



Inverclyde Alliance

**AGENDA ITEM NO: 9**

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Inverclyde Alliance Board</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>16 June 2025</b>
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Evaluation of the Inverclyde Approach to tackling Child Poverty</b>		

## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to the Alliance a recent evaluation that was undertaken by Urban Foresight on the Evaluation of the Inverclyde Approach to tackling Child Poverty which was part of the Scottish Government Child Poverty Accelerator Fund 2024/25.
- 1.2 Inverclyde Council commissioned Urban Foresight to collate the impact of four local projects who are tackling child poverty. Since January 2024, Routes into Supported Employment (RiSE), Early Adopter Community (EAC), Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund with Home Start Renfrewshire and Inverclyde and Thrive Under Five (TU5) were identified as embodying whole family approaches and believe that a system of interconnected support helps move people out of poverty. The four projects joined together to test the theory of the Inverclyde Approach and were considered as part of this evaluation.
- 1.3 The full Evaluation Report at Appendix 1 demonstrates the Inverclyde Approach effectively addresses the many factors contributing to child poverty and should be considered as an effective strategy to be implemented wider across Inverclyde to tackle child poverty.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Alliance:
  - notes this report and the evaluation of the Inverclyde Approach at Appendix 1; and
  - notes the recommendations and associated appendices of the evaluation will be submitted to a future meeting of the Education and Communities Committee and the HSCP Integrated joint Board.

### 3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Inverclyde Council received £88,000 from the Scottish Government Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund between November 2023 to March 2025. The overarching objectives and outcomes of providing this funding included Early Intervention parenting support for families living in poverty, provided an integrated system of support including financial wellbeing assessment, codesign the service with parents and commissioning an external organisation to conduct an evaluation of the Inverclyde Approach.
- 3.2 In late 2019 Inverclyde Child Poverty Action Group, collaborated with Public Health Scotland to develop a theory of change that a system of interconnected services that is codesigned with people and that delivers a place-based family centred whole systems approach will support people out of poverty, provide opportunities and choice that will reduce inequalities within our community.
- 3.3 When Inverclyde Council received funding for the Early Adopter Community, the theory of change was operationalised. RISE had already begun delivery with allocated funding to mitigate deprivation using a person-centred approach, which was based within the Greenock Town Centre. The NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde then introduced the Thrive Under 5 and the Child Poverty Accelerator Fund project awarded funding for the Home Start Renfrewshire and Inverclyde project. These circumstances presented an opportunity to join together and to formally test the theory of the 'Inverclyde Approach'. Urban Foresight was commissioned to evaluate this test of change.

### 4.0 FINDINGS

- 4.1 Inverclyde Council commissioned Urban Foresight to evaluate and evidence the impact of adopting a whole-system, place-based approach—known as The Inverclyde Approach. This model is rooted in relationships, trust, and compassion, with the aim of improving choice, voice, and opportunities for individuals and families experiencing poverty and inequality. Four local projects across Inverclyde adopted this approach, all reporting positive outcomes for participants. The Inverclyde Approach highlights the values and dedication of staff and partners working collaboratively to improve outcomes for the community.
- 4.2 The evaluation identified and shared good practice across the projects, noting the impact of the projects in:
- building strong, trusting relationships.
  - supporting the holistic wellbeing of families.
  - creating opportunities for the whole family; and
  - providing continuous, integrated support for individuals with complex needs, particularly in relation to employability and parenting.

These outcomes are achieved through an interconnected system of services, reinforcing the effectiveness of the Inverclyde Approach in delivering meaningful, lasting change within communities.

- 4.3 The evaluation also provides information on the learning that has taken place through the projects, highlighting both the barriers and enablers for transformational systems change. Key themes included:
- the importance of an integrated infrastructure and coordinated workforce.
  - strong relationships and trust across services and partners.
  - shared resources and capacity across organisational boundaries.
  - empowered, resilient communities involved in service design; and
  - a shift toward continuous learning, early intervention, and testing innovative approaches

## **5.0 NEXT STEPS**

5.1 This positive evaluation report recommends that the Council and its partners consider:

1. wider Integration of the Inverclyde Approach by embedding the approach across the authority to support whole-family working, prioritise relationship-based practice, and empower communities; and
2. creating an environment for sustainable change through adapting internal processes, align funding opportunities, and adopt transformative monitoring and evaluation methods to support changemaking efforts.

The evaluation report provides a blueprint for building successful service and family partnerships to address child poverty, based on learning from the four pilot projects.

5.2 The recommendations are now being considered by the Child Poverty Action Group in Inverclyde and will inform future work of the group.



# Evaluation of the Inverclyde Approach to tackling child poverty

PREPARED FOR  
Inverclyde Council



# Executive Summary

## The Inverclyde Approach

23% of children in Inverclyde are living in poverty<sup>1</sup> and their families have increasingly complex needs. The Inverclyde Approach (the Approach) focuses on coordinating services and building trusting relationships around the needs of families rather than expecting families to navigate a complex web of services.

The Inclusive Communities Service in Inverclyde Council theorised that the Approach would improve the way in which services support families and enable the Council to more effectively tackle child poverty.

