

National Drugs Mission Funds Impact report 2023-24

Executive Summary

This summary report highlights the progress made by projects funded under the Scottish Government's National Drugs Mission funds. This supports organisations which work with people affected by drug use across Scotland. It is based on progress reports shared by funded organisations and insights shared with our grants team through meetings and project visits.



SEPTEMBER 2024

1. Background

In 2021, the Scottish Government contracted Corra Foundation to administer five funds aimed at reducing drug-related harm and deaths in Scotland. These are the [Children and Families Fund](#), [the Improvement Fund](#), [the Local Support Fund \(LSF\)](#), [the LSF Micro](#), and the Grassroots Fund. Since then, over 300 projects across Scotland have received funding and 218 of these were still active during the reporting period. Glasgow, Dundee and Edinburgh have the highest number of projects, aligning closely with population density and need for services.



£13,298,687
funding paid out in 2023/24



£230,844
average total grant size
in 2023/24. Average grant
term is 3 years

Photo courtesy of The Maxie Richards Foundation





Launch of Family Group
Photo courtesy of the Harbour Ayrshire

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.



218

projects active during 2023/24



33,613

people supported in 2023/24.
As reported in 197 project reports

3. Progress reported- Outcomes

Projects report progress towards one or more of the Scottish Government's six outcomes¹. Most projects are working with people across two or more of these, so the same person might be counted for more than one outcome. Below is an overview of each outcome.

Outcome 1:

29 projects had an early intervention approach to the delivery of their work, to ensure **fewer people develop problem drug use**. 4,991 people were supported through these projects.

Change Grow Live employ a full time Enhanced Early Intervention Coordinator to improve the Arrest Referral Service. Receiving support around substance use at this crucial stage can help prevent the issue from escalating.

Outcome 2:

125 projects took a harm reduction approach to ensure risk is **reduced for people who take harmful drugs**. 16,621 people were supported to minimise the risks of their drug use.

Simon Community Scotland deliver the 'We See You' Project in Glasgow. Staff are trained to deliver WAND interventions, which include wound care, assessment of injecting risk, Naloxone supply and dry blood spot testing

Outcome 3:

155 projects supported **people at most risk have access to treatment and recovery**.

These projects reduce barriers to services so that almost 19,000 people could quickly access the help and support they needed.

Street Connect undertakes street outreach and provides drop-in cafes to engage individuals who are vulnerable, homeless and at greater risk of drug-related harms. Many of these individuals face multiple disadvantages and would not otherwise access appropriate and effective support.

¹ Further information on the outcomes is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

Outcome 4:

141 projects helped **people receive high quality treatment and recovery services**, ranging from independent advocacy to residential rehabilitation. 16,873 people were able to begin and remain in treatment.

Phoenix Futures received a grant to improve their residential rehabilitation service through enhanced access, aftercare, and family support provision. People have benefited from this increased preparatory work and structured aftercare support. Retention in treatment has increased.

Outcome 5:

148 projects report that for almost 18,000 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.

Stirling District Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

deliver a Specialist CAB Advice service in addiction services across Forth Valley. This service has helped to bring their service users financial stability, housing security, and improved mental health.

Outcome 6:

Children, families and communities affected by substance use are supported by the work of **91 funded projects**. These projects supported 6,940 family members to progress their own recovery and feel empowered to support their loved one on their journey.

Circle deliver an intensive whole-family support, therapeutic counselling, and children's resilience service across North Lanarkshire. The service has been established in response to the complex health and social care needs experienced by children and their families because of substance use, domestic abuse, and poor mental health.



4. Cross-Cutting Priorities

How projects work is often as important as what support is delivered. Scottish Government have identified six cross-cutting priorities² that focus on building on strengths and reducing barriers. Here we describe how funded projects are working towards these priorities.

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

The importance of involving people with lived and living experience of drug dependency in the design and delivery of services is widely understood across the sector. Many of the funded organisations embrace this approach.

South Lanarkshire Council employ Support Workers with lived experience to work with families affected by substance use. By creating trusting and safe relationships with the families, they help them access the support they need.

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

These projects ensure that specific rights of people in recovery, such as receiving the treatment of their choice, are upheld. Many projects adopt a rights-based approach, assisting people to exercise these rights.

Minority Communities Addictions Support Service (MCASS) supports people from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities, to access mainstream recovery services and understand their treatment options.

122 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.

² Further details of the six Scottish Government's six cross-cutting priorities can be found on the [Scottish Government website](#)

75 projects reported delivering data-informed work (Priority 4)

Funded projects use partnership working and local knowledge to ensure a joined-up approach in identifying and supporting those individuals most at risk of drug related harm.

