

National Drugs Mission Funds Impact report 2024-25

Executive Summary

This summary report highlights the progress made by projects funded under the Scottish Government's National Drugs Mission funds in 2024-25.



SEPTEMBER 2025

1. Background

Scotland has the highest drug related death rate in Europe*, with drugs claiming over 1,172 lives in 2023. Thousands more people are negatively affected by drug use across Scotland. This needs to change.

In January 2021, the Scottish Government announced a National Mission to reduce drug related harms and deaths. This Mission was supported by supported by £250 million funding. Corra Foundation is distributing £65million of this funding through the National Drugs Mission Funds.

This report captures the profound change taking place across Scotland. It also identifies four opportunities to strengthen Scotland's action to deliver the National Drugs Mission. These are outlined in section 7.

2. Funded Projects

The organisations delivering these projects range from large Public Sector bodies to constituted community groups with a single member of staff. Together, these projects have delivered a diverse range of services, including Residential Rehabilitation provision and pathways, advocacy, harm reduction vans and whole-family support.

Funding is used to cover core costs such as salaries and overheads, as well as training, events, and other project-related costs.

3. Methodology

This report assesses progress from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. The data used is drawn from written grant holder reports alongside verbal communication between Corra grant advisors and organisations.



£12,782,504
funding paid out in 2024/25



225
projects active during 2024/25



51,379
people supported in 2024/25

* Public Health Scotland 2024. Analysis reveals families and communities impacted by drug-related deaths in Scotland

4. Project outcomes: the difference projects make.

Each funded organisation reports information to Corra as agreed in their evaluation plan. These plans are designed alongside Corra to monitor progress on each of the cross-cutting priorities and the outcomes in the [National Mission on Drug Deaths Plan](#).

Outcome 1:

33 projects had an early intervention approach to the delivery of their work, to ensure **fewer people develop problem drug use**. **8,913 people** were supported through these projects.

Projects included **Hand of Solace**, supporting children and families from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities through confidential family support sessions.

Outcome 2:

142 projects took a harm reduction approach to ensure **risk is reduced for people who take harmful drugs**. Projects delivered interventions that reduce the likelihood of fatal overdoses. **29,091 people** got help to minimise the risks of their drug use.

Change Grow Live in Stirling employed Peer Harm Reduction Navigators with lived experience of addiction to support vulnerable individuals using drugs. This has helped reach individuals who were not in treatment and who were at greater risk of overdose and drug related harms.

Outcome 3:

156 projects supported **30,028 people at high risk to have access to treatment and recovery services**. These projects reach those furthest from support who are facing complex challenges.

Ayrshire Justice Services Partnership - Drug Treatment & Testing Order (DTTO)

Service employed Peer Recovery Workers to support individuals on a DTTO to engage with treatment and recovery. Individuals are referred by the court to address their substance use as an alternative to custody.

Outcome 4:

147 projects helped **people receive high quality treatment and recovery services**, ranging from recovery cafes to residential rehabilitation services. **25,934 people** were able to begin and remain in treatment.

Dundee Independent Advocacy Service employ Independent Advocacy Support Workers to deliver 1:1 advocacy for people who use drugs and their families.

Outcome 5:

190 projects report that for **32,186** of their service users, **quality of life is improved by addressing multiple disadvantages**. These projects recognise that to tackle substance use issues, wider needs must be addressed.

Projects include **The Corner**, working in partnership with **Hillcrest Futures**, to support young people affected by substance use who are finding it difficult to manage their accommodation.

Outcome 6:

Children, families and communities affected by substance use are supported by the work of **128 funded projects**. These projects helped **13,313 family members** to support their loved ones and progress their own recovery journey.

West Lothian Drug & Alcohol Services delivered the 'Family Matters' support service for people with substance dependency and their families.

5. Cross-Cutting Priorities

Scottish Government have identified [six cross-cutting priorities](#) that focus on building on strengths and reducing barriers. Here we describe how funded projects are delivering towards these priorities.

