

2025 - 2026

Annual Report



Fife Intensive Rehabilitation & Substance Use Team (FIRST) provides a Fife wide community-based rehabilitation service to clients with substance use issues via one to one, groupwork and volunteer support. FIRST also assesses, prepares and supports clients through residential rehabilitation.



REGISTERED OFFICE

Carlyle House
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AUDITORS

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BANKERS

Royal Bank of Scotland
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FUNDERS

Fife Alcohol & Drug
Partnership
Fife Health & Social
Care Partnership

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FIRST is a Charity and Company Limited by Guarantee registered in Scotland
Scottish Charity Number SC034720 Company Registration Number SC298843





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FIRST has given me my confidence back, it has given me the ability to become abstinent for the first time in twenty-five years and I am maintaining this. I have been taught grounding techniques amongst a lot of other core skills. I felt like I was able to engage well in sessions and it was good that I wasn't just read to from a script. I had some really in depth appropriate conversations with my Rehab Worker and she made me feel valid and relaxed in her company.

Source: Exit Questionnaire

Welcome to the FIRST Team

Service Manager
April Adam

Business Manager
Jeanie Nowland

Mental Health Co-ordinator
Nadia Lessels

**Social Prescribing Groupwork/
Volunteer Co-ordinator**
Paul Watson

Administration Team
Kayleigh Gourlay, Office Manager
Sharon Barker, Service Administrator

Community Rehabilitation Team

Co-ordinators

Arlene Hanafin

Rebecca Lee

Mark Young

Rehabilitation Workers

Cara Brophy

Tabitha Bruce (from April 2025)

Victoria Hardie

Kareen McGowan

Gemma Morrison (MIWFF)

David Penman

Nicola Dryburgh (until February 2026)

William Dorman (until February 2026)

Residential Rehabilitation Team

Co-ordinator

Liz Nardone

Rehabilitation Worker

Lauren Murphy

Board of Directors

Joan Lamie, Chairperson

Paul Coleman, Director

Donald Mackay, Director

Jenny MacLeod, Director

Michael Petrie, Director (from June 2025)

Link Officer

Paul Faloona



Been a great service to me. Helped with my self-confidence
and self-esteem and felt very comfortable in the sessions.

Source: Exit Questionnaire

Chairperson's Report

This report highlights the achievements and good practice that has been recognised by our partners over the last year.

The success of FIRST can be attributed to its willingness to listen to clients and staff who are best placed to tell us how we can improve our services. We will always encounter challenges along the way. However, it is vital that we continue to adapt services to meet the changing needs of the clients who we are here to serve.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Service Manager, April Adam for her professionalism and enthusiasm to make FIRST a leader in its field. It is important to recognise we cannot achieve the at times life transforming results for our clients without the commitment and hard work of our staff teams and volunteers – my heartfelt thanks to you all.

FIRST received a steady stream of referrals over the last year and has strived to support clients on their journey of recovery. We are committed to providing a much-needed service in communities and putting our clients at the heart of everything we do. We will always focus on making a difference and helping people to change their lives for the better.

Our Groupwork programme continues to offer a broad range of activities to our clients. I am pleased to say we have received positive feedback from all those involved about the variety and quality of options on offer. The Peer Support Group goes from strength to strength and provides a sense of fellowship and mutual support.

The team has been successful in delivering psychological interventions to our clients. This has been transformational and helped clients to understand what has caused them to use substances and to make positive choices to manage things better.

We remain committed to working in partnership and have supported trainees from other agencies including NHS Fife Addiction Services. We are proud to have supported ScotGEM students over the last decade as part of their training to become GPs.

I am also grateful to my fellow Board Members for generously sharing their time and expertise. Paul Faloona is our Fife Council link officer and would like to thank him for his guidance and support in recent years.

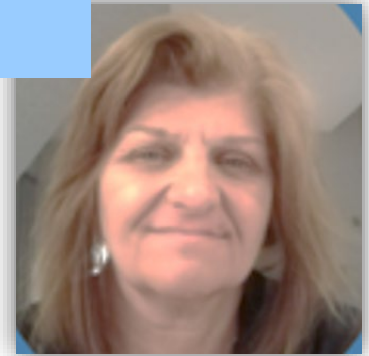
It is a privilege to be a part of FIRST and I look forward to working with you all in the year ahead as we enter the next chapter in our development!

