Item 1

18th January 2024

Glasgow City Council

Wellbeing, Equalities, Communities, Culture & Engagement City Policy Committee

Report by Chief Executive

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Glasgow Helps

Purpose of Report:

This paper provides Members with an overview of the Glasgow Helps service. It details the background to its establishment, the evolution of the service based on learning, and the current model of support provided to citizens of Glasgow.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to note the overview provided and endorse the work of the Glasgow Helps service.

Ward No(s): Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

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1 Introduction

1.1 This paper provides Members with an overview of the Glasgow Helps service. It details the background to its establishment, the evolution of the service based on learning, and the current model of support provided to citizens of Glasgow.

2. Background

2.1 Glasgow Helps has its origins in the support provided to vulnerable citizens during the pandemic. Initially the Shielding line connecting people with specific support, it quickly became clear that citizens in need of assistance were not just those with the health vulnerabilities identified. It also emerged that the issues people faced were not only about accessing food, prescriptions or vitamins; they were long established and exacerbated rather than caused by the pandemic.

2.2 Working in partnership with Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS), the Shielding service was able to expand the support offer to be responsive to issues raised by those that reached out for help. Using collective knowledge and resources, Glasgow Helps worked with GCVS to connect people to specialist services that were the best fit for their needs. Essentially, the service assisted citizens to navigate the complicated and complex array of supports that were available but unknown and not understood.

3. Service Evolution

3.1 Glasgow Helps was relaunched in May 2022 as a post pandemic support offer for citizens across our city, recognising the ongoing requirement for assistance. It has a staff team of 28 who work directly with citizens to secure the 'right support, in the right place, at the right time'. It is open to anyone who lives in Glasgow and can be accessed through self or partner referral using our online form or telephone line (0141 276 1185).

3.2 Alongside this, the Glasgow Helps service sought to reach out to citizens that might benefit from additional support. Using data to understand who this might be and how they could be reached, Glasgow Helps builds strong partnerships with key organisations to encourage referrals into the service as a trusted intermediary. For example, Glasgow Helps establishes links directly with Early Years Establishments and schools, Registered Social Landlords, Health Visitors and Third sector organisations. Learning to date has proven that people engage more deeply with Glasgow Helps when they have been introduced through someone they know. The service also uses targeted outreach in partner venues and offices to facilitate direct access to those that use these.

3.3 The early work undertaken demonstrated that, when citizens presented to Glasgow Helps they were often overwhelmed and in crisis. In this position, it is difficult to focus on the future and an individual's strength and capacity to cope is severely depleted. Despite seeking help to change their situation, they often do not know what support they need, what they are entitled to or what is

available, and do not know where or even how to start to find this. Glasgow Helps uses its knowledge of city services to assist with this in the first instance.

3.5 Seeking support is often difficult for so many of our citizens, for an array of reasons. Early service provision demonstrated that when people do reach out, they want to be listened to, to be understood and to be properly heard rather than provided with referrals or signposted to multiple services. On that basis Glasgow Helps has evolved from simply responding to specific asks, to using the provision of initial practical support to build trust and work intensively with people, listening and helping to unpick their own unique circumstances, issues, needs and aspirations. This model draws heavily from the lessons learnt during the pandemic as well as the successful implementation of this approach within Macmillan's Improving the Cancer Journey service, one of our key partners.

3.6 This person-centred approach uses holistic conversations to put together a detailed picture of what matters to the citizen and determine bespoke actions. Often there is immediate practical support that can be provided but it also kickstarts an ongoing relationship between the citizen and the service that is built around trust, mutual respect and commitment to working together to create a shared plan for support. This approach works intensively with citizens to address both their immediate needs and work towards their longer-term aspirations. A short video has been created to describe this offer which can be viewed here.

3.7 Experience to date demonstrates that this way of working, whilst intensive, is extremely effective in providing both the necessary practical assistance, and the support required to rebuild the personal strength, capacity and resilience within citizens to reclaim control of their lives. Creating the space within a service like Glasgow Helps to understand the reality of people's lives, to walk with them, and to be empowered as a staff member to facilitate change is delivering significantly different and better outcomes for our people. Investing in relationships and subsequently bringing together the best services for them, based on deep understanding of what matters most, has the power to be truly transformational.

4. Achievements to Date

4.1 Since it's relaunch in May 2022, Glasgow Helps has refined both its ways of working and its measures of success. Initially monitoring was focused on tracking referrals and services provided. As Glasgow Helps realigned to a person centred model, the measures used are also evolving to demonstrate more effectively both the impact of the service and the value of the relationship and the long term change that can be secured.

4.2 An overview of our service statistics is set out below. Glasgow Helps has;

- Assisted over 20,100 citizens;
- Undertaken over 51,200 individual contacts with citizens;
- Provided person centred support to over 2,050 citizens;
    - 52% of those working with staff intensively are families;
    - 62% of the families that work with us are one parent families

- Provided access to practical support in relation to a wide range of issues. These have *primarily, but not exclusively* been related to the cost of living (food, utilities, housing) and in terms of income (benefit and employment support). Physical health is also a significant concern.
- Supported a reduction in self-reported concern levels across the areas identified for inclusion in citizen support plans. On average, since May 2022, these have reduced by 33% to date, demonstrating a significant impact and shift towards improved resilience. It is anticipated that these will reduce further as citizens complete their engagement with the service.
- Furthermore, as the person centred approach has evolved and staff have been empowered to work intensively with citizens towards resilience, the reduction in self-reported concerns has continued at pace. Evidence shows that between October and December 2023 this has decreased by 52%.

