Community Link Worker Programme

Annual Report 2024/25

Primary Care Community Link Workers (CLWs*) are funded as part of Glasgow City Health & Social Care Partnership's Primary Care Improvement Plan.

This report focusses on the work of Primary Care CLWs and specialist thematic CLWs, and details the progress and development of the Community Link Worker programme in Glasgow over the 12 months ending 31 March 2025.

During this period, the programme was delivered by the Health & Social Care Alliance Scotland and Scottish Action for Mental Health (SAMH).

Primary Care CLWs



Patients

Patients are the main focus of the CLW role and CLWs support patients by identifying their needs; strengthening connections between community resources and primary care; and mitigating the impact of the social determinants of health.

CLWs are embedded in GP Practices as part of the multi-disciplinary team. They work with practice staff to increase their confidence and capacity to direct patients to local and national support services.



Practice



Community

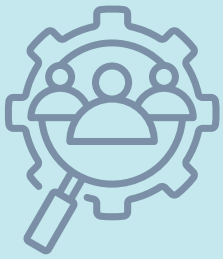
CLWs have excellent knowledge of what's going on in their communities and what supports are available to their patients. They work within local areas to build strong relationships within the community.

*In Glasgow, Community Link Workers (CLWs) are also known as Community Links Practitioners (CLPs) and the terms are used interchangeably.

Specialist thematic CLWs

In addition to the Primary Care CLWs based in 80 GP practices, the Glasgow City programme also has four specialist thematic CLWs:

Asylum Seekers; Homeless; CAMHS; and Youth Health Service.



Follow these links to find out more about the CLW roles:

Alliance - About the Community Links Programme

SAMH - Community Link Worker (CAMHS) Service

Referrals & engagement

In 2024/25, CLWs received

13,364 referrals,

which was a 9% increase on the previous financial year.

Referral sources

All members of the practice multi-disciplinary team, including non-clinical team members, can refer to their CLW.

GPs are the main source of referrals for CLWs - making 56% of all referrals this year.

The programme also allows self-referrals and these were the second highest source this year at 14%, followed by Receptionists who made 9% of referrals to CLWs in 2024/25.

This year, the programme had an outstanding engagement rate of 87%.

CLWs are really committed to engaging with patients who need their support and they're flexible around where and how they engage with patients. This likely contributes to such an excellent engagement rate.

87%
engagement rate

44,537
appointments

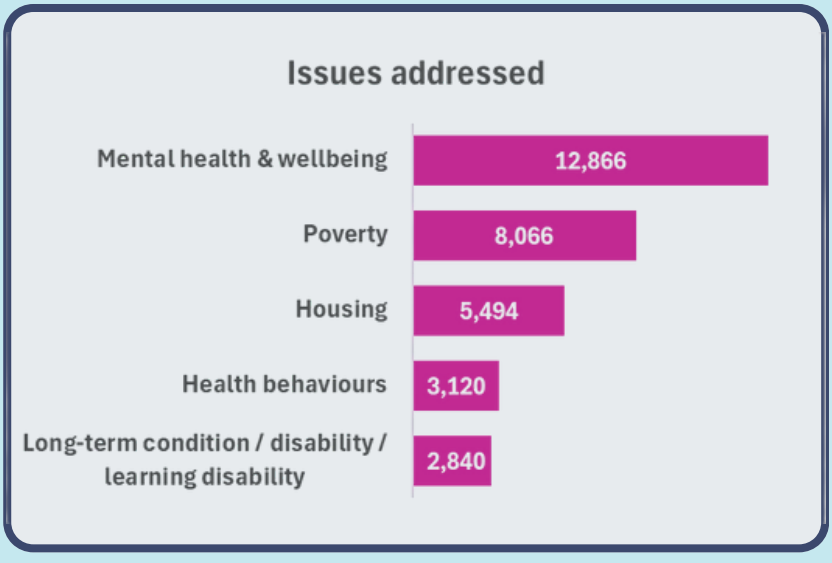
The programme is also person-centred in terms of the number and type of appointments each patient has and the duration of support they receive.