Joan Lamie
June 2026



Conservation Group

Service Manager's Report



It has been another busy year for everyone at FIRST with a constant stream of referrals received for both the Community Rehabilitation and Residential Rehabilitation element of the Service. Our frontline staff continue to effectively deliver a range of Psychological Interventions at Tiers One and Two level and attend monthly coaching sessions to support them with this delivery. In addition they now participate in Reflective Practice sessions and all of this work is supported by NHS Fife Addictions Psychological Therapies Team (APTS) led by Dr Isabel Traynor. James Chamberlain, who is part of the APTS is based in Carlyle House alongside us for part of the week and is on hand to offer guidance and support to staff who require it. This integrated way of working ensures that our staff continue to work in a safe, trauma informed way and have a direct link on hand for advice if needed.

On the subject of trauma/trauma informed, we continue to examine not only our Service but what and where we provide it and by whom. In order to gather feedback from our clients we have initiated a Client Questionnaire entitled 'Client Satisfaction Survey through a Trauma Informed Lens' which we have sent out via text for easy completion and return. Clients have also been offered the opportunity to have a telephone interview with a neutral member of staff if they prefer this method of giving feedback.

Our delivery of Residential Rehabilitation Services in terms of assessment, preparatory work, selection of preferred rehab unit and ongoing support to the individual in rehab and their family members at home has continued and we have had a steady stream of clients access and successfully complete their programmes.

FIRST Groupwork provision has been varied with many activities taking place outdoors, which is a firm favourite for a lot of the clients. The 'Heritage and Communities' group was resurrected in 2026 and the participants have been to many places of interest and have many more in the pipeline.

Talking of pipelines, we were sorry to lose the services of Bill Dorman, one of our Rehabilitation Workers, who joined us following his successful completion of the AWTP Programme in 2015.

Bill has now opted for the outdoor life in Manchester, laying pipelines with his brother. Bill has been a huge loss to FIRST and we wish him well for the future.

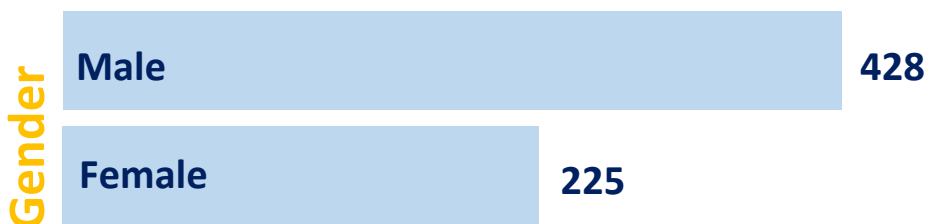
Regrettably, we are still experiencing drug related deaths in Fife despite the sterling efforts of not only staff from FIRST but from all the other services who strive to support those who need it and frequently go 'the extra mile' when needed. We can only keep trying and do what we can to bring these figures down and (hopefully) one day eliminate these tragedies from occurring.

As is customary, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Directors, Staff and Volunteers for all their hard work over the past twelve months. FIRST's success is down to teamwork and showing resilience during difficult times/cases and we have that in abundance. A final thanks goes to our clients who have the really difficult job to do, often in really challenging circumstances so well done to you all for all your hard work.

