



# Evaluation

Report

February 2024

## Contents

1	Introduction .....	1
2	Assessing Clued Up's support and impact .....	3
3	Policy alignment .....	16
4	Stakeholder views .....	19
5	Conclusions and recommendations .....	22

Before reading this report, we recommend you watch the BBC documentary Drugs Map of Britain, episode 3 'Uppers and Downers' – if you haven't already. It features several young Fifers who have been supported by Clued Up for a number of years. It demonstrates, very clearly, the reality facing the young people supported by the organisation. To view the episode, click on the image below....



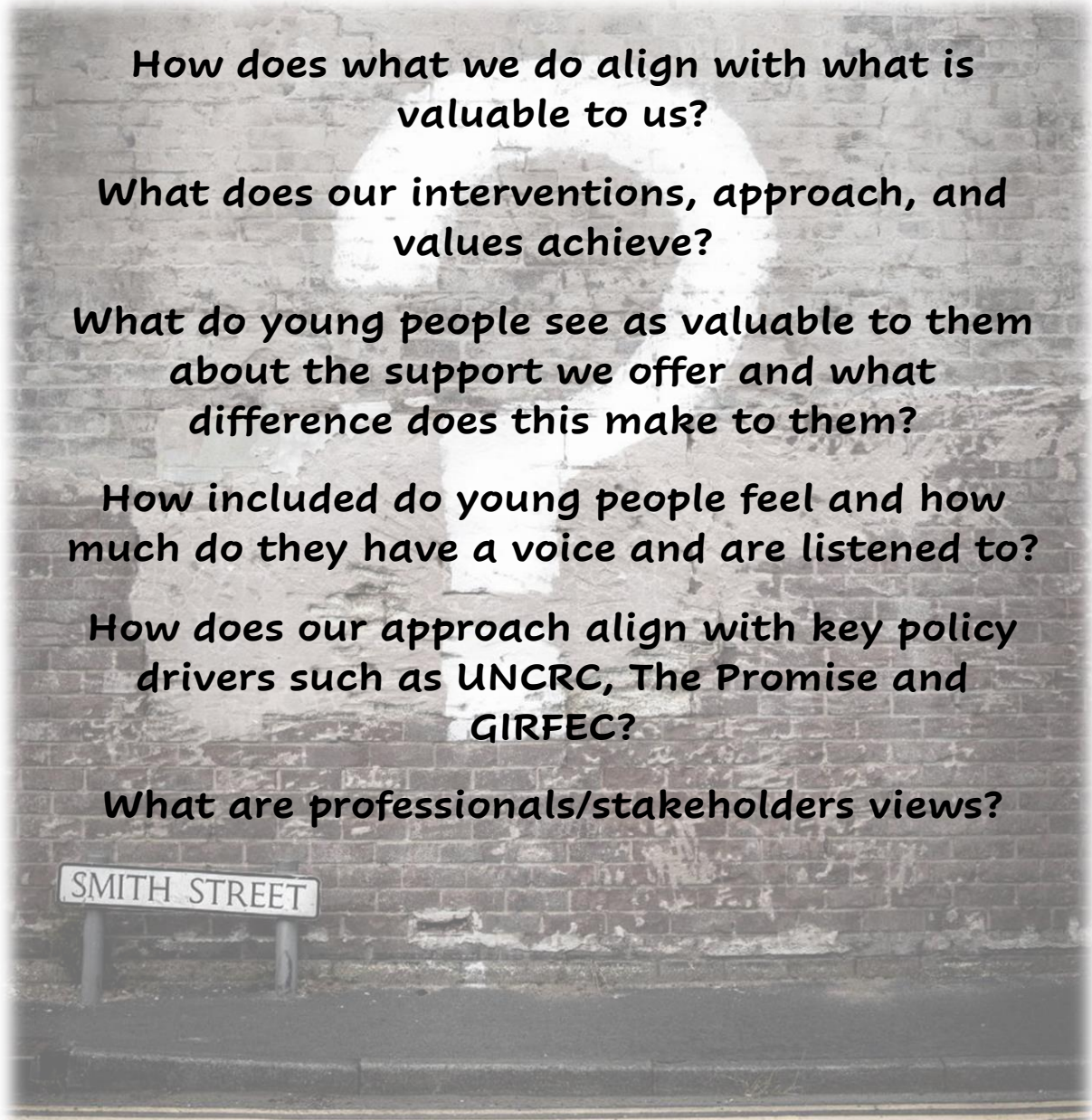
16 Orchardfield Avenue, Edinburgh, EH12 7SX  
0131 627 0070

[www.iconic-consulting.co.uk](http://www.iconic-consulting.co.uk)  
[ian@iconic-consulting.co.uk](mailto:ian@iconic-consulting.co.uk)

Company registration number: SC415033  
VAT number: 159 8925 47

# 1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of our evaluation of Clued Up. In commissioning the review, Clued Up posed the following questions:



Clued Up provides comprehensive ‘youth friendly’ substance use support and information service to young people under 25 years old in Fife, also targeting the wider issues of general well-being and lifestyle. It provides education, prevention and early intervention for young people affected by their own or someone else’s substance use. The organisation is based in Kirkcaldy and works across Fife. Clued Up Project was established in 1994 and has been a third sector organisation since 2004. It is currently governed by a board of eight trustees. There are 20 staff including a Service Manager and administrative support team. Delivery staff work on an outreach basis, working closely with local partners such as schools, police, social work and other third sector

organisations in one of three areas: Kirkcaldy & Levenmouth; Glenrothes & North East Fife; and Dunfermline & South West Fife. Clued Up's services include the Young Person's Outreach Service, Making it Work for Families, CU Excel, and CU Next Generation.

## **Evaluation**

The evaluation involved the following research:

- A depth interview with the Service Manager at the outset and additional discussions throughout the evaluation
- Group discussions with Clued Up staff at a team meeting in June 2023 and trustees at a board meeting in September 2023.
- Four half-days shadowing Clued Up staff as they supported young people, which allowed for informal discussions with the staff, young people, parents/carers, and partner agencies.
- Attendance at Clued Up's AGM in August 2023 which included a presentation by the Youth Forum.
- Consultation with school staff which included seven survey responses and three follow-up interviews.
- Consultation with stakeholders which included 12 survey responses and three follow-up interviews.
- A group discussion in February 2024 with 11 young people who had been supported by Clued Up in the past.
- A document review that included Clued Up's Annual Progress Reports, as well as national documents related to relevant policies such as The Promise and GIRFEC.
- Thematic analysis of the above material to draw out the key findings presented in this report.

## **Report structure**

This report is structured as follows:

- Assessing Clued Up's support and impact (chapter 2).
- Policy alignment (chapter 3).
- Stakeholder views (chapter 4).
- Conclusions and recommendations (chapter 5).

## 2 Assessing Clued Up's support and impact

This chapter focuses on four of the questions posed in the brief: 1) How does what we do align with what is valuable to us? 2) What does our interventions, approach, and values achieve? 3) How included do young people feel and how much do they have a voice and are listened to? 4) What do young people see as valuable to them about the support we offer and what difference does this make to them? We summarise and assess Clued Up's interventions, including youth participation, and what they achieve. We also discuss key issues arising from the assessment which relate to the overarching approach, values, and inclusion.

