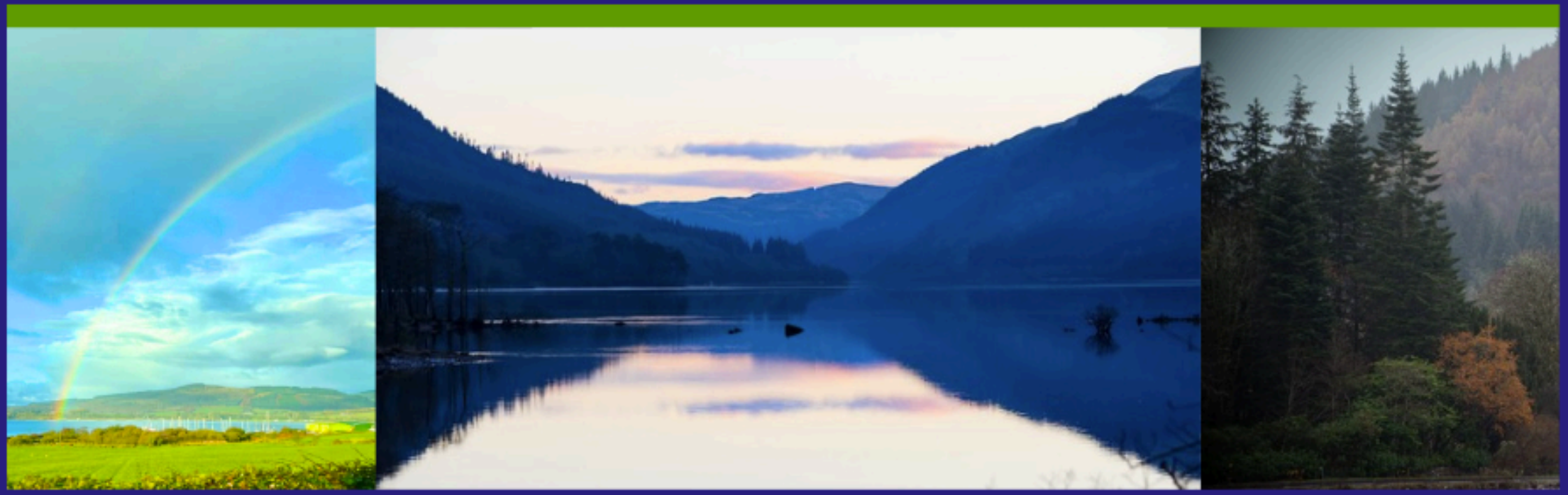
A&B HSCP | Transforming Together

Argyll & Bute Health & Social Care Partnership

Argyll and Bute Alcohol and Drug Partnership

Report 2025-2026



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A&B HSCP | Transforming Together
Argyll & Bute Health & Social Care Partnership

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Foreword

by Tracey McFall, Independent Chair of Argyll and Bute ADP

As Independent Chair of the Argyll and Bute Alcohol and Drug Partnership, I am pleased to introduce our Annual Report for 2025/26. This report reflects the collective efforts of partners, communities, people with lived and living experience, families and frontline services across Argyll and Bute to reduce harm, support recovery and improve lives.



Tracey McFall,
Chair of Argyll & Bute
Alcohol and Drug Partnership

Throughout the year, we have continued to strengthen participation and engagement across Argyll and Bute, creating meaningful opportunities for communities, families, and people with lived and living experience to influence discussions, identify priorities and help shape the development of support and services. By developing local networks and stronger community connections, we are improving our ability to listen, learn, and respond to the needs and aspirations of the people and communities we serve. We recognise that better outcomes are achieved when communities are actively involved in shaping the solutions that affect them.

We have made several significant achievements this year. All ten Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards were assessed as green or blue through the national benchmarking process, demonstrating continued progress towards delivering accessible, high-quality and person-centred treatment and support. While we are encouraged by this progress, we know that real success is not measured by frameworks, assessments or plans alone. People, families and communities must be able to see and experience the difference these changes make.

Our challenge now is to ensure strategic progress translates into visible improvements in people's lives, stronger communities, and greater opportunities for recovery and wellbeing.

The expansion of Planet Youth into all ten secondary schools marks an important step in strengthening prevention and early intervention for future generations. Alongside this, we have continued to build on work relating to residential rehabilitation pathways, naloxone distribution, workforce development, early warning systems and support for people moving between services and life transitions. These developments reflect our shared commitment to reducing harm, supporting recovery and responding to people's needs at every stage of their journey.

Foreword by Tracey McFall, Independent Chair of Argyll and Bute ADP

A key feature of our work during the year has been strengthening the strategic connections between alcohol and drug services and the wider priorities of the health and social care system. We recognise that reducing alcohol and drug-related harm cannot be delivered in isolation. Success depends on ensuring strong alignment with the strategic priorities of NHS Highland, Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership and national policy. By embedding alcohol and drug priorities within broader planning and implementation frameworks, we can maximise resources, improve collaboration across services and ensure a more coordinated response to the complex challenges people face.

Partnership remains at the heart of everything we do. No single organisation can address the complex challenges associated with alcohol and drug harm alone. Our progress is dependent on the collective contribution of health and social care services, housing, justice, education, emergency services, third sector organisations, recovery communities and local people. Equally important is maintaining strong connections with wider strategic planning structures to ensure our ambitions contribute to, and benefit from, broader health, social care and community planning objectives. Together, we are working towards a system that is more responsive, compassionate and focused on improving outcomes.

I am also delighted to welcome Jim McSorley to the ADP Support Team as Business Manager. Jim joined in April 2025, bringing extensive experience in health improvement, community engagement and alcohol and drug prevention. His knowledge and commitment will be a valuable asset as we continue to develop the Partnership's work.

While there is much to be proud of, we remain mindful of the challenges that continue to impact individuals, families and communities. Behind every statistic is a person, and behind every life lost is a reminder of why this work matters. Our focus remains on listening, learning and working collaboratively to improve access to support, tackle inequalities and create the conditions in which people can thrive, recover and contribute to their communities.