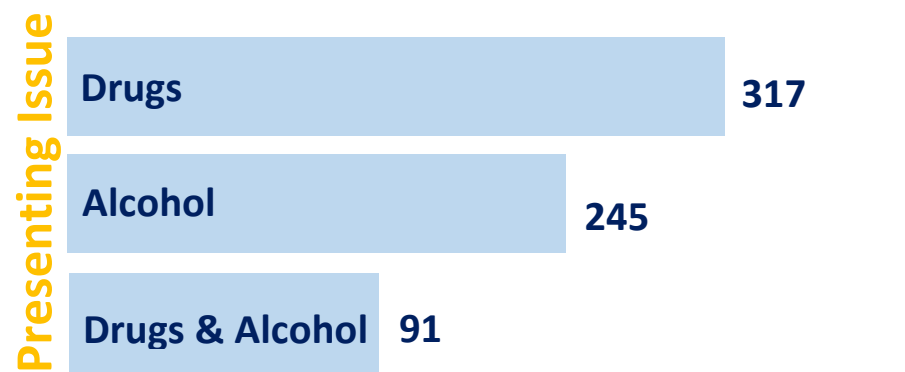
April Adam
June 2026



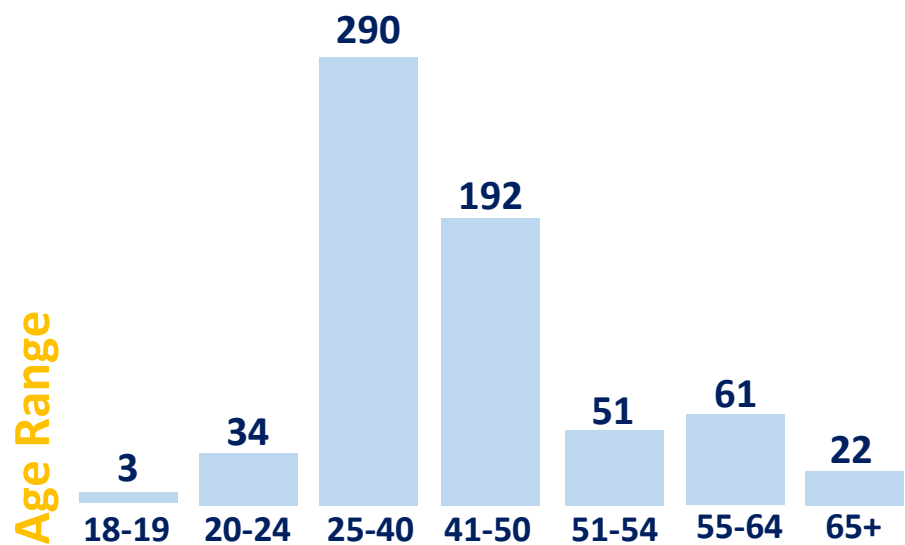
Referral Statistics – Community Rehabilitation



1st April
to 31st March
2025
2026

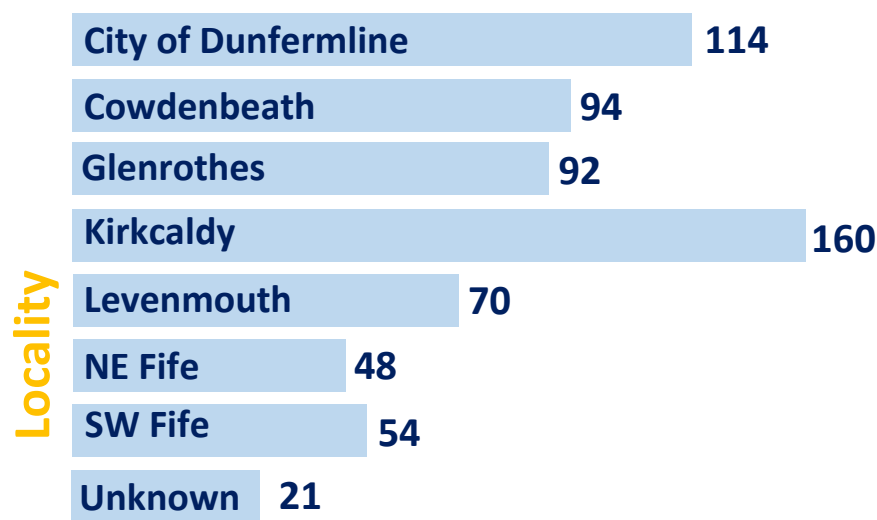


653
referrals
were
received



4161
one-to-one
appointments
were
attended

1625 face to face
2520 telephone
16 video call



FIRST/APTS

We work in partnership with Dr Isabel Traynor and her team, in particular James Chamberlain, Counselling Psychologist who has a presence in our service each week to give staff advice and support with their clients if needed and our staff also have a direct referral route to James so clients are supported timeously. James also supports our mandatory Coaching Sessions that takes place on a monthly basis.

Staff training is crucial so everyone is equipped to support the clients. FIRST's frontline staff therefore complete the following essential training, enabling them to competently deliver a range of psychological interventions in a trauma informed way. This training starts with Tier One Interventions which consist of (a) Endings and Boundaries (b) Formulation and Goal Setting and (c) Decider Skills. On completion of these three elements staff then go on to complete Tier Two Interventions which are (d) Motivational Interviewing (e) Emotional Regulation and (f) Safety and Stabilisation.