177 projects have lived experience at the heart (Priority 1)

Funded projects engaged people with lived experience as employees, trustees, and volunteers. These individuals provide relational, and compassionate support to others on their recovery journey.

Lived Experience workers at **North East Recovery Community** use their local knowledge to engage with vulnerable individuals in the community who are at high risk of drug related harm, supporting them into and through treatment.

98 projects deliver work with a focus on equalities and human rights (Priority 2)

These projects adopt a rights-based approach, assisting people to exercise their rights in relation to justice, housing, health, and recovery. They reduce barriers and challenges faced by people due to their nationality, migration status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, and economic status.

New Life Recovery Hub provide holistic, structured interventions to people who use drugs and their families, particularly those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

155 projects reported doing work that tackles stigma around drug use (Priority 3)

Stigma is a major challenge affecting individuals, families, and whole communities as well, leading to isolation and discrimination. These funded projects provide services that combat stigma, and challenge others to offer the same.

Aberdeen in Recovery (AiR) are a Lived Experience Recovery Organisation (LERO) in Aberdeen. Their aim is to make recovery visible and address stigma associated with drug use. They have delivered training on stigma to GP practices and host the 'Recovery On Air' radio show.

80 projects reported delivering **data-informed work (Priority 4)**

These projects deliver services based on in-depth knowledge of their service users, best practice in service delivery and an understanding of how changes in drug consumption patterns will impact need.

South Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug

Partnership (ADP) deliver a 'one stop shop' Hub in Ayr, called Compass. This was developed giving consideration to surveillance, epidemiological data and the views of individuals with lived experience.

141 projects invested in building **a resilient and skilled workforce (Priority 5)**

This included staff having time and space for personal development alongside pathways for service users to transition into employment.

Recovery Coaching Scotland creates structured opportunities for peer mentors to progress into facilitation and professional roles, strengthening both the workforce and the recovery landscape.

118 projects were **psychologically informed (Priority 6)**

61% of all funded projects reporting that mental health support was needed for people accessing their services. For many, trauma-informed care is a foundation of their ways of working, alongside taking a person-centred approach that addresses emotional, physical, social, and financial needs.

Liber8 Lanarkshire provide specialist trauma therapy to people with substance dependence and their families. They apply the principles of psychologically-informed environments to all aspects of their work.



Thurso Community Cafe

6. Challenges

Projects identified several challenges negatively impacting project delivery. Three of these are detailed below. This information has helped shape Corra's offer of additional support for funded organisations.

Uncertainty around funding

Over the coming year, several funded projects will come to the end of their grant term. More than half of these have been invited to apply for continuation funding. The remaining projects are expressing concerns about the security of their service, as there are not clear alternative funding routes to continue their work.

Workforce challenges

102 grant holders reported challenges with recruitment, staff burnout, or staff training. The most prevalent challenge related to filling vacant posts, with 39% of grant holders reporting this had affected project delivery. Corra aims to fund projects recruiting new staff for at least two years. Staff burnout was another frequently cited challenge leading to, or caused by, limited capacity and resources.

Poverty

92 grant holders reported that poverty not only affects individuals' ability to access support, but also shapes the broader context of their health, wellbeing, and capacity to sustain recovery. Poverty remains a significant catalyst that can lead people into addiction. Several funded projects provide holistic services including financial advice, assistance in claiming benefits and food parcels.



Recovery Through Nature project

7. Opportunities to strengthen delivery of the National Drugs Mission

Achieving the National Drugs Mission is made more difficult by funding uncertainty, the emergence of new substances, intersectionality with issues such as poverty and housing, alongside continued challenges for the workforce and recruitment. However, there are opportunities to strengthen the work of the National Drug Mission by:

Continuing to provide flexible, multi-year funding.

Multi-year funding provided through the National Drugs Mission Funds allows organisations to focus on delivering services, rather than writing funding applications. Multi-year funding also enables organisations to plan effectively, build meaningful relationships with individuals throughout their recovery journey, and retain staff.

