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The WithYou Intensive Pre and Post Residential Support service

Evaluation report published February 2024





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Foreword

In January 2021, the First Minister of Scotland announced a national mission to reduce drug-related deaths and harms through improvements to treatment, recovery and other support services. One of the five priorities set out by the First Minister is the capacity and use of residential rehabilitation.

At WithYou, we fully support the ethos of providing better access to residential rehabilitation - however, we also recognise that people need help to prepare for entering and leaving these services.

With the support of Glasgow City Alcohol and Drugs Partnership and funding from the Scottish Government, we piloted our Intensive Pre and Post Rehabilitation Support service in April 2021. We have used our learning from delivering this model in Glasgow to launch Pre and Post Intensive Support services in Argyll and Bute and East Ayrshire; and we are delivery partners in Dundee, the Scottish Borders and South Ayrshire.

I am pleased to present the findings of an independent evaluation of this service carried out by Research Scotland. It reports that completion rates for residential rehabilitation

services in Scotland can range from just 40% up to around 70%. The completion rate for clients supported by our service, taken over a period of more than two years, was 83%.

The provision of residential rehabilitation requires significant financial investment from local authorities. We know that our Intensive Pre and Post Residential Support service gives clients a higher chance of success and ensures the value of investment in residential rehabilitation.

Going forward, I hope that, through the provision of this service, WithYou can help more people to access their choice of treatment, recover, and live happier, healthier lives.



Louise Stewart, Director of Service Delivery (Scotland) at WithYou



As this report explains, a key characteristic of our Intensive Pre and Post Residential Support service is that all staff - myself included - have lived experience. We have all been through residential rehabilitation services, we know the challenges our clients will face and, importantly, we are living proof of the opportunities that lie ahead.

It gives me great joy to know that my team inspires the people we support. I remember how I felt travelling from my home in Fraserburgh to attend a rehabilitation service in Glasgow. I came down by bus, on my own. I didn't have a clue about what to expect - it was really daunting and I would have benefitted so much from a friendly face.

That is why my team is there when our clients need us, seven days a week from before they go into rehabilitation until they are settled back into the community. I am very proud to be part of a service that is helping people to get to where they want to be in life.



Leigh Watt, Team Leader at the WithYou Intensive Pre and Post Residential Support service

To find out more about services offered by WithYou, including the Intensive Pre and Post Residential Support service, please contact glasgow.pre-hab@wearewithyou.org.uk



At a glance...

About the WithYou Pre and Post Residential Support service

The WithYou Intensive Pre and Post Residential service provides continuous support to people identified as requiring residential rehabilitation and people leaving such placements.

It aims to support clients to successfully complete their stay within residential rehabilitation services and sustain their recovery once they are back in the community.

WithYou has used the learning from delivering this model in Glasgow to launch Pre and Post Intensive Support services in Argyle and Bute and East Ayrshire. It is also a delivery partner in Dundee, the Scottish Borders and South Ayrshire.

Engagement

Between April 2021 and June 2023, 246 people were referred to the WithYou Intensive Pre and Post Residential Support service:



74% (182 people) chose to engage with the service



12% were still in the system (either in a residential service or awaiting a placement) at the time of this analysis



9% declined support from the WithYou Prehab service or did not engage at all



5% took part in early support discussions with the service, but then disengaged

Outcomes

Of the 182 people who engaged with the service:



83% (152 clients) completed residential rehabilitation



16% (29 clients) did not



The outcomes for one client are unknown

Completion rates for residential rehabilitation services in Scotland can range from 40% up to more than 70%.

The completion rate for those supported by the WithYou Intensive Pre and Post Residential Support service is 83%.





Fiona's story: Sustaining recovery

Fiona* was in residential rehabilitation for the second time when she was introduced to WithYou. She had fallen into a cycle of isolation and relapse. When she left residential rehabilitation, she relapsed again. Although she had support, she still felt low and "in a really bad place".

Thanks to her dedicated WithYou Prehab worker, Fiona felt less alone and was able to get back on track with her recovery journey.

The WithYou Prehab worker helped Fiona to take part in recovery cafes, attend GP and hospital appointments, access treatment, and connect with others. As a result, Fiona has sustained her recovery for more than

nine months.

Fiona said: "My WithYou worker has been absolutely brilliant. She gave me good advice, I really can't fault her, she's stuck by me. I always say she's one of the women in my life, that I wouldn't be still clean today if it wasn't for her."

