



**Item 5**

**24th April 2026**

**Glasgow Community Planning Partnership.**

**Maryhill Area Partnership.**

**Contact: Stephanie Thomson**

**Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership  
Health & Social Care Partnership North West Health Improvement:  
Maryhill Ward 15 Update**

**Purpose of Report:**

To provide Partnership members with Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership Health Improvement Ward Update.

**Recommendations:**

The Area Partnership is asked to:

- (1) Note the contents of this report:



**Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership**  
**North West Locality**  
Area Partnership Update: January – March 2026

<p><b>Glasgow City HSCP's Huntington's Disease (HD) Model</b></p>	<p>On 1 January 2026 Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) introduced a dedicated Huntington's Disease (HD) pathway.</p> <p>The new arrangements are only for residents of Glasgow City HSCP. Other partnerships continue to commission a service from Scottish Huntington's Association.</p> <p>Existing patients, new patients, and their families residing in Glasgow City who are affected by HD will receive a coordinated, specialist led support, whilst also benefiting from integration across the wider health and social care services available within the partnership.</p> <p>Glasgow City HSCP's HD service and support includes a Specialist Nurse as a central point of contact to provide support and coordination of care. This will ensure timely access and input from existing services as well as development of pathways across services. As a consequence there will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accessible and inclusive HD services with a named care coordinator who will ensure a person focussed service throughout the individual's journey ensuring research opportunities are explored where appropriate.</li><li>• MDT collaboration with HD neurology, psychiatry, clinical genetics, social work, and allied health teams, enhancing care provision across services.</li><li>• Support for family members and carers with advice, guidance and signposting regarding finances, future care planning, post diagnostic support and carer support.</li><li>• Access to the right service at the right time to minimise risks and avoid crisis.</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for individuals to self-manage where appropriate including the use of digital platforms and access to services when needs change.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to the specialist nurse, HD Champions are being identified from existing services. HD Champions are members of staff within the existing services most used by HD patients including Social Work, Community Rehab, Community Mental Health Teams, District Nurses and Speech and Language Therapists.</p> <p>Continuing feedback from HSCP colleagues, patients and families will be an integral part in the ongoing development of the service and will help us to further shape and develop the service.</p> <p>All the existing patients have now moved across to the new service and have been contacted to update on the changes. It is important to note that residents of Glasgow City are still able to access the award-winning Specialist Youth Service and Specialist Financial Wellbeing Service provided by Scottish Huntington’s Association, as well as its regular support groups, newsletters and annual national family conference. These services can be accessed by calling 0141 848 0308 or emailing <a href="mailto:sha-glasgow@hdscotland.org">sha-glasgow@hdscotland.org</a>. Further details are available at <a href="https://hdscotland.org/">https://hdscotland.org/</a>.</p>
<p><b>Glasgow’s safer drug consumption facility records more than 11,000 visits in first year</b></p>	<p>The UK’s first safer drug consumption facility, known as The Thistle, marked its first year in operation on 13 January 2026.</p> <p>Since opening, 575 individuals have registered to use and access services provided within the facility. The Thistle offers drug users a clean and safe environment in which to inject drugs, obtained elsewhere, under the supervision of nursing and social care staff, as well as access to other health and treatment services. The facility has been accessed 11,348 times by the 575 people (448 male 127 female) who have so far registered to use the service.</p> <p>There have been 7,827 injections, with 93 medical emergencies all safely managed within the facility by staff. Councillor Allan Casey, City Convener for Workforce, Homelessness and Addictions, said the first year has been remarkable and hopes the services continue to be well used.</p> <p>He said: “The first year has been very encouraging. People are engaging with the service and trusting it as a safe space. Each of these 10,000 visits represents an opportunity to reduce harm, connect individuals with support, and ultimately save lives. We know there’s still much to do, but what we are seeing from the first-year data is the real impact of a compassionate, evidence-based approach to this public health emergency and reinforces why progressive policies matter and why Glasgow continues to lead the way in tackling complex challenges with practical solutions.”</p>

The Scottish Government has committed to making up to £2.3 million available per year for the development, set up and running of The Thistle service in Glasgow from 2024 to 2025, which will continue to be overseen by Glasgow City Integration Joint Board.

Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Sport Minister Maree Todd MSP said: “The Thistle, which complements other harm-reduction and treatment and recovery services, has had a profound impact in its first year.

“Through the ability of staff to respond quickly in the event of an overdose it has undoubtedly saved lives. Backed by £2.3 million in Scottish Government funding, it continues to demonstrate the value of an evidence-based approach to safeguarding life and reducing drug-related harm.

“I would like to thank all staff and partners for their work in establishing the service, working with some of the most vulnerable people in our society to help save and improve lives, and their continuing efforts to support and engage with the local community.”

Prior to opening, the Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership (GHSCP) carried out extensive engagement with the community, stakeholders and businesses.

Pat Togher, Chief Officer for the GHSCP with overall responsibility for the service, expressed his gratitude for the staff at the Thistle. He said: “The progress in the first year of the Thistle commencing has exceeded expectations and is testament to the commitment from all concerned, including the important role of lived and living experience in helping shape the service. The scale of activity in the first year demonstrates a growing sense of confidence and value underpinned by the teams’ commitments towards trauma informed and trusting relationships. As the first of its kind in the UK, the Thistle service has, as expected, been the focus of much media and public attention and we strive to ensure our communication and engagement remains a key priority.

“Staff from a range of health and care services are involved in helping people who use the Thistle get the support they need when they need it, and we remain keen to develop this.”

Dr Saket Priyadarshi, Associate Medical Director and Senior Medical Officer for Glasgow Alcohol and Drug Recovery Services, said: “We’re delighted with how well the Thistle is being used. The service has exceeded any expectations we had for the first 12 months. It’s been great to see service users engaging with the wider services from showers and clothing to referral for treatment and care. I would like to thank our colleagues delivering the service safely and effectively on a daily basis.

	<p>“The rising numbers in recent months is a positive sign and is promising for the year ahead, as well as our plans to progress a smoking/inhalation space in the facility.”</p> <p>The Thistle is a three-year pilot. It will be monitored and evaluated to demonstrate the impact it has on the local area and those who use the service. The evaluation will look at various aspects including litter levels, discarded needles, anti-social behaviour and crime.</p> <p>The Thistle is open 365 days from 9am to 9pm.</p> <p>Further information can be found on the webpage <a href="#">Safer Drug Consumption Facility   Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership</a></p>
<p><b>Creating Hope Together – Glasgow City Suicide Prevention Partnership</b></p>	<p>On 22 January 2026, the Scottish Government and COSLA launched the new 2026 to 2029 action plan for <a href="#">Creating Hope Together</a>. The new plan sets out Scotland’s continued commitment to reducing suicide and improving support for people and communities affected by suicide.</p> <p>It builds on the first three years of Scotland’s suicide prevention strategy, and is based around four key strategic outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a safer environment to prevent suicide</li> <li>• Understanding suicide and tackling stigma</li> <li>• Ensuring people affected by suicide can access support</li> <li>• Collaboration in a way that draws on evidence and lived experience</li> </ul> <p>You can view an <a href="#">animation</a> that summarises the action plan on Suicide Prevention Scotland’s YouTube channel.</p> <p><b>Local action in Glasgow</b></p> <p>In Glasgow, partners are already working collectively to align with these national priorities.</p> <p>Our <a href="#">Glasgow City Suicide Prevention Partnership</a> (GCSPP) adopts a multi-agency approach to suicide prevention, which includes engagement through local and national campaigns, awareness-raising activities and building the capacity of partners to be part of the preventative effort. Recent work includes expanding suicide prevention training across frontline services and supporting citywide awareness campaigns.</p>