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has contributed to this work over the past year, particularly people with lived and living experience, family members, volunteers, staff and partner organisations. Your commitment, expertise and determination continue to drive improvement across Argyll and Bute. By working together, maintaining strong strategic partnerships and keeping recovery, dignity and human rights at the centre of our efforts, we can continue to build a system that offers hope, supports wellbeing and delivers better outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

Tracey McFall Independent Chair Argyll & Bute Alcohol and Drug Partnership

Lived & Living Experience

Throughout 2025/26, people with lived and living experience contributed to consultations on MAT Standards, recovery services, ROSC development and the A&B Support App. Feedback highlighted the importance of accessible local support, trusted relationships, peer involvement, clear information and joined-up services. These views informed commissioning, service improvement priorities and the development of community-led recovery support across Argyll and Bute.

You Said, We Did



Access and local support

1.You said: Face-to-face support and accessible local services are important, particularly within rural and island communities.

We did: This feedback has been used to shape future services purchased by the ADP.

2. You said: Rapid or same-day access to MAT and wider support can help prevent crises and maintain recovery.

We did: DARS and With You have worked together with the ADP to shape a rapid response service to meet the needs locally

You said: Support should be available outside normal working hours.

We did: This feedback has been used to shape future services purchased by the ADP.

Recovery support and relationships

1.You said: Recovery support should be flexible and recognise different goals, including reduction, harm reduction and abstinence.

We did: Recovery services locally are provided by a range of providers providing flexible person-centred support to allow people to work to goals set by them

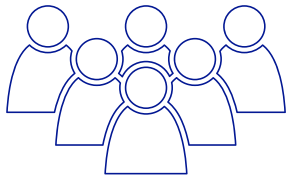
2.You said: People need practical assistance with forms, benefits, housing and navigating services.

We did: Bespoke funded Advocacy services are provided for people in recovery to provide practical assistance required

Lived & Living Experience

You Said, We Did

Peer support, community and ROSC



1. You said: Every locality should have an accessible recovery forum shaped by local circumstances.

We did: The ADP launched local ROSC Groups to ensure all partners could meet regularly and tackle issues affecting their communities

2.You said: Statutory, third-sector and community partners should participate consistently and work more closely together.

We did: The ADP launched local ROSC Groups to ensure all partners could meet regularly and tackle issues affecting their communities

3.You said: Stigma remains a barrier, and communities need positive information about recovery.

We did: The ADP launched a Stigma campaign and asked all ROSC groups to consider Stigma within their communities

4.You said: Recovery cafés, community activities, gym access and alcohol-free social spaces help reduce isolation and boredom.

We did: ROSC groups have set about planning activities within the Argyll and Bute localities aimed at tackling isolation in 2026/27

A&B Support App

1.You said: Drug alerts and push notifications would be among the app's most valuable safety features.

We did: We have included push notifications within the A&B Support app

2.You said: The app should allow anonymous reporting of emerging risks and concerning substances.

We did: We are working on the development of a reporting feature for users in the app

3.You said: The app should include local activities and positive recovery messages, not only risk warnings.

We did: We have ensured to include a comprehensive list of services and activities within the A&B App

4.You said: The app should include information about MAT Standards, advocacy and people's rights.

We did: We have included bespoke information on MAT, advocacy and rights

Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC)

Argyll & Bute Council Community Development Team

Supporting ROSC

Recovery is a central pillar of the Argyll and Bute ADP Strategy 2025-2027. Our approach recognises that recovery is not a single service or intervention, but a network of relationships, supports and opportunities that enable people to build meaningful lives beyond substance use. During 2025/26, partners worked together to strengthen local Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC), ensuring that people can access support within their own communities, connect with peers, exercise their rights and play an active role in shaping services. This section highlights the range of activity contributing to that ambition.



During 2025-26, the Community Development Team worked alongside the ADP, recovery communities, partner organisations and people with lived and living experience to strengthen Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) across Argyll and Bute. Activity focused on developing networks in Bute and Cowal, Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay (MAKI), Helensburgh and Lomond, and Oban, Lorn and the Isles.

Reducing stigma and improving understanding of recovery has remained a priority. Through community engagement and partnership working, ROSC groups have explored ways to make communities more welcoming and inclusive, including awareness campaigns, events, improved signposting, training opportunities and Recovery Month celebrations.

The Team has worked closely with organisations including With You, SRC, SFAD, DARS, LAAS and local community groups. New relationships have been formed, resources mapped and support provided to strengthen pathways into recovery.

This work is helping strengthen recovery communities across Argyll and Bute by increasing collaboration, reducing isolation and supporting local Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care.



Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC)

ROSC and MAT 8 Community Engagement Event

In August 2025, the Argyll and Bute ADP brought together people with lived and living experience, recovery communities, service providers and partner organisations for a joint ROSC and MAT 8 engagement event in Arrochar. The event provided an important opportunity to explore how lived experience can continue to shape alcohol and drug services across Argyll and Bute while supporting the development of local Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC).

The event focused on sharing findings from the Argyll and Bute MAT Experiential Interview Programme, increasing understanding of MAT Standard 8, and identifying priorities for improving support within local communities. Participants were encouraged to consider how services, communities and people with lived experience can work together to reduce barriers, strengthen recovery pathways and improve access to support for housing, welfare, advocacy and wider recovery needs.

A key outcome from the event was the recognition of the importance of community-based recovery support alongside formal treatment services. Discussions highlighted the need to reduce stigma, improve connections between services and communities, and ensure the voices of people with lived and living experience remain central to future planning and service improvement. These themes have since helped inform the development of local ROSC networks across Argyll and Bute.



The event also strengthened relationships between recovery communities across different localities, creating opportunities to share learning, identify common challenges and support a more coordinated approach to recovery. This collaborative approach reflects the ADP's commitment to building recovery-friendly communities where people can access support, develop social connections and sustain recovery close to home.

With You in Argyll & Bute

withyou in Argyll and Bute

Community Based Alcohol and Drug Recovery and Outreach



With You provides free, confidential support to individuals and families affected by alcohol and drug use across Argyll and Bute. Through local bases, outreach and virtual support, the service helps reduce harm, improve wellbeing and support recovery, working closely with NHS Highland DARS and community partners. Support includes naloxone, injecting equipment provision, drug testing strips, relapse prevention, overdose outreach and dedicated family support.



A client experience survey showed exceptionally positive feedback, with all respondents reporting they felt listened to, treated with dignity and involved in decisions about their care.

The Recovery Skills Programme continued across several localities and King's Court Residential Rehabilitation, helping participants build confidence, recovery knowledge and relapse prevention skills. In addition, the Corra-funded pre- and post-rehabilitation pathway supported 16 people before, during and after residential rehabilitation placements.