Results from this process for the period April 2025 to March 2026 are listed below.

Row Labels	Session Count	Client Count
Tier 1: Anxiety Management (Ad Hoc)	156	48
Tier 1: Anxiety Management (Structured)	35	14
Tier 1: Core Skills (Ad Hoc)	464	123
Tier 1: Decider Skills	39	29
Tier 1: Endings	154	70
Tier 1: Formulation	624	333
Tier 1: M.I. Informed	1629	300
Tier 1: Psycho-education Emotions	402	155
Tier 1: Psycho-education Self Harm	18	13
Tier 1: Psycho-education Substance Use	365	166
Tier 1: Psycho-education Trauma	94	53
Tier 1: Safety and Stabilisation (Ad Hoc)	148	62
Tier 1: Trauma Disclosure	80	63
Grand Total	4208	462

Row Labels	Session Count	Client Count	Completed Intervention	Completion Percentage
Tier 2: Core Skills (Structured)	446	127	36	28%
Tier 2: Emotional Resources Approach 1-1	77	9	1	1%
Tier 2: Motivational Interviewing	113	48		
Tier 2: Safety and Stabilisation	293	91	18	14%
Grand Total	929	199	63	

Excerpt from completed Client Psychological Interventions Feedback Form:

What did you find most helpful about the interventions you completed?

It has helped me with my day to day life and work. I can find balance better and communicate when I am feeling overwhelmed. I recognise this and I give myself time out when I am having a bad day and recognise this is temporary. I communicate with my partner and Management at work. I don't just get on with it anymore and I communicate my feelings and learn when I need a break.

How have you found implementing the skills in your day-to-day life?

I now value myself and recognise when I am feeling overwhelmed. My communication has become a lot more clearer from learning different techniques. I have been focusing on my sleep, and I have been utilising a heat mat which is helping me feel comfort and safe. I use distraction and grounding from ERA such as relaxed breathing and hobbies such as dipping powders for nails which is something I was always interested in. It's a new obsession now and I enjoy being creative when I am bored. I have managed to use these skills at stressful times such as Christmas time to be able to be constructive and organised especially. I am prioritising my relationship again, like a night away or a dinner away. I have been clear about boundaries, and we are clear about what is working and what will benefit the family.

Excerpt from completed Client Psychological Interventions Feedback Form:

What would you like to tell us about your experience of accessing these interventions?

Superb, my whole life has changed since working with FIRST and accessing these interventions. I can identify my emotions, and I am now able to understand what each emotion is trying to tell me. I know which tools to use depending on where I am on the window of tolerance.

What effect have the skills covered in the interventions had on your quality of life and recovery journey?

I am now able to identify my emotions, and I am trying to understand them before I react in a way that will cause negative consequences. I struggle with a lot of intrusive thoughts, but I am now able to use different tools to manage these thoughts. I self-harmed a lot before working with FIRST and this is something I have not done in over ten months.

Groupwork Activities

Over the past year our groupwork programme has continued to provide welcoming spaces where people can connect, build confidence and support their wellbeing. Through a variety of group based activities, participants have had opportunities to learn new skills, meet others, improve resilience and take part in meaningful community experiences.

Throughout the year we delivered a range of regular groups and activities including:

-  Mindfulness and Meditation
-  Peer Support, Glenrothes and Dunfermline
-  Heritage and Communities
-  Conservation
-  Rural Skills
-  Djembe Drumming
-  Auricular Acupuncture

A highlight of the year was the making and showing of the Green Threads-Weaving stories of Nature and Recovery, film documentary which the clients took part in. This was filmed over a year in conjunction with Stirling University and can be seen on Vimeo <https://vimeo.com/1120244812?ts=0&share=copy>.

A year of Connection and Support

This year has seen continued engagement across all group activities, with participants regularly attending sessions and supporting one another through shared experiences. The continued success of the groups is reflected in the positive feedback from clients and the strong sense of community developed within the groups.

