

partnership matters briefing



Pat Togher, Chief Officer

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Welcome to Glasgow City HSCP's 'Partnership Matters' briefing, to keep you more up to date with some of what's happening across our HSCP with partners. [Current and past briefings](#) continue to be available on our HSCP's website, and they can be accessed from work and personal devices. We hope that you find our briefing useful. Any comments or suggestions for future topics are welcome, and they can be shared by contacting us at GCHSCP_Communications@glasgow.gov.uk.

Glasgow opens UK's first drug consumption facility

The UK's first safer drug consumption facility opened in Glasgow on 13 January.

Based at the Hunter Street Health and Care Centre, the facility – to be known as The Thistle – will operate daily from 9am to 9pm, 365 days of the year.

Safer drug consumption facilities (SDCF) have been in operation across the world for decades. Evidence shows these facilities can combat drug-related deaths and improve public health by offering a clean, safe place for people to inject their own drugs – obtained elsewhere, not provided or purchased on site – under clinical supervision and access a wide range of treatment and support.

Glasgow has been calling for a SDCF since 2016 following a large-scale outbreak of HIV. An investigation and report into the outbreak, 'Taking Away the Chaos', identified a link to public injecting and recommended a SDCF to meet the needs of the 400 to 500 people who inject daily in public spaces.

Councillor Allan Casey, City Convener for Workforce, Homelessness and Addiction Services, said: "We've been pushing for a safer drug consumption facility for some time. We know from other safer drug consumption rooms in operation across the world that they do make a difference – they do improve the lives of people struggling with addiction, as well as easing pressure on frontline emergency services.

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“We know this isn’t a silver bullet – but having a facility that is safe, hygienic and medically supervised will go a long way towards reducing drug-related overdoses, injection-related wounds and infections and the negative impact that injecting outdoors has on local residents, communities and businesses. We know there are mixed views about having a SDCF, but I’m confident we’ll see the benefits very quickly.”

There’s overwhelming international evidence that demonstrates safer drug consumption facilities can improve health, wellbeing and recovery of people who use them and reduces the negative impact public injecting has on local communities and businesses.

Saket Priyadarshi, Associate Medical Director for Alcohol and Drug Services, said: “We have strong evidence from other cities with similar problems that shows a SDCF in Glasgow could help prevent drug deaths, help stem the spread of HIV infection, reduce drug-related litter and significantly reduce costs in other health and social care services. It will provide a severely marginalised group access to the treatment and support they have been lacking for years.

“One of the aims of The Thistle is to support service users to engage with opportunities to improve their quality of life - housing, benefits and health. These are early but important steps into recovery.

“We’ll learn a lot in the first three to six months, and we’ll keep developing services in response to the needs of the individuals. A robust independent evaluation will help us understand the impact the service has had on people who use it and the local community.”

The Thistle is staffed by a multidisciplinary team made up of nurses, psychology, harm reduction workers, social workers, medical staff and admin. Staff can offer people safer injection techniques and provide harm reduction advice to minimise the risk of overdose and intervene with assistance if a person does overdose.

The look and feel of The Thistle and the rooms within it have been informed through engagement with people with lived and living experience. They were also involved in the recruitment process, providing useful insights and guidance.

Within The Thistle there is a reception and waiting area and private chat rooms where users can talk to staff and tell them about the drugs they plan to take. There’s a separate using space with eight individual booths (two are wheelchair accessible and have either left or right sidearms), a post injection recovery area with trained staff and an aftercare lounge area where service users can, if they want to, interact with healthcare support staff (with lived experience) and representatives from a variety of support organisations. There are two health rooms where users can access a range of treatments including having any wound(s) looked at or Blood Bourne Virus (BBV) testing undertaken.

Lynn MacDonald, Service Manager, The Thistle, said: “We’ve sought to make The Thistle as welcoming as possible and a place where people feel safe and listened to. Staff have undergone significant training in trauma informed care and are ready to offer a compassionate, person-



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centred service with a focus on reducing the harms caused by injecting drugs and to help people access whatever support they need at the time.