Fiona said that, without the support from WithYou, she might have isolated herself again and would probably relapsed again. Although she is no longer supported by her WithYou worker, she knows she could still call her if she needed to. She feels much more positive about the future.

“My life is starting to fall into place now, and it’s a lot to do with WithYou.”

Client



Introduction

About this report

This report sets out findings from an independent evaluation of the WithYou Intensive Pre and Post Residential Support service. The evaluation was undertaken in summer and autumn 2023 by Research Scotland.

About WithYou

WithYou is a national charity that supports people experiencing drug, alcohol or mental health challenges. The charity started as a small support group in the south of England, set up in the 1960s, and grew significantly to become a larger organisation covering England and Scotland.

The organisation was known as Addaction for many years, and in early 2020 rebranded and

changed its name to We Are With You. It is now known as WithYou.

WithYou has 80 local services in England and Scotland, supporting people with drug, alcohol and mental health challenges, as well as their friends and family. It delivers services face to face, online, in the community, in schools and in prisons, providing a positive place where people can progress, connect with others, and get friendly, expert help.

About the Intensive Pre and Post Residential Support service

In Scotland, WithYou delivers an Intensive Pre and Post Residential Service, known as 'the Prehab service'. The service provides continuous support to people identified



as requiring residential rehabilitation and people leaving such placements.

The service began as a pilot in Glasgow in 2021, using funding through the Scottish Government's Corra fund. In 2022, WithYou applied for an extension and increased funding, which was accepted. WithYou has used the learning from delivering this model in Glasgow to launch Pre and Post Intensive Support services in Argyll and Bute and East Ayrshire. It is also a delivery partner in Dundee, the Scottish Borders and South Ayrshire.

Evaluation methodology

The evaluation conducted by Research Scotland involved:

- peer evaluation involving WithYou Prehab staff with lived experience, who learned

about evaluation methods, agreed research tools and interviewed four clients

- researcher interviews with 10 clients
- researcher interviews with six members of staff at partner organisations, including residential rehabilitation services and other alcohol and drug recovery services
- researcher discussions with WithYou Prehab staff
- review of relevant written reports and other background information

The researcher fieldwork for the evaluation focused on clients of the Glasgow service.

This report was completed in December 2023 and published in February 2024.



Service delivery

Introduction

This chapter explores the WithYou Prehab service in more detail. It sets out the aims of the service, the support offered and the profile of its clients.

Service aims and purpose

The WithYou Prehab service aims to support clients to successfully complete their stay within residential rehabilitation services and sustain their recovery once they are back in the community.

The service is available for people attending abstinence residential services (where the focus is living an alcohol and drug free life), as well as stabilisation residential services (where the main focus is stabilising alcohol and drug use).

These residential rehabilitation services are provided and funded by other organisations, and WithYou provides pre and post residential rehabilitation support only.

The WithYou Prehab staff team

All WithYou Prehab staff have lived experience of residential rehabilitation. They are closely linked to their local areas, and have extensive

knowledge of recovery communities, support groups and wider services.

These staff provide increased levels of support to their clients and are very effective at engaging vulnerable adults who are most at risk of a drug-related death or from disengaging from treatment services.

Actively recruiting, training, and inducting people with lived experience into these roles also allows WithYou to provide long-term employment opportunities for people in recovery.

Support offered

The WithYou Prehab service provides emotional and practical support for individuals as they prepare for residential rehabilitation, during their stay, and after leaving the residential rehabilitation service.

WithYou staff co-locate in all three commissioned residential rehabilitation services in Glasgow to provide direct access to support and information within these services. Two of these services are abstinence-based and one service is a stabilisation service.

How it works

1. The local commissioning team notifies the WithYou Prehab service that an individual has received funding for residential rehabilitation services.
2. WithYou Prehab staff follow up with the individual's allocated care manager within 24 hours to complete a basic referral form.
3. The WithYou Prehab team contacts the individual and to offer support.
4. Each individual is appointed a dedicated WithYou Prehab worker to support them through their whole journey.

