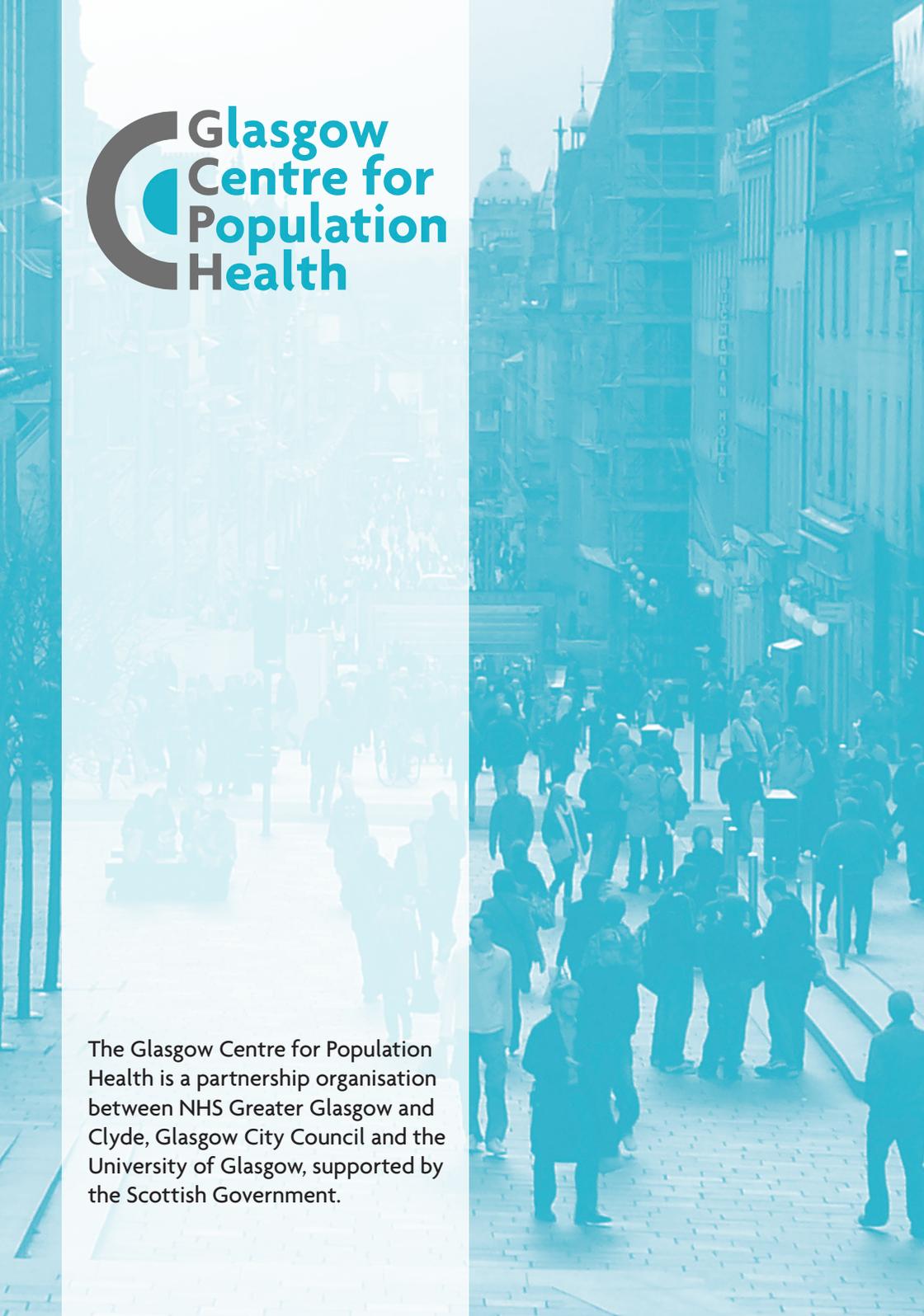




Glasgow Centre for Population Health



The Glasgow Centre for Population Health is a partnership organisation between NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Glasgow City Council and the University of Glasgow, supported by the Scottish Government.

'Population health' refers to programmes of action and inquiry concerned with:

- ▶ The systematic differences in health outcomes between, and within, populations;
- ▶ Understanding how the many factors that determine health interact with each other to create these differences;
- ▶ The biological pathways linking wider social, economic and environmental determinants of health to population health outcomes;
- ▶ The types and mix of policies and interventions best placed to improve a population's health;
- ▶ Processes of learning, knowledge transfer, and partnership between academics and practitioners, to enable positive change to occur.