To set the context for the review Clued Up identified what it considered as valuable about the organisation and its support for young people:

- Age specific projects that are accessible to vulnerable young people.
- Safe, youth friendly environments with options.
- Dedicated staff team who are "REAL".
- Time, building long lasting relationships.
- Strength based approach.
- Treat young people as people – not as "clients".
- Value the potential of young people and help them to realise it.
- Maintain contact.
- Work in partnership.
- Including young people and them having a voice.
- Relationship based practice and building trust.
- Impact on the whole family.

### Interventions

#### Young Person's Outreach Service

Clued Up's core service, the Young Person's Outreach Service, supports young people aged 12 to 26 who are affected by their own or someone else's substance use. Support includes one-to-one sessions, harm reduction advice, alcohol brief intervention, group work, 'Oot & About' (street work), sexual health intervention, and support for meetings about the young person involving other organisations. Referrals come mainly from Fife's schools as well as via social work, self-referral, health, addiction services, residential care providers, other third sector organisations, family, and Fife's Family Support Service. The Outreach Service has a series of regular drop-in sessions across Fife to help raise awareness and engage young people. Nine frontline staff and a team leader deliver the Outreach Service. It is funded by Fife Council Education and Children's Service and Fife Alcohol and Drug Partnership. The service also includes an element of whole family support delivered by Barnardo's Scotland, although this element was not part of our evaluation.

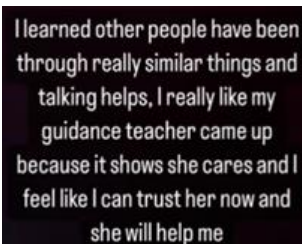


During 2022/23, Clued Up reported the Outreach Service supported 394 young people and arranged 4,308 support sessions (an average of approximately 11 per young person). There were 268 new referrals during the year of whom 263 (98%) engaged; 60% of new referrals were affected by substance use in the family.

Our shadowing one to one sessions allowed us to observe Clued Up staff delivering the Outreach Service and to speak openly with staff, young people and partner agencies. We observed staff supporting young people on a wide range of issues of which substance use was just one alongside school, college, personal relationships, family, friends, mental health, finances, safety, justice, and housing. Staff were non-judgemental, provided sound advice, and offered constructive suggestions, where relevant, in an appropriate manner. In return young people were open, relaxed and clearly trusted and respected their worker. They valued the genuine interest and care their worker had for their wellbeing. They valued the regular contact the worker was able to give them, and the fact this was needs-led, not limited to a set number of weeks. It was notable that some of the young people had required support over a long period and this resulted in a very strong level of trust and openness. It was also notable that Clued Up had previously worked with the siblings of young people they were currently supporting.

“They don’t rush you. It’s all at your own level of progress. I remember with CAMHS it felt like they just wanted to get you off their case load as quick as possible. Whereas Clued Up don’t mind how long it takes for you to get better, they just want to be there to help you”. Young person.

Group work adds another dimension to the Outreach Service, in our view. During 2022/23, Clued Up delivered seven groups that engaged 49 young people. The groups included Easter and summer school holiday groups to provide diversionary activities and personal development opportunities for young people. It was noted that Clued Up took a proactive approach to identify participants. Although there was no specific criteria, staff identified young people from their caseloads who would benefit most from groupwork and the planned activities. For example, staff identified eight girls with low self-esteem or self-confidence from the three secondary schools in Glenrothes for a summer group that met weekly for six weeks to take part in a range of, mainly outdoor, activities. Some of the groups included residential which were both popular and impactful. It was interesting to note that young people involved in a residential in summer 2023 invited school guidance staff to attend and this was seen as a very positive step that helped break down barriers and build trust, as shown in the quote opposite. Young people were also responsible for developing many of the residential activities and this demonstrates Clued Up’s commitment to inclusion and empowering young people. In addition to the school holiday groups, Clued Up also deliver groups during term-time. For example, they delivered a six week programme involving female pupils from Madras College in St Andrews. The group discussed topics such as substance use, self-esteem, body image, sexual exploitation, and community policing. They also went on a three-day residential to the Cairngorms National Park. The prominence of girls groups was noted and was part of a very positive approach to inclusivity that we witnessed throughout the evaluation.



I learned other people have been through really similar things and talking helps, I really like my guidance teacher came up because it shows she cares and I feel like I can trust her now and she will help me

“Clued Up has helped me through some extremely hard times and helped me make new friends through the amazing group work which helped me come out of my comfort zone try new things even if I wasn’t too keen at first”. Young person.



Based on our observations and consultations, and the outcomes reported by Clued Up, we find the Outreach Service is an invaluable and integral part of Clued Up.

### Oot & About

Clued Up’s Oot & About sessions involve staff undertaking detached youth work in their local area to try to engage young people. Taking place on Friday evenings throughout the year, a rota system is in place to spread the work across the local area teams. Using their knowledge of the local area, staff visit places where they know young people tend to congregate such as town centres, schools, in woods, under bridges, in parks, in disused buildings, and on the beach. During 2022/23, 62 sessions were delivered which led to 207 alcohol brief interventions and 2,758 other contacts. Clued Up workers are regularly accompanied by staff from partner agencies such as Fife Council Community Learning and Development, Safer Communities, and NHS Fife. This helps Clued Up build professional connections and relationships.



We accompanied staff on one session in the Levenmouth area in early November 2023. Although the number of young people engaged was limited on a cold evening, it was nonetheless clear that these sessions are valuable. They allow Clued Up staff to engage young people who they may not otherwise meet and to build relationships with them that may be beneficial in the future. It also allows them to meet young people they already know in a different environment. There is also a safety element to the sessions as the team meet young people who may be in vulnerable situations involving substance use, antisocial behaviour and personal safety. The ease with which staff engaged young people was striking, including those they had not met before. The sessions show young people Clued Up’s staff are working at times and in places where they would not normally expect to see workers and this helps breakdown barriers and build trust. As an aside, the session we observed also demonstrated Clued Up’s robust approach to the safety of their own staff.

Oot & About is a very useful part of Clued Up’s support. It helps raise the organisation’s profile and breaks down barriers that fosters engagement with young people. It also aids partnership working.

## **Making it Work for Families**

Making it Work for Families is a whole family partnership approach delivered by Clued Up, Fife Gingerbread, Citizens Advice and Rights Fife (CARF) and Fife Intensive Rehabilitation & Substance Use Team (FIRST). Clued Up has two staff and a team leader dedicated to this service which operates in Kirkcaldy and Levenmouth. It is an early intervention initiative supporting families described in Clued Up's Annual Progress Report as 'living in complex circumstance, with multiple barriers to progression and deep-rooted belief systems around their aspirations... at the greatest risk of being left behind and excluded from mainstream provision'. The service adopts a whole family approach, Clued Up's staff focus on young people working alongside the other partners particularly Fife Gingerbread that focus on the adults. The service is funded by Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal, Gannochy Trust, Opportunities Fife, and Corra Foundation.