	<p>The GCSPP offers three core training programmes: suicideTALK, safeTALK and ASIST. These courses provide a spectrum of awareness and skills-based learning opportunities for staff members. In 2025, the partnership successfully conducted 52 training courses with a total of 920 attendees.</p> <p>Alongside training, the partnership is committed to an equality and human rights based approach, ensuring the needs of groups disproportionately affected by distress, stigma and discrimination are understood and addressed. This is reflected across the priorities and actions driven forward by its members.</p> <p>The partnership will continue to work closely with national and local stakeholders to ensure the action plan delivers meaningful change across the city.</p> <p>Trevor Lakey, Chair of GCSPP said: “We welcome this new national action plan and the momentum it brings in strengthening our shared commitment to creating hope across Glasgow.</p> <p>We know that building confidence and skills across our workforce and volunteer networks is vital. When more people feel equipped to talk about suicide, offer support and challenge stigma, we strengthen the safety and wellbeing of our whole city.</p> <p>This action plan gives us a clear, evidence based direction for the next three years, and in Glasgow we’re ready to put it into practice. Our focus remains on listening to our communities, understanding the barriers people face and ensuring that support is there early, compassionately and fairly for anyone who needs it.”</p>
<p><b>Digital mental health support is helping Glasgow’s Young People</b></p>	<p>Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) funds mental health provision that’s quickly and easily accessible to a range of children and young people dependent on their needs.</p> <p>Barry Syme, Principal Educational Psychologist for the City of Glasgow discussed the successful use of digital platform Togetherall in January’s eMental Health International Collaborative (eMHIC) webinar, ‘Scaling Support Together – Inside Scotland’s National Digital Mental Health Strategy and the Glasgow – Togetherall Model.’</p> <p>Barry leads the provision of school counselling across all 200 Glasgow schools and oversees the commissioning of additional mental health supports for young people, including online services Togetherall and Kooth.</p>

	<p>Young people can easily sign up to Kooth (ages 10 to 15) and Togetherall (ages 16 to 24). These services are evidence-based, clinically moderated, 24/7 online peer-to-peer mental health communities, commissioned by our HSCP and freely available to young people with a Glasgow postcode.</p> <p>Chris Wright, National Advisor for Digital Mental Health, The Scottish Government; Dr. Ben Locke, Chief Clinical Officer, Togetherall; and Fiona Costello, eMHIC also took part in the webinar.</p> <p>Barry said: “Quality assured, online mental health support is an important part of a range of services the HSCP is funding to improve and support young people's mental health. Kooth and Togetherall offer hundreds of young people free and quick access to information, advice and support, reaching people who may not otherwise engage with conventional services. The platform creates a safe, anonymous space for individuals to connect and share at their own pace and integrates with traditional care systems.</p> <p>“Evidence shows that Togetherall is having a big impact on specific groups and gives us measurable outcomes. Above all the platform takes accountability. The online moderators take responsibility for young people who may be in crisis and provide support. This has saved lives.”</p> <p>You can read our <a href="#">Children and Young People's Mental Health Support Guide (Glasgow City) - NHSGGC</a> to mental health supports and services for children and young people in Glasgow.</p> <p>NHS 24 <a href="#">Mental health services at NHS 24   NHS inform</a> are also available to everyone in Scotland, of all ages. The services offered include listening, offering advice and guiding to further help if required.</p>
<p><b>Glasgow City Community Respiratory Team - Supporting People at Home</b></p>	<p>Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)’s Community Respiratory Team (CRT) provides specialist support to people living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in their own homes. The service helps people stay well at home, avoid unnecessary hospital stays and recover safely with the right support.</p> <p>CRT is a multidisciplinary team of 20 staff, including physiotherapists, respiratory nurse specialists, occupational therapist, pharmacist, support workers and business support. The team responds when someone has a flare up of their COPD and aims to prevent avoidable hospital admissions by providing timely care in the community. GPs, Respiratory nurses and AHPs are able to refer into the team and patients who are known to the CRT can self-refer for ongoing exacerbation support.</p>