Adapted from Kindig D, Stoddart G. What is Population Health? American Journal of Public Health 2003;93(3):380-383.

What is the Glasgow Centre for Population Health?

The Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) is a partnership organisation between NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Glasgow City Council and the University of Glasgow, supported by the Scottish Government. Its mission is to generate insights and evidence, support new approaches, and inform and influence action to improve the city's health and tackle inequality. To deliver this mission, the Centre undertakes a range of activities that have helped to establish it as a research and development centre of international standing – working across the boundaries of research, policy, implementation and community life.

Working with a wide range of stakeholders, the GCPH stimulates, carries out and facilitates research of direct relevance to policy and practice; provides a focus for the exchange of ideas, fresh thinking, analysis and debate; and supports processes of development and change. As a result, the Centre offers an authoritative voice in policy and practice domains that impact on the health and wellbeing of the population in and around Glasgow, and on inequalities in health.

Why is there a Glasgow Centre for Population Health?

Scotland's health profile is a matter of major national importance. It rates poorly relative to other comparable countries, and is improving at a slower rate. Scotland's position in the European health league table deteriorated during the 20th Century, particularly from the 1950s onwards. Why that change has happened is not fully known, but it was driven primarily by health problems among the people of Glasgow and the West of Scotland. New thinking and new actions are needed to get to grips with the causes of the health deficit and identify responses fit for the 21st Century. The GCPH was set up in 2004 as a response to these challenges and needs.

The prime focus on West Central Scotland has enabled an unprecedented depth of understanding and insight into the area's health to be built up, together with development of networks, trust and relationships necessary to deliver change. Learning and developments in this geographical area offer wider value, in Scotland and beyond. And in-depth international comparisons and collaborations widen out the GCPH's knowledge and experience base.

How does the Centre develop and exchange knowledge and ideas?

The Centre communicates and disseminates its work in four main ways:

- ▶ **Publications** including reports, briefing papers and journal articles;
- ▶ **Events** and face-to-face communications including seminars and fora, conferences and meetings;
- ▶ **Digital engagement** including online, regular e-newsletters, multi-media outputs, blogs and social media;
- ▶ **Media/PR** including coverage in print, online, on radio and television.

Since its inception the GCPH has endeavoured to ensure that its work is not only disseminated widely but is informed by, and relevant to, those working across the city and beyond to improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities.

As the Centre has evolved over time, it has developed a ‘**translational role**’ – relating findings to contextual issues and developments and synthesising recommendations, in order to influence policy and practice and, ultimately, to achieve change.

It is evident from the Centre’s work to date that changes in policy and practice often require not only the dissemination of evidence or ideas, but also the **establishment of mutual relationships** that allow learning to be acted upon. At the core of the GCPH model are close and collaborative partner relationships at every stage of the process. Proximity cultivates trust, allowing challenging findings to be considered and facilitating the two-way learning that enhances the relevance of future research.

Through collaborative working at the **interface between research, policy and practice**, and by engaging a wide body of evidence and people, the GCPH has been instrumental in shaping health and inequalities policy, with implementation both locally and nationally. This has been achieved through, for example, contributions to the Ministerial Taskforce on Health Inequalities and the Glasgow Health Commission, as well as to specific strategic developments such as the city’s ongoing work on healthy school food policy.

How is the Centre held accountable for its work?

The Centre's four partner organisations are formally engaged in influencing and supporting the Centre's strategy, priorities and work programmes through two key bodies: the Management Board and the Executive Management Team.

The Management Board, on which all four partner organisations are represented, is the formal governance structure, ensuring that robust and transparent processes are in place to support the Centre's work. It sets the Centre's strategy and agrees strategic plans for its range of activities. Board members have responsibility for ensuring that their host organisations contribute to the success of the Centre and that the Centre's work becomes appropriately embedded within their organisational processes and structures. The Management Board is chaired by the Chair of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

The Executive Management Team considers emerging findings and their implications, new developments, and any operational issues requiring partner involvement. It is chaired by the Director of the GCPH and involves senior (Director/Head of Service) representation from the three local partner organisations.

In addition, there is an External Advisory Group comprising public health experts and influencers from across the UK. It reviews the GCPH's activities and provides feedback to the Management Board about the quality and impact of the Centre's work. It also provides information and advice about relevant national and international developments and opportunities.