During 2022/23, a total of 34 families were supported by Making it Work for Families. Clued Up supported 67 young people, the majority of whom (47) were aged 12 to 14. Clued Up's support is similar to the core service described previously with one-to-one and group work. The key difference being that the adults in the families are simultaneously supported by the other partners to deliver the whole family approach. Although Clued Up's support is focused on the young people, it was clear they work closely with Fife Gingerbread and the other partners. Activities include family trips, family learning, and an after-school teatime club. The partners produced a [Stigma Toolkit](#) as 'an aid to support thinking and challenging stigma at a local level to help improve outcomes for families'. Young people supported by Clued Up contributed directly to the development of the toolkit.



The group work included an Easter school holiday group that engaged 14 young people who reported positive impacts such as building confidence and making new friends. An eight week Attendance group was also established which involved girls from Levenmouth Academy who were struggling with mainstream attendance. One of the teachers from the Academy provided very positive feedback on the group highlighting how well the pupils engaged and how they were empowered by Clued Up to take ownership of it. Significantly, they also noted a change in behaviour as some of the girls had handled challenging situations better than they would have prior to the group. Four young people from Making it Work for Families attended a three-night residential in the Highlands. During the trip they took part in a range of challenging outdoor pursuits. The young people were closely involved in planning the residential including budgeting and arranging the programme of activities. The young people were very much empowered by Clued Up. Very positive feedback was received with some of those who took part describing it as a life changing experience. Positive impacts were reported in self-esteem, self-confidence, building new relationships and communicating with others.

Clued Up's involvement in Making it Work for Families is vital in providing dedicated person-centred support for young people within a whole family approach. The use of Clued Up's 'tried and tested' approach has been beneficial in terms of implementation and impact.

## **Participation and volunteering**

Clued Up's Youth Participation and Development Worker is responsible for CU Next Generation.



This service recruits, trains and supports volunteers with lived experience and young people to become peer mentors within the organisation. These are young people who are ready to move on from Clued Up's core service but want to give something back to the organisation by volunteering with them and includes some young people who have their own youth worker aspirations. During 2022/23, 12 young people participated in volunteering training of 16 hours over eight weeks. One of Clued Up's volunteers was recently awarded Youth 1<sup>st</sup>'s volunteer of the year.

The Youth Participation and Development Worker supports Clued Up's Youth Forum. This is a group of young people who meet regularly to provide a forum for youth participation and co-production. Although the numbers are small, with around half a dozen regular members, their impact is significant. Participation in the group also has a significant impact on the young people who attend. The Youth Forum is currently working with University of Stirling on a youth-led research project looking at the impact of drug related deaths on young people. Forum members attended Clued Up's AGM where they shared their experiences and shared their ideas for the drug related deaths research. They did so in a very engaging and powerful way involving storytelling, video and song. They also helped facilitate a discussion among attendees. The Forum members had been heavily involved in planning the session as well. Feedback from attendees on the Youth Forum's involvement in the AGM was extremely positive. The Forum members have also presented to stakeholders on drugs and harm reduction.



The Youth Participation and Development Worker has also helped young people contribute to research on homelessness and policing undertaken by universities and other third sector organisations. Youth Forum members were also involved in the interview panel in July 2023 for the P7 Transition Worker post. Clued Up's innovative approach to youth participation was also shown in their [carpool karaoke videos](#) on Facebook. Clued Up has an active presence on social media and a good level of engagement with approximately 2,100 followers on [Facebook](#) and 1,200 on [X/Twitter](#).

Overall, we highlight Clued Up's youth participation work as an example of good practice. It is innovative, engaging and, importantly, impactful. Not only do young people have a voice through these 'official' youth participation channels, it is clear that young people are very much involved in the individual support and group work aspects of Clued Up's work.

### **Employability**

Clued Up provide specialist employability support for young people to engage in education, training and progress up the employability pathway. The organisation is working with a range of Fife organisations as part of the Scottish Government No One Left Behind funded employability service Bright Futures for those aged 19 to 24. Funding supports one full-time equivalent post, although this is split across Clued Up's frontline staff. The funding aims to support young people to progress along the employability pathway, engaging in learning, training and employment

opportunities. Fife ADP also provide funding for employability support. During 2022/23, Clued Up assisted 80 young people with employability support and they reported a range of outcomes similar to those highlighted for the outreach service.

The evaluation has demonstrated the complex nature of Clued Up's caseload. As such, staff tend to focus on young people's wellbeing including substance use and their relationships with family and friends. In terms of employability, we observed a worker discussing a work experience placement with a young person, another discussing volunteering opportunities with a young person, and other staff discussing engagement in school or college with young people. We are also aware that Skills Development Scotland attended Clued Up's drop-ins during Careers Week 2023. Generally, however, it is our impression that employability is a relatively minor aspect of Clued Up's work. Employability is not an issue staff tended to raise during discussions with us or, with a few exceptions, with young people. As stated above, this reflects the complexity of the caseload. In our view, it also reflects the decision to incorporate employability as a cross-cutting theme for all staff rather than a standalone position. While we are not questioning this decision, it has nonetheless resulted in employability being a very small part of the role for some staff. It is important that staff remain aware of and deliver employability support when appropriate.

## **Impact**

Clued Up regularly record outcomes to try to evidence their impact on young people. The impressive range of outcomes reported include young people making positive choices, showing a positive attitude, improved knowledge of substances, taking responsibility for their actions, turning up on time, having their voices heard, increased participation, developing positive routines, involvement in decision making, educational attainment/qualification, and progressing to further or higher education, training or employment. An equally impressive and wide range of self-reported softer outcomes were reported including improvements in family relationships, mental health, self-esteem, understanding feelings and emotions, attitude to education and training, confidence, social skills, motivation, positive support networks, aspirations, and resilience. Young people also self-reported reductions in substance use, levels of risk or harm, and in offending or anti-social behaviour.

Our discussions with young people provided additional evidence of the impact of Clued Up's support. Helping young people feel better about themselves, increasing their self-esteem and their self-confidence was a recurring theme. We suggest this is a key outcome that assists Clued Up's ongoing support and provides the foundation for progress in other aspects of a young person's life.

*"They make you a lot happier person, a lot more confident". Young person.*

*"My worker recognised my achievements and for all they might have been small, it was recognition that I never got from anybody else. They would compliment me on how I was doing and the progression I was making. Even if it was a shit week, they help you get through and progress from it.... My worker helped in every possible way, self-esteem, confidence, social skills. You pick up social cues (from them), on how to communicate, how to listen". Young person.*

“They’re like your own little hype man!”. Young person.

Clued Up also had a notable impact in helping young people attend and engage with school or college. This is particularly significant given non-attendance at school was a prominent reason for referral.

“I never went to school all week. I just refused. The school wouldn’t let me leave. I had a college application in and I didn’t want to go. My worker was like we can take you round, see what it is. If you just apply for it I’ll take you to your interview and if you don’t like it we can try to figure something else out. She took me and it just felt right. It’s completely changed how I am now. I really enjoy college now and I’ve never been one who has enjoyed learning or sitting through lessons. I wouldn’t be at college now without that”. Young person.

“I wasn’t at school for a good two or three years and I’d obviously missed out on a lot. My worker was able to help get me into a support class and for me to do all my Nationals then and there so I didn’t feel like when everyone was starting their prelims I was still doing Nat 3, I got up to my Nat 5s. It’s the same with college. I’ve just started and I was really stress about it with new people and she’s made that a lot easier for me. She got me an induction and a guidance appointment and she came with me, made it a lot more relaxing to start the course”. Young person.

