leaders and workers since its inception in 2015. A challenging role, yet one that Paul took in his stride and we believe he took enormous pride in helping to oversee the growth and development of FVRC. Paul's role in providing expert support and working with FVADP, Falkirk ADP and Clackmannanshire and Stirling ADP was fundamental in ensuring that FVRC has become an example of best practice that many local authorities and health boards regard with great respect.



34. Press Coverage

The community works to foster good relationships with both local and national press outlets in order to help to challenge stigma. One particularly good piece was published by the Alloa Advertiser in July 2019:

NEWS

29th July 2019

Drug deaths: Love and care can stop the cycle

By Rajmund Bakonyi | [@thecosmicraj](#)



Becky Wood (front left) with members of the café at Sauchie Hall

35. Financial costs

Due to the situation with Covid 19 pandemic, the last time ASC managed to process accounts related to income & expenditure through Tindell, Grant & Co was on 22 February 2020. As such the presented figure of annual cost is an estimate.

The combined budget for employing the six recovery workers, running the seven recovery cafes and, eight SMART meetings, disseminating information and providing regular events and activities was approximately £193K (175K for 11 months).

We anticipate that the total cost of running the FVRC activities, based on the same volume and frequency and with the current capacity of the team, would be 230K per annum. (Approx. £19k per month)

For 2020 – 2021 and given the reduced operational expenditure, during the lock down period between April and July 2020, for items like: staff travel, Café rents, Café provisions, volunteer and peer supporters travel and stationary, we expect that the total cost of running the FVRC activities, based on the same volume and frequency and with the current capacity of the team, would be 218K. (Approx. £18K per month)

36. In remembrance

We would like to acknowledge that a number of community members have sadly passed away over the past year. By no means an exhaustive list, but some of our well-known and missed community members are Tracy Polly, Lisa Kelly and Dan McConnell.

37. Conclusion

The past year has been an exciting time with continued growth in the community's size and influence. It has also been a period of consolidation after a period of rapid expansion with two new cafes opening late 2018. The community holds a recovery café and at least one mutual aid meeting held every day. The Recovery Olympics were once again resounding success and the influence of the FVRC on social policy continued with one of the Recovery Development Workers joining the Drug Death Task Force.

Narek Bido
Chief Executive

Tom Bennett
Recovery Development Team Leader

Addictions Support & Counselling (ASC) – Forth Valley

28 May 2020

Appendix One: FVRC April 2019 Forth Valley Recovery Development Team

Team Leader	Tom Bennett
Recovery Development Worker	Becky Wood
Assistant Recovery Development Workers	Scott Ferguson
	Mikey Dickerson
	James Sludden
	Joe Doherty