Stage	Pre residential rehabilitation	In residential rehabilitation	Post residential rehabilitation
Timing At every stage, support is available seven days a week	Approximately 6 - 8 weeks	Throughout their time in residential treatment, usually 6 - 24 weeks	Approximately 12 weeks
Role of the WithYou Prehab worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending regular home visits and offering one-to-one support • Accompanying the client on a visit to the residential rehabilitation service • With the client, identifying barriers to accessing residential support • Providing emotional and practical support • Supporting on admission day if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with staff in the residential rehabilitation service as much as needed • Attending care plan reviews • Supporting gradual exposure to community • Supporting disengagement plans • Following up within 24 hours for all unplanned discharges • Supporting on planned discharge day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering person-centred support on discharge • Utilising assertive engagement • Supporting access to further recovery support (including group work) • Supporting access to in-house employability, education, and personal development projects • Supporting re-engagement with services if lapse or relapse occurs
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationships • Easing fears • Providing information • Explaining what to expect from residential rehabilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and encouraging engagement with the rehabilitation service • Preparing for leaving the residential setting • Working on a care plan • Considering accommodation and making sure that clients are returning to a safe environment that supports their recovery <p>During this phase, clients are under the care of the residential rehabilitation service. Each service has different arrangements in terms of engagement with outside services. WithYou staff can visit clients at times that don't interrupt the rehabilitation schedule.</p> <p>Individuals who leave residential rehabilitation services unplanned receive support, welfare calls and outreach visits from the WithYou Prehab team to encourage re-engagement and provide harm reduction advice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping clients to resettle into the community and make decisions about their lives • Empowering clients to come up with their own solutions • Taking a motivational and nurturing role • Explaining what additional services are available • Supporting clients to plan what they will do each day • Linking clients to places for skills, employment and exercise, as well as recovery cafes and groups • Supporting clients to build life skills and practical skills, for example by going shopping with their client and helping with budgeting

Outcomes

Between April 2021 and June 2023, a total of 246 people were referred to the WithYou Prehab service.



Of the 246 people who were referred to the service between April 2021 and June 2023, 74% (182) chose to engage.



Of these, **83%** completed residential rehabilitation, **16%** did not (the outcomes for one client are unknown).



12% were still in the system at the time of this analysis – either awaiting a residential placement, or in residential support.



9% declined support from the WithYou Prehab service or did not engage at all. Sometimes this was because funding for the residential support was removed, or the individual decided not to go to residential rehabilitation.



5% took part in early support discussions with the service, but then disengaged. This was because they chose not to attend residential rehabilitation, declined treatment, left the area, or went to prison.

Wider research in Scotland suggests that completion rates for residential rehabilitation services can range from 40% up to more than 70%.

The completion rate for those supported by the WithYou Prehab service was 83% between April 2021 and June 2023.



Impact on clients

Introduction

This chapter explores the impact of the WithYou Prehab service on clients.

This includes:

- attending residential rehabilitation
- completing residential rehabilitation
- sustaining recovery in the community
- lapses and relapses

Note: People going through recovery may face a temporary setback (lapse) or a longer-term setback (relapse).

Attending residential rehabilitation

Clients and partner organisations highlighted that the WithYou Prehab service helped people to follow through and attend residential rehabilitation by:

- reducing apprehension and improving understanding of what residential rehabilitation will involve
- providing accompanied visits to residential rehabilitation services
- supporting clients to find a more stable position before residential admission

Clients highlighted that the support from the WithYou Prehab team was very effective in reducing their anxiety about the residential rehabilitation experience.

Many said that visiting the residential rehabilitation service beforehand helped a lot, and made them feel less nervous about attending.

Some clients said that they felt much more hopeful about attending residential rehabilitation as they knew the WithYou Prehab team had personal experience of such services, and they could see the impact this had on their lives.

“ The support I received was very good, encouraging me to go into residential when I didn’t believe I could do it.” Client

Some organisations also found it helpful that the WithYou Prehab team could brief residential rehabilitation providers on individual client situations and needs prior to their attendance.

“ People are terrified about coming to rehab. It’s that fear of the unknown. So having someone who is friendly and will bring them to visit the service and let them know what to expect – you can see the fear melting away.” Partner organisation

One client said that the WithYou Prehab team supported her to access an abstinence-based residential rehabilitation service rather than the stabilisation residential rehabilitation service, which she was originally planning to attend.

She was at a stage in her life where she didn’t feel able to make good decisions. Her WithYou Prehab worker provided guidance and made sure she had the information she needed to make an informed choice. The client felt her WithYou worker kept her on track and helped her to stay calm, supporting her to make her own decisions.

