

STEPPING STONES

IMPACT

REPORT

2025-2026

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Funded by the following agencies with thanks.



Chairpersons Comments

Welcome to Stepping Stones annual Impact report for 2025/ 26. Stepping Stones have been offering support to the people of West Dumbartonshire for 35 years, a huge milestone for the organisation. From its inception it's been about supporting and helping individuals, many of whom are now Board members, Peers, Volunteers, and supporters. Many things have changed but the need for services supporting individuals with mental health issues continues to grow, and the early part of 2026 indicates a similar trend.

As a member led, community based organisation we are constantly looking for ways to reach those who need our services, the development of both our peer services and volunteer strategy allows for a greater range of support for individuals, alongside our other range of support services.

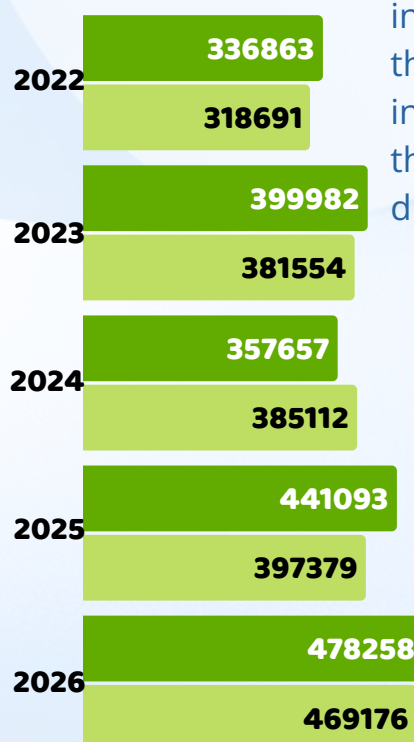
During the year, we made a decision to recruit to the Board, I'm pleased to say that it now consists of 7 members and 4 co opted members, highlighting again that we are a member led organisation loyal to our grass roots beginning. We would very much like to recruit a younger board member to represent the views and needs of our younger members. I would like to take the opportunity to thank our staff team, volunteers and peers for all they do to ensure the success and the continuing positive outcomes. A special thank you to all our fundraisers and funders. Lastly, thanks to my fellow Board members both for their support and commitment to Stepping Stones.



Alison Punton
- Chair

Financial Snapshot

● Income
● Expenditure



This past year has been one of particular difficulty in respect of the future of Stepping Stones. Over the past 9 months the Board have been looking into the finances of the organisation, especially for the 2026/27 financial year. We have been very diligent in ensuring our future, with our current funds secure and some low risk investments. Overall, the finances are very healthy. This year's accounts will be available at our AGM and I will provide further information then.

A big thank you for our main sponsors, partners, individuals and organisations for the ongoing donations and fundraising - especially the Kilt Walk earlier this year. These funds allow Stepping Stones to offer the continued excellent support to our members.

Myself and the board take our roles very seriously and will endeavour to make sure we maintain an eye on our costs and expenditure in the months ahead.



Noel Hynes
- Treasurer

Chief Officer Report

A year already....

Bronwyn O'Riordan
- Chief Officer



As I sit reviewing the annual Impact report for 2025/26 I am immensely proud of what everyone at Stepping Stones has achieved, I am also thoroughly amazed at how quickly my first year flew in - time does fly when enjoying yourself!

Alison has highlighted our successful Trustee recruitment, between development of the Board to continually upskilling staff we have achieved a lot.

There was a focus on staff continuous professional learning. Showing dedication to improving their knowledge and accreditations far beyond the requirements of their roles. Well done team!

We facilitated an increased number of education sessions; resulting in delivery of Healthy Minds, Positive Futures, Scottish Mental Health First Aid, and Peer2Peer training. The organisation continued to be an educational placement provider, supporting and benefitting from 15 trainee counsellors.

In summer 2025 a Communications and Marketing Strategy was launched to help Stepping Stones implement a new way of working.

It introduced key messages that were clear, concise, and compelling. focusing on the unmet need, the solution, and the impact. The strategic goals and objectives aimed to be relevant, and inspire action; whether that was getting help, making a donation, giving back or advocating for the cause. So, what did this achieve?