Young people also highlighted that Clued Up helped them make new friends and have fun. Some young people reported they could just be a child and forget about the problems or responsibilities they had to deal with.

“You get to meet young people you didn’t know before and make friends and start new friendships. You talk to each other and meet people who understand you. The friendships you can make out of Clued Up are the best friendships you can make out of them all. You didn’t know them at all and it wasn’t like you were forced to be friends with them. So it (Clued Up) is not just that you are getting support you get the chance to make friends”. Young person.

“I was also given the opportunity to be a kid again. I was constantly putting everyone else before myself. Clued Up gave me the opportunity to go out, meet friends and do things like paddle boarding. It was nice to be a kid again instead of growing up so fast”. Young person.

“Being able to be a child. To go through your teenage years. Look after yourself. It helped you cultivate memories that you would never have got if it wasn’t for their support. What they do is exponential to anybody else”. Young person.

## **Discussion points**

We discuss below a number of points that emerged from our assessment of Clued Up’s services. The issues discussed are wraparound support; harm reduction; engaging young people; care experience; and mental health.

## **Wraparound support**

When asked to describe their role, Clued Up workers frequently used terms like wraparound support, advocacy worker, and support worker. Although they used different terms their descriptions have a common theme of providing holistic, person-centred support for young people, and at times their siblings and parent/carer. What was striking about staff describing their role was how much broader it was than we anticipated having reviewed job descriptions and various reports. In particular, substance use was only part of the picture, and for some of the young people supported substance use was a relatively small part. In our opinion this is important. Clued Up is underselling its role to partners and funders. The organisation supports young people in a much broader sense than implied by its description of providing 'comprehensive youth friendly substance use support and information service to young people under 25 years old in Fife, also targeting the wider issues of general well-being and lifestyle'. An emphasis on substance use was not particularly apparent throughout our discussions with staff, young people or trustees, or our staff shadowing sessions. Young people emphasised the wide ranging support that Clued Up provided.

*"They focus on the bigger picture. It's not just drugs and alcohol, it's more about you. Your whole problems aren't about drugs or alcohol - some might be - they know how to get to the root of the problem, it's not just about the drugs and alcohol. It's all the other stuff like taking you to doctors' appointments.. My worker took me to job interviews, took me to house viewings, college. It was the bigger picture they helped with". Young person.*

*"If you've got so much problems, a lot of organisations would try to address them all at one time. For me I couldn't tackle my drug use until I got my housing sorted out. They take steps at a time and they add up to big things and that's a lot more helpful in the long run". Young person.*

We therefore recommend that Clued Up's staff and trustees consider some fundamental questions about what the organisation's goals are, what support they provide, and how they present themselves and their services to stakeholders.

Recommendation 1: Clued Up's staff and trustees consider some fundamental questions about what the organisation's goals are, what support they provide, and how they present themselves and their services to stakeholders.
---

## **Harm reduction**

It was evident during the evaluation that harm reduction is Clued Up's primary role in addressing substance use among young people. The organisation is not a treatment service provider. The harm reduction work was evident during our discussions with staff and our shadowing of staff. We observed staff talking to young people about steps they can take to reduce the risk of harm from their substance use such as testing smaller quantities of drugs first, not being alone when taking drugs or alcohol, and raising awareness of dangerous drugs circulating in Fife. Young people listened. They also reported putting some of the advice into practice. At the same time, the young people shared recent experiences of significant drug and alcohol use and dangerous behaviours. So there is a reduction in potential harm within the context of drug and alcohol use which can be

significant and longstanding.

Clued Up also regularly share harm reduction messages on social media as shown in the example opposite. The easy to read language and non-judgemental message demonstrate an understanding by Clued Up staff of where and how to try to deliver harm reduction information to young people. Stakeholders confirmed that Clued Up workers are talking to young people about harm reduction.



“They are really insightful people. They are not going to tell you what to do and how to do it. They are going to advise you and educate you. If you’ve got a drug problem, they are not going to say you can’t do that, you need to stop. If they are not 100% sure, they’ll educate themselves and then they’ll educate you on what’s the safest ways to do whatever you are doing, what not to do, what’s not safe... it makes you want to not do it more than if someone was like don’t do that. It makes you think, maybe it would be worthwhile giving it a go to stop because they are not directly putting it on you”. Young person.

“I was referred because I sold drugs at school. Knowing more about the risks of drugs helped. I don’t want to get into any more trouble so I have changed my behaviour”. Young person.

“All the Clued Up workers who have supported my young people have been knowledgeable about substances and life-styles, and have established very positive relationships”. Stakeholder.

It was evident that Clued Up has an important role in helping young people engage with substance use services. Workers reported they regularly took some of their young people to appointments and we observed examples of this during our shadowing. For example, one young person was driven to and from their addiction services appointment and another was driven to the pharmacy to collect their opiate replacement medication. Clued Up’s support for young people to access these services is valuable.

We fully understand Clued Up’s emphasis on harm reduction. We are very aware of the issues facing many of the young people they work with. We also understand one of the hooks that helps them engage young people is the non-judgemental approach they employ. At the same time, we would encourage Clued Up to assess whether there are any evidence-based approaches elsewhere that have helped address substance use among marginalised young people that could be applied to Fife. We would also encourage Clued Up to seek funding to pilot the most effective approach in Fife.

Recommendation 2: Clued Up assess whether evidence-based initiatives that have successfully addressed substance use among marginalised young people elsewhere could be applied to Fife, and seek funding to pilot the most effective approach in Fife.

## Engaging young people

One of the most impressive features of Clued Up's work is their ability to engage young people, particularly those who might be described by other organisations as "hard to engage". The ability to engage was very evident during our time shadowing staff and in our conversations with young people. It is also evident in feedback Clued Up has received from young people as illustrated by the following quote.

"I remember coming into the drop-in with a couple of other guys, went into the meeting room, the main room where people would sit. You were able to get a coffee, a cigarette outside and there was people who came in and sat with me, not separate but as if you were together in a group. You know there wasn't any feeling of division which was comforting. Initially when you don't know where you are going, I suppose especially in the drug world you are suspicious of everything so to have that was welcoming. It was easy to sit and it wasn't a threat and I suppose that is why I was able to open up. When you saw other people opening up just being honest about where things were at and that initially was what came about. Then the more I came along, got familiar I was invited to like different classes, there were outings that we went on, we went climbing, went for walks, you know, we done stuff that seemed a bit normal even when you felt abnormal. It was taking you away from the world you were stuck in. It was giving you even a glimpse of something else. Then obviously it was the offer, it wasn't forced on you but if you wanted to speak to anyone about any individual issues you could and that's when I began to speak to yourself. I'm sure you will agree at that time my family, my mother in particular was an extremely hard and heavy situation and that was something that had never been addressed in my whole life but there was room to speak about that without judgement, without threat. That was hard for me to approach that subject or talk around it without first of all having this welcoming atmosphere, feeling like I wasn't threatened. Because when you walk in that drug world you walk about daily looking over your shoulder, you can't trust anyone you know that. But there was this opening where I could finally, slowly be able to trust and that began actually with being able to get some of the stuff out which was wrecking my head, my emotions, it was steering a lot of my decisions, and with taking drugs at the same time it was a complete mess. I know personally now that if that wasn't there, I walked that life daily, where I saw people that never went forward for the help and I saw what happened to them. They ended up in the houses, they ended up going to the next crutch which is more people on more drugs. A lot of these people are not here right now". Young person.

