



# Alana Forsyth

## *Chief Executive Officer*

As we reflect on 2022-23, it is hard to articulate the difference a year has made on our service, our team and our community. We hoped that post the COVID-19 pandemic the worst social and economic challenges impacting our communities would abate and we could return to providing a service at the heart of the community. As we now know, while still dealing with the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, the worst cost of living crisis in living memory plunged those that were already in poverty in to, or closer to destitution and created significant financial pressures on a greater number of families across our community. With inflation and interest rates at decade-long highs and energy bills breaking records, demand for our services was driven to unprecedented levels.

This annual report provides but a snapshot of the work of GNWCAB during this period but cannot tell of all of the work delivered, impact in the community or lives improved as a result of the skill and dedication of the GNWCAB team during 2022-23. While the numbers presented here are impressive, they cannot begin to tell the full story of GNWCAB or the crucial place it has in the community.

The need for crisis support has tragically been our highest growth area, with more and more people presenting without access to food to eat, or energy to heat their homes. In contrast, access to services that provide critical in-person support has decreased, as some agencies continued to offer digital-only help post pandemic and others have such demand for services that waiting lists render the help offered redundant by the time it is available.

With increased frequency, GNWCAB provides crisis support for people in despair. We regularly engage with GPs, Community Psychiatric Nurses, Social Work, Community Addiction Teams and the Police in a bid to find emergency support for people presenting with acute mental health issues. While our team are trained in Mental Health First Aid and Suicide Prevention, they are not mental health professionals.

Increasingly we are supporting people who have become almost permanent clients. These are people who have multiple, complex issues and for a variety of reasons are unable to advocate effectively for themselves or engage with statutory services. The lack of in person support available at local level leads to an increasing level of dependency on services like ours, who continue to provide an open door where people are treated with dignity and respect.

**Our clients have come to see us as an emergency service. They have exhausted every avenue to access services to no avail, so come to us as a safe, trusted place. Referrals to our service from partners in statutory and partner organisations are also higher than ever before, reflecting the unique value others agencies place on the work of GNWCAB too.**

**People who work and volunteer in CAB are by definition, driven, compassionate and empathic – that’s what attracts them to CAB. An increasing number of people are coming to us in acute distress and for many of these people, the support provided by GNWCAB is life changing and in some cases, life-saving. The work delivered by our team is truly awe inspiring and on a daily basis I am heartened by the dedication and commitment of the people delivering the service. The impact of the level of despair and destitution in our communities can weigh heavy and impact the health and wellbeing of our team. We continue to view the welfare of our people as a priority and strive to create the best supportive, flexible working environment we can, where people know how valued they are.**

**As resources are stretched ever thinner across all sectors, we have championed a partnership approach to ensuring our clients access the right support at the right time, using a method that best suits their needs. In 2022/23 we invested time and effort in building capacity for partner organisations across the community. We provided training to staff and volunteers of partner organisations to ensure that collectively we can provide wrap-around support, using the expertise of each agency to achieve the best outcome for clients.**

**We are a charity who experience the same financial challenges as many others in our quest to not just survive year on year, but to continue to build a lasting service that meets the needs of the local community and close gaps in service provision. Increasingly we are facing these challenges as a charity continually trying to source funding, while in many respects working within the demands of statutory service but without the resource.**

**2022/23 has been a year of truly unprecedented challenge, but there has also been much to celebrate at GNWCAB, we welcomed new staff, volunteers and Trustees. We celebrated long service milestones and personal achievements. We developed new partnerships, attracted new funding opportunities and welcomed new tenants to our community hub. A culmination of that celebration was our 40 (+2) birthday event held in our Maryhill office. Staff, volunteers, clients, partners, funders and elected representatives old and new joined us to mark the incredible milestone. A proud moment for everyone involved in the work of GNWCAB reflecting on the incredible, lasting impact on the Maryhill & Possilpark Communities over four decades.**

**We remain indebted to a group of talented, committed volunteers who give selflessly of their time. They are part of the bedrock of our service and without them we simply couldn’t deliver this invaluable work in the community.**

**I am proud to work with incredibly talented, supportive and committed group of people. Despite the ongoing challenges they continue to turn up with energy and commitment to making life better for others. We are a diverse bunch of people who work to represent the vibrant community that we serve. Together we make up GNWCAB and are very proud of the work we deliver for the communities of Maryhill, Possilpark and beyond. As we look to what can seem to be a rather desolate future for some people needing our support, what we can be assured of is that GNWCAB will continue to advocate for better opportunities for local people and use our energy and influence to work for a better future for all.**

**I would like to express my deep, ongoing gratitude to our staff, volunteers, Board of Directors, partners and funders who seek to make life better. Collectively we strive to deliver a service that is second to none that leads to lasting improvements for the people in the community we serve. Here's to the next 40 years.**

*Alana Forsyth*