

partnership matters briefing



January/February 2026

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.



Pat Togher, Chief Officer

Glasgow's safer drug consumption facility records more than 11,000 visits in first year

The UK's first safer drug consumption facility, known as The Thistle, marked its first year in operation on 13 January 2026.

Since opening, 575 individuals have registered to use and access services provided within the facility.

The Thistle offers drug users a clean and safe environment in which to inject drugs, obtained elsewhere, under the supervision of nursing and social care staff, as well as access to other health and treatment services.

The facility has been accessed 11,348 times by the 575 people (448 male 127 female) who have so far registered to use the service.

There have been 7,827 injections, with 93 medical emergencies all safely managed within the facility by staff.

Councillor Allan Casey, City Convener for Workforce, Homelessness and Addictions, said the first year has been remarkable and hopes the services continue to be well used.

He said: "The first year has been very encouraging. People are engaging with the service and trusting it as a safe space. Each of these 10,000 visits represents an opportunity to reduce harm, connect individuals with support, and ultimately save

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lives. We know there's still much to do, but what we are seeing from the first-year data is the real impact of a compassionate, evidence-based approach to this public health emergency and reinforces why progressive policies matter and why Glasgow continues to lead the way in tackling complex challenges with practical solutions."

The Scottish Government has committed to making up to £2.3 million available per year for the development, set up and running of The Thistle service in Glasgow from 2024 to 2025, which will continue to be overseen by Glasgow City Integration Joint Board.

Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Sport Minister Maree Todd MSP said: "The Thistle, which complements other harm-reduction and treatment and recovery services, has had a profound impact in its first year.

"Through the ability of staff to respond quickly in the event of an overdose it has undoubtedly saved lives. Backed by £2.3 million in Scottish Government funding, it continues to demonstrate the value of an evidence-based approach to safeguarding life and reducing drug-related harm.

"I would like to thank all staff and partners for their work in establishing the service, working with some of the most vulnerable people in our society to help save and improve lives, and their continuing efforts to support and engage with the local community."

Prior to opening, the Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership (GHSCP) carried out extensive engagement with the community, stakeholders and businesses.

Pat Togher, Chief Officer for the GHSCP with overall responsibility for the service, expressed his gratitude for the staff at the Thistle. He said: "The progress in the first year of the Thistle commencing has exceeded expectations and is testament to the commitment from all concerned, including the important role of lived and living experience in helping shape the service. The scale of activity in the first year demonstrates a growing sense of confidence and value underpinned by the teams' commitments towards trauma informed and trusting relationships. As the first of its kind in the UK, the Thistle service has, as expected, been the focus of much media and public attention and we strive to ensure our communication and engagement remains a key priority.

"Staff from a range of health and care services are involved in helping people who use the Thistle get the support they need when they need it, and we remain keen to develop this."

Dr Saket Priyadarshi, Associate Medical Director and Senior Medical Officer for Glasgow Alcohol and Drug Recovery Services, said: "We're delighted with how well the Thistle is being used. The service has exceeded any expectations we had for the first 12 months. It's been great to see service users engaging with the wider services from showers and clothing to referral for treatment and care. I would like to thank our colleagues delivering the service safely and effectively on a daily basis.

"The rising numbers in recent months is a positive sign and is promising for the year ahead, as well as our plans to progress a smoking/inhalation space in the facility."



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The Thistle is a three-year pilot. It 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 Thistle is open 365 days from 9am to 9pm.

Further information can be found on the [The Thistle webpages](#).

Ministerial visit showcases Glasgow's Care at Home and Reablement Success

Tom Arthur MSP, Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, spent the morning of Tuesday 16 December at Blair Court, Glasgow, meeting the dedicated staff at the heart of Glasgow's Care at Home and Reablement services.

Accompanied by Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) Chief Officer Pat Togher and Samantha Flower, Occupational Therapy Lead for Partnerships, the visit offered a first-hand look at how our HSCP is transforming lives and supporting independence for thousands of patients, helping avoid unnecessary or prolonged hospital admissions.