	<p>A new video, <a href="#">CRT interview - John Taking Back Control</a>, highlights how important this support is for older people with severe COPD, especially those who may not have a large support network or who find it difficult to travel to hospital.</p> <p>The video follows John, a Glasgow resident living with COPD. After turning 68, John’s mobility declined sharply. He went from walking to the local shops to struggling to move between rooms in his home. He also faced repeated ambulance trips, long waits on hospital trolleys and week-long hospital stays, which left him feeling depressed and stuck in a cycle he couldn’t escape.</p> <p>CRT stepped in to support him at home. The team provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exacerbation monitoring and support and education</li> <li>• regular home visits and telephone support</li> <li>• breathing and mobility exercises</li> <li>• mobility aids, including a walking trolley and bathroom supports</li> <li>• monitoring of his antibiotics and general health</li> </ul> <p>All of this took place in John’s own living room, helping him feel safe and supported.</p> <p>Marianne Milligan, Team Leader for the CRT, said: “John feels the support he received has been life changing. He has gone from feeling low and unable to move around to taking back control of his life. He’s more independent again and reassured that the team is only a phone call away. Being at home also means his family can visit comfortably without the stress of hospital visiting times.”</p> <p>John added: “I’m no longer stuck on a hospital trolley for hours — I can be treated in my own chair. I can even get to Tesco now using the electric buggies and my walking trolley.”</p>
<p><b>New disability sport sessions helping people stay active across Glasgow</b></p>	<p>A successful pilot has led to a new programme of disability sport days running across Glasgow. The sessions were designed to help adults with disabilities stay active, build confidence and feel part of their community.</p> <p>The programme first began when Glasgow City Health and Social Partnership (HSCP) Local Area Coordinators, along with partners such as Key Housing, asked if an activity could be created for adults with disabilities who wanted more opportunities to be active and social. Their request helped shape the new weekly sessions, now delivered at Glasgow Life venues in Tollcross, Gorbals and Springburn. Each day runs from 10am to 2.30pm and includes a mix of sports such as football, hockey, badminton, basketball or netball. Participants also take part in circuits, gym sessions and</p>

	<p>boccia, and can join in at their own pace.</p> <p>Phil Peek, Sport and Physical Activity Officer, explained that the aim is to support people to enjoy regular physical activity in a safe, friendly environment.</p> <p>Phil said the benefits are clear: people grow in confidence, get used to coming along each week, enjoy trying out the gym and sometimes even start taking part in activities outside the disability sessions. Families have also said they enjoy seeing their loved ones become more independent and watching their confidence shine through.</p> <p>Participants say the sessions are welcoming and fun. One attendee said they enjoy catching up with friends and using equipment like the hand bike, while the coaches help with tasks people may not feel able to do on their own.</p> <p>Simone Cairney, who attends with her brother Stephen, said: “The coaches are wonderful, and they help me do the things I can’t do by myself. They encourage me. If I’m having an off day, they are brilliant, and my sister is so happy I come here.” She added that the friendly staff keep people coming back because the support works for them, and Stephen especially enjoys the weights, boccia and lunch.</p> <p>Lead disability coach David Seagar said the days are incredibly popular: “It’s such a popular day, and it’s so rewarding to see people meeting new friends, working hard and getting a sweat on and just having a great day.”</p> <p>Sessions take place from 10am to 2.30pm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mondays at Tollcross</li> <li>• Wednesdays at Gorbals</li> <li>• Fridays at Springburn</li> </ul> <p>Participants need to be a Glasgow Club member to join. More information is available on the <a href="#">Glasgow Life website</a>.</p>
<p><b>Glasgow’s Family Wellbeing Hub supporting parents, carers and young people</b></p>	<p>Our Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) is proud to highlight the work of the Family Wellbeing Hub, a developing partnership model designed to support parents and carers of children and young people experiencing mental health challenges, including suicidal crisis.</p> <p>Families have highlighted that they often feel overwhelmed when navigating their child’s distress, and many reported limited support for understanding needs, coping at home and managing the emotional strain.</p>