Stakeholders highlighted Clued Up's ability to engage young people, particularly disadvantaged or marginalised young people, as one of the organisation's strengths. Parents and carers held similar views.

"Feedback from young people indicates that Clued Up is an accessible service, and I have seen young people engaging with Clued Up who have struggled to link with other services, which is an indication that the service is youth friendly". Stakeholder.

"I think they care about the young people. They want to help young people. They are there for them and it's that listening ear sometimes, somebody who is not telling them

off or ranting, somebody who says, I am here to help, how can I help? And that is built up over a period of time, it is not something that happens straightaway. They have something special about them. They are not judgemental of me as a parent or my child as a young person. I have been judged by other services but that's not the case here and it's a nice thing". Parent/carer.

Our discussion with staff and young people, and our observations, identified a number of important factors that enable Clued Up staff to successfully engage young people; this includes the things that young people see as valuable to them about the support Clued Up provides. We list these factors below distinguishing between actions the workers demonstrate and their personal attributes.

Actions	Personal attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A non-judgemental approach.</li> <li>▪ Listening to young people and empowering them to make decisions.</li> <li>▪ Meeting and communicating regularly with young people which shows they care and are committed to helping.</li> <li>▪ Providing support that is needs-led not time limited which again shows they are committed to helping.</li> <li>▪ Being prepared to engage with parents, carers, siblings, and other organisations, where appropriate.</li> <li>▪ Advocating on their behalf during meetings or with other organisations.</li> <li>▪ Engagement is voluntary and flexible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Experience and understanding of relevant issues which allows them to empathise with young people.</li> <li>▪ Local knowledge from living or working in Fife.</li> <li>▪ Some of the team are themselves young people and this helps those being supported to relate to their worker.</li> </ul>

The following quotes from young people illustrate the importance of some of the above factors.

"It took my worker months for me to engage. If that was social work or any of those type organisations they would have left but Clued Up can see who needs it and keep trying". Young person.

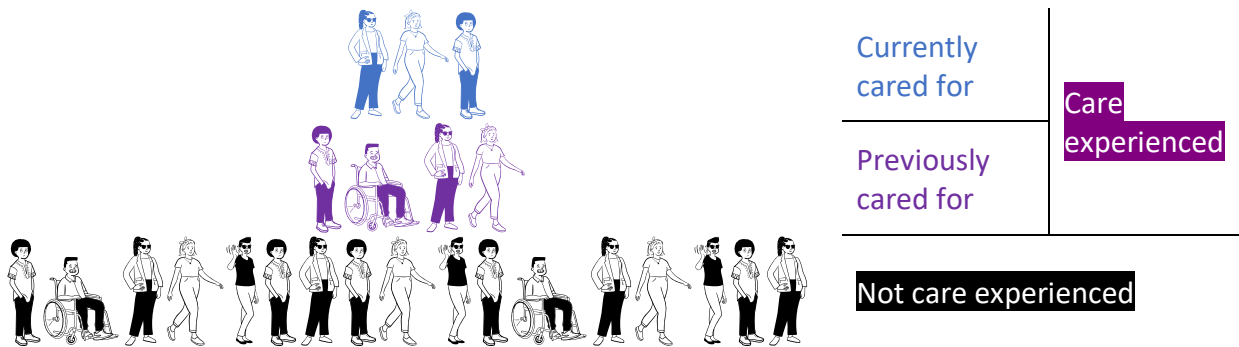
"They get to know you as a person first before they try to work out what your problems are". Young person.

"When I came and met the worker for the first time I was like she's actually treating me like an actual person not making me feel like I'm a mentally fucked up bairn. That's how they (other services) made you feel sometimes. Clued Up are really welcoming. She was lovely. She explained the whole thing and just let me talk about everything that was going on with me. You could tell she was really listening and really cared. It was nice to have someone to talk to about it all". Young person.

“It’s having someone that is proud of you when nobody else is for the wee-est things. Like you tell them for 24 hours you’ve not done any of the habits that you used to do and they’re really proud of you. Nobody else would say that”. Young person.

### Care experience

The evaluation established that approximately 30%, or in 1 in 3, of the young people on Clued Up’s caseload are care experienced. The organisation’s records show that approximately 13%, or 1 in 8, young people are currently cared for. Additional information gathered from staff, shows that approximately 17%, or 1 in 6, had previously been cared for. The makeup of Clued Up’s caseload, with regard to care experience, is shown visually below.



The fact that almost a third of Clued Up’s caseload is care experienced is significant. It helps illustrate the complexity of Clued Up’s caseload. This was very evident among the young people we met while shadowing staff, a number of whom were care experienced. These young people spoke very highly of the support they had received from Clued Up, and the trust between them and their worker was self-evident. Parents and carers were also full of praise for Clued Up, as illustrated by the following quote.

“I’ve seen a huge improvement recently. I don’t know how you’ve done it ... but after years of professionals efforts, you’re the only person to get anything out of her and she speaks so highly of you too. So thank you for being so amazing at your craft”. Parent/carer.

In our view, Clued Up underplays the extent and importance of the support the organisation provides to care experienced young people given their prominence in the Scottish Government policy (see chapter 3). We therefore recommend Clued Up accurately monitors the number of care experienced young people, raises awareness among public and third sector partners and potential funders of their support for the group, and assesses potential opportunities to provide supplementary support.

**Recommendation 3:** Clued Up accurately monitors the number of care experienced young people, raises awareness among public and third sector partners and potential funders of their support for the group, and assesses potential opportunities to provide supplementary support.

### Mental health

It was also very evident that mental health and wellbeing is a recurring issue among Clued Up’s caseload. Some of the young people supported by Clued Up have significant mental health issues,



and this includes self-harm and suicidal ideation (thoughts and plans). Clued Up staff displayed great empathy and support on these issues, for example, helping young people put in place a plan for who to reach out to if they were at crisis point. Clued Up workers are at times, helping to keep young people safe. They are also providing valuable support to parents and carers of young people with mental health and substance use issues.

“I know it’s a bit dark but if it wasn’t for my worker I wouldn’t be here. The mental health support provided was second to none. CAMHS, Barnardo’s, GPs, it just didn’t work but my Clued Up worker made it work and I’m here today... Taking you out of the environment that causes you stress, anxiety, and mental health problems. You go down to square one and you build yourself up again”. Young person.

“I was in a dark place and couldn't get out, I did everything wrong and got myself lifted a few times and couldn't get myself out of trouble, I felt really upset all the time depressed and lonely. What helped me was talking to my worker about everything just to feel okay at the moment and being able to laugh and be normal. Another thing that helped me was the emotion cards because I can do that at any point and it made me realize how I actually felt. Probably what helped me was learning new things and being able to tackle my problems showing me it’s okay to feel upset and help me look at the positive things in life”. Young person.

“I think if my child didn’t have [Clued Up worker] they’d be dead, if you want my honest opinion. If they didn’t have that contact, and the trust they have built then I don’t think they would be here. I can’t put it strongly enough, without their input I do not know where my child would be right now, I don’t know if they’d still be here.... The worker does as much for me as they do for my child. They go way above and beyond. I have no one else to talk to about this. It’s been good for me and good for my own mental health. I’d be lost without their support”. Parent/carer.