Clients reported benefits including:

-  Improved confidence and self-esteem
-  Reduced feelings of loneliness and isolation
-  Improved emotional well-being
-  Increased social connection
-  Opportunities to learn new skills and experiences

The groups have continued to provide consistency, structure and meaningful opportunities for people from a wide range of backgrounds.

Looking Forward

As we move into the next year, we aim to continue building on the strengths of the groups by:

- ✿ Maintaining accessible and inclusive group activities
- ✿ Expanding opportunities for well-being and peer connection
- ✿ Continuing to support people through practical and creative groupwork
- ✿ Encouraging participation, confidence, and resilience through shared experiences.

Thank You

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the success of the groupwork this year. Whether attending groups, volunteering time, supporting activities, or supporting us as partners, your contribution has helped create positive and lasting impacts within the community.

We look forward to continuing this work together in the year ahead.

Paul Watson
Social Prescribing Groupwork/Volunteer Co-ordinator

Rural Skills Group

“Attending FIRST has helped me immensely and gave me confidence to deal with my ongoing problems and to help me mix with other like-minded people at my FIRST groups.”

Liked it all. Gave me a different way of thinking and looking at things more positively. Learning to deal with situations in a better way.”

“This group has greatly improved my ability to calm down negative thoughts and behaviours. It is very relaxing and inclusive with no judgement. I look forward to this group every week.”

This was challenging to begin with but in a good way. Brings you out of your comfort zone and is very beneficial to mood and mindset. Extremely invigorating - love this group!!”

“This group has been an essential part of my recovery, improving self-esteem and self-belief, relaxing, restorative – AMAZING.”

Liked the interaction with people and the program gives you a good awareness of yourself and ways to deal with stress and situations. Also calms you and it's a safe space.”

“Just loved every session. Always went home in a better mood and improved sleep.”

Source: Groupwork Questionnaire

Lochore Meadows Group



Dear FIRST Team

I am writing to express my heartfelt thanks for the incredible support I received.

I came to your service at a time in my life when I was struggling deeply, facing postnatal depression, a relationship breakdown, and the impact of childhood trauma. These challenges led me down a path of addiction, and I felt overwhelmed of how to cope.

Being able to access 1-1 support at home made such a difference to me, especially having young children. It allowed me to get the help I needed in a way that felt safe, manageable, and without added pressure. That level of understanding and flexibility meant more than I can put into words.

I would especially like to thank Tabitha. Her support has been truly life-changing. She always brings positivity into every session, and her encouraging words have helped me begin to see myself differently. Even on difficult days, she never fails to remind me of my progress and my strength.

A real turning point for me was learning how to change my mindset and cope with life events – not just my addiction. That shift has helped me build resilience and given me tools I will carry forward for life.

Because of your service, I feel more in control, more hopeful, and better equipped to move forward for both myself and my children. The care, patience, and genuine kindness I have experienced will never be forgotten.

Thank you for everything you have done not only for myself but also for my children, this service has truly changed my life.

Elise and the children

Residential Rehabilitation

Over the past twelve months the Residential Rehabilitation service has continued to provide a vital pathway to recovery for individuals experiencing addiction and complex challenges. Residential Rehabilitation remains an essential option in the recovery journey, offering people the time, structure, therapeutic support and a safe environment, needed to achieve meaningful and sustained change.

During this year, twenty-six individuals were admitted to residential rehab facilities through our service. Each placement represents an opportunity for someone to rebuild their health, relationships, confidence, and future and FIRST remain committed to ensuring that those who require intensive support are able to access it.

We also recognise that recovery extends beyond the individual. In partnership with Phoenix Futures, we have continued to support families through the delivery of a dedicated family support group. This collaboration has provided a valuable space for families and loved ones to access guidance, peer support and understanding whilst navigating the challenges associated with addiction and recovery.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Lauren Murphy for her ongoing professionalism, dedication, and unwavering commitment to supporting individual service users through their recovery journeys. Her contribution continues to make a significant difference to the lives of those accessing our service.

Finally, I would also like to thank all the Rehabs, our funders and partners whose ongoing commitment and collaboration continue to make this work possible. Their support enables us to provide life changing opportunities for recovery and to continue our shared journey to make lives better.