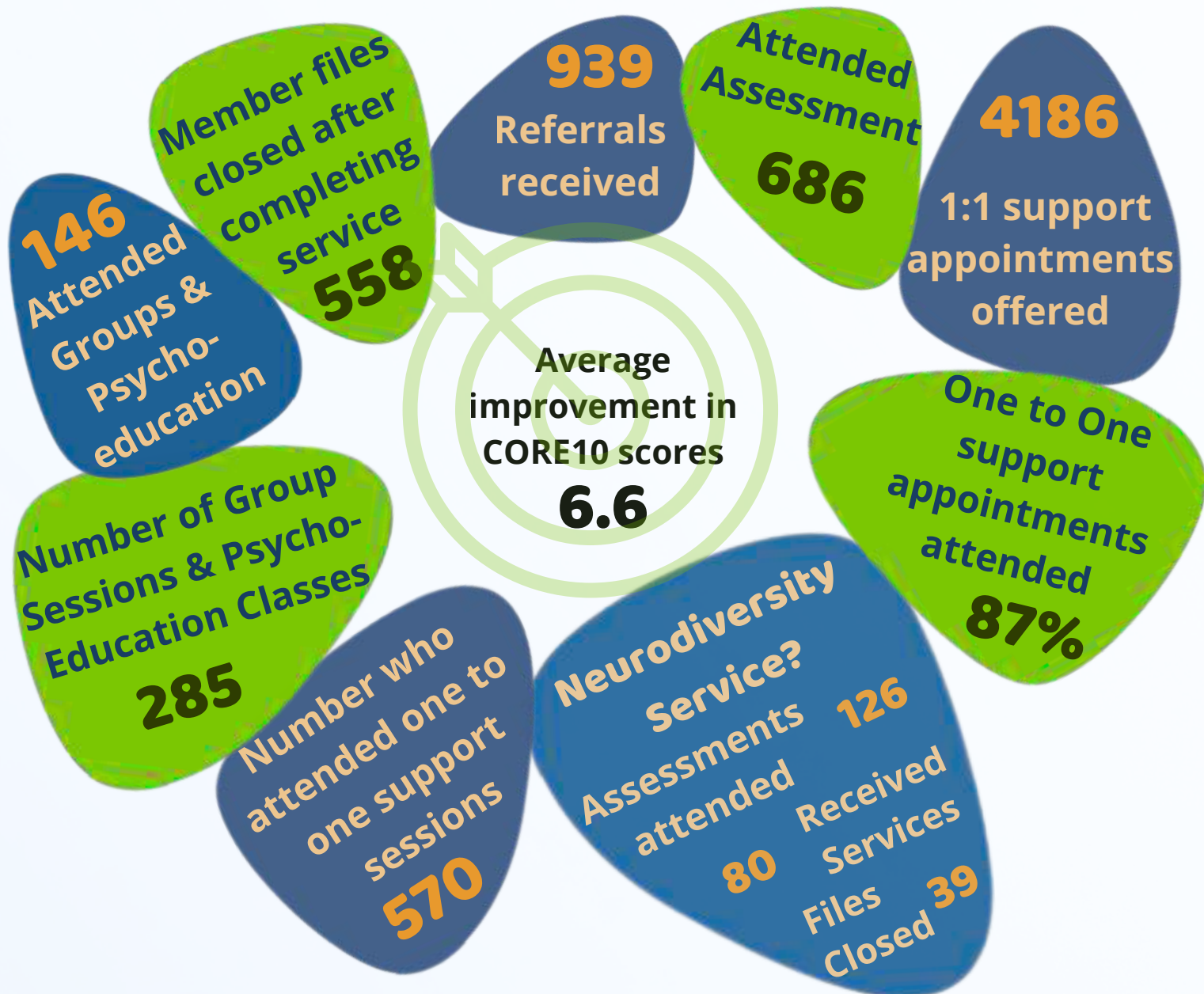
Outcomes included our new website, updated branding, 300% increased use of social media platforms, engagement with national days and relevant campaigns creation of a calendar of events, increased marketing materials and promotion like our new leaflets, and press releases.

I'd like to thank the website working group who assisted in the inclusivity work carried out, introduced new features, and gave us the option of online referrals to the service.