“ I was so caught up in everything that was happening in my life that I couldn’t think straight at all about what the best next thing to do was, so it was great to have someone there who could sit me down and explain it properly. Do you know what I mean? Not rush me, or push me.” Client

David's story: Supporting attendance at residential rehabilitation

David* had been drinking alcohol for more than 35 years. He started working with the WithYou Prehab service after a relapse following discharge from in-patient detox.

The WithYou team visited David at home three times a week to build relationships, support harm reduction and coping skills, and ensure access to adequate medication.

David began to manage his alcohol use and introduce periods of sobriety through working with the WithYou Prehab team.

Rather than attend another in-patient detox, David was supported to achieve 12 days of sobriety and enter a residential rehabilitation service.

He is now halfway through his programme and his WithYou Prehab worker continues to visit regularly to offer support. Together, they are planning for when David leaves residential rehabilitation.

Completing residential rehabilitation

While people are in residential rehabilitation, they are under the care of that service. However, they maintain contact with their WithYou Prehab worker and continue to build trust and relationships.

Some clients talked about how discussions with their WithYou Prehab worker during this time helped them to stay in the residential service. Clients felt that having advice and support from someone with experience of residential rehabilitation was invaluable.

“ She reassured me that it was six months of my life. If I get sorted and get clean, I've got the rest of my life.” Client

WithYou Prehab workers also provided crisis support, for example, if clients experienced bereavement or other changes in circumstances.

“ My WithYou Prehab worker was up right away, because I had thoughts of wanting to leave, wanting to use. She was just reassuring me, just like a shoulder to cry on. She came with her arms wrapped round me.” Client

In this stage, WithYou Prehab workers support clients to make plans for leaving residential rehabilitation, with a focus on sustaining their recovery.

If an individual leaves residential rehabilitation unexpectedly or early, the WithYou Prehab team is alerted and provides immediate support, putting plans in place to avoid serious problems.

The team is available seven days a week and clients can be put on the WithYou welfare call list for the weekend if there are concerns. Partner organisations mentioned this as an area of strength of the WithYou Prehab service; they felt that individuals were connected to alternative support much more quickly than would otherwise be the case, therefore reducing their risk of relapse.

Thomas’s story: Supporting completion of residential rehabilitation

Thomas* said that without WithYou he would probably have left the residential rehabilitation service as soon as he finished the detox stage. But after speaking to his WithYou Prehab worker, he decided to stay for the whole 24 weeks. By doing so, Thomas believes he has given himself a better chance of sustaining his recovery. When he began his journey, he felt hopeless, but now he has aspirations for the future.

He said: “I thought I’m off my detox now, I know what I need to do and there were points in time I wanted to leave. Speaking to my WithYou Prehab worker really helped me not to do that and make an impulsive decision.”

Sustaining recovery in the community

Clients were very positive about the support they received from the WithYou Prehab team as they left residential rehabilitation and moved back into the community.

Clients said they received a lot of practical support from the WithYou Prehab team, for example making sure accommodation was suitable to return to and support with appointments, travel, shopping, finances, routines, and daily coping skills.

“ He met me the second day I was out of rehab just to find out what my plans were, where I am at, what I am intending doing, and stuff like that.” Client

“ To be honest, they probably saved me. Whether I would have relapsed I don’t know, I can’t tell you that. But have I had the support to avoid that? Yes.” Client

Clients felt that they could contact their WithYou Prehab worker about anything, and they would be there to provide support. Clients felt sure that this consistent support had helped them to stay on track and to sustain their recovery.

“ They’re really good support. I’ve not looked back for street Valium from last year, since I got my WithYou Prehab worker.” Client

“ It doesn’t matter what time or when, she’ll get back to me. Like if I feel a wee bit upset or stuff like that, I’ll just text my WithYou Prehab worker, and she’ll get back to me, have a talk with me and everything just goes away. The thoughts I was thinking like 10 minutes before.” Client

In particular, clients found that with support from the WithYou Prehab service they were able to build a structure and routine based on what they wanted to do, and what would support their recovery, including:

- attending recovery cafes, meetings and services in a routine that suits them
- physical activities like hill walking, swimming, going to the gym and football
- connecting with health services – such as blood tests, eye tests and health support at the main WithYou Glasgow hubs, supporting attendance at GP and hospital appointments, and accessing mental health and counselling services
- connecting to employability support – such as volunteering opportunities or local training and employability services

Clients found it extremely useful that they had a WithYou Prehab worker to demonstrate potential ways of continuing recovery on a daily basis.