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Glasgow's Home Care Service delivers an astonishing 81,693 visits every week, supporting over 4,100 of the city's most vulnerable residents, with an average service user age of 78. The service operates 365 days a year, with 25 mobile teams covering the city from 7am to 10pm, and over 60% of care delivered out of hours to meet complex needs.

Reablement plays a key role: 75% of new service users start with a reablement package, and over 40% leave the service with no further care required — well above the citywide target.

Eighty-two percent of hospital discharges and 85% of community referrals receive reablement support, helping people regain confidence and skills after illness or crisis.

The average hours of care required per person decreases by 15% after reablement, freeing up resources to help more people stay at home safely.

The innovative 'front door' approach of our HSCP's Health and Social Care Connect (HSCC) has reduced onward referrals by 70 to 75%, reducing waiting lists and ensuring people get the right support, first time.

Expert Occupational Therapy intervention enables alternative solutions to care and support, maximising individuals' independence and often preventing the need for ongoing formal care.

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Mr Arthur met with occupational therapists, reablement teams and service managers, hearing directly from those delivering care and was able to hear real-life stories demonstrating the service's person-centred ethos. Through collaborative working, tailored interventions and a focus on what matters most to each individual, staff are helping people live well at home, reduce social isolation and avoid unnecessary hospital admissions.

After the visit Samantha commented: "I was extremely proud to showcase the excellent work local authority occupational therapists do every day, and it was lovely to see their contribution being acknowledged by the minister."

The visit also highlighted Glasgow's leadership in partnership working, digital innovation and continuous improvement. From rapid hospital discharge (80% home on the day of referral) to seamless collaboration with NHS and third sector partners, the service is setting the standard for integrated care.

Mr Arthur praised the dedication and professionalism of staff, recognising their vital role in supporting patients to live independently, with dignity and choice. The city's Care at Home and Reablement services stand as an example of best practice, delivering real results for individuals, families and the wider community.

Robert Murray, our HSCP's Interim Head of Care and Technical Services said: "The Care at Home and Reablement Team were delighted to welcome the Minister during his recent visit. The team had the opportunity to share the exceptional work they deliver every day, supporting some of Glasgow's most vulnerable citizens to remain safely and independently in their own homes."

Project SEARCH – 2026 Applications Open!

Do you know anyone with learning disabilities and / or autism spectrum conditions who is looking for a way to develop and enter the world of work? If yes, then encourage them to apply for DFN Project SEARCH!

Applications are now open for DFN Project SEARCH, a pioneering employability programme designed to support young people aged 18 to 29 in Glasgow who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum conditions. The full-time, one-year initiative offers real workplace experience and tailored support to help interns gain the skills and confidence needed to move into paid employment, and to support them to have the life skills to live more independently within their communities.

Beginning in August 2026, the Glasgow programme is delivered in partnership with NHS Glasgow Royal Infirmary, the University of Strathclyde, and our Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)'s Supported Employment Service. Interns take part in up to three 10-week work rotations based on their strengths and interests, supported throughout by trained job coaches.

Angie Black, Supported Employment Service Manager, said: "Every year we see the incredible difference Project SEARCH makes. Young people become more confident and feel rewarded by



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their employment. It's a unique opportunity, and we're delighted to support it here in Glasgow."

Alongside hands-on experience, interns receive ongoing support to secure and maintain employment and live more independently after graduation.

Kenneth's Story

Kenneth, who joined Project SEARCH in 2024, came into the programme hoping to work in the NHS, inspired by his grandmother's career. Through his work placements in the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, including roles in Domestic Services and with the Porters team, he built confidence, independence and valuable workplace and life skills.

By the end of the programme, Kenneth had secured two NHS jobs and is now working as a full-time porter. He credits Project SEARCH with helping him grow in maturity, improve his social confidence and skills and take steps toward a future career in healthcare.

"Before I started this, I didn't have a lot of self-confidence," he said. "Through meeting patients, staff and classmates, I came out of my bubble. I wouldn't be where I am now without the support I got."

How to apply

You can find information by visiting our website at <https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/dfn-project-search-applications>

If you want more information before applying, you can contact:

- supportedemployment@glasgow.gov.uk
- www.dfnprojectsearch.org

Digital mental health support is helping Glasgow's young people

Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) funds mental health provision that's quickly and easily accessible to a range of children and young people dependent on their needs.

