



Impact in Scotland Report 2025

What we did.

Who we reached.

Why it matters.

withyou
in Scotland

wearewithyou.org.uk

Welcome to our impact in Scotland report

Contents

Our mission in Scotland has always been to help one another. From the beginning, we've provided vital services for those experiencing challenges with alcohol, drugs, or mental health.

But there's still much to be done. Our name reflects who we are. It's a statement of intent, of support, and of our commitment to work side by side with our clients as equals. To help them believe that the change they want to make is possible.

We won't stop until we achieve our vision of a future free from harm caused by alcohol, drug and mental health challenges, where anyone seeking help feels welcomed, not judged.

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When people get the right support, lives are changed

Behind every statistic is a person, a parent, a partner, someone's child.

In 2025, we worked alongside more than 14,000 people across Scotland. People finding the courage to ask for help. People taking their first steps toward change. People rebuilding their lives after years of struggle.

Some came through our doors in towns and cities across Scotland, including Glasgow, Dundee, and Dumfries. Others reached out through our award-winning webchat service, or via WithYou Anywhere, our first-of-its-kind fully digital service, which launched in Highland in October to bring accessible support to people in some of Scotland's most remote areas.

We've also strengthened our community-based support. In areas like Argyll and Bute and Renfrewshire, our community link workers connect people who are isolated or unsure what support is available in their communities. And we're now supporting people in West Dunbartonshire through our new drug and alcohol service, which launched in January 2026.

The reality is stark. If you live in Scotland's most deprived communities, you're 12 times more likely to die from drugs and 4.5 times more likely to die from alcohol. This isn't just a health crisis, it's a social justice issue. Drug and alcohol services can't tackle this alone. We need whole-community approaches that address the root causes of harm.

Stigma remains a huge barrier to people seeking help. That's why we have played an active role in developing Scotland's



If you live in Scotland's most deprived communities, you're 12 times more likely to die from drugs and 4.5 times more likely to die from alcohol.

Charter of Rights for People Affected by Substance Use and the Standards for Young People Accessing Treatment or Support for Alcohol or Drugs.

But stigma's not our only challenge. We're also facing new threats. Nitazenes contaminating the drug supply. Cocaine is now implicated in nearly half of all drug deaths. Xylazine and bromazolam adding to an increasingly toxic and unpredictable supply. We're adapting fast, working closely with partners to keep people safe as patterns of harm change.

We're also building stronger partnerships with recovery communities and strengthening pathways for people with lived experience and expertise to join our teams.

Every person who reaches out deserves support that meets them where they are. No judgement. No barriers. Just help when they need it most. We value our partnerships immensely and know that when we work together, everyone benefits.

We're here and we're listening, and wherever you are in Scotland, we are WithYou

Thank you to everyone who makes this work possible — the people who trust us with their recovery, the communities who welcome us, and the partners who fund vital support across Scotland.

Louise Stewart,
Director for Scotland, WithYou



Our work across Scotland

From our support groups on the Isle of Jura, to our naloxone training in Stranraer. From our recovery hubs in Glasgow, to our harm reduction van in Fife. Wherever you are in Scotland, we are WithYou.

We deliver community-based drug and alcohol services across Scotland. Our approach brings together harm reduction, residential rehabilitation pathways, assertive outreach, and family support. We work in partnership with NHS Scotland, health and social care partnerships, and other third sector organisations to provide support that's built around people's needs, not systems.

We deliver services in:

- Glasgow
- East Dunbartonshire
- East Ayrshire
- South Ayrshire
- Scottish Borders
- Dumfries and Galloway
- Argyll and Bute
- Dundee
- Fife
- Highland
- West Dunbartonshire

We also deliver Community Link Worker services in Renfrewshire and Argyll and Bute.



Community link workers: bringing support closer

Our community link workers are based in GP practices. They provide practical, social and emotional support to people experiencing health inequalities. From mental health to bereavement, poverty to isolation, they connect people to the help that's right for them.



Scan to watch our Community Links work in action

Partnership working in action

Our STARS service in Glasgow shows what's possible when we work in partnership with statutory services. Delivered with Glasgow Alcohol & Drug Recovery Services, we support people who are stable but still want regular contact to maintain their recovery.

Our team provides flexible support that's led by what people need. We help people stay connected to their recovery community, access other services, and keep moving forward. We're currently supporting almost 850 people across Glasgow.