CLWs across Glasgow City carried out a total of 44,537 **appointments** with

11,836 individuals,

a 13% increase on the previous year.

Issues addressed with patients



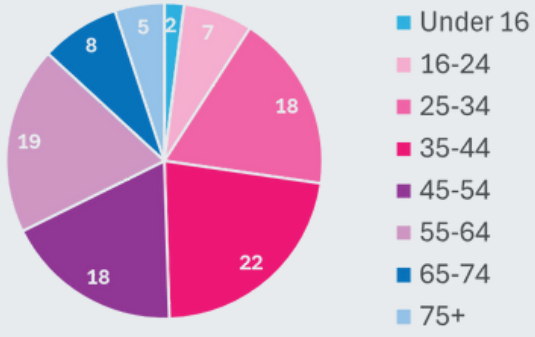
This graph illustrates the most common issues addressed in 2024/25.

CLWs support patients with a wide variety of issues, in addition to those they are referred for.

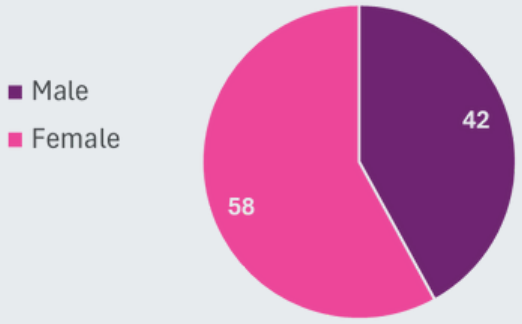
Initial conversations often uncover further patient concerns and priorities and many patients are supported with multiple issues.

Patient demographics

Percentage of CLW patients - by age group



Percentage of CLW patients - by sex



These charts illustrate the distribution of some of the demographics of patients supported by CLWs in 2024/25.

The highest concentration remained in the 25 to 64 year old age groups.

The distribution of patients by sex remained static this year. Only 0.1% of patients selected "Other' and 'Prefer not to say' categories.

Patient outcomes

CLWs use the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale* (SWEMWBS) to gauge improvement in patients' mental wellbeing, over time.

Patients reported improved wellbeing after working with a CLW - with an average improvement score of 4.3 for 2024/25.

*Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS)© NHS Health Scotland, University of Warwick and University of Edinburgh, 2008, all rights reserved

Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts. Please select the answer that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks.

	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5
I've been thinking clearly	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	1	2	3	4	5

Case studies

The following case studies further demonstrate the range and impact of the work carried out by CLWs in 2024/25 (*all names have been changed).

Andrea*

Andrea was a survivor of domestic violence, who was struggling to settle into her new accommodation. Despite now living in a different country from her ex-partner, she still didn't feel fully safe in her new life. She was also feeling isolated and was having trouble sleeping. She had been prescribed medication which hadn't helped. She was also engaged with the Community Mental Health Team.

Andrea had also had to part with her children when she fled to safety. She missed them terribly and was burdened with guilt about her decision. The CLW discussed post-traumatic stress and grief with the Andrea and provided a space of emotional support and safety to help make her feel validated and in control of her own situation.

The CLW also suggested other ways to manage sleep such as good sleep hygiene, avoiding screens for a few hours before bedtime, and potentially using white noise sounds or guided meditations to help relax and ground the body.

The CLW also highlighted the importance of keeping the mind active during the day and having a structured schedule to help her to settle into her new life. Andrea was keen to start volunteering to help give her day structure and to engage with other people in the community so the CLW supported her to secure opportunities with two local organisations.

The CLW also put Andrea in touch with a local organisation that supports the wellbeing of survivors of domestic violence and went along with her for her first visit to make it less daunting for her. The organisation was very warm and welcoming and Andrea began to attend regularly.