“We’re very appreciative of the time and effort from people with lived and living experience in helping design the Thistle to ensure that it meets the needs of the target population. They were also involved throughout the recruitment process for all staff, providing useful insights and guidance.”

Users of The Thistle will be able to spend time in the lounge area before leaving. The strongest feedback from lived experience groups, as well as other countries operating a drugs consumption facility, was the need for access to an outdoor smoking area.

Following approval to establish the UK’s first safer drug consumption facility, our Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) began a comprehensive engagement exercise – the most extensive ever done in relation to a new service. There will be a continued programme of community engagement during the months ahead.

The Thistle will be monitored and evaluated to demonstrate the impact it has on the local area and those who use the service. The evaluation will look at various aspects including litter levels, discarded needles, anti-social behaviour and crime.

The Scottish Government has committed to making up to £2.3 million available per annum for the development, set up and running of the SDCF in Glasgow from 2024 to 2025.

Councillor Casey added: “Giving people who use drugs the opportunity to consume in a calm, hygienic and supervised environment is essential in combating drug-related deaths and improving public health.”

Parkhead Hub update – February 2025

Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership’s (HSCP) new Parkhead Hub opened in a phased approach on Monday 27 January 2025. The Hub integrates health and social care services and community facilities, including a café and the relocated Parkhead Library.

Forge Medical Practice, Drs McKenzie and Burns and Meadowpark Surgery, Community Pharmacy and Sandyford East are all now operating from the Hub, as well as a range of health improvement initiatives. Parkhead Health Centre is now closed and will be demolished to create the new car park.

Social care services for children, adults and older people and specialist support including addictions, justice and homelessness services have also moved to the Hub, having vacated the nearby Newlands building.

Jackie Shearer, Engagement and Equalities Coordinator, Parkhead Hub said: “The Social Blend café at the Hub is expected to open by March 2025. It will be run by Include Me Too, a social

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enterprise and charity that offers employment and training opportunities to young people and adults with additional support needs.”

Bespoke Atelier, a design company based in Bridgeton, close to the Parkhead Hub, have created new artworks for the Hub. At the entrance, a large scale, illuminated wall panel and the Hub's main reception desk provides a welcoming environment for visitors. The designs celebrate the rich textile and weaving heritage of the local area and include patterns from the archive of the Stoddart-Templeton carpet factory at Glasgow Green.

Photographs from award-winning photographer, Chris Leslie are on display in some of the Hub's waiting areas. Local artist, Frank McAllister showcases his photographic works in McKenzie Burns practice. Graphic illustrations by shortlisted young designer of the year 2024 Katie Smith, bring a pop of colour to the first floor. There are also artworks by Parkhead's Tommy McGoran, and these can be viewed on the ground floor.

Our short [video](#) explains how the Hub arts strategy was developed with the involvement of the local community in the North East of Glasgow.

A partnership group met regularly to plan, implement and coordinate wide-ranging community initiatives over the Hub's construction phase and beyond. This included an education programme with a work-based learning programme for secondary pupils, moving them on to foundation apprenticeship stage.

Gary Dover, our HSCP's Assistant Chief Officer for Primary Care and Early Intervention, said: “The Parkhead Hub is a fantastic development for North East Glasgow, bringing together a wide range of health and social care services in one location to improve access for local people. I would like to thank all staff and contractors who have contributed to the development of the building.”

You can read about the Hub in our [newsletter](#) and on the [website](#).

New video highlights the transformative impact of Martha's Mammies

A new [video](#) is now available on our HSCP's (Health and Social Care Partnership) YouTube Channel showcasing Martha's Mammies, an innovative Glasgow City HSCP service that provides vital support to birth mothers who have lost care of their children on either a temporary or permanent basis.