Connecting people to recovery communities

Recovery is stronger when people have positive connections in their local area. We help people join recovery cafes, peer support groups and community activities. Our staff facilitate recovery groups and support people to access training and volunteering, with pathways into recovery worker roles. We work in partnership with grassroots recovery organisations to make this happen.

People we've supported

Finding supports that fits

Chloe's story

Chloe always felt like she didn't fit in. She had severe social anxiety growing up and found it hard to connect with people her own age. She didn't know it then, but she was neurodivergent.

When she started using drugs and alcohol as a teenager, it felt like an escape.

"Nobody cared if I was weird. They all thought I was funny. I thought, this is it, I'm going to have so many friends," she recalls.

But by the time she realised she was dependent, she'd been through years of turmoil — hospitalisations, debt, and a stay in intensive care.

During a spell at a specialist hospital unit, Chloe was diagnosed with autism, ADHD and BPD (Borderline Personality Disorder). Suddenly things made sense. But it wasn't until an overdose in early 2024 that something shifted.

Chloe reached out to WithYou in the Borders. She started with one-to-one sessions before joining the MAP (Mutual Aid Partnership) group in Galashiels. Group settings had never worked for her before, but this was different.

"It's structured but not strict. If I feel overwhelmed, I can say to my recovery worker James, 'I need five minutes.' He'll open the door and that's fine."

James Nichol is neurodivergent himself. He helped Chloe understand the link between ADHD and her relationship with substances.

Now 28 months into recovery, Chloe has just landed a job as a Spanish teaching assistant. She's also performed in her local panto and started her own craft business.

"I wouldn't have been able to do this if I wasn't sober and if it wasn't for the people at WithYou. I never thought I could get help. Now I'm proud of myself sober."



It's structured but not strict. If I feel overwhelmed, I can say to my recovery worker James, 'I need five minutes.' He'll open the door and that's fine.

Finding connection in recovery

Graeme's story

"When I was drinking, it wasn't a nice existence. I wasn't living," says Graeme.

Graeme, from Glasgow, was supported by our North East Glasgow Recovery Hub to overcome challenges with alcohol.

He explains: "I couldn't bring myself to stop because I thought it would mean leaving things behind. I thought, 'If I don't drink, what am I going to do?'"

Now 18 months into recovery, Graeme is more social than ever. He's found his place in the East End's vibrant recovery community, volunteering at his local recovery café and training to become a recovery worker.

"Before, I thought stopping drinking meant losing everything. Now I've gained so much more. I've made real friends. I'm learning new skills. I have purpose.

"The sun shines brighter now. The grass is greener. The birds chirp louder.

"My experience with WithYou has been great. I have learned that when you put your hand out, someone will reach out and grab you. And they won't let you go."



My experience with WithYou has been great.



There hasn't been a day since I started where I've not wanted to go to my work.

Lived experience, lasting impact

Ronnie's story

Many people who work at WithYou have their own experience of the challenges our clients face. Ronnie's one of them.

Now an Advanced Practitioner at our North East Glasgow Recovery Hub, Ronnie manages a team of five supporting people preparing for and coming out of residential rehab. But his path here started long before he joined us.

Ronnie grew up in Paisley in the 1970s and 80s, where drugs and poverty were widespread. He was on a methadone prescription for 20 years before entering

residential rehab in 2014. From there, he moved into supported housing, started volunteering, and completed his SVQ qualifications in health and social care. Within five months of starting a placement, he was offered a full-time job.

He joined WithYou in December 2020 and has never looked back.

"I bring nearly 12 years of recovery. Rediscovering yourself. Constantly growing. There hasn't been a day since I started where I've not wanted to go to my work."

