

WithYou in Scotland

Impact report 2022–2023



we are
withyou

Our values



Non-judgemental

No matter your story or background- we are **WithYou**.



Person-centred

Whether you choose harm reduction, abstinence or recovery- we are **WithYou**.



Recovery focussed

When you choose recovery- we are **WithYou**.



Compassionate

We work with people on their own goals, whether that's staying safe and healthy, making small changes or stopping an unwanted habit altogether. We give people support in a way that's right for them either face to face in their local service, community or online.



Professional

We provide a free and confidential service without judgement to more than 100,000 people a year.



Determined

We use our expertise to improve the help available and raise awareness around drugs, alcohol and mental health so that more people can get support.

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A message from our Chief Executive



Though 2022/23 was a challenging year in many ways, it was also one of great successes. The scale of the issues we exist to tackle is both significant and growing.

We know mental health problems are increasing at an alarming rate, causing unprecedented strain on existing services, and that drug and alcohol-related deaths in Scotland remain at crisis levels. These are all complex, deep-rooted problems, and there are no easy answers, but we know that every person can recover with the right support. I'm incredibly proud of how we are responding as an organisation to these challenges, and humbled by the impact we are having across Scotland.

From rolling out the trauma-informed and harm reduction elements of the Medication

Assisted Treatment Standards at pace, integrating people with lived and living experiences throughout our organisation, widening access to naloxone, to improving our performance and quality of our services. These achievements have not been easy but are testament to all the hard work of our colleagues in Scotland.

We know we can't achieve lasting change alone. Recognition of the complex needs of many of our clients has driven an even greater focus on partnership working. I'm proud of the

partnerships we've developed and sustained this year with third sector, recovery, and statutory organisations, including Police Scotland, NHS Scotland, social services, the justice system and other agencies. We will continue to nurture these partnerships going forward, strengthening our impact and effectiveness.

However, the scale of the challenges we're facing demands urgent, concerted action and there needs to be bold, brave, and substantial changes to bring about real improvements to people's lives. The continued financial and political commitment to this policy agenda by the Scottish Government has been welcome and it is vital this continues under new leadership.

The positive impact we are having has resulted in us retaining all of our services in Scotland as well as launching new services. We have also added to our virtual services, building on our work with the national Know the Score helpline and our webchat service for Scotland, and piloting our Never Use Alone phone line, a programme to mitigate the risks of using drugs alone. This growth is testament to the amazing work we are doing and will ultimately allow us to help more people.

Providing the right support, to the right client, at the right time is critical, and this year we have evolved how we deliver support for the people we work with. This approach (which we call segmentation) allows our frontline services to adapt the support they provide to the needs of the individual and what is causing concern in their lives. This is helping us refine our approach to our treatment pathways, further improving the experience of treatment and support for our clients. Alongside this, we are also enhancing our trauma approach, utilising our clinical expertise and infrastructure to improve our performance and improve people's lives.

Though this impact report provides a brief snapshot of the work we are doing, we know there is more we can do. As an organisation, we are absolutely committed to tackling the issues faced by people in communities across

Scotland, and I look forward to seeing how we go further this year in improving the quality of our services and the impact we have.

Belinda Phipps

Chief Executive Officer

A message from the Council for Scotland

We are delighted to see our Scottish services go from strength to strength, supporting the achievement of positive outcomes for our clients.

This year we have seen the expansion of our residential rehabilitation pathway services, which support people through all stages of their rehabilitation journey, and the growth of our assertive outreach model, which engages with some of the most vulnerable people by providing quick and effective support. In addition, our harm reduction services, continue to offer life-saving interventions like naloxone, overdose awareness, alcohol brief interventions and wound care. We are pleased to see this work continue and expand to engage with even more people.

As we look forward, the Council For Scotland is committed to ensuring our services focus on the key areas of government policy that can have the biggest impact on local communities. As an organisation, we are very experienced in delivering services around; children, young people & families, criminal justice and substance use and mental health. Throughout the coming year we want to see our services grow further and achieve the ultimate outcome for each individual we work with, which is to move into long term recovery, not only because of the support we provide but because we encourage them to believe in themselves.