People with lived and living experience have continued to lead recovery activity across Argyll and Bute. This included nature-based wellbeing initiatives in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay, and ongoing development of the Rothesay Recovery Hub on Bute. The opening of Connect Bute provided a new community space for recovery, family support and wellbeing activities.







With You in Argyll & Bute

Impact in Numbers

306 referrals were received during 2025-26.

89%

52% improvement in physical health

52% improvement in meaningful use of time

57% improvement in emotional health

52% improvement in community connection

46% improvement in family and relationship

49% improvement in motivation



16 people were supported through the pre- and post-residential rehabilitation pathway.

withyou in Argyll and Bute

Through partnership working, lived experience leadership and a strong commitment to recovery, With You continues to play a vital role in delivering the ambitions of the Argyll and Bute ADP Strategy, supporting people to improve health and wellbeing, strengthen community connections and build positive, sustainable futures.

Scottish Drugs Forum National Traineeship Programme

The Scottish Drugs Forum (SDF) National Traineeship Programme continues to create meaningful employment and development opportunities for people with lived and living experience of substance use across Argyll and Bute. The programme combines paid work experience, vocational qualifications and specialist training, helping participants build confidence, develop skills and progress into employment within health, social care and recovery services.

During 2025-26, three Argyll and Bute residents participated in the programme through a partnership between the ADP, SDF and With You. Trainees gained practical experience across a range of local recovery and support services while working towards an SVQ Level 2 in Social Services and Healthcare. In addition, trainees completed 18 facilitator-led training sessions and six e-learning modules, alongside bespoke training delivered in partnership with Scottish Women's Aid and the Scottish Refugee Council.

The programme has already demonstrated positive outcomes for participants. One trainee secured employment with Blue Triangle Housing Association before completing the traineeship, while others have been supported to explore further qualifications and employment opportunities. Staff at With You highlighted the value trainees bring to services through their communication skills, commitment to learning and lived experience perspectives.

Importantly, trainees act as positive role models within their communities, helping to challenge stigma, demonstrate the reality of recovery and show that meaningful employment is achievable following experiences of substance use. Their contribution strengthens local services while supporting wider recovery ambitions across Argyll and Bute.

Impact Highlights

- 3 trainees from Argyll and Bute completed the 2025-26 programme.
- Trainees worked towards an SVQ Level 2 in Social Services and Healthcare.
- 18 training sessions and 6 e-learning modules completed.
- One trainee progressed into employment before programme completion and another secured a place to continue development through further training.

The National Traineeship Programme continues to demonstrate the value of investing in people with lived and living experience, supporting workforce development, reducing barriers to employment and strengthening recovery communities across Argyll and Bute.

Scottish Drugs Forum - Peer Research and MAT Experiential Programme

The Scottish Drugs Forum (SDF) continues to play an important role in ensuring that the voices of people with lived and living experience help shape alcohol and drug services across Argyll and Bute. Through the Peer Research and Experiential Programme, local volunteers are supported to develop skills, contribute to service improvement and gather valuable insight into the experiences of people accessing treatment and support services.

During 2025-26, SDF worked with a group of peer researchers from across Argyll and Bute, providing training and development opportunities in research, interviewing and presentation skills. The programme not only supports the ADP's experiential reporting requirements but also creates meaningful opportunities for people with lived experience to influence local services and develop their own confidence, skills and aspirations.

A key achievement this year was the completion of the 2025-26 Experiential Programme. Through extensive engagement with services and communities across Argyll and Bute, SDF completed interviews with people accessing treatment and staff members from all localities. This information has helped inform local improvement planning, MAT Standards implementation and wider service development activity.

SDF also produced an accessible summary of the previous year's experiential findings and presented the key messages to local stakeholders. The findings have been used to inform local priorities and strengthen the focus on person-centred, recovery-oriented support across Argyll and Bute.

Impact Highlights

- 6 peer research volunteers engaged in the programme, including four newly trained peer researchers.
- 49 experiential interviews completed, including 43 interviews with people accessing treatment and 6 staff interviews.
- One peer researcher progressed into employment and another secured a place on the Scottish Drugs Forum National Traineeship Programme.
- Findings from the experiential programme continue to inform local MAT Standards improvement work and service development.

Through peer research and meaningful lived experience involvement, the programme continues to strengthen the ADP's understanding of what works well, where improvements are needed and how services can continue to evolve to meet the needs of people affected by alcohol and drug use

SCOTTISH DRUGS FORUM

Residential Rehabilitation- Partnership Working

During 2025/26, the Residential Rehabilitation Group continued to support access to residential treatment for people across Argyll and Bute. Twenty new placements were agreed during the reporting period, with an equal balance between men and women. Support was provided to people experiencing issues relating to alcohol, drugs, or combined alcohol and drug use. Extensions were also agreed where a longer period of treatment was assessed as appropriate.

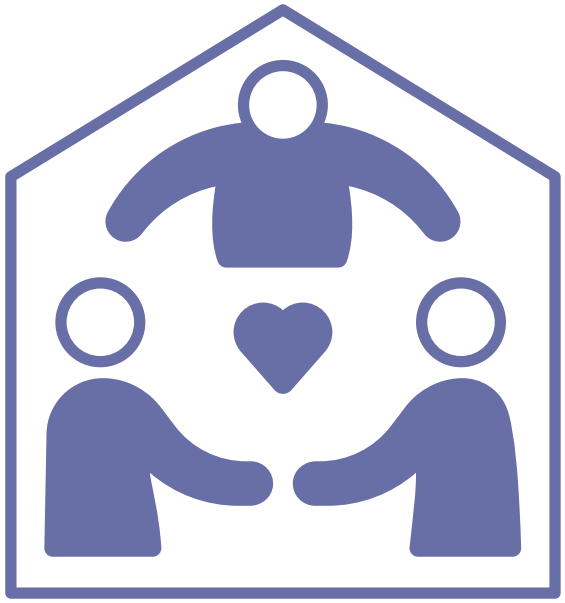
Placements were agreed across a range of approved providers, enabling treatment options to be considered in line with each person's assessed needs and circumstances.

The gender balance represents a change from the previous reporting period and indicates progress towards ensuring that residential rehabilitation is accessible to everyone who may benefit. Demand for residential rehabilitation has continued to be monitored alongside placement availability, uptake and outcomes.