Liz Nardone
Residential Rehabilitation Co-ordinator

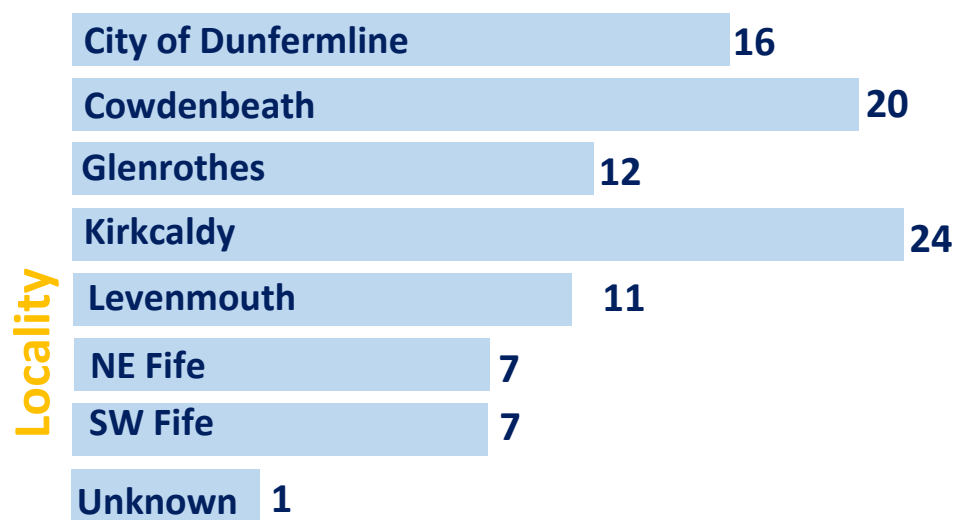
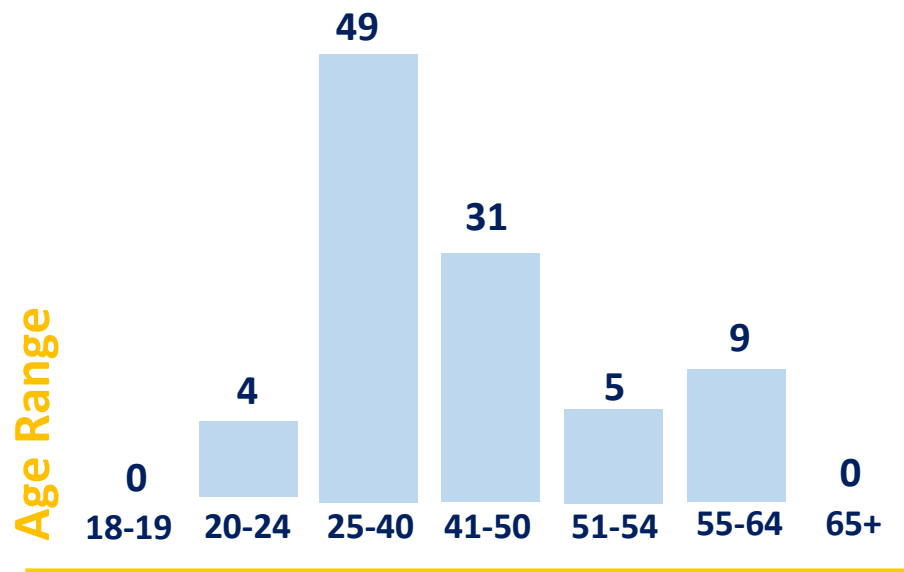
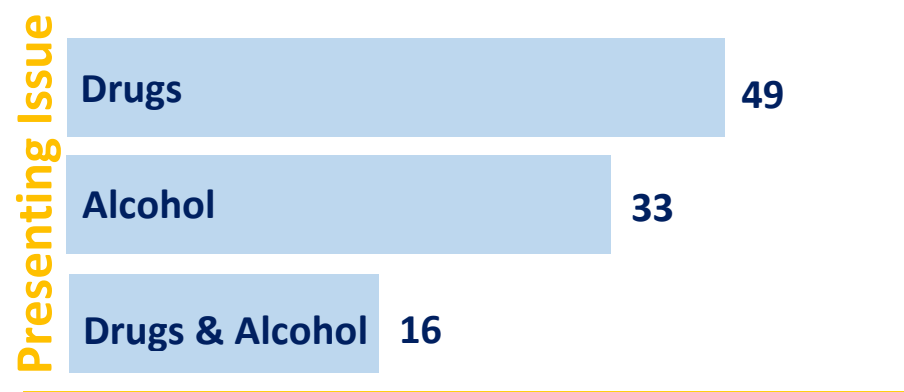
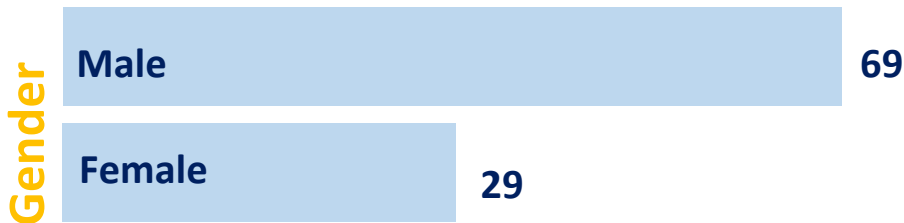