4.3 Alongside these quantitative measures, Glasgow Helps is also creating anonymised user stories that articulate the range of interactions that are undertaken. An example is included in **Annex A** to this report.

4.4 In addition, Glasgow Helps has undertaken substantial stakeholder engagement, building strong partnerships with a wide range of organisations. A snapshot of this work is provided below;

- Partnering with the Trussell Trust and GAIN to deliver an Access to Advice offer providing a direct route from Glasgow Helps to financial inclusion services;
- Partnering with the Wise Group to support families to access Glasgow City Council's Winter Fuel Support Fund;
- Strengthening the person-centred support offer across the city through collaboration with similar services including; Family Finance Key Workers, Community Link Workers, Health & Social Care Connect, Glasgow Life Live Well Programme, Improving the Cancer Journey and Long Term Conditions, and the Wise Group (Relational Mentoring service);
- Partnering with nine Early Years Establishments to support young families, testing the importance of a trusted intermediary;
- Delivering a programme of diverse outreach across a range of partner and community venues, including DWP offices and Welcome Places in collaboration with partner organisations such as One Parent Families Scotland and Scottish Social Security Agency;
- Partnering with Police Scotland to create a unique pathway that supports front line officers to refer directly to Glasgow Helps through their Concern Hub;
- Collaboration with the Scottish Welfare Fund.

5. Looking Forward

5.1 The contribution that Glasgow Helps has made, and will continue to make, to support our citizens is acknowledged in the Council's Strategic Plan 2022-27. The continuation of the service is highlighted as a core activity required to deliver on Grand Challenge 1, Mission 1: 'End Child Poverty in our city using early intervention to support families'. Glasgow Helps is committed to working

directly with families across the city and is embedded within the Glasgow Child Poverty Pathfinder, contributing to the development and delivery of new ways of working to achieve this mission.

5.2 Glasgow City Council recently approved the ongoing resourcing of Glasgow Helps, securing its future as a permanent service for the city. It will continue to evolve its approach, build partnerships and refine its ways of working to deliver quality person-centred support. Furthermore, it will work with the Child Poverty Pathfinder and city partners, including citizens, to contribute to shaping and refining a consistent, strengths based person-centred approach for the city.

5.3 Glasgow Helps has also committed to participate in the development of the city's No Wrong Door model. No Wrong Door seeks to address the current fragmented and disjointed service infrastructure in the city by creating joins and improving collaboration. No Wrong Door will ensure that no matter where a citizen first interacts with a service in Glasgow, they can access the right support for them. Glasgow Helps seeks to play a key role in this model as one of the core person centred services facilitating connections. There is clear evidence that a person centred approach is vital to support the creation of conditions for citizens to thrive. As we move forward, working with similar services, such HSC Connect and Glasgow Life Live Well will be of crucial importance to generate synergies and secure the capacity to provide more of this support.

6 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial:	None, the funding for Glasgow Helps has been secured within the GCC budget.
Legal:	None
Personnel:	None
Procurement:	None

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.	Yes, Glasgow Helps works with vulnerable citizens including those that fall within the protected characteristic groups.
What are the potential equality	No equality impacts identified at this stage.

impacts as a result of this report?	
Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.	The Glasgow Helps service will work with citizens who are struggling with a range of issues, including finances.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:	No
What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?	None
Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?	No

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:	None, Glasgow Helps has established its own Privacy Statement and has a robust DPIA in place.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Members are asked to note the overview provided and endorse the work of the Glasgow Helps service.

Annex A

Glasgow Helps User Story: Amanda

Amanda was referred to Glasgow Helps by a child development officer at her son's early years establishment. Her story demonstrates the importance of consistent support through transitions, the importance of removing service barriers, of bringing services to the citizen, and of maintaining trust to deliver true person-centred support.

Amanda is a single mother living with her 3-year-old son. Amanda recently separated from her husband and has relocated her family at short notice to a tenancy in the private rented sector. Amanda works part time at a local pharmacy and her income is supplemented by Universal Credit. Amanda also has significant caring responsibilities for a family member who is undergoing treatment for a long-term health condition.

Staff made a referral to Glasgow Helps for Amanda initially for support with her housing situation, as she was struggling to afford to rent of her new private let. Amanda wasn't aware of the process she would have to follow to apply for social housing and was even concerned that applying for this would jeopardise her current rental agreement. Whilst she was initially referred for support with housing only, Amanda's trust in her Glasgow Helps Holistic Support Officer grew and she began to open up on other challenges.

As their relationship developed they created on a personal plan that has brought expertise from a range of other services to work with Amanda. This has included securing full benefit entitlements (including Scottish Child Payment, which she was unaware of), receiving guidance and education around budgeting and money management, gaining support as a single parent, connecting to her new community, working with her local Long-Term Conditions team to cope with her brother's diagnosis and to be able to support him with his treatment, completing a social housing application

Amanda has opened up about the circumstances of her relationship breakdown, disclosing experience of domestic abuse. The support that has been put in place has already had a significant impact on her self confidence and aspirations for the future and these are being incorporated into her personal plan going forward.

Consistent engagement and demonstrating a focus on what she wanted was pivotal to securing Amanda's buy-in to the service. She is already demonstrating improved mental health and confidence as a result of working with the team. Amanda will continue to work with Glasgow Helps, at her pace, receiving regular contact with a review once she is ready to move on.