The Group will continue to review the residential rehabilitation pathway and identify barriers that may prevent people from accessing or completing treatment.

Priorities include maintaining fair and consistent decision-making, improving the quality of referral information, and ensuring appropriate support is available before, during and following treatment.

Reporting will continue at an aggregated level to support service improvement while protecting confidentiality



Lomond and Argyll Advocacy Service (LAAS)

Recovery Advocacy Project (RAP)

Lomond and Argyll Advocacy Service (LAAS) continues to play a vital role in ensuring that people affected by alcohol and drug use have their voices heard, their rights upheld and can access the support they need. Through the Recovery Advocacy Project (RAP), advocates work across Dunoon, Oban and Mid Argyll, supporting individuals to navigate services, understand their rights and participate fully in decisions affecting their lives.

During 2025-26, LAAS supported 87 people with a wide range of issues, including access to treatment services, housing and homelessness matters, welfare benefits, debt, child protection processes and legal representation. Advocates worked alongside individuals to ensure they were able to understand information, express their views and engage confidently with services.

A key aspect of the project is helping people access the right support at the right time. Through advocacy and signposting, the team connected individuals and families with a range of local services, helping reduce barriers to support and strengthen recovery pathways. LAAS also continued to support parents affected by alcohol and drug use whose children were involved in Child Protection processes, ensuring they were able to participate meaningfully in meetings and decision-making.

Throughout the year, LAAS worked closely with the ADP, MAT Standards partners and the wider recovery community to raise awareness of advocacy, reduce stigma and promote a rights-based approach. Advocates attended MAT 8 meetings across Argyll and Bute, ensuring the voices and experiences of people accessing services were represented. The organisation also contributed to raising awareness of the Charter of Rights for People Affected by Substance Use, helping individuals understand and exercise their rights.

Impact Highlights

- 87 people supported through independent advocacy.
- Ongoing participation in MAT Standards and MAT 8 development work.
- Increased awareness of advocacy services through community events, recovery groups, GP practices and partner organisations.
- Continued focus on reducing stigma and supporting pathways into treatment, recovery and wider support services.



Prevention

Prevention remains central to the ADP Strategy, recognising that reducing alcohol and drug-related harm starts long before people require specialist treatment. During 2025/26 partners worked together to strengthen evidence-based prevention, early intervention and education across schools, communities and wider services.

Planet Youth remains a key part of Argyll and Bute ADP's long-term approach to preventing alcohol and drug-related harm among young people. Using an evidence-based, community-led model, it focuses on strengthening the factors that support young people's health and wellbeing while reducing risks associated with substance use and other harms. By working with schools, families, communities and local partners, the programme supports positive outcomes and healthier environments for young people.

During 2025-26, Planet Youth expanded from five to all 10 secondary schools across Argyll and Bute. This ensured participation from every secondary school and provided a comprehensive picture of the experiences, behaviours and influences affecting young people across mainland and island communities.

In December 2025, the Planet Youth Strategic Group held a two-day residential event to review emerging findings and identify priorities for future action. This helped ensure that activity remains evidence-based and focused on the issues most relevant to local young people and communities.

A further achievement was securing support to establish 10 local Planet Youth Coalition Groups, one in each locality. Bringing together local stakeholders, organisations, parents and community representatives, these groups will develop action plans informed by local knowledge and survey findings.

Through increased participation, stronger community engagement and a commitment to evidence-based prevention, Planet Youth is helping improve understanding of the factors influencing young people's health and wellbeing and supporting the ADP's ambition to prevent alcohol and drug-related harm before it occurs.



Care-Experienced Children and Young People

During 2025/26, work continued to strengthen wellbeing support for care-experienced children and young people across Argyll & Bute. The Care-Experienced Wellbeing Worker, who came into post in December 2023 funded by the ADP, provided additional capacity alongside the Specialist Care Experienced Nurse, supporting a more collaborative approach with children, young people, families, carers and partner agencies.

Daniel Spargo-Mabbs (DSM) Productions

As part of the ADP's commitment to prevention and early intervention, Daniel Spargo-Mabbs (DSM) Productions continued to deliver engaging and evidence-informed drug education to young people across Argyll and Bute. The productions use the real-life story of Daniel Spargo-Mabbs to encourage discussion around risk, decision-making, peer influence and the potential consequences of drug use, helping young people make informed choices and stay safe.

During 2025-26, DSM Productions reached more than 772 pupils across Lochgilphead, Oban, Dunoon, Rothesay, Helensburgh, Tarbert and Campbeltown. Recordings of the production were also made available to schools on Tiree, Mull and Islay, ensuring young people in island communities could benefit from the programme.

The productions provide a powerful starting point for wider alcohol and drug education, helping young people understand the realities of substance use and develop the confidence and skills needed to respond to challenging situations. This supports the ADP Strategy's focus on prevention, education and reducing the risk of future alcohol and drug-related harm.

Impact

Feedback from pupils demonstrated the positive impact of the programme:

- 95% learned more about the possible consequences of taking drugs.
- 94% learned more about the impact of drug use on others.
- 91% said the workshop provided useful information and advice.
- 75% knew where to go for further information and support.
- 71% felt better able to cope with negative peer influence.
- 69% intended to use the practical strategies they had learned to stay safe.
- 68% felt more able to speak with a parent or carer about these issues.

By combining powerful storytelling with practical learning, DSM Productions continues to be an important part of Argyll and Bute's prevention approach, helping young people increase their knowledge, build resilience and make safer, informed decisions around alcohol and drugs

S2 Health Drama Programme

The S2 Health Drama Programme continues to be an important part of Argyll and Bute ADP's prevention and early intervention work with young people. Using interactive drama and discussion, the programme encourages young people to explore topics relating to health, wellbeing, alcohol, drugs and risk-taking behaviours in an engaging and age-appropriate way. The aim is to increase knowledge, build resilience and support informed decision-making before harmful behaviours become established.

During 2025-26, the S2 Health Drama Programme was delivered in seven secondary schools across Argyll and Bute. Following feedback from pupils, schools and partners, additional content was introduced focusing on vaping and the potential harms associated with nicotine dependence and vaping products. This ensured the programme remained relevant to emerging issues affecting young people.

Working in partnership with the Health Psychology Department at the University of Aberdeen, a vaping awareness comic was developed to complement the drama programme. The resource was distributed to S2 pupils to take home, supporting conversations between young people and their parents or carers about vaping, health risks and informed choices.