“ They’ve been fantastic to my journey. WithYou has been very consistent, getting me involved in things I would never have found on my own.” Client

“ I know that they’re there. I’ve got my groups to go to and if I didn’t attend, people would be wondering where I was. It makes you feel safe, and you’re looked out for.”

Client

Some clients said that their health and wellbeing had improved greatly through accessing treatment and support, being more active and eating better. Some felt fitter, stronger and healthier.

Others said that through accessing mental health and counselling services they felt better about themselves, were more able to trust people, could rebuild their relationships with family and develop new networks and relationships in the community.

“ It was a massive help to my health and wellbeing as my WithYou Prehab worker got me a gym pass where I attended the gym weekly and this helps a lot with stress and mental health.” *Client*

“ This time around I’ve got a lot of people I’m friends with. She gave me the confidence to actually speak to people.” *Client*

Some clients mentioned that a key part of this was support to say no to some things, and focus on the activities that would support their health, wellbeing and recovery.

“ I believe in myself a bit more... I know it’s not about getting pats on the back, but to be told you’re doing well by somebody and people recognising it.” *Client*

Partner organisations felt that the support provided by the WithYou Prehab team was invaluable, particularly in the immediate period following residential rehabilitation, when clients can be at their most vulnerable and at risk.

Partner organisations found that the WithYou Prehab service was able to offer excellent

community support networks to their clients post-rehabilitation, and that this was done in a direct, empathetic manner.

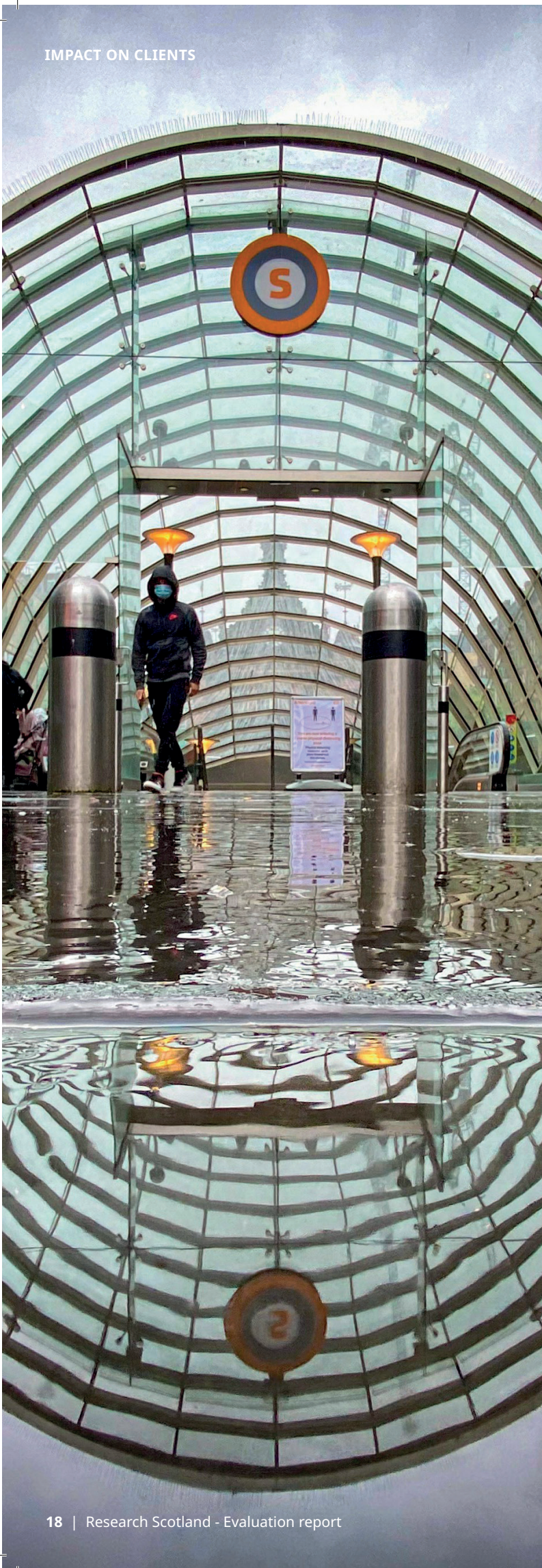
“ It’s about confidence building. WithYou just works so hard with individuals to build up their confidence to go to recovery communities and meetings. They offer a huge amount of support, all tailored to each individual’s needs.” *Partner organisation*

Emma’s story: Sustaining recovery

When Emma* was struggling with her recovery, she was able to call her WithYou Prehab worker and have a frank discussion about how she was feeling.