The GCPH has undergone two formal evaluative reviews by the Scottish Government, in 2008 and 2011. These reviews involved a wide range of stakeholders, and the positive findings in both cases led to extension of funding. The Centre is currently funded to the end of March 2015 with a recommendation to extend support to April 2017.

Reflecting the pattern of funding commitments and formal reviews, the GCPH is now in Phase 3 of its work, which commenced in 2012 (see centre section). Phase 1 ran from 2004 to 2009, and Phase 2, from 2009 to 2012 (see pages 12-14).

What are the Centre's aims?

Activities are directed towards four main aims:

- ▶ To create and test new models for understanding the patterns, and causes of, Glasgow's enduring poor health while identifying potential solutions and actions for improvement;
- ▶ To bring excellent and innovative population health research together with the work of policy-makers and service providers to accelerate and strengthen processes for better and more equal health;
- ▶ To develop greater capacity for effective action to improve health through educational processes and events, provision of regular communications, and organisational and professional development;
- ▶ To be a focus for the exchange of ideas, independent thinking, analysis and debate about population health and health inequalities, linked with similar activities elsewhere in the world.

How does the Centre go about its work?

Five guiding principles underpin the Centre's ways of working:

1 Taking a long-term view: The GCPH exists to support the development of a healthy, fair and sustainable future. It sustains hope that such a future might be achieved and is building a rich body of knowledge, insight and commitment to support change over time. A long-term focus on core themes of work is combined with an ability to be responsive to emerging priorities and to opportunities that fit the Centre's unique remit. This is enabled by the nurturing of networks incorporating research, policy, implementation and community perspectives.

2 Being evidence-centred and ethical: The GCPH gathers and works with new and existing data from a variety of sources to generate knowledge that is translated, through reflexive processes, into practical, research-based intelligence and insight for people in policy and practice roles. The Centre's work to build and support the use of evidence is undertaken in the context of its five guiding principles and an agreed set of values.

3 Using creative approaches: Focusing on longstanding challenges to health and equity, the GCPH encourages fresh thinking and new approaches which span traditional boundaries and foster innovative collaborations. There is an emphasis on active engagement with a wide spectrum of stakeholders, using a range of dissemination and learning methods to support action for a healthier future. Thereby, the Centre seeks to enable different types of knowledge about health and equity issues to be recognised and to support the development of new ways of working.

4 Being collaborative yet challenging: The GCPH is founded on a partnership approach but maintains a distinctive, independent voice to inform policy and practice. It has a unique position where it is of, but not in, the partner organisations. The Centre seeks to act as a critical friend to those shaping efforts to improve Glasgow's health and reduce health inequalities.

5 Attending to capacity and context: A range of skills and backgrounds are present in the staff team, and considerable emphasis is placed on ensuring that the work is informed by, and relevant to, global, national, local and organisational contexts. The Centre offers development and capacity-building opportunities through embedding staff within partnerships and structures and through hosting training placements and secondments. This approach brings new perspectives into the GCPH team and the collaborating organisations, building relationships, access and influence that will strengthen efforts to improve Glasgow's health and reduce health inequalities.

Phase 3

What is Phase 3?

The GCPH's Phase 3 work programme focuses on four themes:

- Understanding Glasgow's health
- Urban health
- Poverty, disadvantage and the economy
- Asset based approaches and resilience.

These themes have evolved from the broad foundations of the Centre's work during Phases 1 and 2 (see pages 12-14). In some instances there has been continuity of work programmes throughout Phases 1-3, while in others, early work initiated by the GCPH has been developed by others with the Centre providing a supportive role. Most often, however, the Phase 3 work reflects the bringing together of insights from a number of areas of work, in order to inform and influence action to improve the city's health and tackle inequality.

Within each of the four themes, there are a number of projects or programmes. These represent a mix of short- and longer-term projects, with all work developed and delivered in association with a range of research and delivery partners.

In addition to work described under the four themes below, there is a body of work that is not theme-based and cuts across all the work themes. This includes the exchange of knowledge and ideas, described on page 4. To facilitate this, the Centre has a formal partnership with the International Futures Forum – facilitating reflection and learning about what needs to be done for the persistent obstacles to achieving a healthier population to be overcome, and helping to build a consciousness of a different future.

Theme 1: Understanding Glasgow's health

This theme builds on the Centre's work examining the 'excess' poor health experienced in Glasgow and the West of Scotland. Its overall aim is to achieve a significantly clearer understanding of which factors are, and which are not, contributing to excess mortality; and, where appropriate and possible, to formulate policy recommendations to address this new understanding. Connections through the Centre's partners and more widely will enable these analyses to inform local and national processes and priorities.

