



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025

### CABINET SECRETARY FOR HEALTH PRAISES THE VITAL ROLE OF COMMUNITY LINK WORKERS IN TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES.

Voluntary Health Scotland (VHS) and the Scottish Community Link Worker Network (SCLWN) have launched a series of compelling films to shine a spotlight on the **transformative impact of Community Link Workers (CLWs)** in addressing health inequalities and supporting patients across Scotland. This important work is driving **early intervention and prevention**, at a time when statutory services and the NHS are under increasing pressures. CLWs are providing an incredibly vital role in supporting people and complementing frontline Primary Care and NHS professionals.

*"I'm delighted that the Scottish Community Link Worker Network is launching these videos that share powerful first-hand accounts of the positive impacts that Community Link Workers have on the individuals that they support and within the general practice teams that they are part of."*

**Neil Gray, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care**

With over **300 CLWs** now embedded in GP practices, CLWs work closely alongside clinical colleagues, taking a social prescribing approach with their patients to tackle non-medical issues affecting their health such as poverty, loneliness, housing, debt, and more. The majority of CLWs in Scotland are employed via third sector organisations within local communities.

#### Highlights from the Films

The videos illustrate the critical, life-changing role of CLWs:

- **Patient Video:** Real stories showing how CLWs empower individuals to improve their health and wellbeing.
- **GP Video:** Insights into the collaborative role of CLWs within primary care teams.
- **CLW Video:** CLWs talk about their work and what it means to them.
- **Overview Video:** overview of social prescribing and SCLWN

#### Groundbreaking Research

The 2023 [Essential Connections Report](#), which looked at the range and scope of Community Link Worker programmes across Scotland, revealed the significant impact of CLWs in their communities:

- **95% of referrals** are for mental health concerns.
- **82% of cases** address social isolation and loneliness.

The findings from this report have led to a **Scottish Government review** of the CLW programme to ensure its long-term sustainability and reach.

#### Why It Matters

These films underline the vital role of CLWs in reducing health inequalities, supporting mental health, and improving people's lives through a person-centred approach.

**WATCH NOW:**

- [The Power of Community Link Workers](#)
- [Community Link Workers-Patient Stories](#)
- [GP interviews-Community Link Workers' role in primary care](#)
- [Overview of Social Prescribing and SCLWN](#)

**For more information or to arrange interviews, please contact:**

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**About VHS and SCLWN**

Voluntary Health Scotland (VHS) and the Scottish Community Link Worker Network (SCLWN) champion the critical work of CLWs and their contribution to Scotland's health and wellbeing.

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