What we provide



Drug and alcohol services

Our services provide a variety of wraparound support for people looking for help with their alcohol and/or drug use, including:

- **Harm reduction** – We provide assertive outreach, naloxone distribution and administration, alcohol brief interventions, and drug and alcohol advice and information
- **Injecting equipment provision (IEP)** – We provide needle exchange, wound care, wound management advice, blood borne virus testing and overdose prevention
- **Assertive outreach** – We provide intensive engagement and support in the community, helping people access the treatment they need
- **Recovery** – We provide evidence-based support based on motivational, cognitive and solution-focused approaches. Our services deliver recovery through holistic key-working, group work, recovery planning, covering core topics like relapse prevention and employability

- **Residential rehabilitation pathways** – We provide continuous and intensive support to people entering or leaving residential rehabilitation services, working in partnership with residential rehabilitation providers, commissioners, recovery communities, and other third sector support services. We also provide support and advocacy to families and concerned others
- **Young people** – We provide intensive, evidence-based support to young people whose problematic substance use is directly affecting their physical health and emotional wellbeing
- **Trauma** – All of our services work in a trauma-informed way and we provide a trauma support service (Survivor Scotland), where people can access trauma counselling either by phone, digitally or in-person
- **Family support** – We support children under the age of 11 who are affected by their parents' drug or alcohol use by working with the whole family to improve health and wellbeing. All of our services use evidence-based approaches, including; CRAFT, Family Decision Making and Solihull models
- **Prison Navigators** – We provide support to people on remand or serving long-term sentences, whilst in prison. Our services use evidence-based support to reduce drug and alcohol-related harms, as well as practical support to attend court or when being released from prison
- **Drug Testing Treatment Orders** – We provide support to people involved in the criminal justice system through Drug Testing and Treatment Orders (DTTO)

We are
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Community Links

We provide person-centred support through GP practices across Scotland to people experiencing health inequalities due to poverty and deprivation.

Our Community Links workers offer help and advice on things like mental and physical health, bereavement, and loneliness. They aim to improve people's health and wellbeing and connect them to support in their communities.

- **Social Prescribing** – Our services deliver a range of support that connects people to activities, groups, and services in their community to meet the practical, social and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing
- **Supporting Primary Care** – Our services support the work of the GP practice by

engaging with people that require additional support

- **Mental health interventions** – We provide low-level support to people experiencing mental health issues using evidence based approaches through in-person and group support
- **Poverty and deprivation** – We provide support to people experiencing issues ensuring that they are able to access community-based support and advocacy
- **Asylum seekers and homelessness** – We provide support to people seeking asylum or experiencing homelessness, ensuring that they are able to access community-based support and advocacy



Digital services

We provide support online and on the phone, offering free, confidential advice to people who are worried about their drug or alcohol use, or mental health, as well as their family and friends.

- **Webchat** – Our award-winning webchat allows people to access free, confidential advice from a trained recovery worker online. This service helps us to reach thousands of people who are not able to access traditional treatment services – including women, carers, and people seeking support anonymously due to fears around safety
- **Never Use Alone** – We provided a helpline for people who use drugs alone, allowing people to contact our staff while they are using substances, reducing the risk of overdose

- **Know the Score** – We manage a comprehensive website containing information and advice on drugs for parents and young people, where they can learn about different types of drugs, the risks, the law, and where to get help
- **Drinkline** – We provide a helpline that supports people who are worried about their alcohol use, or that of a loved one

Our services



WithYou delivers services across Scotland

Argyll and Bute – Community Links service and recovery service (harm reduction, recovery, pre and post rehab)

Borders – Recovery service (harm reduction, recovery, employability, pre and post rehab)

Dumfries and Galloway – Recovery service (harm reduction and recovery)

Dundee – Recovery service (harm reduction, recovery, pre and post rehab)

East Ayrshire – Recovery service (harm reduction, recovery)

East Dunbartonshire – Family and young persons service (young persons, trauma, family support)

East Lothian – Community Links service

Fife – Harm reduction service (enhanced harm reduction, Naloxone coordination, mobile injecting equipment provision, hospital liaison)

Glasgow North East – Recovery service (harm reduction, recovery, pre and post rehab)

Glasgow North West – Recovery service (harm reduction, recovery, pre and post rehab)

Glasgow – Community Links service

Lanarkshire – Blood borne virus service (harm reduction)

Renfrewshire – Community Links service

South Ayrshire – Recovery Service (harm reduction, recovery, pre and post rehab, prison navigators, Drug Testing and Treatment Orders)

Scotland-wide – Webchat, Drinkline, Know the Score

Our approach



WithYou works in a way that supports individuals and their families. We recognise that people require tailored support and our approach is to provide that support at different stages of their journey, regardless of their drug or alcohol use history, circumstances or background.