We Are With You deliver an **Assertive Peer Support Service (AO Team)** in Dumfries and Galloway. They work with partners in Police and Health to identify and engage those at high risk of overdose.

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

Reports from these projects highlighted the importance of having well trained, supported staff, ensuring that people with substance use issues receive high quality treatment.

Scottish Drugs Forum deliver the **Addiction Workers Training Programme** to people with lived and living experience of addiction across Scotland. The programme supports people, through paid internships to take up roles as addiction workers.

69 projects were psychologically informed³ (Priority 6)

These projects embed the principles of trauma-informed and psychologically informed practice into their wider recovery services. Some deliver psychological support.

Addictions Counselling Inverness provide talking therapy and therapeutic group work programmes to people who use drugs who are in recovery and their families.

Photo courtesy of the Harbour Ayrshire



3 Further details of the six Scottish Government's six cross-cutting priorities can be found on the [Scottish Government website](#)

5. Challenges

Projects identified several challenges negatively impacting project delivery. This information has helped shape Corra's offer of additional peer support or training for funded organisations.

76 projects reported workforce challenge

38% of grant holders reported challenges with recruitment, staff burnout, or staff training. The most prevalent challenge related to filling vacant posts, with 62 grant holders reporting this had affected project delivery. Corra aims to fund projects recruiting new staff for at least two years.

20 projects reported gendered barriers to access

These barriers affected funded projects, partner organisations and crucially, those they support. Often there are broader systemic and cultural issues behind these barriers. Several projects addressed this challenge through introducing gendered service provision.

48 projects reported barriers to collaborative working

Collaborative working has presented a significant challenge for the sector. Some organisations have indicated that at times, poor collaboration resulted in ineffective utilisation of resources. Thirteen projects reported issues relating directly to data sharing. The most prominent challenge was obtaining data from statutory partners which often caused delay or barrier to referral processes and effective service delivery.

79 projects reported that poverty affected the people they were supporting.

Poverty is a key underlying issue for individuals impacted by substance use. It often presents a significant barrier to engagement and recovery. Several funded projects provide holistic services including financial advice, assistance in claiming benefits and food parcels.

39 projects reported mental health barriers

Some organisations funded through the National Drugs Mission Funds experienced challenges around supporting their service users' mental health. They have identified significant barriers to support for those with a dual diagnosis (drug use and mental health issues).

Psychiatric Services will often seek to refer people back to Addiction Services and vice versa. Many organisations have reported long waiting lists for Mental Health Services, posing risks to individuals in need. Some non-mental health organisations reflected on their limited skills, experience and/or knowledge of best practice around responding to a service user's mental health crisis.

James's Story

Told from the perspective of a support worker employed through a funded project.

“ James (names have been changed) had suffered from addiction most of his life and on becoming a father to Simon* he battled to address his issues. He would sometimes overcome them for long periods and then sadly relapse. He has always been devoted to Simon, who was placed in the care of James's mother. She was a stable, loving influence on Simon, and supported James to maintain a healthy relationship with his son.

When James lost his mother, grief sent him spiralling back into addiction. Family, friends, and neighbours noticed a change in his behaviour, and a family member contacted our organisation asking for help for James and Simon.

Our team already had established a relationship with James, and we promptly arranged for him to come along to our community-based hub with Simon to assess his needs and concerns. During the discussion it became very apparent that

James's drug addiction was adversely affecting his parenting abilities. Simon was not eating set meals, he was missing school, and he was struggling with the lack of routine. We recognised the urgency of the situation and advised James that we were going to have to share our concerns.

Though James was initially upset about this, when we discussed the reason for this and the support they would both receive, he realised that this was indeed the best option. We provided a safe space for James and Simon and regular contact was maintained.

James was referred to a local addiction support service who implemented a support plan. He got access to counselling to address the underlying issues contributing to his drug dependency, and he was placed on a methadone prescription. A multi-agency approach was adopted, and we collaborated with the addiction support service. The support plan focused on healing from grief, developing coping skills and building a strong support network. Throughout the journey our team have continued to work with James attending

all relevant meetings and appointments to provide support and input to his support plan. Simon's feelings were acknowledged and validated, and he received counselling and support for him to understand his father's addiction and its impact on their lives.

James continues to embrace his journey of recovery with determination and commitment and meets support workers weekly. He is now more engaged in parenting Simon and is actively participating in his son's life. James has attended school events, helped with homework, and encourages Simon's interests and hobbies. Simon is still residing with his aunt; however he sees James on a regular basis and his emotional wellbeing has improved significantly as he sees his dad's progression.”

[Read the full version of the National Drugs Mission Fund Progress Report 2024](#)

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.

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