The Approach is based on the belief that it is not a single programme, but a system of interconnected support that helps people move out of poverty. As a result, it is a whole systems and whole family approach that aims to deliver more coordinated support for families:

- **A whole systems approach** – partnership with other services, including community and third sector organisations, working with families to design and deliver services and integrating values-based leadership.
- **A whole family approach** – a person-centred, place-based approach that prioritises building relationships, creating safe spaces, and supporting families wherever they are in their journey. This includes providing trauma-informed services.

The Inverclyde Approach not only responds to the local situation in Inverclyde, but contributes to wider policies tackling child poverty, including, but not limited to: [Best Start, Bright Futures](#), [Getting it Right for Every Child](#), [The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund](#) and the [No One Left Behind Approach](#).

Since January 2024, four projects, Routes into Supported Employment (RISE), Early Adopter Communities (EAC), Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund project with Home-Start Renfrewshire and Inverclyde (subsequently referred to as Home-Start) and Thrive Under 5 (TU5), were identified as embodying whole family approaches. These projects joined together to formally test the Inverclyde Approach. Urban Foresight was commissioned by Inverclyde Council to evaluate this test of change.

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<sup>1</sup> Inverclyde Child Poverty Action Group, Child Poverty Local Action Report (Year 6: 2024-2025), 3

## Collective impacts on the whole family

The evaluation has demonstrated that the projects testing the Inverclyde Approach have had several impacts on families, with three main themes:

- **Engaging with families** – the Inverclyde Approach has collectively reached 375 families (**Appendix 4**) building strong relationships with them and facilitating activities for them to do together.
- **Supporting the health and wellbeing of the whole family** – the projects are facilitating emotional wellbeing, embedding movement and physical wellbeing into daily life, and improving access to, and relationships with, food.
- **Supporting parents and carers to progress in their employability and parenting journey** – the projects are enabling parents to progress in employability, facilitating financial wellbeing among families, and building wider parenting, life skills and confidence.

As the approach facilitates a more interconnected set of services, their impacts are mutually reinforcing and therefore described as collective impacts.

## Transforming ways of working towards a whole system approach

The Inverclyde Approach not only serves the whole family, but considers the different touchpoints within the system which support a family. The projects have been working holistically in ways that align services, empower communities, and embed learning.

The evaluation has demonstrated that the projects have successfully made progress in transforming ways of working. Specific structures of the system have been identified that both help and hinder the project's ability to transform ways of working:

Barriers ↴	Enablers ↴
De-prioritisation of partnership working in resource constrained environments.	Structures that support a coordinated approach e.g., shared strategic spaces.
Workforce perceptions on partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Inaccessibility of referral systems.</li><li>→ Incompatibility of internal systems, including data sharing.</li><li>→ Competing priorities and funding.</li></ul>	Trauma-informed training for the workforce. Workforce perceptions on partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Better understanding of the local support offer.</li><li>→ Ability to share best practice.</li><li>→ Opportunity to align approaches across services.</li><li>→ Improvement of services for families.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Increased personal confidence in referrals.</li> <li>→ More efficient use of resources.</li> </ul>
Co-design fatigue.	<p>Involving families early and in every step from design to delivery.</p> <p>Integrating co-design into ongoing engagement.</p>
Short-term funding opportunities paired with high expectations and delayed internal processes.	<p>Transformational shift to evaluation methods to support continuous testing and learning.</p> <p>Funding opportunities that support the time investment required to build relationships between services and with families.</p>

The evaluation of the test of change has provided insight on how to build and maintain successful trusted relationships between services. **Appendix 5** outlines a blueprint for applying the Inverclyde Approach to partnerships based on the critical success factors identified in the evaluation.

# Recommendations for tackling child poverty

## Integrating the Inverclyde Approach

This evaluation demonstrates that the Inverclyde Approach should be integrated more widely across the locality. There are four recommendations for how to continue to support the implementation of the Approach:

Recommendation ↴	Summary ↴
<b>1/ Shift mindsets on poverty and how it needs to be tackled.</b>	Services should work to shift mindsets of the workforce and senior leadership to ensure that everyone understands the complexity of tackling child poverty and the importance of taking a partnership and trauma-informed approach. This is the foundation of implementing the Inverclyde Approach.
<b>2/ Invest in working together to serve families.</b>	Services should invest in working together through a partnership approach, to provide a coordinated support offer for families that is place-based and person-centred.
<b>3/ Prioritise familiar faces in services.</b>	Services should prioritise having dedicated roles that act as a central point of contact for families. This ensures families build relationships with, and trust in, services, and encourages them to discuss their needs more openly.
<b>4/ Empower communities to be involved in creating services that work for them.</b>	Services should integrate opportunities for co-design into their ways of working, to meet families' support and accessibility needs. This ensures services are fit for purpose, use resources effectively and place people at the heart of service delivery.