Her WithYou Prehab worker shared his experiences, and this really helped Emma. She found his experience inspiring and felt that he was a strong role model. He encouraged her to avoid using and helped her to believe that she could achieve a better life. She feels inspired by all the WithYou staff and hopes that she can sustain her recovery and work in the recovery field one day.

Emma said: “He’s shared his experience with me. And for that alone it just shows that it is possible, and now he’s got a job and everything. He’s like... it can open doors and all you need to do is don’t use, don’t booze and life is your oyster basically.”



Client stories

As clients progressed on their recovery journey, they talked of wider support with volunteering, learning and employability.

Nadia's story: Sustaining recovery

Nadia* said the WithYou Prehab service made a huge difference to the decisions she made after residential rehabilitation. When she left, she was keeping herself so busy that she wasn't taking care of her own recovery. She was burning herself out and becoming stressed to the point of wanting to "use" again.

Her WithYou Prehab worker suggested she take a break from some of the things she was involved in. She took his advice and stopped volunteering, which made her feel much "freer".

Nadia realised the work she was doing – which she thought was going to make her feel well again – was too much, and was impacting her mental and physical health, and her recovery.

She said: "I would just keep going and keep going and keep going and I would just keep getting burnt out and I'd be really confused and want to use all the time...and be really fucked up.

"My WithYou Prehab worker kind of laid it out to me and that helped because I think no one had said maybe take a step away. He could see what it was doing to me, so it was good."

Over time, Nadia's WithYou Prehab worker suggested she should get involved in physical activity, so she joined a gym and a climbing group. She found this had a significant, positive impact on her physical and mental health. Nadia has also started an SVQ qualification and has sustained her recovery for more than a year.

Jonathan's story: Journey to employment

Jonathan* is currently involved with a third sector organisation as a peer researcher, and he would like to do the necessary training to eventually work in the recovery field. He says he has been inspired by his WithYou Prehab worker's journey.

Jonathan is determined not to repeat the same mistakes he made the last time he left residential rehabilitation (without support from WithYou). He felt rushed into employment and didn't pay enough attention to his recovery.

This time, Jonathan has sustained his recovery and he is attending recovery cafes and other support groups. He is avoiding people who are still using and focusing on doing voluntary work.

He says: "It's just seeing the proof in front of me of what other people have done and are now working at WithYou. It's something that I would like if I was given the opportunity further down the line."

Sean's story: Progressing to Learning

Sean* has been free of all substances for a year and attends recovery meetings regularly.

On leaving residential rehabilitation, he said he felt a sense of comfort and relief that he had his WithYou Prehab worker to support him.

Sean's WithYou Prehab worker supported him to build routine and structure, and attend recovery events. He has now enrolled in a college course, started volunteering, and is working on his family relationships.



Lapses and relapses

The WithYou Prehab team recognises that recovery is not a straightforward journey, and that people may experience lapses and relapses.

Clients highly valued the support available if they lapsed or relapsed. Clients praised the approach taken by the WithYou Prehab team, helping them to understand that recovery takes time and that lapses and relapses can be part of their recovery journey.

“ I know I'm a work in progress now. I didn't get an addiction in two minutes, so I'm not going to recover in two minutes.” Client

Staff and partner organisations felt that the WithYou Prehab team could pick up very quickly on whether someone was relapsing. The team knows individual client behaviours and is in regular contact with all clients. This means WithYou Prehab workers can identify unusual behaviours - for example, if someone doesn't text for a couple of days or doesn't answer the phone. This allows potential lapses and relapses to be identified quickly.

“ WithYou will go to the next of kin, go to people's houses. We've found people who we've not seen for a few days, injected them with naloxone, called an ambulance and saved their lives. This is the level of intensity we're working at.” Partner organisation

Experience of the service

Introduction

This chapter explores the impact of the WithYou Prehab service on clients.