Key components include:

- Systematic testing of the most plausible theories that have been proposed to explain the 'excess' levels of poor health and mortality seen in Glasgow and Scotland;
- Further development of within-Glasgow analyses, to understand the way that the distribution of health is changing within the city/region;
- Building of the information base for the Understanding Glasgow programme, supporting its use as an educational resource and informing policy and planning;
- A focus on child health – specifically, infant feeding, and the health needs of 'looked after' children.

In addition to the epidemiological analyses at the core of this theme, the Phase 3 work will bring qualitative research insights alongside the quantitative and continue to develop ways to make population health information accessible and useful to non-specialist audiences. This theme has direct links to all of the other themes, and will inform the work that takes place across the Centre's span of activity.

Theme 2: Urban health

This theme is concerned with the ways in which the urban environment (physical, social, economic and cultural) and the consequences of demographic change affect health. Like Theme 1, it builds on several longstanding projects (such as the GoWell and Healthy Urban Planning programmes) as well as more recent developments (such as the school food environment; active sustainable travel; and neighbourhood management structures). The overarching aim within this theme is to distil local policy and practice recommendations to support population health and sustainable communities, in the face of current trends/evidence and unknown futures. Work within this theme maintains a future orientation and reflects the need to think differently about city strategies and processes.

Key components include:

- GoWell and social regeneration: studying the processes and impacts of neighbourhood based regeneration;
- Healthy urban environments and placemaking: supporting the 'mainstreaming' of attention to health and wellbeing within urban planning and design processes;
- Sustainability, transport and travel: using knowledge about active, sustainable travel to influence decision-making;
- Neighbourhood effects on young people's health: building on the Centre's research concerning the school food environment;
- Afternow: supporting the development and application of this body of work, within Glasgow and beyond.

Theme 3: Poverty, disadvantage and the economy

The aim of this theme is to understand how economic change, poverty and disadvantage impact on population health and wellbeing at key life stages (early years, adult working years and older years) and to use this understanding to inform policy and service development. This theme builds on the Centre's previous work on child poverty, while newer areas of work relate to improving understanding of the health inequalities facing lone parent families and those experiencing in-work poverty.

A newer area of focus for the Centre, this theme will develop and evolve during Phase 3 but initial components are outlined below.

Key components include:

- Child poverty: continuation of the Centre's evaluation of the established Healthier, Wealthier Children project and contributing to various strategic partnership developments to reduce poverty and disadvantage;
- Lone parents: a focus on the wider challenges and opportunities facing those lone parents with young children who are moving into paid work as part of the UK government's welfare reforms;
- In-work poverty: the Centre seeks to increase understanding of the impact of the changing nature of work and the rise of in-work poverty on health and wellbeing.

Theme 4: Asset based approaches and resilience

Asset based approaches emphasise the need to redress the balance between meeting needs and nurturing the strengths and resources of people and communities. There is a national emphasis on integrating the insights that come from the assets perspective into policy and ways of working. The published evidence on the impact of these approaches on health is, however, limited. The notion of resilience refers to the process of withstanding the negative effects of risk exposure, demonstrating positive adjustment in the face of adversity, and beating the odds. Resilience and wellbeing are clearly linked, and there is a well-established research base underpinning a focus on resilience at individual, community and city-levels. In Phase 3, GCPH will aim to become a source of expertise and insight on resilience and asset based approaches.

Key components include:

- Reviewing the theory and evidence relating to asset based approaches and resilience, including a specific focus on measurement issues and cost-effectiveness;
- Building support for community-based approaches to asset- and resilience-development, using action research and community narratives methods;
- Exploration of the characteristics and impacts of asset based services.

Phase 1 and 2

What did the Centre do in its initial phases?

Three main streams of activity form the foundation of all of the Centre's work:

- ▶ Strengthening understanding of health and its determinants;
- ▶ Maximising health gain from major change strategies through evidence and influence;
- ▶ Creating new insights and developing fresh thinking.

A brief overview of work is provided here. Fuller accounts, and outputs, are available from the GCPH website.