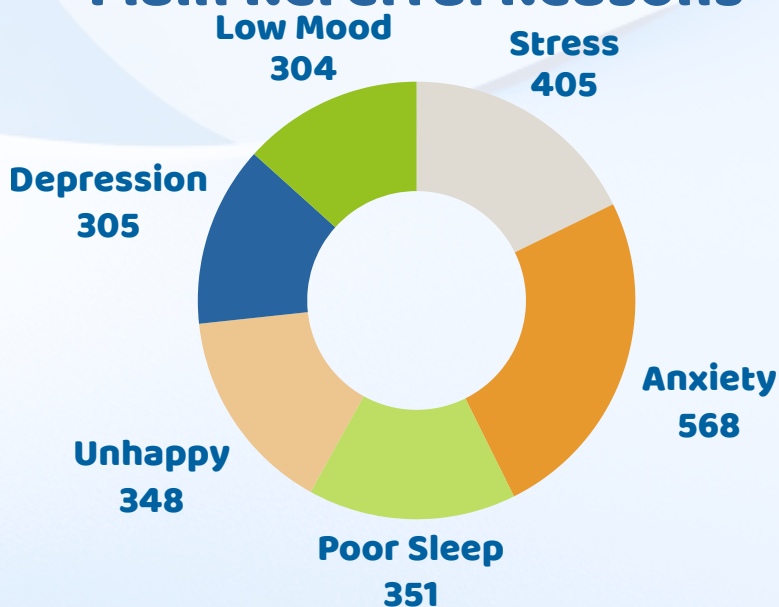
Inclusivity has been another key focus this year; Our National Lottery funded Neurodivergence service continued to grow. We celebrated awareness opportunities, gave support, completed bespoke awareness training for staff and volunteers, and made cultural changes to the way we work.

Other highlights from 2025 include: the successful move to Group block model, the Women's Groups (funded by the CMHWP Fund), the funding from 'Strengthening organisations' (Lottery) for our Volunteer Strategy, our VIVA award win, the unwavering support of the Fundraising Volunteer Group, and the support from our communities - THANK YOU ALL!!!

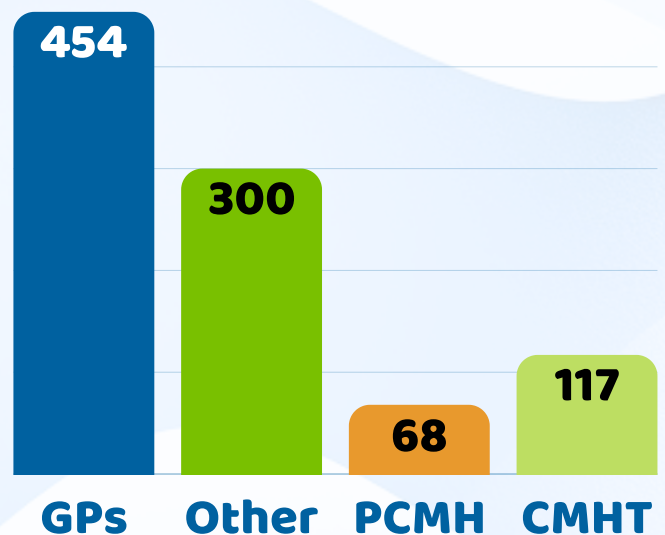
Impacts in Numbers!



Main Referral Reasons



Who Referred



What the members say....

This section offers a selection of comments made by the members about the one to one and group supports received in the past year.

ONE TO ONE COUNSELLING & ENHANCED GUIDED SELF HELP

"Having someone to talk to who won't judge me for my past or current issues. I opened up to Ali more than I have to anyone else, this helped me relax."

"Being able to talk to someone was a fantastic help. By talking, I identified just how much my self-confidence and self-esteem had deteriorated and through simple tasks, began to look at ways of building this and getting back to the new me! I am extremely happy with the service provided."

"I think the main support I needed was to help me deal with bereavement of members of my family, especially my husband. Also to accept that I matter to people and that my life has some value."

ONE TO ONE INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT AND GUIDED SELF HELP

"To acknowledge I don't have all the answers or power to change things. To speak with others. Not to over analyse situations. Deal with things as they surface."

"Becoming aware of ADHD and how to deal with some of the symptoms of ADHD which were exacerbating the emotions I was feeling which were negative. Feel a lot more positive since attending my support sessions with Anna."

"Being able to be more emotionally independent and regulate myself better. Better understanding of myself and outlook on my life. Learn better coping mechanisms."

"My mental health was so bad last year that I didn't speak to anyone, now I'm doing groups, volunteering and doing my best to get out more."

GROUP SUPPORT INCLUDING SOCIAL AND PEER SUPPORT TRAINING

Relaxation Groups

"Knowing that you are not alone. Benefitting from Breathing Techniques. Lovely Group of people."

Social Group

"For me its for being able to talk to other people. Get me used to talking to people. Helps me be normal."

Healthy Minds Session

"It helped me identify ways in which I can improve my own wellbeing. It felt good to meet people who 'get it'."

Bereavement & Loss Peer Group

"Discussing emotions re loss of spouse. Sharing similar stories. Helping to put lots of feelings into context. To help with life's future challenges."