By combining education, discussion and creative learning approaches, the S2 Health Drama Programme continues to support the ADP's prevention agenda, helping young people build the knowledge and confidence needed to make safer choices around alcohol, drugs, vaping and wider health behaviours.

ADP School Support Services

ADP School Support Services continue to play an important role in delivering evidence-based alcohol and drug education, early intervention and support for young people across Argyll and Bute. Working with schools, families, community organisations and partner agencies, the service helps young people make informed choices, build resilience and access support when needed.

During 2025-26, strong partnership working supported a range of community-led initiatives aligned to the Planet Youth prevention model. In Helensburgh, Police Scotland Youth Engagement Officers worked with young people to co-design and test workshop content before wider delivery, ensuring activities were relevant and informed by young people's experiences.

In Dunoon, collaboration between Police Scotland and community partners provided opportunities for young people to take part in activities including personal training, boxing, cooking and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Fire Skills courses. These programmes helped develop confidence, life skills and positive social connections.

School Support Services have also played a key role in developing Planet Youth Coalition Groups across Argyll and Bute, with two commissioned providers leading local coalitions. This strengthens links between schools, families and communities and supports a coordinated approach to prevention.

In Oban, Youth Café staff introduced Dynamic Youth Awards to expand one-to-one and group support, helping young people recognise and celebrate their achievements. Staff also completed Daniel Spargo-Mabbs training alongside school colleagues, strengthening knowledge and confidence in delivering high-quality alcohol and drug education. An interim report was presented to the Child Protection Committee to raise awareness of the service and its contribution to supporting children and young people across Argyll and Bute.



DO YOU KNOW YOUR ENERGY DRINKS?

Young people in the UK drink more energy drinks than those in any other countries in Europe.

Energy drinks are very popular with young people – even though they come with a warning (in small print on the back) saying that they are "not recommended for children".

Why Not?

Energy drinks are not recommended because of the high quantity of caffeine, other stimulants such as guarana and taurine and high levels of sugar. Energy drinks can be addictive and can be harmful.

Because?

Caffeine stimulates the central and peripheral nervous system. Consumed in larger doses, it can cause anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, behavioural problems, gastrointestinal problems and heart arrhythmias. Stimulants can also affect concentration and memory!

MAYDS

Many countries are considering a ban for under 18's. A number of countries have already implemented restrictions such as:

Canada and Lithuania under 18's

England, New Zealand & UAE under 16's

Energy drinks are banned at Tarbert Academy

For more information or help please contact MAYDS.

STREET MAYDS- Mid Argyll Youth Development Services (MAYDS)

STREET MAYDS continues to play an important role in preventing alcohol and drug-related harm among young people through detached youth work across Mid Argyll and surrounding rural communities. By engaging with young people where they naturally gather, particularly during weekends, evenings and school holidays, youth workers provide trusted support, information and advice in a non-judgemental environment. This early intervention approach helps reduce risk-taking behaviours, improve awareness of alcohol and substance use, and strengthen links to positive activities and support services.

During 2025-26, STREET MAYDS worked closely with Education, local businesses and community members to address concerns relating to anti-social behaviour, alcohol use and community safety. Young people were supported to understand the impact of their actions on others, leading to positive engagement with residents and a reduction in reported anti-social behaviour incidents.

The service also delivered targeted sessions on alcohol, substance use and anti-social behaviour for young people experiencing difficulties engaging with school. These sessions provided opportunities for discussion, education and support, helping young people make safer and more informed choices.

Regular Friday and Saturday evening outreach sessions remained well attended, with around 35-40 young people engaging at each session. Through informal conversations and access to food, information and advice, workers built trusted relationships and supported young people at times when they may be more vulnerable to alcohol and drug-related risks.

A further achievement was investment in staff development. Five staff completed Scottish Drugs Forum naloxone training, increasing confidence and capacity to respond to potential drug-related emergencies, while three staff completed specialist street work training to strengthen engagement with young people in community settings.

The impact of STREET MAYDS was recognised through local media coverage in February 2026, highlighting the value of community-based youth work in supporting prevention, reducing harm and creating safer communities for young people.



Distress Brief Intervention (DBI)

The Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) service provides rapid, compassionate support for people experiencing emotional distress, including those affected by alcohol and drug use. During 2025/26, a new NHS Highland-wide DBI model was established to improve access to timely support across the region.

Between October 2024 and September 2025, the service received 685 referrals, highlighting ongoing demand for early intervention. Common reasons for referral included low mood, anxiety, stress, relationship difficulties, suicidal thoughts, and alcohol or drug use.

DBI supports the wider aims of the ADP by helping people access support earlier, reducing the risk of crisis and connecting individuals to practical, emotional and community-based services. This preventative approach contributes to improved wellbeing and reduced alcohol and drug-related harm across Argyll and Bute.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) continues to support the reduction of alcohol and drug-related harm across Argyll and Bute through prevention, early intervention and partnership working.

During 2025/26, SFRS delivered fire safety risk awareness training to Health and Social Care Partnership staff, helping practitioners recognise and respond to risks associated with substance use. The service also raised awareness of hoarding-related risks through community engagement activities.

Home Fire Safety Visits remained a key intervention, with referrals from ADP partners leading to practical support such as smoke alarm installation and targeted safety measures for people at increased risk.

SFRS continues to contribute to multi-agency forums, case conferences and local partnerships, including hosting the quarterly Oban, Lorn and Isles Alcohol and Drug Forum. Through these activities, SFRS plays an important role in improving safety, reducing harm and supporting vulnerable people across Argyll and Bute.

Public Health Approach to Justice

The Argyll and Bute ADP recognises that people affected by alcohol and drug use are often in contact with a range of services including healthcare, justice, housing, social work and community organisations. A Public Health Approach to Justice focuses on understanding and responding to the wider factors that contribute to vulnerability, harm and offending behaviour, while promoting recovery, wellbeing and inclusion. Rather than viewing substance use solely through a criminal justice lens, this approach emphasises prevention, early intervention, trauma-informed practice, harm reduction and partnership working to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities. During 2025/26, partners across Argyll and Bute continued to strengthen pathways between justice, health and community services, helping people access timely support, maintain continuity of care and reduce the risk of further harm.