	<p>To address this, our HSCP co-designed the Hub alongside parents, carers and 18 other partner organisations across statutory and third sector services. Together, they have built a flexible and compassionate model that ensures families are met with the right support at the right time.</p> <p>The Hub provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a weekly peer support group, co-facilitated by Health Improvement, Children 1st and a trained Parent Carer Peer Support Volunteer</li> <li>• expert-led learning sessions covering self-harm, suicide prevention, neurodiversity, trauma and online harms</li> <li>• a proactive support pathway, beginning with a one-to-one needs assessment and followed by direct referrals into partner organisations, removing the need for families to chase appointments.</li> </ul> <p>Parents and carers can self-refer, and the open-door model helps ensure that no family falls through service gaps. A trauma-informed and culturally relevant ethos underpins every stage of the work.</p> <p>The development of the Hub also reflects the broader commitment of the Glasgow City Suicide Prevention Partnership, which works collectively across agencies to strengthen local suicide prevention efforts and ensure families and young people receive timely, compassionate support.</p> <p>This model is a strong example of partnership working bringing together parents, carers, community organisations and public services to support families in a way that builds confidence, reduces isolation and empowers them to be partners in their child's care.</p> <p><b>Find out more</b>  You can read the full practice story on the Suicide Prevention Scotland website at <a href="https://www.suicideprevention.scot/work/time-space-compassion-practice-stories/family-wellbeing-hub-glasgow">https://www.suicideprevention.scot/work/time-space-compassion-practice-stories/family-wellbeing-hub-glasgow</a></p> <p>More information on Time, Space, Compassion can be found here: <a href="https://www.suicideprevention.scot/work/time-space-compassion-practice-stories">https://www.suicideprevention.scot/work/time-space-compassion-practice-stories</a></p>
<p><b>Two-Thirds of Self-Referrals Could Be Treated Elsewhere: Think ABC Before A&amp;E</b></p>	<p>In 2025, ankle sprains, viral infections, and diarrhoea are among the most common self-referrals we see at A&amp;E.</p> <p>Two in three people (approximately 63%) who self-presented at Accident and Emergency (A&amp;E) in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) between April and October 2025 could have been treated elsewhere, according to our</p>