Provide targeted support for workforce development, support, and retention.

39% of all funded projects experienced challenges with recruitment and retention. This is a recurring challenge across the third sector with staff burnout, uncompetitive salaries, short-term contracts, and a lack of suitably skilled candidates frequently highlighted.

Mitigating the gendered barriers to accessing support.

The needs of women affected by drugs and alcohol are different to the needs of men. Women often face greater stigma, are likely to be caring for children, and carry around trauma such as domestic abuse. We must ensure that trauma informed, safe spaces are available for women throughout their recovery journey.

Further focus on systemic issues such as poverty, and mental health support.

Over 40% of funded projects identified poverty as a significant barrier to recovery. When people struggle to cover the essentials, thinking about recovery becomes a luxury they cannot afford. Similarly, funded projects told us that people often feel let down by statutory mental health services. These services are largely inaccessible with long waiting times. Third Sector organisations are forced to fill the gap themselves. This cannot be a substitute for clinical care.

David's Story

Change Grow Live (CGL) are funded through the Improvement Fund to extend the reach and provision of recovery hubs across NHS Forth Valley. They provided the case study below to illustrate the impact of their work.

David*, one of the people regularly accessing the new Recovery Hub in Clackmannanshire has reported to the team that he has benefitted greatly from the multi-agency approach. David has had issues with drugs for a number of years and has previously received treatment for his opiate use. However, during his assessment at the Hub, it was identified that he had significant financial difficulties, fuel poverty, housing issues and was extremely isolated in his community. The assessment revealed that David had accumulated substantial debt due to his substance use and lack of income, as he was not accessing the benefits appropriate to him.

The Citizens Advice Worker (partner within the Hub) supported David to access the correct benefits and to create a debt management plan. Workers supported him to get a bus pass, fuel/energy vouchers and linked in with local authority housing, to begin to address the issues he was experiencing. This multi-faceted support plan made active recovery more accessible to David by addressing his basic needs and relieving a great deal of stress.

While the social support plan was being put in place, the Recovery Coordinators and Harm Reduction Navigators supported David in relation to his substance use. Workers provided him with harm reduction advice around poly drug use and overdose awareness. David was given first aid and Naloxone training at the HUB, and was regularly supplied with new Naloxone to take home.

Partners within the Recovery Hub include Hepatology and the Hep C Trust. They supported David to complete a Dry Blood Spot test (DBST), which returned positive for Hepatitis C. He is now receiving treatment for Hepatitis C with the support of the Hepatology nurse. This will enhance David's life expectancy.

Based on their own positive experience in the Recovery Hub, David has become an advocate for the service, promoting the benefits of engaging to his friends and colleagues, including escorting people to the Hub for their first visit.



* Name has been changed

About Corra Foundation

Corra Foundation exists to make a difference to the lives of people and communities. It works with others to encourage positive change, opportunity, fairness and growth of aspirations which improve quality of life. Corra wants to see a society in which people create positive change and enjoy fulfilling lives.

In 2020 Corra launched a ten-year strategy. It is long term because making a difference on the big challenges will take time. At its heart is the strong belief that when people find their voice, they unlock the power to make change happen.

Our ways of working

At Corra we have a set of principles that we strive to put into practice across our roles as an employer, independent funder, charity and partner, as well as in our influencing activity. We will:

- Listen and respond to people, communities and organisations and amplify voices that are less well heard – their wisdom is at the heart of Corra’s approach.
- Build relationships, always working alongside others on the basis of shared power, mutual trust and shared learning.
- Pursue diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), trying to challenge structural discrimination and contribute to radical shifts in the funding sector.
- Be an open, trusting and flexible grant maker.
- Ensure we contribute to tackling climate change, through our investments, operations and grant making and encouraging others to take action alongside us.
- Be bold, taking considered risks and supporting others to do the same.

Date of publication: **September 2025**

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