



Item No. 9

Meeting Date Wednesday 19th February 2025

**Glasgow City
Integration Joint Board
Public Engagement Committee**

Report By: Kelda Gaffney, Interim Assistant Chief Officer, Adult Services

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The Thistle (Safer Drug Consumption Facility) – Engagement Update

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of the report is to update the IJB Public Engagement Committee on the engagement activity that was undertaken preceding the opening of the Safer Drug Consumption Facility (SDCF) in Glasgow City in January 2025. The report updates the Committee on the activity undertaken, the pre-launch week and the activity planned for future engagement.

Background/Engagement:

The IJB approved the implementation of a Safer Drug Consumption Facility in Glasgow City [September 2023](#).

The Public Engagement Committee was tasked with monitoring community engagement. A presentation to the Committee in November outlined the approach to engagement and the Engagement Strategy was presented to, and approved by, the IJB in [November 2023](#).

A full report was shared with the PEC in [February 2024](#) and presentations to the Committee in May 2024 and November 2024 have updated on activity, output and ongoing plans.

Governance Route:

The matters contained within this paper have been previously considered by the following group(s) as part of its development.

HSCP Senior Management Team ☐
Council Corporate Management Team ☐
Health Board Corporate Management Team ☐
Council Committee ☐

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	Update requested by IJB ☐ Other ☒ SDCF Oversight Board Not Applicable ☐
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Recommendations:	The IJB Public Engagement Committee is asked to: a) Note the contents of this report.
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Relevance to Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan:	
The implementation of the Safer Drug Consumption Facility will support the IJB/HSCP to meet the Vision and Partnership Priorities laid out within the Strategic Plan 2023-26. In particular the SDCF will support the priorities of Prevention, early intervention and well-being, Supporting greater self-determination and informed choice, Supporting people in their communities and Strengthening communities to reduce harm.	

Implications for Health and Social Care Partnership:

Reference to National Health & Wellbeing Outcome:	The SDCF will contribute to meeting the following health and wellbeing outcomes for health and social care services: People who use health and social care services have positive experiences of those services, and have their dignity respected; Health and social care services are centred on helping to maintain or improve the quality of life of people who use those services; Health and social care services contribute to reducing health inequalities; People who use health and social care service are safe from harm.
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Personnel:	Alcohol and Drug Recovery Services have recruited, trained and manage the Safer Drug Consumption Facility staff team. All staff are now in post. Staffside and GCC Unison were involved in the workforce planning for new posts.
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Carers:	Family members and carer representatives have been consulted as part of the engagement strategy and contributed to wider community engagement via their participation in a short video explaining the service.
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Provider Organisations:	Provider organisations operating with the proximity of the SDCF have been invited to participate in the engagement efforts. This includes local providers of services which are not contracted to deliver health and social care services by Glasgow City HSCP. Implications for provider organisations are considered through the SDCF Implementation Board.
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Equalities:	An EQIA has been completed and published and has informed engagement activity to date. This was reviewed in January 2024 following further engagement and has been updated since the service became operational.
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Fairer Scotland Compliance:	In offering a safer environment for drug consumption, co-located with a range of associated services and advice, the facility will contribute to supporting people to make choices that will help offset the impacts of socio-economic disadvantage often associated with this service user group.
Financial:	The financial framework for the operational costs for the facility has been agreed with the Scottish Government, and operational costs will be delivered within this financial envelope. Full details are included in the report presented to IJB in September 2023 . The implementation of the SDCF is likely to result in reduced costs to other parts of the health, social care and criminal justice system. The IJB agreed to earmark funds for the redesign works required to the Hunter Street Health and Care Centre to accommodate these services. Costs have been met from within this allocation.
Legal:	The SDCF will be delivered alongside other Alcohol and Drug treatment services aimed at reducing harms and providing pathways into treatment, care and recovery. Operational policies will be strictly adhered to and will be monitored closely. King's Counsel opinion confirmed that NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and Glasgow City Council staff can deliver the facility within existing legislation. The Lord Advocate has provided a public statement of prosecution policy, so that service users will not be prosecuted for possession of drugs whilst using the SDCF.
Economic Impact:	There may be economic benefits to the city as a result of the reduction in the visibility of drug misuse in public places and a reduction in drug-related litter being visible on the streets. Any economic impacts experienced will be considered as part of the independent evaluation.
Sustainability:	None.
Sustainable Procurement and Article 19:	None.
Risk Implications:	The implementation and delivery of the first SDCF in the UK, carries with it a degree of reputational risk for Glasgow City Council, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and Glasgow City IJB. Such risks are identified, monitored and mitigated through the SDCF Implementation Board., and will continue to be monitored via appropriate governance routes.