Similar to care experience, it is our view that Clued Up underplays the extent and importance of the support the organisation provides on mental health and wellbeing among young people. We therefore make a similar recommendation that Clued Up gathers information that illustrates the extent of mental health issues among young people, raises awareness among public and third sector partners and potential funders of their support in this area, and assesses potential opportunities to provide supplementary support.

Recommendation 4: Clued Up gathers information that illustrates the extent of mental health issues among young people, raises awareness among public and third sector partners and potential funders of their support in this area, and assesses potential opportunities to provide supplementary support.
--

### 3 Policy alignment

This chapter addresses the question: How does our approach align with key policy drivers such as UNCRC, The Promise and GIRFEC? Overall, it is our view, based on the evidence gathered during this evaluation, that Clued Up has a strong alignment with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), The Promise, and Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). We examine Clued Up’s alignment with each one below.

#### UNCRC

The UNCRC is a legally-binding international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities. The UNCRC contains 54 Articles setting out rights that include: education; freedom from violence, abuse and neglect; be listened to and taken seriously; a proper house, food and clothing; and relax and play. The Children and Young People’s Commissioner Scotland (CYPCS) published a useful easy read [guide](#) to the UNCRC.

Clued Up’s support model is, fundamentally, a rights-based model. The organisation’s approach is to support and empower young people to make informed decisions about their lives with a specific focus on substance use and general wellbeing. We reviewed the UNCRC Articles and the different elements of Clued Up’s support and suggest the strongest alignments are as follows:

Clued Up support	Aligned to UNCRC Articles
Support on substance use and general wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Article 6 - I should be supported to live and grow</li> <li>▪ Article 17 - I have the right to get information in lots of ways, so long as it’s safe</li> <li>▪ Article 19 - I have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated</li> <li>▪ Article 31 - I have a right to relax and play</li> <li>▪ Article 33 - I should be protected from dangerous drugs</li> <li>▪ Article 36 - I have the right to be kept safe from things that could harm my development</li> <li>▪ Article 39 - I have the right to get help if I have been hurt, neglected or badly treated</li> </ul>
Empowering young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Article 12 - I have the right to be listened to and taken seriously</li> </ul>
Support for care experienced young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Article 20 - I have the right to special protection and help if I can’t live with my own family</li> <li>▪ Article 25 - If I am not living with my family, people should keep checking I am safe and happy</li> </ul>
In-school support and accessing education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Article 28 - I have the right to an education</li> </ul>
Supporting independent living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Article 27 - I have the right to have a proper house, food and clothing</li> </ul>
Family support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Article 9 - I have a right to live with a family who cares for me</li> </ul>

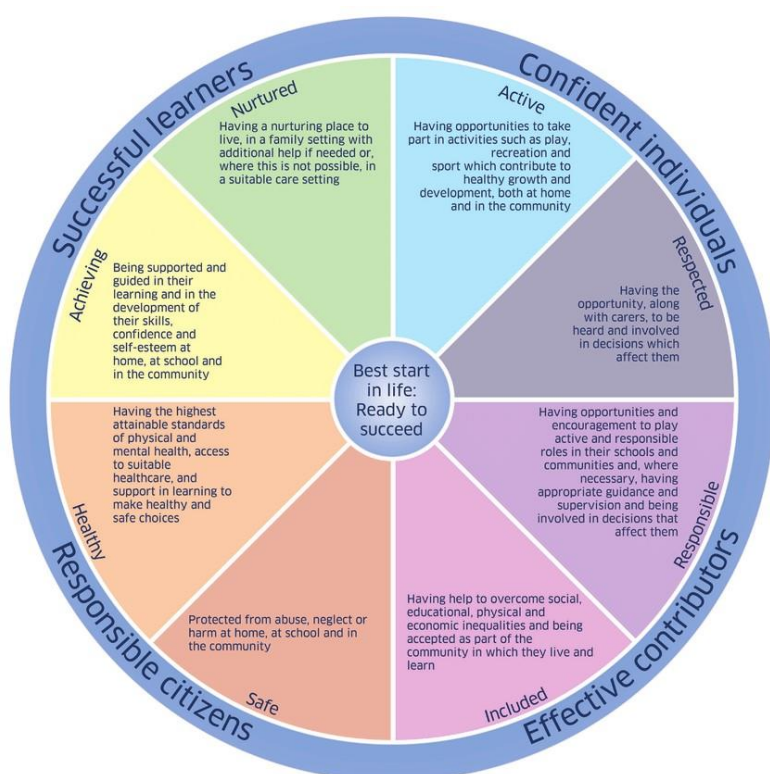
## GIRFEC

GIRFEC is the Scottish Government’s commitment ‘to provide all children, young people and their families with the right support at the right time.... so every child and young person in Scotland can reach their full potential’.

One of the Scottish Government’s aims is that organisations working with children and young people promote GIRFEC’s [principles and values](#). It is our view that Clued Up has a strong alignment with these principles and values. As discussed in this report, Clued Up provides person-centred trauma-informed support that seeks to empower young people and this embodies the GIRFEC principle of ‘placing the child or young person and their family at the heart, and promoting choice, with full participation in decisions that affect them’. The focus of the support on substance use and general wellbeing, without time limitations, strongly aligns with the GIRFEC principles of ‘providing support for children, young people and families when they need it, until things get better, to help them to reach their full potential’ and ‘understanding wellbeing as being about all areas of life including family, community and society’. The rights-based model and whole family approach also aligns strongly with the GIRFEC principle of ‘working together with families to enable a rights respecting, strengths based, inclusive approach’.

To support the GIRFEC approach the Scottish Government identified eight wellbeing indicators, known as the SHANARRI indicators. They were developed to help organisations to assess the strengths and needs of children and young people across eight themes: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, and Included. Clued Up’s holistic approach will have an

impact on young people across the SHANARRI indicators, and individual work plans are based on the indicators. The greatest impact, in our view, is evident in Safe, Healthy, Nurtured, Respected, and Included.