Barry Syme, Principal Educational Psychologist for the City of Glasgow discussed the successful use of digital platform Togetherall in January's eMental Health International Collaborative (eMHIC) webinar, '[Scaling Support Together – Inside Scotland's National Digital Mental Health Strategy and the Glasgow – Togetherall Model.](#)'

Barry leads the provision of school counselling across all 200 Glasgow schools and oversees the commissioning of additional mental health supports for young people, including online services [Togetherall](#) and [Kooth](#).

Young people can easily sign up to Kooth (ages 10 to 15) and Togetherall (ages 16 to 24). These services are evidence-based, clinically moderated, 24/7 online peer-to-peer mental health

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communities, commissioned by our HSCP and freely available to young people with a Glasgow postcode.

Chris Wright, National Advisor for Digital Mental Health, The Scottish Government; Dr. Ben Locke, Chief Clinical Officer, Togetherall; and Fiona Costello, eMHIC also took part in the webinar.

Barry said: “Quality assured, online mental health support is an important part of a range of services the HSCP is funding to improve and support young people’s mental health. Kooth and Togetherall offer hundreds of young people free and quick access to information, advice and support, reaching people who may not otherwise engage with conventional services. The platform creates a safe, anonymous space for individuals to connect and share at their own pace and integrates with traditional care systems.

“Evidence shows that Togetherall is having a big impact on specific groups and gives us measurable outcomes. Above all the platform takes accountability. The online moderators take responsibility for young people who may be in crisis and provide support. This has saved lives.”

You can read our [guide](#) to mental health supports and services for children and young people in Glasgow.

NHS 24 [mental health services](#) are also available to everyone in Scotland, of all ages. The services offered include listening, offering advice and guiding to further help if required.

Glasgow City Community Respiratory Team – supporting people at home

Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)’s Community Respiratory Team (CRT) provides specialist support to people living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in their own homes. The service helps people stay well at home, avoid unnecessary hospital stays and recover safely with the right support.

CRT is a multidisciplinary team of 20 staff, including physiotherapists, respiratory nurse specialists, occupational therapist, pharmacist, support workers and business support. The team responds when someone has a flare up of their COPD and aims to prevent avoidable hospital admissions by providing timely care in the community.

GPs, Respiratory nurses and AHPs are able to refer into the team and patients who are known to the CRT can self-refer for ongoing exacerbation support

A new video, [John Taking Back Control](#), highlights how important this support is for older people with severe COPD, especially those who may not have a large support network or who find it difficult to travel to hospital.

The video follows John, a Glasgow resident living with COPD. After turning 68, John’s mobility declined sharply. He went from walking to the local shops to struggling to move between rooms in his home. He also faced repeated ambulance trips, long waits on hospital trolleys and week-long hospital stays, which left him feeling depressed and stuck in a cycle he couldn’t escape.



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CRT stepped in to support him at home. The team provided:

- exacerbation monitoring and support and education
- regular home visits and telephone support
- breathing and mobility exercises
- mobility aids, including a walking trolley and bathroom supports
- monitoring of his antibiotics and general health

All of this took place in John's own living room, helping him feel safe and supported.

Marianne Milligan, Team Leader for the CRT, said: "John feels the support he received has been life changing. He has gone from feeling low and unable to move around to taking back control of his life. He's more independent again and reassured that the team is only a phone call away. Being at home also means his family can visit comfortably without the stress of hospital visiting times."

John added: "I'm no longer stuck on a hospital trolley for hours — I can be treated in my own chair. I can even get to Tesco now using the electric buggies and my walking trolley."

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:

- [Creating Hope Together – Glasgow City Suicide Prevention Partnership](#)
- [New disability sport sessions helping people stay active across Glasgow](#)
- [Celebrating success: HSCP CIPFA trainees shine at national awards](#)
- [Glasgow's Family Wellbeing Hub supporting parents, carers and young people](#)
- [Stories from Glasgow: celebrating community voices](#)
- [Promoting health and wellbeing during construction of the Parkhead Hub](#)
- [Primary Care Newsletter - February 2026](#)

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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