Our approach to support can be defined here:

- **Engagement** – All of our services provide a “front door” for people looking for help. We are often the first point of contact with services for many of the people we support, whether online through our webchat service, or via a GP practice with our Community Links services
- **Change** – Our services understand that people need choice when addressing drugs, alcohol or mental health issues. All our interventions can be delivered in a variety of ways, based on evidence-based practices
- **Sustain** – Our services adapt to people's changing needs to give them the best chance of recovery



Pauline's story

After being supported by WithYou to stop using alcohol, Pauline decided to use her experience to help others

Pauline (61) started drinking after she retired from her job in education.

She says: “My issues didn't start til I was in my 50s and I took early retirement from work. I had worked every day since I was 16 and then there was... nothing. The first year of retirement was fine, I went on holiday, decorated my house. But after that... nothing.

“My youngest daughter was still at school so I was getting up in the morning and getting her ready. My house was spotless, my washing was done, but that only took a couple of hours every day. So I started drinking.”

Pauline was hospitalised four times due to alcohol intake. After the fourth time she stopped drinking – and turned to WithYou for support. She now works on reception at our Glasgow Recovery Hub and volunteers to run a group for people over 50s who are experiencing issues with alcohol.

Pauline adds: “If people come in in a really bad way, we can help them to turn their life around. I absolutely love it.”

Pauline's story shows that anyone can face challenges – and that, with the right support, everyone can recover.



Impact

What difference have we made?

We provide services in
15 locations
 across 12 Alcohol and Drug Partnership areas of Scotland, supported by more than
200 staff and volunteers

Of these staff and volunteers, more than
60% have lived experience

With the support of our services,
77% of people
 are making progress with their drug use, and 70% of people are making progress or maintaining stability with their alcohol use

We worked with more than
14,000 people
 in Scotland last year

Our webchat engaged with more than
18,000 people last year in the UK

We spoke with more than
3,500 people
 through our Drinkline and Know The Score helplines

We distributed
1,275 naloxone kits
 in Scotland

In our drug and alcohol services,
60% of people
 have seen an improvement in their emotional health

In our drug and alcohol services,
85% of scheduled appointments
 were attended

In our Community Links services,
84% of people
 have seen an increase in their wellbeing

In our Community Links services an average of
96% of people
 are satisfied with the support they received

What people have said

Following an uninspected inspection of our Glasgow Recovery Hubs, the Care Inspectorate said:

"The service was sector-leading in the delivery of recovery services in the community."

"People using the service and staff were at the centre of decision-making about how the service was provided."

"Access to creative and meaningful resources maximised people's chances of engagement and recovery."

"Support was delivered by a skilled and motivated staff team with the majority having their own lived experience of recovery."

"The organisation and management teams demonstrated strong values and real insight into people and their recovery journey."

What our clients have said:

"Thank you for helping me rebuild my relationship with my mum. I couldn't have made the first step without you, we now keep in touch regularly and things are much better." – (Community Navigator service)

"Feeling positive for making a change towards a better future, I'm so grateful for having the navigator support in prison and the community." – (Community Navigator service)

"They gave me the starting blocks to take the small steps to rebuild my belief in myself. They have supported me through being homeless at one of the lowest points in my life. I genuinely feel my life would not be looking as positive without the worker's advice and understanding of how I was feeling." (Community Links service)

"The family group has given me hope. The group never judges me but provides me with advice and support. They are my surrogate family." – (Family support group)

"Encouragement to change, giving a completely different outlook on daily life. The service has been a lifesaver for me." – (Recovery service)

"The hub/my worker really helped me take the initial step in my recovery. My worker was so down to earth and supportive. Always keeping in contact and making sure I was following up on what I needed to do." – (Recovery service)



In focus

We know that supporting people into residential rehabilitation is incredibly important to long-term recovery

In 2021, we identified a gap in provision for those entering or leaving residential support services. Research highlighted that many people left residential rehabilitation unsuccessfully, often a lack of support preparing them for residential rehabilitation and due to a lack of support after leaving their placement.

To address this, we received funding from the Scottish Government's Corra Foundation to pilot a service in Glasgow providing intensive support to people preparing to enter residential rehabilitation, engagement during their stay, and long-term support as they move back to their community. With this intensive support, we find more people successfully complete their stay in residential services and sustain their recovery once back in their own home and their own community. We have also found that, by working closely with our commissioners and local services, we have been able to more effectively identify people with the greatest need, and provide a dedicated recovery worker to support them throughout their whole recovery journey.

The service has had a significant impact, identifying and filling the gap between community and residential service providers, and improving outcomes for individuals

we support. We are more visible than ever, and are now co-locating in three residential services to provide direct access, support and information to staff and clients. We are delivering six different recovery support groups across Glasgow in partnership with Crossreach, Phoenix Futures, Simon Community, and Turning Point Scotland. As a result of the success of this pilot, we have also now adopted this model in Dundee, Argyll and Bute and South Ayrshire, where we manage similar residential rehabilitation pathways. This work is vital in supporting more people into rehabilitation services and increasing the chances of successful long-term recovery.