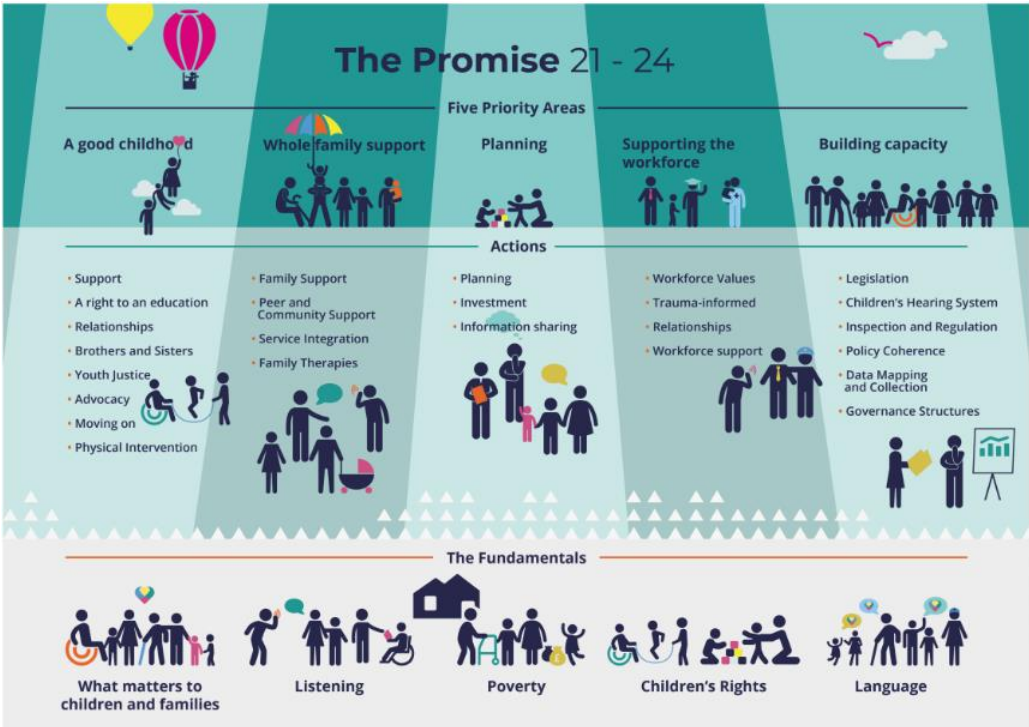
The trusted relationship that Clued Up workers develop with young people embodies the support promoted by GIRFEC. The [2022 GIRFEC Policy Statement](#) states that “Growing up experiencing adversity or trauma such as abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, community violence, homelessness or growing up in a household where adults are experiencing poor mental health or substance use can impact on a child or young person’s healthy development and potentially have

long-lasting impacts into adulthood. There are critical moments when timely and proactive support can make a long-term difference to a child or young person. For example, when a child or young person experiences a significant loss, or an adult they depend on is experiencing significant

struggles, or their emotional security is affected by a transition between a school or service. Evidence shows that having safe, supportive relationships with trusted adults helps children and young people to address and overcome adversity and trauma, and go on to achieve their full potential”.

**The Promise**

[The Promise](#) presented the findings of an independent review of the children’s care system in Scotland. Care experienced people were at the heart of the review which was published in 2020. It identified five foundations which ‘must be at the heart of a reorganisation of how Scotland thinks, plans and prioritises for children and their families’. The foundations were: Voice; Family; Care; People; and Scaffolding. To take forward the review findings and #KeepThePromise, [Plan 21-24](#) was published. As summarised in the diagram below, it outlined five priority areas and associated actions, underpinned by five fundamentals.



As noted elsewhere in this report, just under a third of the young people supported by Clued Up are care experienced. Clearly this makes The Promise a very relevant point of reference. Much of the focus of The Promise and related documents is on the care system and Clued Up has a limited role directly. Where Clued Up does have a direct role is in supporting care experienced young people and their families and this which aligns with the first two priority areas in The Plan 21-24: A good childhood and Whole family support. Clued Up is a young person centred organisation, Clued Up supports care experienced young people to have their voice heard, and, where appropriate, to maintain relationships with parents, carers, and siblings, working closely with social work and other partners.

## 4 Stakeholder views

This chapter addresses the question: What are professionals/stakeholders views? It covers Clued Up's approach, services, support and partnership working.

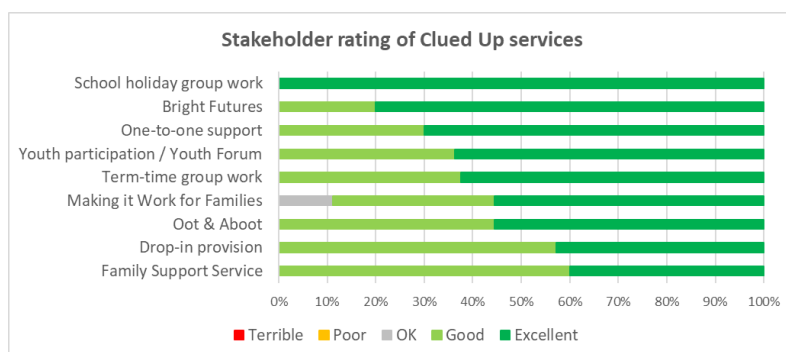
### Approach

A resounding 85% of stakeholders reported that Clued Up fully meets its aim to provide youth-friendly substance use support and information for young people in Fife, targeting the wider issues of general well-being and lifestyle. The remaining 15% of stakeholder reported the organisation partly meets this aim. No stakeholders felt Clued Up meets its aim partly, a little, or not at all.

“Clued Up are youth centred in their approach and workers always prioritise the needs of young people. This approach seems to be supported by management which gives staff freedom in the way they engage young people in the service”. Stakeholder.

### Services

Stakeholders rated Clued Up services very highly. School holidays group work, Bright Futures (employability support), one-to-one support, youth participation, term-time group work, Out & About, drop-in provision and family support were all rated as excellent or good by stakeholders. Making it Work for Families was also highly thought of with 90% of stakeholders rating it as excellent or good. Not one stakeholder rated any of Clued Up's services as poor or terrible.



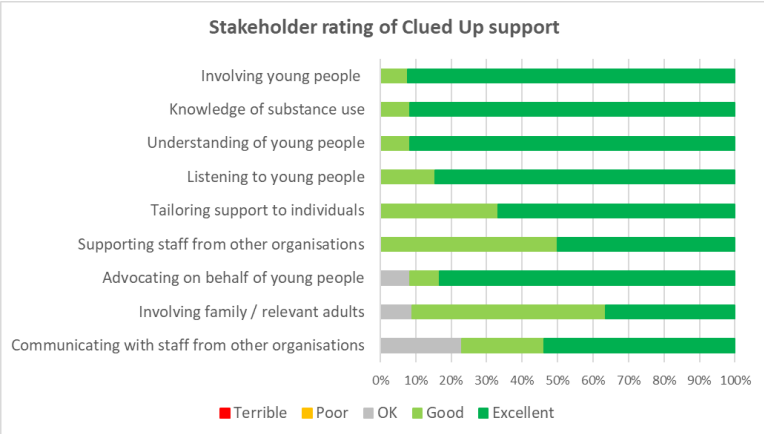
“I have spoken with the young people and families supported by Clued Up and I am well aware of the impact that the service has on the individual and the family, as well as the trusting relationships between youth workers / youths and parents as well as within the schools. The Clued Up workers' relationships and support of the young people really helps them to develop confidence, achieve new things and progress in life. I see this as being a vital piece of the puzzle in terms of family working - it was evident to me that while the parent/s are supported by adult workers, young people are no longer the 'sole carer' for their parent and can take a breath and step back from being consumed by the role of ensuring parents are okay. In my view, if Clued Up weren't there to offer individual support to the young person at this vital moment, the likelihood of a negative outcome for the young person is still high. They also involve young people at every opportunity and this approach is embedded into their work - including planning of residentials, developing resources such as the stigma training toolkit - opportunities to involve young people and platform their views are taken at every step”. Stakeholder.

Fife covers a large geographical area and has a significant population which can be a challenge for third sector organisations. It was therefore reassuring that one stakeholder highlighted the equity of Clued Up’s support across Fife. Clued Up’s local area team structure aids this equitable delivery model and provides strong links with schools and other partners.

