Choose Life Expenditure 2015/16

1. Introduction
At the June 2016 of the FHWA members asked for a short report on Choose Life (suicide prevention) funded projects. This report gives an update on the funding and outcomes for these projects and provides information on the recent work of Fife’s Choose Life (suicide prevention) Group.

2. Background
FHWA’s Health Inequalities Funding supports two projects that have suicide prevention theme. In addition FHWA also funds a part-time Development Officer and gives a small amount of funding to enable awareness raising across Fife. The table below details FHWA suicide prevention costs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FHWA Suicide Prevention Funds</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fife Adult Self Harm Project operated by Penumbra – to cover staffing costs</td>
<td>£42,000 per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samaritans – Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy branches – to cover branch publicity, volunteer training and volunteer expenses</td>
<td>£12,000 per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part-time Choose Life Development Officer to cover salary and budget for awareness raising</td>
<td>£30,000 per annum</td>
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</tbody>
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3. Fife Adult Self Harm Project
The Fife Adult Self Harm Project operated by Penumbra is based in Dunfermline. The funding provided by the Alliance covers staffing costs for two staff. The Project also has two volunteer befrienders.

The Project is also in receipt of funding from The Robertson Trust and clients have carried out fundraising activities as well.

The Project provides an early response service to people aged 18+ who have been involved in a recent self-harm incident, based on prompt telephone communication. Clients’ support needs are then established and they are put in contact with appropriate services in the area. Informal person-centred 1:1 support sessions in a safe, non-judgemental environment are provided where appropriate. In addition “wrap around” services (coffee morning, social activities, drop in and group work) are provided for individuals on the waiting list. Awareness raising sessions and training are offered to increase the skill base of staff and individuals who are in contact with people who self-
In 2015/16 the Project received 83 referrals. These were mainly self referrals. Referrals were also received from the NHS, Social Work and other Voluntary Services. 76% of those referred were female and 24% were male. This represents an increase on the number of male referrals in the previous year. The majority of referrals were aged between 15 and 34, however the Project has noticed an increase in the number of referrals aged 35 and over. During this year the Project’s waiting list has increased and the Project has noted that those on the waiting list have a higher level of need.

During the year 536 individual support sessions to were offered to 53 people. Supported people used different “wrap around” services on 40 occasions in the year.

Evaluation forms and I.ROC (Individual Recovery Outcomes Counter) completed by clients show that their self harming behaviour and suicidal ideation are reduced significantly and that all 12 indicators on the I.ROC showed increases with the highest increases being in ‘valuing myself’, ‘social network’, ‘hope for the future’ and ‘mental health’. Clients regularly report that they value the service’s non-judgemental environment, the support to develop new coping strategies and the opportunity to meet people with similar issues.

The Project workers delivered training and awareness raising sessions to 100 people (one full day training on two occasions and awareness raising sessions on five occasions) in the year. Based on feedback, the majority of participants reporting increased knowledge of self harm and confidence in working with people who self harm.

4. **Samaritans**

There are two Samaritans branches within Fife, in Dunfermline and in Kirkcaldy. Both the Samaritans branches are funded towards their publicity, volunteer training and volunteer expenses costs.

Publicity can be in the form of newspaper and radio advertising, information events, and general distribution of publicity materials. Representatives from both branches often share an information stand with the Choose Life development officer at events such as Fife College Freshers Week events.

Training is provided to volunteers on recruitment and throughout their time with the organisation including attendance at national conferences. Volunteer expenses can include taxi fares home after late night sessions on the phoneline or specialist equipment to enable blind volunteers to take calls.

During this year the Samaritans branches have formed a partnership with the NHS Fife Unscheduled Care Assessment Team (UCAT) whereby the Samaritans offer a phoneline support service to patients discharged from UCAT with no planned psychiatric follow-up. When the UCAT staff discharge a patient they will ask them if they would like Samaritans to call them in the few days following the assessment. If the patient accepts the offer, they are given Samaritans materials and their contact details are taken – name and number, along with the time they would like to receive the Samaritan volunteer’s call. These details are relayed to a dedicated mobile phone which is held by a Samaritan volunteer. The information is then passed on to either the Kirkcaldy or Dunfermline branch for the call to be made. The patient’s details are then erased from

harm.
the mobile phone. If the first call gets no response, a Samaritan volunteer will arrange for another call to be made a week later. If again there is no response, the Samaritan volunteer will schedule another call to be made a month later. Once contact has been made, ongoing support can be offered if the patient feels that it would be helpful.

On average 25 people per month are discharged from UCAT without follow-up. From the start of this partnership, an average of 16 referrals have been made from this group each month. Of those, 80% are being reached. With Samaritans making the initial call, the client doesn’t have to take the difficult step of contacting the service themselves. Patients have sent expressions of appreciation for this service, and overall feedback has been very positive. The project is having a much bigger impact and is receiving more responses than had been envisaged.

It appears that this is the first time this kind of activity has been developed between Samaritans and other organisations. There is scope for similar work to be developed with other organisations within Fife, for example Police officers within Fife are currently in discussion with Samaritans to develop something similar.

5. **Choose Life Development Officer post and suicide prevention publicity budget**

The Choose Life Development Officer supports the suicide prevention work that it carried within Fife. Providing a link officer role to the funded projects, supporting the work of the multi-disciplinary steering group and organising information events and other publicity.

During 2015/16 information stands were held at the Culture of Kindness and Diversity Week conferences held in the Lochgelly Centre; freshers events at the Fife College campuses in Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes; Dunfermline Advice Hub and St Andrews Public Library in conjunction with the Mental Health Focus Group; and at the Fife College mental wellbeing events in December and March.

In addition Choose Life advertising was arranged on the Courier website; on Fife Stagecoach buses and at Kirkcaldy, Inverkeithing and Dunfermline Town railway stations; and in the matchday programme of East Fife Football Club. In collaboration with East Fife Supporters’ Trust a postcard was designed featuring the logos of all four professional football clubs in Fife and key suicide prevention messages. These were distributed at the home games on Saturday 12th September at the end of Suicide Prevention Week. Choose Life materials were also distributed to main libraries, pharmacies, GP surgeries, Fife Council local offices and community centres in the run up to Suicide Prevention Week. A new updated version of the popular leaflet ‘Keeping Connected Fife’ was produced and a version for younger people developed.

The Choose Life Development Officer delivered a SuicideTALK session for FMC Technologies in Dunfermline.

In November 2015 a remembrance event for those bereaved by suicide was held in St Columba’s Parish Church in Glenrothes. Although attendance was low those that were there found it beneficial. Planning is under way for a similar event in 2017.

The Choose Life steering group met three times during the year. In addition a Locations of Concern meeting, which takes place annually, was held in September 2015 to which representatives of the management teams of the Tay and Forth Road Bridges, Transport Scotland, Network Rail, the RNLI, Royal Life Saving Society UK, and Police Scotland were
invited.

In Mary 2016 a successful ‘Engaging Organisations’ event was held at the Town House in Kirkcaldy which was well attended by colleagues from Fife Social Work Department, Police Scotland, NHS Fife and the voluntary sector. The objective of the event was to be thought provoking for workers in Fife partnership organisations about how they can engage with the suicide prevention agenda in their various roles. The evaluation of the event showed that it met its objective as indicated by the following quotes from attendees:

An excellent event with a good balance between strategic initiatives alongside practical advice.

I thought it was thought provoking, informative and a good way to showcase all the good work in Fife.

6. Recommendations
Members of the Fife Health and Wellbeing Alliance are asked to:
• note the progress made by each of these projects
• continue to support the work of Fife’s Choose Life Suicide Prevention Group

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