

Glasgow Citizens Advice Bureaux

Bridgeton CAB
Castlemilk CAB
Central CAB
Drumchapel CAB
Easterhouse CAB
Glasgow North West CAB
Greater Pollok CAB
Parkhead CAB



Good Advice and Information- Improved Health Outcomes

Inequalities in health in Scotland are well documented. A recent report found “healthy life expectancy is a quarter of a century shorter in the most deprived tenth of areas in Scotland compared to the least deprived tenth of areas”. Given Glasgow’s very large share of the most deprived areas (44% compared with 11% for Edinburgh) the situation is particularly acute. The report notes “the axes of inequality (as) including social deprivation, ethnicity, migration status, gender, sexual identity, and living with disabilities” ***which are exacerbated by “food insecurity... and barriers to high quality preventative health services”****

General Practitioners involved in the Deep End project know that health services are provided in inverse proportion to where need is greatest. These GPs work in the 100 most deprived areas in Scotland in collaboration with partner organisations to offer additional services to assist those in the these areas to achieve improved health outcomes. CABx is one of those vital partner organisations. Doctors know that medicine alone is not enough. Getting the right benefits and relieving the stress caused by debts is crucial to wellbeing.

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The Community Links workers in GP surgeries refer people to services like the CABx.

Christine, seen here with Lynsay, the CAB adviser commented: ***'The CABx service provides a vital service for very vulnerable people...often they don't know what they are entitled to.. CABx help makes the difference it means being able to turn the heating on and put food on the table.'***

Reducing Poverty - Maximising Income

Across Glasgow four CABx (Parkhead, Bridgeton, Glasgow North West and Easterhouse) are embedded in GP surgeries offering on the spot advice and information to patients on welfare benefits and debt.

"The service has assisted our practice enormously. It has decreased the amount of inappropriate GP consultations. The feedback from patients has been extremely positive. One patient said: "C (adviser) was so helpful to me and explained my options in a way I could understand. I feel less stressed now and happier, it was good seeing her my GP practice as I knew where to go and didn't have to worry about transport"" (Practice Manager)

Agu's Story

**Agu is Nigerian but has lived and worked in Scotland for many years. He is 72 years old and has a state and occupational pension. Recently his three daughters aged 17,15 and 12 came to live with him and Agu struggled to provide for the family. He had applied for child benefit but the CABx adviser

that Agu is £14,000 a year better off.

A recent survey carried out by Citizens Advice Scotland demonstrates the crucial positive effects of advice and information on people's health.



“I felt like a massive weight has been lifted off me by discussing these issues with someone who is actually listening as I can’t speak to family about my money worries because I don’t want to worry them, It’s just nice to finally talk to someone about it”

June's Story

*June is 57 years old and is in receipt of universal credit. She is unable to work as she has several health conditions and for the last 5 years she has been looking after her father and only returning to her own rented flat to collect mail. When her father died, June began to settle his estate and moved back to her own home. She discovered that Scottish Power had closed her account, shut off her meter and that she owed £400 in arrears which appeared to be accrued standing charges. She was extremely worried about the debt and didn't know how she would cope. The CABx adviser negotiated with Scottish Power on June's behalf to set up a new account and to get the debt of £400 written off

* Health inequalities in Scotland: trends in deaths health and wellbeing, health behaviour and health services since 2000.

Providing a Service Where it is Needed

It is estimated that 18% of the population experience psychological distress, with people living in the most deprived areas almost twice as likely to be experiencing mental health problems. Pollok CAB began to notice that people with mental health issues were reluctant to come to the bureau as they found it too intimidating. With help from the Community Fund and working in partnership with health care professionals, Pollok set up a mental health project. It operates from the Rossdale Community Mental Health Centre and three other local health centres; taking the service to places where the clients feel comfortable.



The welfare benefits system is notoriously complex and Claire, Pollok CAB's support worker for outreach activities, comments that she is constantly ***“astounded by the number of people who are on the wrong benefit”***. This project deals with people suffering a wide range of mental health issues including schizophrenia and depression. Maximising income is crucial and as Claire explains mental health issues makes dealing with authorities difficult: ***“many are falling through the cracks, unable to go online themselves or***

law and other issues.

In the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Bridgeton CAB operates as part of the Patient Advice and Support Service (PASS). While the main focus is on enabling patients to provide feedback or make complaints about health services, it also allows the CABx a presence in the hospital where in addition to assisting with complaints, advisers provide benefit checks, and inform families and patients about other issues such as travelling expenses for visiting.

Fedyr's Story

**Fedyr is a 65 year old Ukranian who has been diagnosed with terminal cancer. His immediate family is in Russia and his sister lives in Kyiv; Fedyr has no direct support in Glasgow and does not speak English. The CAB adviser in the GP practice made a benefits check and in addition to the universal credit that Fedyr was receiving, advised him to apply for adult disability payment. An interpreter was arranged and a call made Social Security Scotland to make the application and ensure that it could be paid immediately. Fedyr will be £172.75 a week better off.

**All names have been changed to protect confidentiality. All case studies have been drawn from CABx health outreach services.

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