Public Health Approach to Justice - Partnership Working

During 2025/26, the ADP continued to work with Community Justice, health services and third-sector partners to improve support for people affected by alcohol and drug use across healthcare, justice and community settings. Partnership activity focused on strengthening connections between services and helping people access appropriate treatment, harm reduction and recovery support at times of increased vulnerability.

The ADP Public Health Approach to Justice pillar took a pragmatic approach to planning and improvements during 2025-26, aligning into existing activity between DARS and Justice Social Work within the MAT Standards Action Plan, reported quarterly to Scottish Government. This approach ensured services could deliver relevant existing improvement activity without pressure of additional asks.

Further commitment has been pledged by ADP in relation to aligning community justice activity within our Test of Change project at a locality in Argyll and Bute and regular representation and constructive input to the local Community Justice Partnership ensure we continue to strengthen local strategic planning and delivery.

A particular focus was improving the transition from prison into the community. The DARS Substance Liaison Service worked closely with prison healthcare teams and local alcohol and drug services to support continuity of opioid replacement therapy following liberation. This helped reduce the risk of treatment interruption and supported people to reconnect with local services promptly.

The service also strengthened links between Police Scotland, hospital services, DARS and community recovery providers. By improving communication and creating additional opportunities for engagement, this partnership approach supports the ADP and Community Justice commitment to reducing harm, improving continuity of care and supporting recovery.

DARS Substance Liaison Service

The DARS Substance Liaison Service, funded by Argyll and Bute ADP, plays an important role in reducing drug-related harms and improving engagement with treatment and recovery services across Argyll and Bute. Working across healthcare, justice and community settings, the service supports people at key points of vulnerability, helping individuals access appropriate care, reduce the risk of relapse and remain connected to treatment and support.

During 2025-26, a key focus was strengthening pathways between prison and community services. The Liaison Service worked closely with prison healthcare teams and local addiction services to ensure that individuals receiving opioid replacement therapy experienced a smooth transition on liberation. This helped maintain continuity of care, reduce the risk of treatment interruption and support people to re-engage with local services as quickly as possible.

The service also continued to strengthen links between Police Scotland, hospital services, DARS and community recovery providers. By acting as a bridge between services, the Liaison Service has helped improve communication and create additional opportunities to engage people who may not otherwise access support through traditional routes.
Partnership working with With You has supported efforts to engage individuals following a non-fatal overdose or attendance at emergency care services. This approach helps ensure that people are offered a range of treatment, harm reduction and recovery options at a time when they may be most receptive to support.

By strengthening pathways between services and improving continuity of care for people affected by substance use, the DARS Substance Liaison Service continues to make an important contribution to preventing drug-related harms, supporting recovery and improving outcomes for individuals across Argyll and Bute.

Adult Support and Protection

Act against harm

Adult Support and Protection (ASP) continues to support adults experiencing harm, vulnerability and exploitation, including those affected by alcohol and drug use. Working alongside the ADP, Police Scotland, health services and advocacy partners, ASP promotes coordinated, person-centred support that improves safety and wellbeing.

During 2025/26, 1,927 ASP referrals were received, with 59% originating from Police Scotland. Improvements to referral recording, screening and oversight have strengthened the identification and management of risk, while partnership working remains key to responding to complex needs involving substance use, trauma, mental ill health and self-neglect.

A multi-agency audit highlighted strong partnership working, person-centred practice and professional curiosity, while identifying opportunities to further strengthen risk assessment and recording. Ongoing workforce development is helping address these areas and support continuous improvement.

Through close collaboration with the ADP and wider partners, ASP continues to play an important role in reducing harm, supporting recovery and helping vulnerable individuals remain safe and connected within their communities



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Argyll & Bute Health & Social Care Partnership

Local Early Warning System (LEWS)

During 2025/26, the Local Early Warning System, previously known as the Local RADAR Group, continued to strengthen partnership working and the timely sharing of intelligence about emerging drug-related harms across Argyll and Bute. The multi-agency group brought together representatives from health, emergency services, Police Scotland, commissioned services and the ADP Support Team to review local incidents alongside regional and national trends. This supported improved situational awareness and enabled relevant alerts, harm-reduction information and emerging-substance guidance to be shared through local services and professional networks. Work also progressed to strengthen communication arrangements, maintain key contact networks and prepare for a multi-agency tabletop exercise.



The group maintained a strong focus on practical harm-reduction responses.

This included:

- progressing expanded naloxone and CPR training
- sharing updated resources
- exploring the introduction of nitazene testing strips
- continuing to monitor the need for additional community naloxone provision

Development of a new local drug harm-reduction app also progressed during the year, with input from people with lived and living experience helping to shape an accessible, user-friendly resource containing local support information and the ability to share important alerts

Naloxone Provision Across Argyll & Bute

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Partnership Working

Partnership working remains at the heart of the Argyll and Bute ADP Strategy and is fundamental to delivering effective prevention, treatment, recovery and harm reduction services. The complex challenges associated with alcohol and drug use cannot be addressed by any single organisation acting alone. Throughout 2025/26, the ADP continued to work alongside health services, social work, housing, education, justice partners, third-sector organisations, recovery communities and people with lived and living experience to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities across Argyll and Bute.

This section highlights how partners have worked together to strengthen treatment and support pathways, promote family-inclusive and rights-based approaches, develop the workforce, improve local services and respond to emerging needs. Collectively, these partnerships help ensure people can access timely, compassionate and effective support while contributing to a healthier, safer and more recovery-oriented Argyll and Bute