The video features staff and service users with lived experience, offering a powerful insight into the work being done and its life-changing impact. Service users share how the programme has provided them with a non-judgemental space to heal and connect with others, while staff explain how the service has achieved remarkable outcomes in a short amount of time.

Prior to the implementation of Martha's Mammies, women in Glasgow who had experienced the loss of care of their children had limited access to specialist support.



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The grief and emotional distress that followed were often faced alone. Martha's Mammies was created to address this gap by offering flexible, intensive and personalised care through its multi-disciplinary team.

The team works with small caseloads, allowing them to respond to each woman's unique needs with compassion and adaptability. The focus is on helping women rebuild their lives by providing practical and emotional support.

"It's a place where I feel understood and supported," said one service user. "I don't feel judged here at all." Another service user said: "It's like being with family and it feels like coming home."

The video highlights the service's mission to offer hope and healing, ensuring women have a safe space to come together, rebuild confidence and move forward.

Maximising Independence – bringing benefits for Glasgow citizens now and for the future

The Maximising Independence (MI) Programme was set up over four years ago to support people who can and wish to remain living at home safely for as long as possible with the right support in place for them, and for their carers if they have them.

MI doesn't mean living without any support at all – it's about living as independent a life as you can, making choices about the things that matter to you, to live as full a life as possible, with support when you need it.

When the MI Programme reaches its final phase - its planned programme close and transition next month – its approach will move fully into the day-to-day 'business as usual' work done across the HSCP and MI partners. However, it's clear that the benefits of the MI approach started to be seen in the way we work and support people right from the start.

"It became clear fairly early on that Maximising Independence had to be a wholesale change in our approach to how we do things rather than a standalone programme of work" says Alison Noonan, our HSCP's Head of Maximising Independence and Transformation for the past three years.

"The scale of the transformation was so large and far reaching that it had to be embedded in every interaction we have with the people we support – from when they first approach us or are referred to us, right through to how we can support them to live at home in less intrusive and resource-intensive ways.

"And of course, we wanted to get our MI messages out to people long before they even need to contact us, so we can support them to build their health and wellbeing independently within their local community.

"We want Glasgow citizens to have strong and reliable health and social care not just now, but for future generations too. So, we've been talking, listening and collaborating to build a sustainable way of supporting people, so that everyone can achieve their full potential for health, wellbeing and independence. The Maximising Independence approach informs the way we design and deliver our services. It's now at the core of everything we do."



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Several MI projects and activities are underway. Some are being delivered directly by the MI Team, and others are being delivered elsewhere across the health and social care network in Glasgow, with advice and support on building in the MI approach. [You can find out more about the range of MI projects and read more about some current projects.](#)

One of the most significant things about the MI projects at this transition stage, is that they are coming together and complementing each other, under the overall MI approach within our 'business as usual' activities.

For example, we can see how the way we approach the people we support is changing – looking at their strengths as well as the areas they're less strong in, considering how previous trauma may be a barrier to how people access health and social care. We're now routinely looking for innovative technical solutions to support people live more independently at home and meeting people at drop-ins across the city to show them how technology can help and listening to their issues and aspirations.

We're building on local community organisations' areas of expertise and supporting them to share and grow what they do through our 'Make It Local' community hubs, to support more people to live independently, make connections and reduce social isolation and loneliness. And our Circles of Support help families, friends and carers to support people to live independently within their local community.

Our HSCP's Assistant Chief Officer for Older People's Services and South Operations Stephen Fitzpatrick sees the MI approach as being vital to tackling the big health and social care issues facing the city's population, "Glasgow's demographic is changing, we have more people needing care and reducing resources, so we need to look at a long-term sustainable solution for this generation and future ones.

"We know most people want to live independently for as long as possible, and we know that it's better for their health to do so. So, our MI approach is all about making that possible for as many people as possible, and it's about identifying and tackling health issues early and preventing problems, instead of treating them further down the line when they become more serious. It's also a better way of directing our valuable resources to where they're most needed.