When the CLW checked in with Andrea a few weeks later, she was much happier and more confident. She was continuing to volunteer with the two organisations and was taking ESOL classes at a local college and started to discuss longer term goals for her future.

She had decided that she wants to work in Social Care and help others. The CLW was aware of a specific volunteering opportunity that would fit well with this goal and provide Andrea with really good work experience in this area. Training would be provided as well as access to digital devices for the duration of the training.

Andrea was really keen to apply, so the CLW supported her with the application, and they're now awaiting the outcome.

James*

James had recently been released from prison and was experiencing problems with his mental health. His GP referred him to the CLW for some support in establishing some routine and structure for his days.

In his first appointment with the CLW, James discussed his mental health and the reasons surrounding sleep issues, negative thoughts and panic attacks. It also became apparent that he was struggling financially and facing digital exclusion.

The CLW initially offered some practical support: identified James was eligible for a free bus pass and supported him to access this; helped him to set up an email address; and helped him to obtain a mobile phone.

The CLW also provided him with some crisis vouchers and referred him to a local food bank to alleviate some stress around the cost of living. He also referred James to Glasgow Life's Access Pass initiative and SAMH's Achieving Active Lives programme.

James completed an Alcohol Brief Intervention which helped the CLW to identify that James was alcohol dependant and was using alcohol and cigarettes as a coping strategy for bereavement and childhood trauma.

The CLW had a number of supportive discussions with James around this and signposted him to alcohol support, bereavement support, counselling, and other local support groups.

James' mental health was quite unstable at times and the CLW had to apply principles from his ASIST (suicide prevention) training at a number of appointments and work closely with the GP around these issues.

Despite his challenges, James was passionate about getting back into work so the CLW referred him to a SAMH employability programme. As a result, James is now completing a First Aid course, working towards becoming a security guard and has signed up to a volunteering opportunity.

He now also has a gym membership and attends regularly. Through building a community at the gym, James found out about a local peer support group and has also started to attend this regularly.

He also has more control around his alcohol intake and is engaging with the Quit Your Way smoking cessation programme.

Dorothy*

Dorothy was referred to the CLW as she was experiencing difficulties with her mental health. She explained that she was finding it difficult to cope with several stressors, including: post-traumatic stress disorder; practical concerns around debt; affording monthly bills; affording to replace broken household items; and difficulties communicating with her son's school in relation to issues with bullying. Her son also had a diagnosed health condition.

The CLW identified early on, that Dorothy was struggling to adhere to her claimant commitment for Universal Credit, so the CLW referred the participant for a benefits check and support.

The CLW was able to provide evidence of Dorothy's ongoing health challenges and caring responsibilities for her son and as a result, her Universal Credit payments were increased. She was also designated as 'Limited Capability for Work' which reduced the expectation for her to complete job search activity, and she was advised to apply for Carer's Support Payment and Adult Disability Payment.

The CLW supported Dorothy to apply for the Aberlour Urgent Assistance Fund and she was awarded £250 towards the cost of replacing her fridge/freezer which had been broken for some time. With the help of the CLW, Dorothy also applied to Glasgow Care Foundation who provided her with

a new bed and mattress for her son, as these were also broken.

The CLW was also able to provide Dorothy with food and fuel vouchers and signposted her to a local food pantry.

To help Dorothy to focus on her mental health recovery, the CLW referred her to the Flourish wellbeing programme. The CLW also put Dorothy in touch with One Parent Families Scotland who provided support with the feelings of isolation and other challenges she was facing as a single parent of a child with a disability.

The CLW also helped Dorothy to apply for a Glasgow Life Access card to provide six weeks of free access to local leisure facilities. This was in an effort to address another of Dorothy's goals: to lose some weight.

With Dorothy's permission, the CLW contacted her son's school to reiterate her concerns around her son being bullied and to seek reassurances for them that the situation would be addressed.

The CLW also provided a supporting letter to Dorothy's lawyer in advance of a Home Office appointment to renew her Biometric Residence Permit, and helped her to book an A1 English test locally at short notice.