Future Plans

The Board and staff are working with our members to develop Stepping Stones Services. Here are some updates on our plans, we hope that you'll find these useful. Any questions or feedback please contact us to discuss further.

TRAUMA

Whilst not a trauma service, staff have all completed Trauma Informed training and we will continue to look at ways to develop our services so that they will be able to support the many people who continue to use our services that have experienced traumatic events. We will equip our staff with the skills required to enable those who refer to get the support they need when they present with mental health challenges that are within scope of the service.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Stepping Stones have recruited a new Peer Support Worker who shall be working closely with the Lived Experience Panel; this will ensure that your voices and needs are represented in any future service developments.

Opportunities for Peers and Volunteers to get more involved will be launching in 2026. Please see our website and social media for updates on new groups, Drop-in services and more!

2026 CMHWB Fund focus in on reaching more young people, our Youth Worker will be offering 1:1 support and groups.

The Neurodiversity project will be offering groups both in person and online.

MANAGING DEMAND

We will continue to work towards our long term goal of driving down waiting times for people who have common mental health challenges. We are working with our Health and Social Care partners to find solutions.

Whilst we no longer have an Assessment Lead post, "enjoy your retirement Jackie", our staff have been taking on the task of carrying these assessments and we aim to have the initial wait time within a reasonable scale. We are also looking at further developing the referral pathway so that members have quicker access to psychoeducation classes and groups.

OUR FUNDING

Members should be aware that Stepping Stones are going to have to tender for the future HSCP funding, this does cast uncertainty over the future stability of our services but please note that the team are doing everything they can to best position Stepping Stones to secure the contract for the future services. Thank you to everyone who attended our consultation meeting, to everyone who has participated in our survey, and everyone who continues to show us your support; we shall take the next step together!

Please take a look at our website for information on all of our services
www.stepstones.org.uk

Acknowledgements and Thank You

Stepping Stones is a registered charity SC019270.

We are genuinely appreciative for the funding we receive from West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership which allows us to continue to provide valuable services to the local community. We are also grateful for the funding we receive from The Lottery 'Improving Lives Fund', and various small grant programmes, including the West Dunbartonshire Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. Thank you to all the people fundraising on our behalf; a cash donation, a gift or monies raised via events such as the Kiltwalk were gratefully received.

Our thanks go to the Board Members, Staff, Volunteers and Facilitators as listed below who have helped us deliver our services throughout the year.

Board of Directors

Alison Punton - Chair

Janette Tran - Board Member

Noel Hynes - Treasurer

Louise Nisbet - Vice Chair

Iain Anderson – Board Member

Maureen Duffy - Board Member

David Baillie - Board Member

Maureen Wylie - Board Member

Brian Anderson – Board Member

Lorraine McKenzie - Board Member

David Sloan - Board Member

Staff

Bronwyn O'Riordan - Chief Officer

John White – Operations Director

Elaine McWilliams – Group Worker P/T

Jackie Sroka – Assessment Team Leader P/T

Cathie McGrory – Admin Team Leader

Chloe Gorton - Reception Admin Worker P/T

Sarah Dillon, Peer Group Worker P/T

James Reilly - Peer Group Worker P/T

Jim Todd - Peer Group Worker P/T

Danai Batziou – Counselling Supervisor

Coliosa Boyle - Support Team Leader

Ashley Dougan – Peer Support Worker

Pauline Sweeney - Support Worker P/T

Ali Brown - Person Centred Counsellor P/T

Maggie Friel - Reception & Admin Worker P/T

Sian McLaughlin - Support Worker

Anna Lilley - Support Worker

Rachael Cramb - Support Worker

Volunteers

Kasia Taczkowska - EGS

Morag Hutchison - PCT

Tatiana Heise - PCT

Wendy Kirkup - PCT

Zenab Ali - PCT

David Baillie

David Sloan

James Reilly

Jim Todd

John Kerr

Lorraine Dodd

Lorraine McKenzie

Louise Nisbet

Pauline Murray

Sarah Ann Dillon

Freelance Counsellor

Karen Ritchie

Enhanced Guided Self Help and Person Centred Counselling Trainees who have contributed to the services in the past year

Abby Penman - PCC

Abigail Foye - EGS

Caitlin Devenney - EGS

Ene Dapa - PCC

Eva Bloice - EGS

Hannah Jackson - EGS

Hannah Mains - EGS

Kenny Fulton - PCC

Ross Caldwell - PCC

Sean Mannion - PCC

Ruth Lamb - PCC

Sean Mannion - PCC

Shona Martin - PCC

Sumbul Shafiq - PCC

Thomas Sadler - PCC

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