"The legacy of the MI approach will carry on being central to our HSCP's current and upcoming strategic plans."

For more information

See our Maximising Independence [video and newsletters](#).

The Promise is five years old

The Promise is a commitment made by Scotland to care experienced children and young people, ensuring they grow up loved, safe and respected. This promise was made following the Independent Care Review in 2020, aiming for significant changes to the care system by 2030.



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At Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), we have been dedicated to fulfilling The Promise. Recently, our Promise Keepers met to reflect on [Glasgow's Plan 2021 to 2024](#) and our achievements so far. Some of the major things we've been working on include:

- working on the Language of Care, focusing on how information about children and young people is recorded, especially within residential Children's Houses. This work is now expanding to other areas of Children's Services.
- the Central Continuing Care and After Care team is reviewing our 16 plus accommodation and support services, involving all stakeholders, including young people. Their views will shape a new model of care.
- committing to listening and acting upon the views of our children and young people. This is evident in our use of advocacy services, and various communication models. Our practice is shifting to reflect the importance of working alongside children, young people and families.
- employing four Promise Participation Workers to ensure that the views of our children and young people are shaping our policy and practice.
- fewer children and young people are living away from their families in Glasgow thanks to more intensive support tailored to their needs. Our staff are more aware of the impact of intergenerational trauma and poverty, which is reflected in their support and relationship-building with children and families.

Following the event, a colleague shared their thoughts: "We're [HSCP] rewriting our collective script, breaking down the social construct idea of what social work has been perceived to be, with an emerging new identity! It really is so exciting and a privilege to be part of such a creative positive movement."

Alison Cowper, Head of Children's Services (North West) said: "Since the launch of the Independent Care Review in 2020, Glasgow has demonstrated a real multi-agency partnership commitment to keeping the Promise for our city's children, young people and their families. The progress that's been made so far is a reflection of people working together, thinking differently and being passionate about making a difference. We'll continue to build on this and look forward to what we can be achieved with Glasgow's Promise Plan 2024 to 2030".

You can find more information on what we're doing on [Glasgow's Promise website](#).

Demographics and Needs Profile 2024

Our HSCP's 2024 Demographics and Needs Profile, which supports needs assessment and service planning, is now available. It offers population estimates by age, gender and ethnicity, as well as projections at city, locality and national levels, using 2022 Census data. Drawing upon various sources, the profile also includes health information, such as life expectancy, mortality, illness patterns, as well as factors affecting health and wellbeing like lifestyles, social capital, deprivation, education and employment. The profile is now web-based for easier navigation. Read our [Demographics and Needs Profile](#).



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News

We also regularly publish [news articles](#) and [briefings / bulletins](#) on our website about specific topics or work happening across our HSCP with partners – whether it be about current services, service developments or achievements to celebrate. If you would like to have something featured, please email GCHSCP_Communications@glasgow.gov.uk. Some recent news items include:

- [Suicide Prevention training in Glasgow reaches new milestone](#)
- [Help to plan any future care needs](#)
- [Alexa is improving wellbeing for residents of our HSCP's care homes](#)
- [Time to Talk Day 2025: promoting mental health and wellbeing in the workplace](#)
- [Helping education staff to support students who self-harm](#)
- [Residents and service users enjoy the festive season](#)
- [Our HSCP's Transport Team honoured at Glasgow Caring City's Festive Fun Day and Awards](#)
- [Immeasurable impact of Community Link Workers on local people](#)
- [PCIP Bulletin – January 2025](#)

Meetings & Events

We have regular meetings and events to discuss and / or make decisions about health and social care in Glasgow. More information about them with upcoming dates is available below:

- [Glasgow City Integration Joint Board \(IJB\)](#)
- [IJB Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee](#)
- [IJB Public Engagement Committee](#)



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