The CLW also provided ongoing emotional support and reassurance throughout the time she worked with Dorothy.
Dorothy now feels more financially and emotionally secure knowing that she can contact her CLW again if she needs any further support in the future.

Patient feedback

Thanks for all your help. I don't know what I would have done without this service. [CLW] was very professional and he brought in the services I needed to help and support me with all my issues. He couldn't do enough for me and provided appointments that suited my needs - he's a top gentleman. He was so professional and I can't speak highly enough of him. I am so grateful for the help at a time when I really needed it. Thank you.

After the appointment with [CLW] I felt much better. The way she listened to me and supported and acknowledged my struggles made me feel understood and accepted.

The CLW was really good for me. She was a great listener and pointed me in the right direction. She supported me when I was ready give up, kept me going. She was just a great help.

Brilliant service who have helped me at one of the worst times of my life. I suffered severe trauma after my wife tragically lost her life and was made homeless as well as losing my job because of my mental health. [CLW] was absolutely brilliant with me: he supported me to get a new home and has also made a referral to get help with my benefits application. He also referred me to get mental health support from Lifelink. I would never have known what to do without his help - he works wonders.

[CLW] went above and beyond to listen to me with many issues I had being going through. There were times I didn't want to overload him with my issues but when I did open up, he was fully there to listen, understand and point me in right direction. I truly appreciate the job he did for me.

The experience has been a very positive one. She is a great help and has vast knowledge. It's made a very unsure and stressful time much easier for me to navigate.

Fantastic service who helped me a lot in the worst days of my life. I was supported through every issue and treated with great dignity and compassion [CLW] is a fantastic link worker. He puts a lot into his job and makes sure his patients are well looked after.

I feel reassured and informed since the CLW provided me with the knowledge to help me promote my child's needs with the school. She also made a referral to Social Work who are also helping me with the school to ensure that my son gets the support he needs.

[CLW] listened to me and made me feel understood which I've not felt for a long time. She's very funny, too and we laughed a lot. She gave me great tips and advice to sort out my life which are working great for me and the kids. Thanks.

Onward referrals and signposting

CLWs made more than **40,800 onward links** via referrals and sign posting - more than double the number than in the previous year. People were connected to a diverse range of supports and services across Glasgow. The most common onward destinations this year were:

Money & benefits	**9,634**
Mental health support	**6,420**
Community groups	**5,028**
Health behaviours	**4,031**
Housing support	**3,849**

Long term condition support	**1,646**
Carer support	**1,331**
Supports for marginalised groups	**1,240**
Learning development	**1,076**
Social Work services	**1,039**

Working in partnership

The Glasgow City CLW Programme links to organisations and services to provide effective access to supports at the right time for our patients.

Many of these links are made locally: dependent on delivery within the areas where we work. We also utilise supports for patients delivered city wide and at a national level to suit patient need.

In 2024/25 we developed and strengthened links with a range of organisations to help support evolving information and effective referral routes for CLWs. Examples include:

Defence Medical Welfare Service provide support to members of the Armed Forces community, including veterans with mental health concerns who would benefit from wraparound peer support. This service now has a direct referral pathway for CLWs.

“Wintering Well” resources have been developed by the University of Glasgow to support people who are usually depressed, suffer low mood or identify as having 'Seasonal Affective Disorder' (SAD) symptoms in autumn and winter seasons.

We hold Carer Awareness briefings for all CLWs ensuring they are contributing to making Glasgow a Carer Aware City - we hold sessions with our CLWs both at induction and throughout the year.

Volunteer Glasgow who facilitated a CLW Forum session to explore use of their Volunteering Toolkit and Masterclass workshops, encouraging volunteering at the right time for patients.

Employability work has focused on linking to Jobs and Business Glasgow supporting CLWs to access effective employability supports which sets aims and goals with support to help patients achieve.

Get in touch

If you would like to find out more about the Glasgow CLW programme, please email:

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