Assertive outreach: The invaluable role of community navigators

In response to an increase in drug-related deaths and overdose incidents across our services, we developed a new assertive outreach model, which we deliver in partnership with local services like NHS Scotland, Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service. This model allows us to respond more quickly when people are experiencing near-fatal overdoses, meaning we can enable faster access to treatment and support for people not currently engaged with services. We don't wait for people to arrive at our front door, we give immediate support in communities and ensure that people can access to medical assisted treatment.



Community Navigators are at the heart of delivering our assertive outreach model. They are usually people with lived experience, closely linked to their local area, with extensive knowledge of recovery communities, support groups and wider services. They provide increased levels of support and are very effective at engaging vulnerable adults most at-risk of a drug-related death or from disengaging from treatment.

Actively recruiting, training, and inducting people with lived experience into these Navigator roles also allows us to provide long-term employment opportunities for people in recovery. We know it can be difficult for people in recovery to secure employment, but that working can be an important part of their recovery.

Community Links: Expanding our work in our communities

It has been an exciting journey for WithYou since we joined Scotland's Community Link programme in 2019. Our Community Link workers are based in GP practices, providing non-medical support with personal, social, emotional and financial issues. This is one of the core services available through GP practices in Scotland and helps reduce demand for primary care by diverting people to the right sources of support within their community. We developed a brand new Community Links model, winning our first contract in Glasgow at the end of 2019 and receiving excellent feedback from clients, GPs and commissioners. Our evaluation found 100% of clients said they felt listened to, treated with compassion, dignity and respect and connected with the right sorts of support.

Our Community Links workers are not just signposting or referral agencies. We focus on using our skills to deliver evidence-based interventions while people are with us, including motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioural approaches. This helps people to change their behaviour around health and wellbeing, and sustain over a longer period of time.

We have now expanded our coverage across Scotland, taking our model to East Lothian, Renfrewshire and Argyll and Bute. We are the largest third-sector organisation delivering this service, with 44 staff working across 73 GP practices.

We recognise that each client population has different needs and we tailor our service delivery to ensure we are meeting those needs.

For example:

- In deprived areas of **Glasgow**, our work includes focusing on the impact of poverty on mental health. We also employ specialist staff who focus on working with asylum seekers and people who are homeless
- In **Argyll and Bute** and **East Lothian**, where we support rural and remote populations, we help to address, social isolation and an increasingly elderly population
- In **Renfrewshire**, we support people with their mental health, long-term health conditions, deprivation and more. This includes working in remote villages where isolation and lack of access to services are major issues



Harm reduction: A vital tool in reducing drug-related deaths and promoting recovery

Some people who use drugs are not always ready to begin their recovery journey, and can be at additional risks of drug-related harms. Our harm reduction services play a vital role in helping people to be as safe as possible, preventing deaths and planting the seeds of long-term recovery.


We deliver a range of nationally recognised interventions, minimising the negative effects


of drug use, providing injecting equipment, naloxone distribution, dry blood spot testing, and harm reduction advice and support.


Fife is one of the areas where we deliver a harm reduction service. Due to the semi-rural nature of the area, we have adapted our service to ensure that as many people as possible have access to life-saving support, this includes operating several mobile units that travel across the region.




Our service provides specific support to save lives and reduce harm:

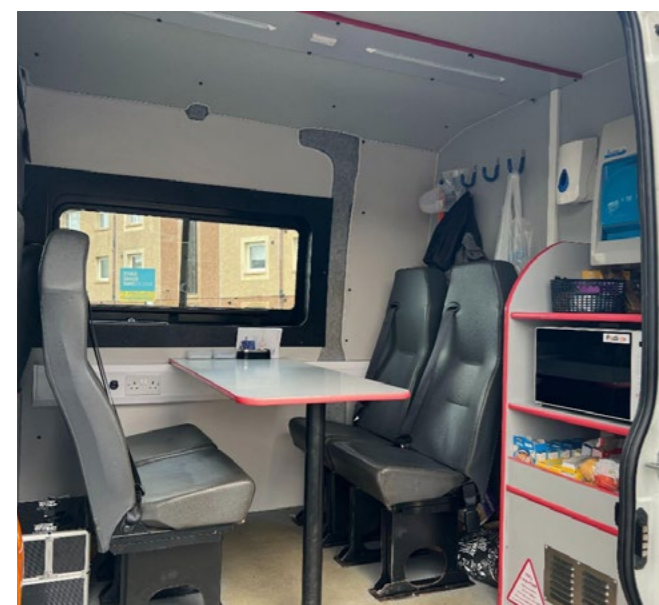
 **Overdose prevention coordination** – Our service ensures that overdose risks are discussed at every contact we have with people and provides coordination support for the area.