Our impact in numbers

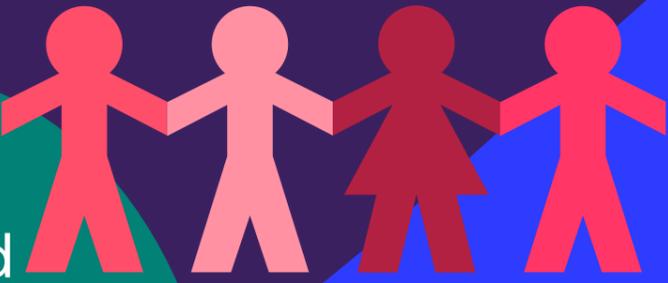
We worked with

14,000

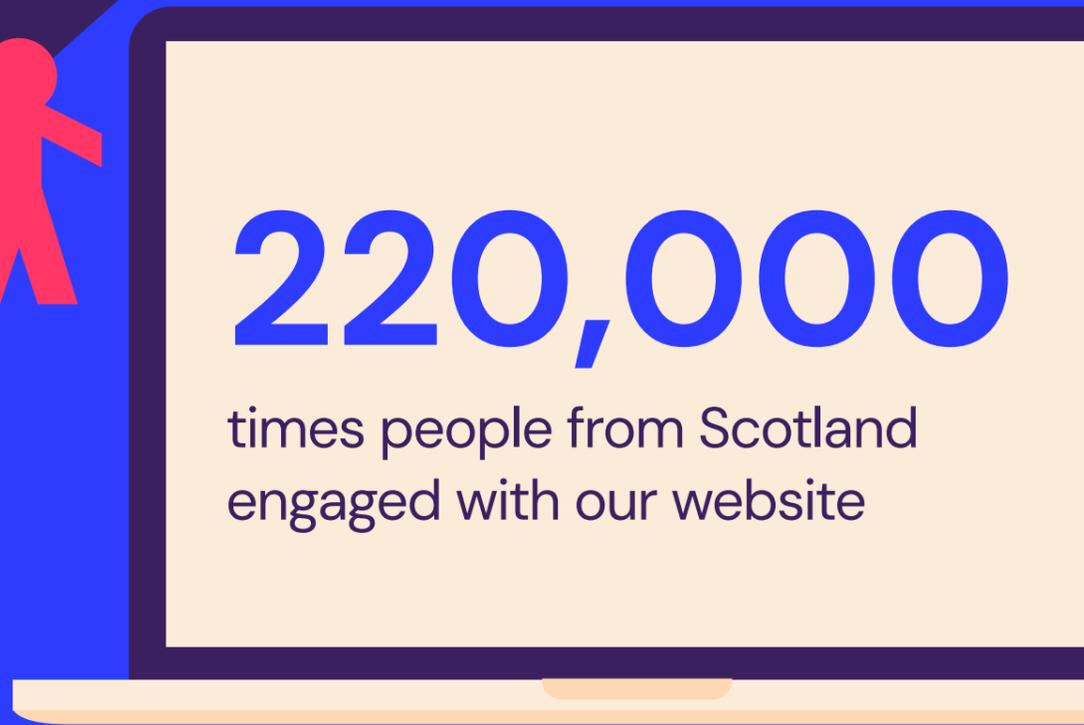
people in Scotland to overcome challenges with drugs and alcohol

↑ 21%
year-on-year increase in referrals

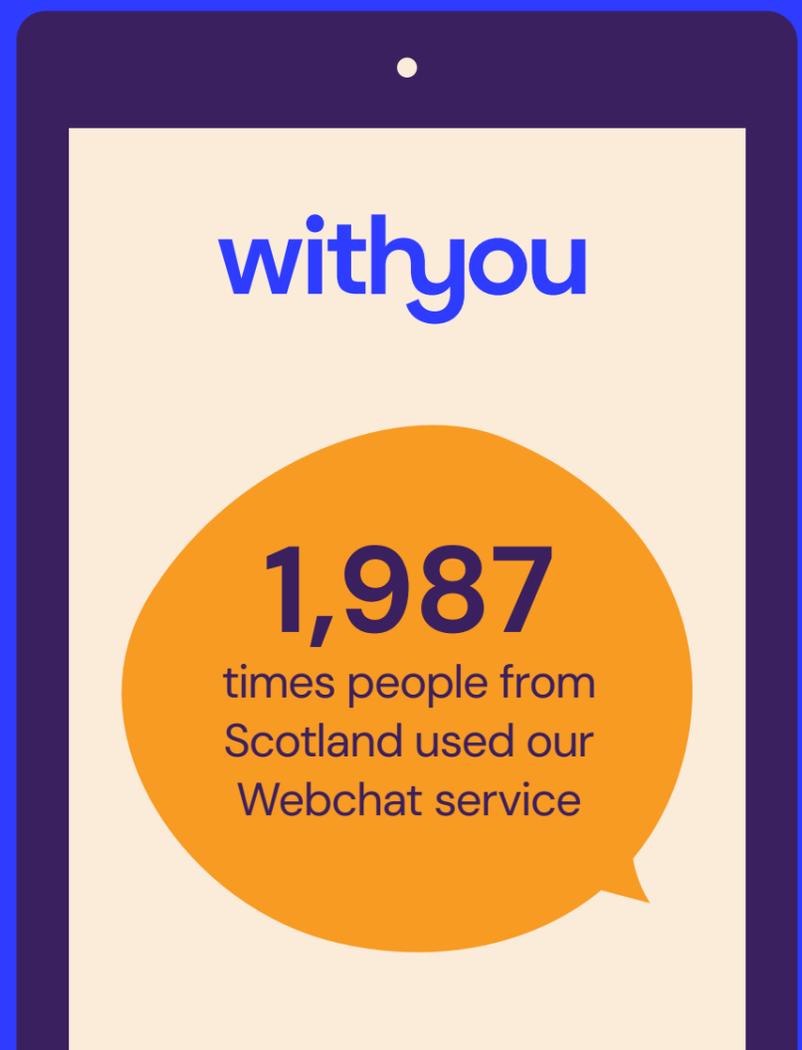
↑ 19%
year-on-year increase in people successfully discharged