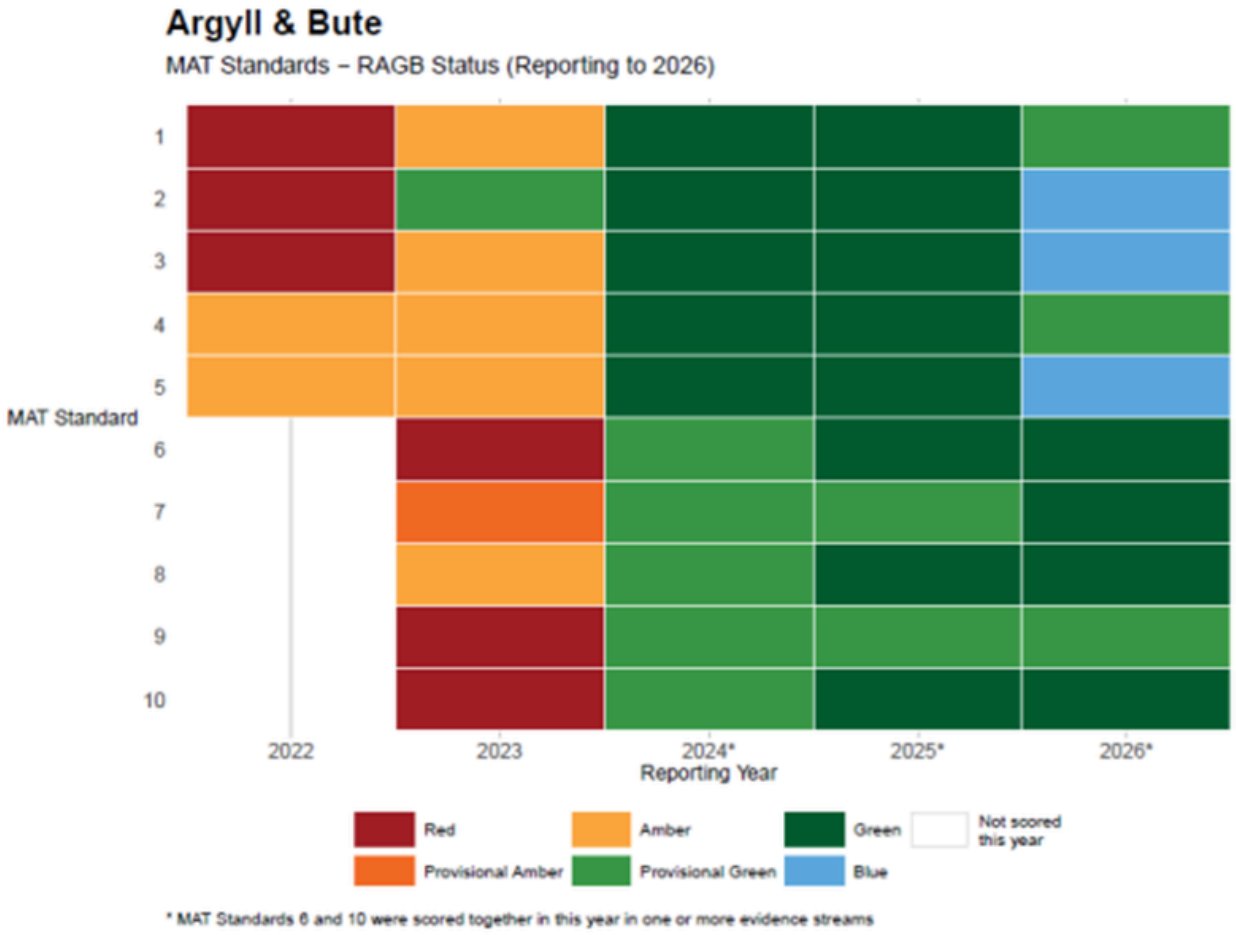


MAT Programme- Partnership Working

During 2025/26, Argyll and Bute made strong progress in implementing the ten Medication Assisted Treatment Standards. The national RAGB assessment awarded three blue, four dark green and three light green ratings. All ten standards were therefore rated green or blue, demonstrating sustained improvement in access, treatment delivery, partnership working and supporting evidence.

This positive position reflects collaboration across treatment services, primary care, third-sector organisations, advocacy and wider ADP partners.

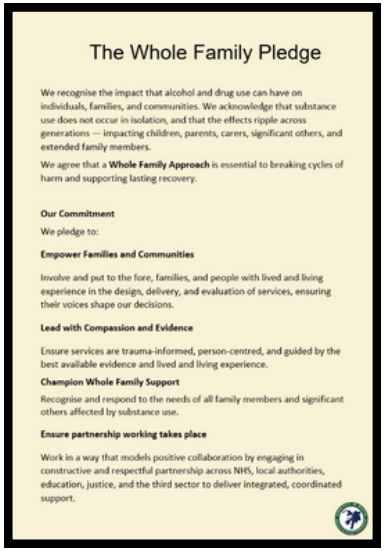
Local assessment combined process evidence, performance information and feedback from people accessing treatment, ensuring improvement was informed by both delivery data and people's experiences.



Whole Family Approach (Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol)

During 2025/26, the Argyll and Bute Whole Family Approach continued to progress from planning into implementation, with Embedding A Whole Family Approach in Argyll and Bute bringing together partners, family members and people with lived experience to improve support for individuals and families affected by alcohol and drug use. Regular meetings of the multi-agency Implementation Group helped maintain momentum, identify priorities and strengthen collaboration across statutory and third sector services.

A significant focus during the year was the co-production and development of the Whole Family Pledge. Working alongside partners and family representatives, the pledge was designed to promote a shared commitment to family-inclusive, trauma-informed and collaborative ways of working. The pledge highlights the importance of involving families and people with lived and living experience in decision-making, recognising the impact of substance use on whole families and strengthening partnership approaches across Argyll and Bute. The pledge was completed and launched at the Whole Family Approach Conference in April 2026.



The Whole Family Pledge

We recognise the impact that alcohol and drug use can have on individuals, families, and communities. We acknowledge that substance use does not occur in isolation, and that the effects ripple across generations — impacting children, parents, carers, significant others, and extended family members.

We agree that a **Whole Family Approach** is essential to breaking cycles of harm and supporting lasting recovery.

Our Commitment

We pledge to:

Empower Families and Communities

Involve and put to the fore, families, and people with lived and living experience in the design, delivery, and evaluation of services, ensuring their voices shape our decisions.

Lead with Compassion and Evidence

Ensure services are trauma-informed, person-centred, and guided by the best available evidence and lived and living experience.

Champion Whole Family Support

Recognise and respond to the needs of all family members and significant others affected by substance use.

Ensure partnership working takes place

Work in a way that models positive collaboration by engaging in constructive and respectful partnership across NHS, local authorities, education, justice, and the third sector to deliver integrated, coordinated support.

Whole Families Small Grant Fund

The ADP continued its Whole Families Small Grant Fund, with Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs (SFAD) supporting the grants process. Applications were considered by a volunteer panel of people with lived and living experience, helping to bring a family and lived experience perspective into funding decisions.