	<p>figures.</p> <p>Of the 31,483 individuals who self-presented at A&amp;E across the health board during this period, the majority (20,215) had injuries or illnesses that did not require emergency care.</p> <p>A self-presentation is when someone attends an A&amp;E without prior clinical consultation, such as with a GP or NHS 24 (via 111). NHSGGC is urging the public to help change this trend in winter.</p> <p>Dr Claire Harrow, Deputy Medical Director for Acute Services, said: "Every day, dozens of people are coming to A&amp;E with conditions that could be managed safely and more quickly elsewhere.</p> <p>"This not only means longer waits for them, but can also risks delays for those with life-threatening emergencies."</p> <p>A&amp;E is intended for life-threatening conditions and the most serious injuries. In such cases, people should call 999 or go to A&amp;E immediately.</p> <p><b>Top minor injuries and illnesses that could be treated elsewhere</b></p> <p>NHSGGC has identified the most common minor injuries and illnesses leading to unnecessary A&amp;E attendances. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sprain and strain of ankle, knee, wrist, or foot</li><li>• Superficial injury of the head</li><li>• Open wound of finger(s) without damage to nail</li><li>• Low back pain</li><li>• Urinary tract, viral or acute upper respiratory infections</li><li>• Diarrhoea and gastroenteritis</li><li>• Closed fracture of the lower end radius or finger</li><li>• Nausea and Vomiting</li></ul> <p>These conditions can often be managed at home, by community pharmacies, GPs, or Minor Injuries Units, rather than A&amp;E.</p> <p>Dr Harrow continued: "Unless you have a serious injury or your condition is life-threatening, A&amp;E is not the best place to go. If you don't need to be there, you may be redirected elsewhere.</p>
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	<p>“There are quicker ways to access the care you need. These include treating from home using the NHS inform website or NHS 24 Online app, visiting your local pharmacy, booking a GP appointment, or calling NHS 24 on 111.”</p> <p><b>NHSGGC’s ABC model for accessing the right care:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ask yourself:</b> Can I treat this at home? Visit NHS inform website or use the NHS 24 Online app for advice on treating illnesses and injuries from the comfort of your own home.</li> <li>• <b>Be aware:</b> Local GPs, pharmacies, dentists, and opticians offer a wide range of healthcare services, sometimes without an appointment.</li> <li>• <b>Call 111:</b> If it’s urgent or you’re unsure, call NHS 24 on 111 for guidance on the best place to get care.</li> </ul> <p>Unless it’s an emergency, think ABC before going to A&amp;E.</p> <p>For more NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde News, visit <a href="#">NHSGGC News - NHSGGC</a></p>
<p><b>Listening to our patients</b></p>	<p>Listening to patients, families, and carers – and understanding their experiences of care – is central to what we do at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.</p> <p>Care Opinion is one of the ways we gather feedback to help us achieve this. It is an independent website where patients, families, and carers can share their healthcare experiences: <a href="https://www.careopinion.org.uk">https://www.careopinion.org.uk</a>. The feedback we receive through this platform gives us valuable insight into what is working well and where we can improve.</p> <p>In January we had our highest number of positive stories (84%). Some highlights from January 2026 and February, ‘Staff’ was the most frequently used tag to describe what people valued about our services. The themes include the helpfulness, friendliness, professionalism, care and kindness demonstrated by our teams.</p>
<p><b>Virtual hospital achieves 200 patient milestone</b></p>	<p>We marked an important milestone for the Virtual Hospital on 4 February, with over 200 patients in virtual beds.</p> <p>The Virtual Hospital enables us to provide safe, quality care to our patients, wherever and whenever they need it. This means that patients get to stay at home, get home earlier, or avoid hospital admission altogether, and are supported to manage their own condition with the support of NHSGGC staff and remote monitoring.</p>

	<p>Director of Interface, Lorraine Cowie, said: "Having over 200 patients in a virtual bed is a huge step forward for NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.</p> <p>"We will continue to move forward and develop innovative pathways for our Virtual Hospital with colleagues across the system, to personalise services for our population and give patients the right care, in the right place, at the right time.</p> <p>"Not only is this transformative for patient experience, but our work with the Virtual Hospital will also help to reduce the significant pressure on our sites improving access and flow."</p>
<p><b>NHSGGC renews appeal to people using lidocaine patches</b></p>	<p>NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde is asking patients who are currently prescribed lidocaine patches – prescribed under common names such as Ralvo or Versatis – to consider requesting a review.</p> <p>The request follows a similar appeal just over a year ago and aims to reduce inappropriate use of these patches and tackle the significant costs associated with them.</p> <p>Lidocaine patches provide short-term pain relief in a very small number of conditions, and their use has greatly increased in recent years – even though most of the people who receive them could use alternatives that are better for their needs.</p> <p>The NHSGGC appeal last year had a significant impact, but Jane Hall, Deputy Director of Pharmacy at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, has asked patients and members of the public to help NHSGGC to reduce the use of lidocaine patches further.</p> <p>She said: "Lidocaine patches are an effective medicine for shingles, and they will continue to be prescribed to patients when they are effective.</p> <p>"However, there are some patients who receive these patches where they may not be beneficial, and we are keen to review their use to establish ongoing need.</p> <p>"Our appeal last year had a significant impact on the number of these patches prescribed, but if we can make further reductions, it will benefit our patients as well as freeing up precious resources to help in other areas.</p> <p>"We would encourage anyone who is currently prescribed these patches to ask for a review by their GP practice pharmacy team, so that they can ensure their prescription is right for them.</p>