“If we can do it, we will.” Staff

What works

Relationships and trust

Clients, partner organisations, and staff all felt that the relationships that WithYou Prehab staff built with their clients are key to the success of the service.

Clients talked of feeling an immediate and strong bond with their workers, and feeling that staff care about them. Clients mentioned feeling secure, comforted, and safe by knowing someone is there for them and looking out for them.

“Really approachable and friendly.” Client

Clients valued having someone (who is not a family member) there to listen to them. Having a dedicated person throughout their recovery journey was important, and this fostered a trusting relationship and meant clients did not have to repeat their story.

Clients were positive that they were supported to make decisions for themselves through speaking to their WithYou Prehab worker. Importantly, clients said they did not feel rushed into decisions, and were able to talk and think these through.

“Really, really supportive in the decisions that I want to make, even if I'm a bit confused. Always there, you know.” Client

“I really trust my WithYou Prehab worker... The advice he's given me has been really substantial to my journey. It's helped me a

lot in making decisions – I can sometimes be indecisive, and he's guided me in a way that's been really, really practical and helpful for me.” Client

Staff agreed that relationships, boundaries and trust were all critical to their work.

Clients are treated as equals; the approach is person-centred, and support is tailored to the individual's needs.

Lived experience

Clients felt that being supported by someone with lived experience worked very well, because WithYou Prehab workers understand what they are going through. Clients mentioned that they felt less judged speaking to someone with lived experience and felt that staff were in a good position to provide advice.

“I think that's a lot better because they know what you're going through because they've been there and done it.” Client

“They know that we know where they're coming from. We've not just read it in books. It gives people hope and they really drop that barrier.” WithYou Prehab staff member

Many clients mentioned that their WithYou Prehab worker provided a positive role model, and that they found the journeys of WithYou staff inspirational.

“I was fortunate enough to get a WithYou Prehab worker who had actually been to the residential rehab that I was going into. It was good to kind of know what I was going into through their own personal experience. Being able to see proof that it works.” Client

“ Inspirational... I do look at my WithYou Prehab worker and I think that’s so good, look at where you’ve come from to where you are now. She’s a strong independent woman.” Client

“ When I looked at her, I was like, I cannot believe you used to have any issues like that, and now look at you, you’re helping other people. I thought it was amazing.” Client

Flexible and intensive support

Clients felt that the support they received was flexible and tailored to their needs.

“ She’s a brilliant worker, she’ll do anything to help you.” Client

“ Probably like the best support I’ve received from of any organisation.” Client

Partner organisations highlighted the flexible service available from the WithYou Prehab team, saying staff were willing to adapt, respond and do what is needed to complement residential rehabilitation services. They also emphasised that while support was flexible, person-centred and intensive, it was also appropriate and risk assessed.

Partner organisations particularly valued that the WithYou team could react quickly in crisis situations, and was diligent in keeping in contact with clients, particularly after their residential rehabilitation stay. This meant that support was available at crucial times, when people may be most vulnerable.

“ The WithYou team is incredible. They’re genuinely interested in person-centred support. Nothing is ever too much for them.” Partner organisation

WithYou prehab staff agreed that the flexible approach was critical. They highlighted that many clients had no one else to support them, so it was important to have regular check-ins, visits and support available seven days a week. Staff felt this was possible because they

had a reasonable case load, dedicated clients, and more flexibility than some other services. For example, a client leaving residential rehabilitation really wanted their nails done, so her WithYou Prehab worker went with her, and they were able to speak during the appointment.

Team skills and support

Clients valued the life experience their WithYou Prehab workers brought, and partner organisations recognised that having lived experience of addiction and rehabilitation made a significant difference to the team’s ability to support clients in an empathetic, skilled and knowledgeable way.

“ A big thing is the knowledge base that a lot of the workers have. A lot of them have lived experience and may have had their recovery in Glasgow. That means that when they’re talking to someone from our community, they’re part of that community and able to give really solid, practical, and emotional support.” Partner organisation

Partner organisations felt that the diverse WithYou Prehab team brought a strong mix of knowledge, skills and experiences. They felt that this meant clients could be well matched with team members, based on client needs and team member skills and experiences.