I found working with FIRST extremely helpful. I felt heard and listened to and that someone was in my corner. When I asked for Residential Rehab, things moved much quicker than I expected it to. I found working with FIRST to be a massively positive experience.

Source: Exit Questionnaire

Referral Statistics – Residential Rehabilitation

1st April
to 2025
31st March
2026



 **98**
referrals
were
received

 **27**
clients
accessed
residential
rehabilitation

 **26**
clients
completed
full/majority
of the
programme

 **35**
clients were
referred to
community
rehabilitation for
further support

Family Support Group

FIRST Family Support Group is a therapeutic recovery group designed to bring together families and loved ones in recovery. The group has been active now for ten years and continues to grow in strength and numbers. The group runs once a month and is attended by individuals before entering rehab and also whilst in rehab. Many people continue to attend the family group after residential rehab for ongoing support.

The group provides a safe, supportive, and non-judgmental environment where everyone can openly share their experiences throughout their own recovery process. The family group encourages open and honest conversation and is a vital part of residential rehab recovery. The aim of the group is to strengthen relationships and encourage healing.

The group promotes recovery not only for the individual but also for the family and aims to provide support to everyone affected by substance use.

April 2025 - March 2026

Total No of Meetings Held	10
Total No of Attendees	211
Total No of FIRST Clients	91
Total No of Family Members	106
Total No of Visitors/Guests	10



**I found the group very helpful.
Encouraging each other. Conversations
are a great therapy for family and users.**

**Great place to come to get identification of
stories so you can share hard subjects that
caused us to use or drink. Lovely meeting
with like-minded people**



**Very interesting for the addict and
for family members. So good
places like this exist.**



Lynne's Story

I am forty-five years old, married with two older kids. I haven't worked for over sixteen years due to caring for both my children who have medical issues. My husband owns a successful business and we have a lovely home. As the kids got older, they became less dependent on me and as the years passed, I began to lose my sense of purpose. I began to depend on alcohol more and more until it became a daily occurrence for me.

Over the years as my drinking progressed to the point of addiction, I isolated, lied and became untrustworthy. My life began to spiral, my relationship with my family was suffering drastically and I was being admitted to hospital at times for days. I came to FIRST for support, through a friend who initiated contact. After speaking with FIRST, they made me realise that there was help available and there was a road to recovery.

Liz and Lauren made contact with me and explained my options moving forward. They advised me that a residential rehab programme would give me the help and support that I needed to get me on the road to sobriety. Through regular contact and meetings before rehab, I joined a pre-rehab group and kept Liz and Lauren up-to-date during my time in Abbeycare. They were a constant support to me and my family with kind compassion and gave us all hope.

After completing the eighty-four day programme, I am now home with my family and continuing with my recovery journey. I attend meetings and aim to get involved heavily in the fellowship. I have a sponsor and about to embark on the 12-Step programme. I keep in touch with Liz and Lauren via phone and regular meet ups which I look forward to.

Surrounded by my loving family and the support of FIRST, today life is good. I am happy which I've not felt for such a long time.



Thank you to our funders:

Fife Alcohol and Drug Partnership

Fife Health and Social Care Partnership

The Robertson Trust

CORRA Foundation (Improvement Fund)

**Thank you to a client for their kind donation which
provided hot food at our groupwork sessions**

Thank you to those who have contributed to this Annual Report

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