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Implications for Glasgow City Council:	There are a number of implications for both Glasgow City Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, including political and reputational impacts, positive impacts on the local community and media attention. There may also be increased demand for support services as a result of successful engagement with a cohort of vulnerable individuals with severe and multiple disadvantages. Resource implications may be offset by a reduction in demand for unscheduled care services such as acute health services and crisis / emergency social care services.
Implications for NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde:	There are a number of implications for both Glasgow City Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, including political and reputational impacts, positive impacts on the local community and media attention. There may also be increased demand for support services as a result of successful engagement with a cohort of vulnerable individuals with severe and multiple disadvantages. Resource implications may be offset by a reduction in demand for unscheduled care services such as acute health services and crisis / emergency social care services.

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to update the IJB Public Engagement Committee on the engagement activity that was undertaken preceding the opening of the Safer Drug Consumption Facility (SDCF) in Glasgow City in January 2025. The report updates the Committee on the activity undertaken, the pre-launch week and the activity planned for future engagement.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Communication and Engagement subgroup, chaired by the Alcohol and Drug Recovery Service (ADRS) Associate Medical Director, has been meeting since final proposals for the facility were developed in August 2023. The Engagement Strategy was presented to, and approved by, the IJB on [29th November 2023](#), and has since been presented quarterly to the IJB Public Engagement Committee.
- 2.2. A Summary of phase 1 engagement and feedback was presented to the Public Engagement Committee in [February 2024](#).
- 2.3. Phase 2 of the Engagement plan included more widespread communities and businesses in the city and a wide range of third sector services, statutory services and staff. A *You Said, We Did* document was developed following Phase 1 & 2 engagement. This is available in the Engagement section of the website (<https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sdcf-engagement>)

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- 2.4. Phase 3 of the engagement plan focussed on potential service users, referring services, local businesses and residents. Engagement with the ADP Lived Experience Reference groups identified the name of the service - The Thistle.
- 2.5. Feedback from local residents has resulted in a planned deep clean in the vicinity of the service and engagement with the independent evaluation team to ensure that the impact on local priorities is included in their work.
- 2.6. A concerted effort was also made to engage with people who inject drugs during Phase 3. The staff team engaged in assertive outreach locally and with existing street teams. Communication resources were developed including a business card with essential information, a service user briefing, including a map, and a new video taking you through the service, voiced by staff with lived experience. Frequently Asked Questions and the video are available on the SDCF website (<https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sdcf-frequently-asked-questions>). Short clips of the video are being shared widely via social media and directly with individuals and family members, with particular focus on Injecting Equipment Providers and Street teams.
- 2.7. Full details of Phase 3 engagement can be found in Appendix 1. The twelfth and final community drop-in session included Police Scotland colleagues in attendance, as requested by community members in attendance at previous sessions. HSCP officers and Police Scotland attended the Calton Community Council to provide an update on progress. Further information sessions took place with relevant partners including Emergency Department staff at Glasgow Royal Infirmary, Scottish Ambulance Service, Community Pharmacies, Justice, Homelessness and Mental Health services. The team also engaged with Barras market traders, who were keen to remain involved.

3. Pre-launch and opening day

- 3.1. The pre-launch plan evolved over several iterations as the results of the NHS Assure water tests were shared. Initial plans had hoped to use a 3-week window to invite key stakeholders to visit the service. Unfortunately, the delay caused by the testing process meant that there was only 1 week to plan media and stakeholder visits prior to the official opening on 13th January 2025.
- 3.2. The service was visited by the First Minister, John Swinney and Cabinet Secretary for Health, Neil Gray on Friday 10th January, where they toured the service, met staff and ADP Lived Experience Reference group members involved in the planning, recruitment and video. The IJB Chair and Vice-Chair also met the First Minister, Cabinet Secretary and centre staff at this visit.

4. Ongoing engagement activity

- 4.1. Engagement activity will continue to be monitored and approved by the SDCF Implementation Board, which is moving to an Oversight Board, following operationalisation of the service. New Terms of Reference are being developed with a revised membership and workstream structure and will be included in the next update. The Oversight Board will be chaired by the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) Chief Officer and will include membership from NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, HSCP, partner agencies,

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community and housing providers. Governance structures are detailed in the paper presented to IJB in [January 2024](#).