	<p>“We would also ask people to speak to a friend or loved one who uses these patches and encourage them to seek a review of their prescription.”</p> <p>Lidocaine patches are only indicated for the short-term treatment of nerve pain following shingles. They are not always suitable for long-term use or for other types of pain, such as back pain or hip pain, as they are considered ineffective for these purposes.</p> <p>To find out more about taking control of your treatments, go to <a href="#">NHS Inform</a>.</p>
<p><b>NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde teams up with Glasgow City FC</b></p>	<p>NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) has partnered with Glasgow City Football Club to encourage more 25–29-year-olds to attend their cervical screening appointment as less than half of this age group take the test.</p> <p>Glasgow City FC is an independent women-founded and women-led club. They are Scotland's most successful team having won 16 league titles, nine Scottish Cups, and six League Cups since they were established in 1998. As well as providing a space for women and girls in football, the club strives for equality away from the pitch.</p> <p>Cervical screening, often known as a smear test, is offered every five years to women and people with a cervix, aged 25 to 64. Despite this, over half in the 25–29 age group are not attending when invited.</p> <p>Among women aged 25 to 29, the most recent statistics<sup>[1]</sup> for NHSGGC screening show that the uptake rate was 46.5% compared to 74.7% for women aged 50-74.</p> <p>However, no age group met the national target of 80% with overall uptake across all age categories at 65.2%.</p> <hr/> <p><sup>[1]</sup> NHSGGC March 2024</p> <p>Alison Potts, Consultant in Public Health Screening at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, said: “The uptake of cervical screening in women aged 25-29 is a real concern. We’ve seen excellent uptake of the HPV vaccine which protects against most Human Papilloma Viruses that lead to cervical cancer.</p>

“While this is extremely positive as the vaccine offers good protection against HPV infection, the vaccine doesn’t protect against all types of HPV or existing HPV infection that people may have.

“Please don’t assume that being vaccinated means you no longer need to attend screening. That simply isn’t the case.

“You might think, ‘I’ve had the HPV vaccine’, ‘I’ve never been sexually active’, or ‘I’m too young for cervical cancer’. But the truth is that screening is still essential. Cervical cancer can affect anyone with a cervix.

“We know life is busy and appointments can feel inconvenient or embarrassing. But the test only takes a few minutes, and those minutes could save your life. Screening detects early changes long before they have the chance to develop into cancer.”

Alison added: “If you are worried about attending for screening, you will have the chance to speak with your sample taker, usually your GP practice nurse, who will be able to answer all your questions. Reasonable adjustments that can be made to appointments to make you feel more comfortable. Mention that you would like to discuss these when you make your appointment.”

Through a series of videos, posters, and social media activity, the campaign aims to tackle myths, remove stigma and encourage more young women to book their appointment as soon as their letter arrives. Glasgow City FC players are helping spread a clear message: Don’t Fear the Smear.

Glasgow City FC Co-captain, Lee Gibson said: “As professional athletes, we’re always looking at training and nutrition, but football moves quickly and sometimes it’s easy to overlook important health checks and screenings.

“Hopefully, by being open about our own experiences with smear tests, we help to normalise conversations. If talking helps even one woman feel less anxious and more likely to book a screening that only takes a few minutes to look after long-term health, then it’s absolutely worth it.”

Women aged 25 and over are urged to contact their GP practice to book their cervical screening appointment as soon as they receive their letter. The test is quick, safe, and it can be lifesaving.

For more information on Cervical Screening visit: <https://nhsggc.scot/nofear>