 **Hospital liaison** – Our hospital liaison service works alongside hospital staff to identify and support people who have been admitted for drug-related issues.

 **Naloxone training** – Our service provides training for staff across Fife, including NHS and local authority front-line staff, third sector and recovery focused organisations.

 **Peer Naloxone project** – This project is funded through the Scottish Drug Forum, employing paid sessional staff with lived or living experience to make Naloxone more accessible in the community.

 **Coordination of needle and syringe exchange scheme** – Although managed and owned by NHS Fife, NEO this support is provided by WithYou to local pharmacies. We also provide support to NHS Fife Pharmacy services with enquiries from ISD Scotland.



Never Use Alone: Exploring new ways to reduce drug-related deaths

We know that many drug-related deaths occur when people are using drugs alone. In order to address this area of risk, we piloted our Never Use Alone project focused on helping people who want to be as safe as possible when using drugs alone. This was a telephone-based harm reduction service, providing virtual support by remotely monitoring clients as they used drugs such as heroin or cocaine, and allowing our staff to react quickly if someone came into difficulty when using alone.

The free telephone line ensured that we can establish crucial information, such as what drugs have been used, what the person is intending to use, where they are located, and if they can leave their door unlocked so the emergency services can be alerted should they become unresponsive. Our specially trained staff would stay on the line until help arrived.

Funded by the Scottish Government and developed in consultation with the Scottish Ambulance Service and local authorities, the pilot showed us that phone-based virtual supervised consumption is a feasible option to support individuals who use opioids and other drugs alone. Though the programme has now come to an end, we have gained valuable insight from running the helpline, including around how to build trust in the community and where this type of service can be particularly important, such as in isolated, rural communities.

Looking forward

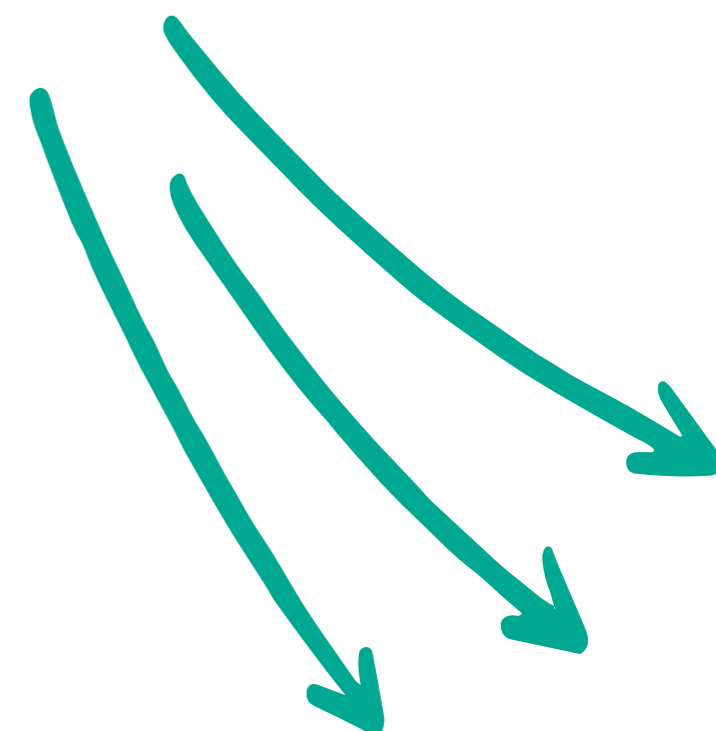
We are hugely proud of the staff and volunteers across all of our services in Scotland, who continue to provide compassionate, person-centred and life-saving support to some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Our clients are at the heart of everything we do, and in 2023-2024 our strategic objectives will see us focus on radically improving more people's chances of getting better, and reducing inequalities in treatment and recovery for marginalised people.

WithYou will continue to advocate for our clients, working with our partners across the sector to address stigma and remove barriers to support, ensuring that people have a choice on how they engage with our services.

These objectives are the basis of our vision of achieving a future free from harm caused by alcohol, drug and mental health issues. Though we have come a long way, we know there is always more we can do.

We must never forget that, with the right support, people can recover.



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