“ They genuinely go through every referral they get and match it to the most appropriate person in their team. I don’t know of any other service that offers that.” Partner organisation

WithYou Prehab staff felt that team members worked well together, supported one another, and brought a different approach, background and road to recovery.

Partnership working

Partner organisations felt that WithYou worked well with other organisations, through mutual respect, good communication and strong individual relationships.

“ Working in partnership makes it much easier to support the client. Everything will get put in place to support them in getting settled back in the community and having the ability to maintain recovery.” *Partner organisation*

“ I have excellent working relationships with WithYou. It’s a fantastic team. They are really open to partnership working and have excellent communication skills.” *Partner organisation*

“ WithYou are our closest partners. We could not function, if I’m honest, without their support.” *Partner organisation*

Partners said that WithYou brought strong community connections and links, and supported transitions to help those leaving residential rehabilitation to integrate into the community.

Some said that it was particularly helpful for WithYou Prehab workers to be ‘familiar faces’ within the residential rehabilitation services, so that this connection could be continued in the community.

“ That’s where WithYou works really well – in re-introducing community support as the team is dead centre in the community. They’re in the recovery cafes, in the hubs – they’re embedded in them.” *Partner organisation*

Challenges

None of the clients involved in this evaluation felt that anything about the WithYou Prehab service could be improved. When prompted on challenges or areas for improvement, all reiterated how valuable the service was to them.

One client said that they didn’t previously know anything about WithYou, so more awareness raising might be useful.

One client said that although he had initially sustained recovery and was discharged from

the WithYou Prehab service, over time he felt pressure building and started drinking alcohol again. He didn’t ask for support from WithYou, because he said he didn’t like asking for help, but he knew he could contact his WithYou Prehab worker at any time. (This client was referred back to WithYou for support, with his consent, immediately following the interview.)

Staff highlighted that due to successes, referrals and caseloads were increasing. This made it difficult to judge when to keep supporting existing clients, and when to make room for the new clients coming through.

WithYou Prehab staff mentioned that in some cases they have great relationships with partner organisations, but some organisations and individuals are not clear about the role of WithYou. Staff felt that in some cases it would be beneficial to be more involved in certain meetings or have access to wraparound support for their clients during times of crisis.

“ When do you say enough is enough, so you can provide support to someone else?” *WithYou Prehab staff member*

Partner organisations also emphasised the positive relationships they had with WithYou and the value of the service. One partner said it would like to work with WithYou to explore why drop out rates for its residential programme were high in week one, to see if anything more could be done to address this.

Another partner said that it could sometimes take time for the WithYou Prehab team to get involved in fast-moving situations. They suggested that this was likely to be a wider systemic challenge, when the situation required combined attention from a range of partners.

Conclusions

The WithYou Prehab service supported 182 people through their recovery journey between April 2021 and June 2023.

Of these, 83% completed their residential rehabilitation stay – which is a high proportion for completion of residential rehabilitation.

The service has a positive impact on:

- supporting attendance at residential rehabilitation services
- stabilising clients' lives in the lead up to attending residential rehabilitation services
- ensuring clients attend a suitable residential rehabilitation service
- encouraging continuation of rehabilitation during times of crisis or change
- easing the transition back into the community in practical terms
- building structure and routine in clients' lives on leaving residential rehabilitation
- ensuring community activity supports recovery on an ongoing basis
- building health, wellbeing and community connections
- connecting clients to skills development and employability services at an appropriate point

The WithYou Prehab service also provides alternative support to those who do not complete residential rehabilitation, or who lapse or relapse, helping to reduce and avoid crisis situations.

Clients, partner organisations and WithYou staff all had very positive experiences of the service. The service works well because it matches workers with clients in a thoughtful way, enabling relationships and trust to grow, and takes a person-centred, flexible and intensive approach to support.

The lived experience, knowledge and skills within the WithYou Prehab team strengthen the support and relationships, and provide positive role models and inspiration for clients.

The WithYou Prehab service works well alongside the range of other support available, with partner organisations feeling the service adds value to and complements their services, and ultimately provides more support for clients to maintain their recovery.

For the future, the WithYou Prehab team may wish to consider:

- reviewing or strengthening criteria for when to discharge clients
- light touch, check-in, drop-in, or occasional support for those who have been discharged from the service
- gathering and sharing learning about why clients are dropping out of residential rehabilitation services, working jointly with partners
- raising awareness of the service among relevant stakeholders

**Names have been changed*

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