Funding was agreed for a number of projects across Argyll and Bute. This included work through Keeping It Local to reduce stigma, support the Hope Kitchen, increase volunteer support and offer more one-to-one engagement. Other grants covered practical support for veterans and their families, including help with transport to appointments and social activities, alongside therapeutic and drop-in support for families and young people.

Funding was also agreed for a new kinship peer learning network and a series of locally produced podcasts. These projects cover a mix of practical, social and peer support, as well as work aimed at reducing the stigma that can be experienced by families affected by alcohol and drug use.

Scottish Families
Affected by Alcohol & Drugs

Argyll & Bute Housing Services

Housing Services remain a key partner in addressing the wider factors that can contribute to alcohol and drug-related harm, including homelessness, poor mental health, financial hardship and social exclusion. Through delivery of the Local Housing Strategy, homelessness services, Housing First and housing support provision, the service works to ensure vulnerable individuals can access and sustain safe, secure accommodation.

A significant strength within Argyll and Bute is the Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Housing Practitioner (MHDAHP) role, which provides a direct link between housing, health and addiction services. The post supports individuals with complex needs who may otherwise struggle to engage with treatment and support services, ensuring housing issues do not become a barrier to recovery.

Between December 2024 and November 2025, Housing Services received 430 homelessness applications. During homelessness assessments, 105 households (24%) identified mental health, alcohol or drug support needs, demonstrating the close relationship between housing instability and health inequalities. Through housing support assessments, this increased to 167 households, reflecting the importance of having trusted services that can identify and respond to underlying support needs.

The MHDAHP received 44 referrals during the year, more than doubling activity compared to the previous reporting period. Of these cases, 39% involved both mental health and alcohol or drug-related needs, highlighting the growing complexity of presentations. The practitioner worked closely with Housing Services, Housing First, DARS, mental health services, social work, criminal justice and third sector organisations to coordinate support and improve outcomes for individuals with multiple and complex needs.

Housing First continues to provide stable accommodation alongside flexible, person-centred support for people affected by homelessness, trauma, mental ill health and substance use. The MHDAHP plays a key role within all Housing First cases, helping individuals access treatment, sustain tenancies and improve their overall wellbeing.

By combining secure housing with effective health and addiction support, Housing Services continue to make an important contribution to the ADP's aims of reducing harm, improving health outcomes and supporting long-term recovery across Argyll and Bute.

Carr Gomm Housing Support- Oban ADP-Funded Drop-In Service

Carr Gomm's ADP-funded drop-in service in Oban provides accessible, appointment-free support for people experiencing substance use, poor mental health, housing difficulties, financial pressures and social isolation. Expanded to four days per week during 2025/26, the service offers a trusted space where people can access practical support and build connections with staff.

Focused on early intervention, the service helps individuals address issues such as benefits, housing, rent arrears, homelessness prevention and access to wider services, supporting stability and reducing vulnerability.



Between April 2025 and February 2026, the service delivered 187 drop-in sessions and recorded 737 attendances.

During this period, staff provided 235 benefits interventions, 114 housing advice interventions and 75 homelessness prevention interventions.

The service continues to demonstrate the value of accessible, community-based support, helping people improve wellbeing, reduce harm and access the wider support needed for positive change.

carr gomm
Supporting People & Communities

Drug Related Death Review Group

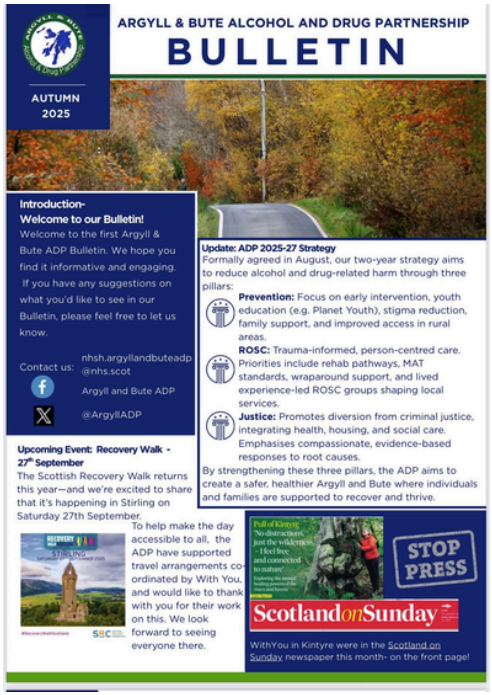
During 2025/26, the Argyll and Bute Drug Related Death Review Group continued its vital work reviewing drug-related deaths, bringing together information from partner agencies to better understand the circumstances surrounding each loss of life and to identify opportunities for learning, improvement and action.
The Group's work is underpinned by the belief that every drug-related death is preventable. Each review seeks not only to understand what happened, but also to identify what more could have been done collectively across services, systems and communities to support the individual and reduce the risk of harm.

Alongside reviewing individual cases, the Group considered a range of recurring themes emerging from reviews, recognising that drug-related deaths are often the result of multiple and interconnected factors, the Group focused on identifying opportunities for earlier intervention, improved coordination and more person-centred support.

During the year, the Group also worked to strengthen local governance processes for tracking reviews and monitoring outstanding actions, ensuring learning leads to meaningful change. Efforts were made to improve how findings and recommendations are shared across services, helping to embed a culture of continuous learning, accountability and prevention.

The ongoing work of the Group reflects a commitment to ensuring that every death is treated as a tragedy from which lessons must be learned, with the ultimate aim of preventing future loss of life and strengthening the support available to people at risk of drug-related harm.

ADP Bulletins



During 2025/26, the ADP introduced a new series of bulletins to provide partners across Argyll and Bute with regular news, updates and information on opportunities.

Three bulletins were produced during the year, covering areas including the new ADP Strategy, ROSC and MAT activity, recovery events, training opportunities and developments within local recovery communities.

The bulletins were published on the ADP website and shared through partner networks helping information reach services and organisations across Argyll and Bute.

Following their introduction in 2025/26, the bulletins will continue as a regular way of sharing ADP news, training, events and other useful information with partners.



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Argyll & Bute Health & Social Care Partnership

If you require this document in large font or in an alternative format please contact us in any of the following ways:

In writing: **Argyll and Bute Alcohol and Drug Partnership**
Victoria Integrated Care Centre,
93 East King Street,
Helensburgh, G84 7BU

Email: nhsh.argyllandbuteadp@nhs.scot

facebook: **https://www.facebook.com/ArgyllandButeADP**

@ArgyllADP