Strengthening understanding of health and its determinants

- ▶ The Centre's **observatory function** was established to increase understanding of Glasgow's health over time, and in comparison to other cities, post-industrial regions, and Scotland as a whole. The Let Glasgow Flourish report was the most comprehensive description to date of the city's health. Community health profiles, mental health profiles, the Miniature Glasgow and Miniature Cities films, and the Understanding Glasgow website were subsequent developments, making public health information accessible in different formats and for a range of audiences.
- ▶ Further analyses sought to gain a better understanding of what lay behind the observed trends by comparing Glasgow to similar **UK cities** and also to **European cities and regions**. It became clear from this set of innovative and systematic analyses that the widely accepted explanations are not sufficient to fully explain Glasgow's health problems.
- ▶ **Primary care observatory** and **work and health observatory** functions (both located within the University of Glasgow) were also supported by the GCPH. Through its report, The Shape of Primary Care, the primary care observatory influenced the development of a new Primary Care Framework for Greater Glasgow and Clyde; and the ensuing 'Deep End' project brought a particular focus on practices working in the most deprived communities in Scotland. The Scottish Observatory for Work and Health monitored and reported on the movements between work, worklessness and the related effects on population health, highlighting differences in different parts of the country, and trends over time.

Phase 1 and 2

Maximising health gain from major change strategies through evidence and influence

- ▶ The **pSoBid** study was a cross-sectional, population-based study using innovative multi-disciplinary methods to examine psychological, social and biological determinants of health inequalities.
- ▶ The longitudinal **GoWell** programme is a ten-year study of the impact of housing and neighbourhood regeneration on the health and wellbeing of 15 deprived communities in Glasgow.
- ▶ Another long-term GCPH programme, **healthy urban planning**, has focused on influencing strategic urban planning processes and led to Glasgow's Equally Well test site, which developed new approaches in area-based planning. This programme also facilitated the implementation of seven strategic health impact assessments (HIAs) in Glasgow.
- ▶ The Centre has undertaken or commissioned a series of evaluations to understand the impacts of services on population health and to shape future service development. Evaluation of **school meal provision** and the wider social and environmental influences on food consumed during the school day have directly influenced policy developments within Glasgow. Evaluations of **smoking cessation services**, the development of **Community Health (and Care) Partnerships**, and the **Healthier, Wealthier Children** child poverty project have all informed service developments within the NHS and social care. In addition, the GCPH evaluation of **Govanhill's neighbourhood management and participatory budgeting** developments has had both a local and a national impact.
- ▶ Two trends highlighted in the Let Glasgow Flourish report stimulated the GCPH to look afresh at the growing challenges in the areas of active, sustainable transport and safer use of alcohol. The **active travel** work programme has involved a range of approaches to elicit patterns and trends in school travel, travel to work, and pedestrian road casualties. Research focused on **alcohol** has looked at young people's social networks, drinking behaviours at different life stages and gender differences. Other work sought to increase understanding of the importance of **relationships and social networks**, an example being a community-based pilot project aimed at reducing gang-related activity.

Phase 1 and 2

- ▶ This body of knowledge about social networks and resilience, combined with a growing national interest in these issues, saw the development, in Phase 2, of a new GCPH work programme focused on [asset based approaches](#) for health improvement.

Creating new insights and developing fresh thinking

This area of work had its own activities, and was also embedded within many of the programmes mentioned above.

- ▶ The Centre's [culture, sustainability and economic development](#) project considered the history and future for the city of Glasgow in the face of the challenges posed by these three influences. This work fed into strategic development processes in the city such as the city visioning exercises.
- ▶ Regular GCPH events, including the winter seminar series and the Healthier Future Forum, were set up to bring different perspectives to longstanding health and equity challenges.
- ▶ The establishment of an initiative based at the University of Glasgow, looking at [culture and wellbeing](#), was supported by the GCPH with additional Scottish Government funding. This has developed into the substantial [Afternow](#) programme.
- ▶ Through facilitation and input at meetings and events, GCPH staff and International Futures Forum colleagues have supported partner organisations and others to take fresh approaches and think differently about longstanding challenges.

Contact us

To find out more about the GCPH and keep informed of new findings, publications, events and developments you can:

- ▶ Visit our website at: www.gcph.co.uk
- ▶ Join our learning network at: www.gcph.co.uk/eupdate
- ▶ Follow us on Twitter: [@theGCPH](https://twitter.com/theGCPH)
- ▶ Follow us on Facebook: facebook.com/theGCPH

Telephone numbers and staff details are available on the Centre's website.

The work and success of the GCPH are critically dependent on connections, partnerships and collaboration across organisations and sectors. The Centre regularly receives requests from partners and other public, private and third sector organisations, as well as from individuals and the media for input on a wide range of subjects. All such requests are welcome.



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www.europeinminiature.com



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