We supported **392** families with children through our services



220,000
times people from Scotland engaged with our website



withyou

1,987
times people from Scotland used our Webchat service



of people who signed up for a recovery group actively participated



63,000
times people attended appointments across Scotland

How we're shaping the conversation in Scotland

We believe change happens when lived experience, frontline expertise and evidence come together.

Following the launch of the Charter of Rights for People Affected by Substance Use in December 2024, our involvement continued throughout 2025. This human rights approach will make all services more accountable and support easier to reach.

We were also proud to see the release of the Standards for Young People Accessing Treatment or Support for Alcohol or Drugs, which we helped develop. Young people shaped these standards themselves. They set out what good support looks like. Early help, flexible access, and consistent relationships with workers who understand them.

What we see in our services tells us alcohol needs urgent attention. While drug deaths have fallen, Scotland continues

to have the highest alcohol death rate among UK nations. We call for specific funding for alcohol harm reduction, better access to detox, and stronger support in communities. We are keen to support our government, policy and delivery partners to ensure we get this right.

The picture is changing for drugs, too. Cocaine now shows up most often in hospital screenings and post-mortems. Synthetic opioids like nitazenes are a growing concern. Collectively, we need to act faster, with wider use of drug testing and harm reduction.

Beyond the National Mission, we've been active across Scotland's policy landscape. We supported calls for an emergency response on alcohol. We contributed to the review of Scotland's Alcohol Brief

Interventions programme. And we've been working with many of our partners to highlight the funding challenges facing the entire care sector. This collaborative approach, bringing frontline insight to policy development, is how we create change that lasts.

We'll keep pushing for long-term funding beyond the National Mission's 2026 end date. We look forward to the launch of the National Specification and will continue to influence where needed. We've been working with other nationally-funded organisations and with government directly on our vision for Scotland post-2026.

What we learn from supporting people every day shapes what we say. We make sure the voices of people with lived experience are heard where decisions are made.

The people behind what we say

Our calls for change don't come from meeting rooms. They come from what we see and hear every day, in recovery hubs, mutual aid partnership groups, recovery cafes and communities across Scotland.

In this film, people share their experiences. Some are in recovery. Some are still finding their way. All of them remind us why this work matters.



Scan to watch our film

Meeting people where they're at

Not everyone can walk through our door. Geography, stigma, work patterns and caring responsibilities all create barriers. That's why we've invested in digital support that reaches people wherever they are, whenever they need us.

WithYou Anywhere

WithYou Anywhere launched in Highland in October 2025 as the UK's first fully commissioned virtual drug and alcohol service. Developed with Highland Council and NHS Highland, it supports people aged 16 and over across one of Scotland's most rural regions.

Our team provides brief interventions and structured recovery support via phone

and video. People can access help without travelling long distances or worrying about being seen in smaller communities.

This model shows what's possible when we remove barriers to support people in remote areas.

Our Webchat service

WithYou delivers Scotland's national Webchat, an online messaging tool for people seeking support with drugs or alcohol – whether for themselves or for a parent, child, partner, friend or employee they are concerned about.