- 4.2 The SDCF Implementation Board approved the continuation of the SDCF Communication and Engagement Group to co-ordinate and report on the engagement activity that is still required now the service is operational.
- 4.3 The SDCF Implementation Board approved the creation of the Thistle Community Engagement Forum, similar in design to those in other countries. The Thistle Community Engagement Forum will facilitate ongoing communications for service leads and community members to meet, discuss and respond to any issues arising following the implementation of the service. Representatives from the HSCP, residents, local businesses, housing providers, elected members, those with lived and living experience, and Police Scotland have joined the forum, which will be supported by the Alcohol and Drug Partnership. The first meeting is scheduled for 25th February 2025. The meeting will initially be chaired by an HSCP officer, but it is anticipated that a community representative will assume chairing responsibilities in the future.
- 4.4 Wider community engagement will continue through existing community structures, with all being offered an update in the near future.
- 4.5 Further service user engagement is being planned to further promote the service to potential end users.
- 4.6 Media interest continues to be significant. It has been agreed that the IJB will receive a report 6 month post implementation that will detail activity, interventions, outcomes and community feedback.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. The IJB Public Engagement Committee is asked to:
 - a) Note the contents of this report.

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Phase 3 Engagement Activity

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	AUDIENCE	DATE	COMMENTS
PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE	ALCOHOL AND DRUG PARTNERSHIP (ADP) LIVED EXPERIENCE REFERENCE GROUPS	AUGUST/ SEPTEMBER/ OCTOBER	The naming of the service and the rooms within was discussed and debated. The service was named 'The Thistle'.
LOCAL COMMUNITY	DROP IN SESSION WITH POLICE SCOTLAND	25 TH SEPTEMBER 5PM-7PM	Very busy session. Residents took the opportunity to raise concerns about local policing.
LOCAL COMMUNITY	CALTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING	10 TH OCTOBER 7PM	Keen to be involved in ongoing engagement through the Community Forum
LOCAL COMMUNITY	MERCHANT CITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL- VICE CHAIR AND SOCIAL HUB	16 TH SEPTEMBER 12.30PM	Concerned about increased footfall of people who inject drugs in the local area and the impact on local business

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STAKEHOLDER GROUP	AUDIENCE	DATE	COMMENTS
LOCAL BUSINESS	BARRAS MARKET	23 RD OCTOBER 3PM- postponed by local business and rearranged for Feb 2025	Ongoing contact- keen to engage with the service and very interested in Naloxone training
REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORD	WHEATELY GROUP	3 RD DECEMBER	Positive engagement- keen to share information resources with people who inject drugs
PARTNER ORGANISATIONS	WOMENS SERVICES	ONGOING	Agreed to plan women's only visits to tackle anxieties about using the service.
PARTNER ORGANISATIONS	COMMUNITY PHARMACIES	ONGOING	Positive interest in how to support and refer into the service
PARTNER ORGANISATIONS	HOMELESSNESS SERVICES	ONGOING	Positive interest in how to support and refer into the service

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STAKEHOLDER GROUP	AUDIENCE	DATE	COMMENTS
PARTNER ORGANISATIONS	JUSTICE SERVICES	ONGOING	Positive interest in how to support and refer into the service
PARTNER ORGANISATIONS	SCOTTISH AMBULANCE SERVICE	ONGOING	Positive interest in how to support and refer into the service
PARTNER ORGANISATIONS	A&E, GLASGOW ROYAL INFIRMARY	ONGOING	Positive interest in how to support and refer into the service
PARTNER ORGANISATION	SCOTTISH PRISON SERVICE (SPS) STAFF, PRISON HEALTHCARE STAFF AND PRISON POPULATION	ONGOING	Positive interest. Information resources shared, including the video of Thistle walkthrough.
PARTNER ORGANISATION	ALCOHOL AND DRUG SERVICES - VOLUNTARY SECTOR DRUG & ALCOHOL AGENCIES (VSDAA) STAFF AND ADRS STAFF	ONGOING	Positive interest and questions on how the service will work with community teams and the wider system of care.
PARTNER ORGANISATIONS	MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	ONGOING	Positive interest in how to support and refer into the service

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