“I feel that Clued Up offer the same opportunities throughout Fife for every young person that has been impacted by substance use”. Stakeholder.

**Support**

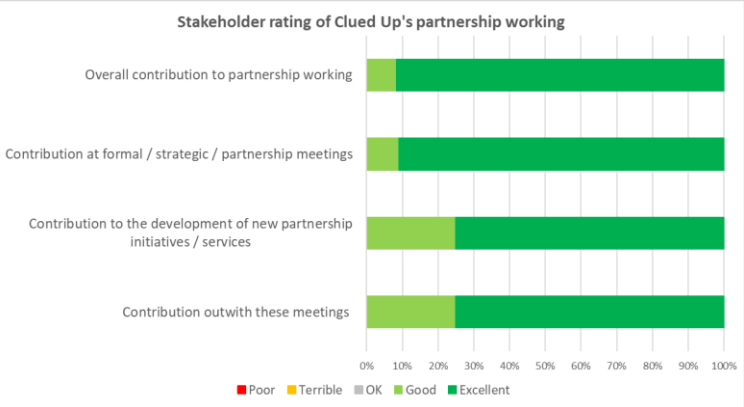
Stakeholders rated Clued Up’s support very highly. Involving young people, knowledge of substance use, understanding young people, listening to young people, tailoring support to individuals, and supporting staff from other organisations were all rated as excellent or good by stakeholders. Advocating on behalf of young people and involving family / relevant adults and communicating with staff from other organisations were also very highly rated with over 90% of stakeholders rating them as excellent or good. Communicating with staff from other organisations was still highly rated with approximately three quarters rating it as excellent or good, although there was a suggestion that this could be improved from about a quarter of stakeholders who rated it as OK. Not one stakeholder rated any of Clued Up’s support as poor or terrible.



“Clued Up operate in a very specialist niche area of support. Their ability to engage with the young is second to none and held up as best practice and the outcomes achieved on behalf of those accessing their services show the dramatic improvement Clued Up has on their lives”. Stakeholder.

**Partnership working**

Stakeholders rated Clued Up’s partnership working very highly. All stakeholders rated the organisation as excellent or good on all four measures. Over 90% of stakeholders rated as excellent Clued Up’s overall contribution to partnership working and contribution to formal / strategic partnership meetings, and three quarters rated as excellent their contribution to the development of new partnership initiatives / services, and contribution outwith the meetings already mentioned.



“Clued Up are honest, willing to say uncomfortable things, pragmatic and committed. They don't walk away when things get tough, they don't over-promise and acknowledge their challenges. They commit to, and are involved in, multiple partnerships which are informing and influencing change in services in Fife”. Stakeholder.

“Clued Up's Service Manager is the staunchest of supporters for their target demographic. There is a passion to explore all opportunities that can help improve the lives of those affected by substance misuse. They are willing to explore new opportunities, able to recognise limitations and when to bring in other specialisms and are constantly looking, within a complex funding environment, to look outside the box for opportunities that benefit their service users”. Stakeholder.

## 5 Conclusions and recommendations

Clued Up commissioned this evaluation because they wanted to reflect on what they delivered and what impact their services have on the young people they support. Unusually, it was not driven by a funder requiring an external evaluation as a condition of their grant. The focus of the evaluation has therefore been on reflection and review as a 'critical friend'. Overall, we found Clued Up to be a very accomplished organisation that provides invaluable support to young people, particularly marginalised young people, in Fife. Its strength lies in its people. The organisation benefits from strong leadership and a very committed, enthusiastic, and skilled team.

The evaluation highlighted that the Young Person's Outreach Service is an invaluable and integral part of Clued Up support. Engaging almost 400 young people in 2022/23, workers provide a mix of individual and groupwork support that young people valued highly. Key reasons for this were the non-judgemental and empowering way the team worked. Clued Up's involvement in Making it Work for Families and the replication of their 'tried and tested' approach has been vital in providing dedicated person-centred support for young people within a whole family approach. The evaluation found that Clued Up's detached youth work, Oot & Aboot, helps raise the organisation's profile and breaks down barriers that fosters engagement with young people, and aids partnership working. The evaluation highlighted the excellence of Clued Up's youth participation work which we suggest is an example of good practice based on its innovative, engaging and impactful nature. Not only do young people have a voice through formal youth participation channels such as the Youth Forum, it was also clear they are very much involved in the decision making process regarding individual support and group work. The evaluation also highlighted that employability is part of the support staff provide, but a relatively small part for some. It was apparent that young people trusted and respected their worker, they valued the genuine interest and care their worker had for their wellbeing, the regular contact the worker was able to provide, and the fact this was needs-led and not time-limited. Overall, we found the services have a very strong alignment with what Clued Up identified at the outset as valuable to them, what young people identified as valuable during the evaluation, and with key policy drivers, particularly the UNCRC, GIRFEC and The Promise.

Some noteworthy findings emerged from our assessment of Clued Up's support. The most significant was demonstrating that substance use was only part of the wide-ranging trauma-informed support Clued Up provide, and for some young people it was a relatively small part of the issues they were supported with. Clued Up's support has a much broader focus than substance use and it was telling that staff used terms to describe their role like wraparound support, advocacy worker, and support worker. We suggest Clued Up is underselling its holistic support role and importance to partners and funders. We also suggest the organisation is underselling its importance in supporting care experienced young people, who make up almost a third of the caseload, and young people with mental health issues. The evaluation also noted harm reduction as the focus of the organisation's support on substance use. Although we fully understand this focus, we suggest Clued Up assess whether evidence-based initiatives that have successfully addressed substance use among marginalised young people elsewhere could be applied to Fife, and seek funding to pilot the most effective approach in Fife. In addition, the evaluation recognised Clued Up's ability to engage young people, particularly those other organisations might describe as hard to reach. We highlighted a number of factors that facilitate this engagement and



that young people see as valuable to them about the support Clued Up provide. Broadly speaking, these factors relate to the actions demonstrated by workers and their personal attributes. The actions included a non-judgemental approach, listening to young people and empowering them to make decisions, and meeting regularly with young people which shows they care and are committed to helping. The personal attributes included experience and understanding of relevant issues and of Fife which allows them to empathise with and engage young people.

Public and third sector stakeholders provided very positive feedback on Clued Up's approach, services, support, and partnership working. The organisation is held in very high regard and is a much valued partner in Fife, operationally and at a strategic level.

This report includes a small number of recommendations. These are suggestions as a critical friend which we make in the context of a very positive evaluation overall. For ease of reference the recommendations are reproduced below.

Recommendation 1: Clued Up's staff and trustees consider some fundamental questions about what the organisation's goals are, what support they provide, and how they present themselves and their services to stakeholders.

Recommendation 2: Clued Up assess whether evidence-based initiatives that have successfully addressed substance use among marginalised young people elsewhere could be applied to Fife, and seek funding to pilot the most effective approach in Fife.

Recommendation 3: Clued Up accurately monitors the number of care experienced young people, raises awareness among public and third sector partners and potential funders of their support for the group, and assesses potential opportunities to provide supplementary support.

Recommendation 4: Clued Up gathers information that illustrates the extent of mental health issues among young people, raises awareness among public and third sector partners and potential funders of their support in this area, and assesses potential opportunities to provide supplementary support.