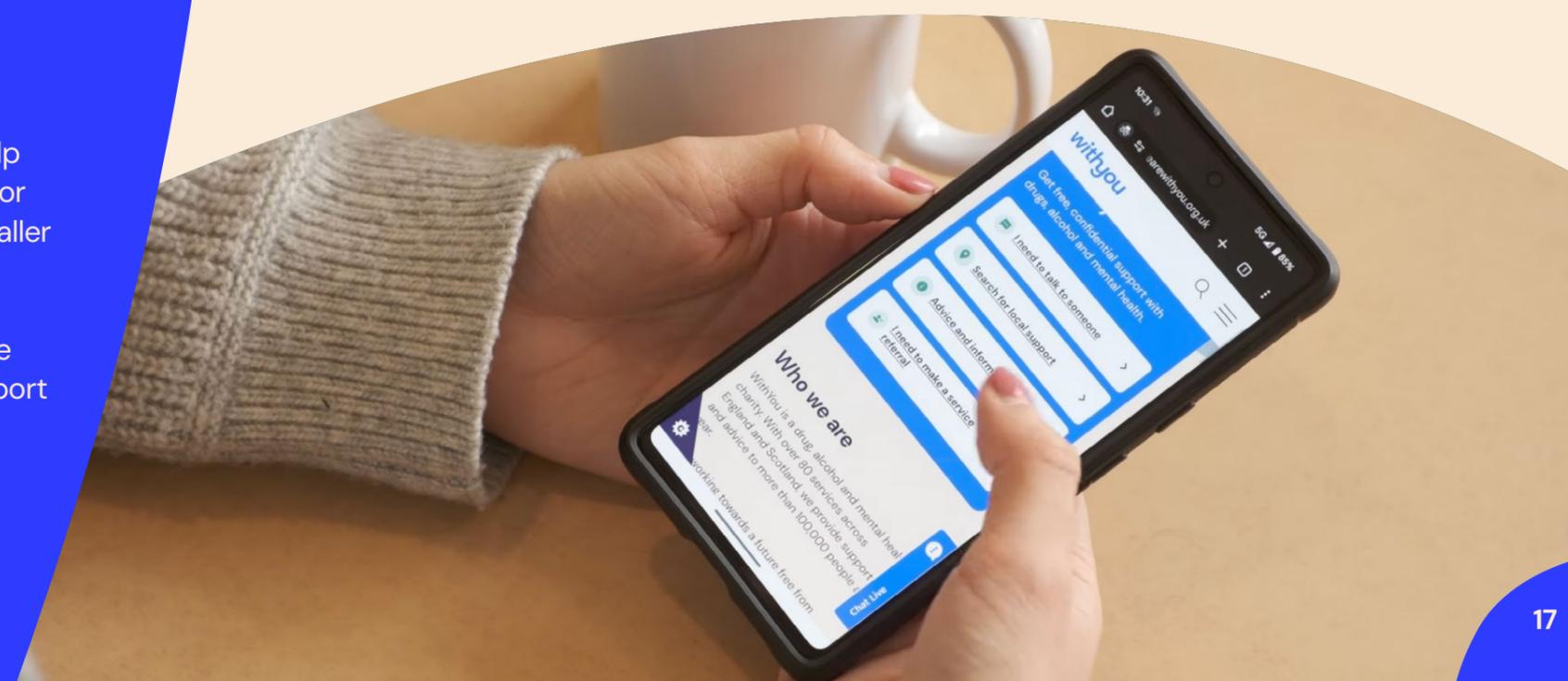
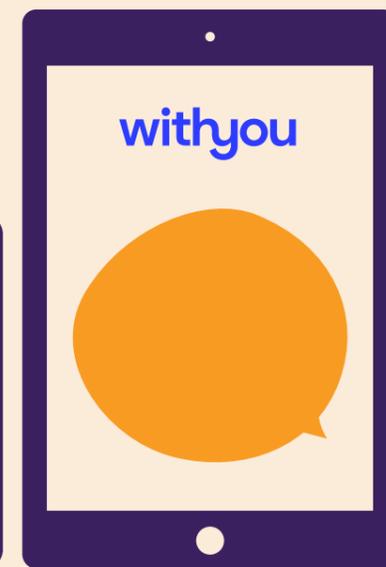
Our specialised team of Webchat advisors offers brief interventions and treatment options, as well as connecting clients with in-person support.

This free, confidential service is funded by the Scottish Government. It's available from 9am to 9pm on weekdays, and from 10am to 4pm at weekends and bank holidays. It's open 364 days a year, closing only on Christmas Day.

Our Webchat colleagues were recently honoured with the 'Digital Health and Care Team' award at the Holyrood Digital Health Awards.



Scan to talk to us confidentially online



Our vision

A **future** where everyone lives a life **free from** the **harm** associated with drugs and alcohol.

Find out more

To learn more about our services in Scotland visit

wearewithyou.org.uk/about-us/in-scotland

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in Scotland

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