# Creating a more supportive environment for changemaking

The evaluation of the test of change also showed that the system has fundamental barriers that prevent or restrict services' abilities to implement the Inverclyde Approach. There are three recommendations for changes in the system to more effectively to tackle child poverty:

Recommendation ↘	Summary ↘
<b>1/ Ensure internal processes are adaptable.</b>	All services should adapt their internal processes to better support whole system and whole family approaches. This will ensure that services can be more agile in response to changing circumstances and more effectively work together.
<b>2/ Create supportive funding opportunities.</b>	Funders should create long-term funding opportunities that are designed to support whole system and whole family approaches. This will ensure that funding expectations and timelines reflect and support the time investment required to build trust with families and coordinate services.
<b>3/ Adopt transformative Monitoring and Evaluation (M&amp;E) approaches.</b>	Funders and senior leadership should ensure M&E approaches reflect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ the depth of support families require.</li><li>→ the work across the system needed to achieve this.</li><li>→ the time investment required to facilitate the depth of support shifting from transactional services to transformational changes for families, and communities.</li></ul>

## Next steps ↘

The evaluation has demonstrated that the Inverclyde Approach effectively addresses the many factors contributing to child poverty. The projects supported positive outcomes for the whole family, and they have begun to develop a coordinated system of support that is adaptive and shaped by the families it aims to serve. These results suggest the Inverclyde Approach should be implemented more widely across the locality.

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# 1.0 Introduction

The Inverclyde Approach is a whole systems and whole family approach. This means it aims to deliver place-based and person-centred services that use trauma-informed practices to put families at the heart of delivery. Since the beginning of 2024, four projects – Routes into Supported Employment, Early Adopter Communities, Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund project and Thrive Under 5 – have been working together to test the hypothesis that the Inverclyde Approach would enhance support provided to families in Inverclyde.

## 1.1 The Inverclyde Approach

### What is the Inverclyde Approach?

The Inverclyde Approach (the Approach) focuses on coordinating services around the needs of families and building trusting relationships with them, rather than expecting families to navigate a complex web of services.

The Approach is based on the belief that it is not a single programme, but a system of interconnected support that helps people move out of poverty. As a result, it is a whole systems and whole family approach that aims to deliver more coordinated support for families:

- **A whole systems approach** – a mindset and way of working that recognises poverty is the result of a range of inequalities, rather than just income, and that to successfully support families, services and the system must work together. This includes partnerships with other services, including community and third sector organisations, working with families to design and deliver services and integrating **values-based leadership**.
  - Values-based leadership is a leadership style focused on instilling a shared set of values in the workforce.
- **A whole family approach** – a person-centred, **place-based** approach that prioritises building relationships, creating safe spaces, and supporting families wherever they are in their journey. This includes taking a **trauma-informed approach** to help every member of the family to personally develop, and to maintain and/or strengthen their physical, mental, and financial wellbeing.
  - A trauma-informed approach recognises that addressing trauma is an essential part of service delivery and achieving this requires partnership across services,



upstream working and reconceptualisation of practices and policies through a trauma-focused lens<sup>2</sup>.

## What were the aims of this project?

The Inclusive Communities Service in Inverclyde Council theorised that the Inverclyde Approach would improve the way in which services support families and enable the Council to more effectively tackle child poverty. The project aimed to test this theory.

Since January 2024, four projects, Routes into Supported Employment (RISE), Early Adopter Communities (EAC), Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund (CPAF) project with Home-Start Renfrewshire and Inverclyde (subsequently referred to as Home-Start) and Thrive Under 5 (TU5), were identified as embodying whole family approaches. These projects joined together to formally test the Inverclyde Approach. Table 1 provides details on the four projects.

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<sup>2</sup> Scottish Government, Trauma-Informed Practice: A Toolkit for Scotland, 7-8

Table 1: Projects involved in testing the Inverclyde Approach.

Project	Where does it sit?	Scope	Timeline	Description
Routes into Supported Employment (RISE)	Advice Services – part of Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)	Greenock and Port Glasgow	November 2021- December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ RISE aimed to support men aged 20-40 with a range of complex issues including recovery from substance misuse, offending, and homelessness.</li> <li>→ Participants of the programme received individualised support from an Occupational Therapist and Community Support Workers to improve their skills and reduce barriers to employment, education and/or training.</li> </ul>
Early Adopter Community (EAC)	Inverclyde Council	Port Glasgow	Round 1: January 2023 – March 2024  Round 2: March 2024 – March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Piloting a locality-based approach to delivering affordable childcare (After School Childcare (ASC) and holiday childcare) to families who are low-income or who are one of the child poverty priority families.</li> <li>→ Family wellbeing support is provided to families who require additional support including advocacy.</li> <li>→ Transportation to ASC, healthy snacks and activities are provided to children participating.</li> </ul>
Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund (CPAF) project with Home-Start Renfrewshire and Inverclyde (Home-Start)	Third sector	Greenock East/Central	December 2023 – March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Implementing a Whole Family Wellbeing model through the CPAF project, in partnership with Inverclyde Council.</li> <li>→ Supporting 45 families with an emphasis on parents with mental health concerns and children under five.</li> <li>→ Involves one-to-one support and group activities to foster peer connections and resilience.</li> </ul>
Thrive Under 5 (TU5)	Inverclyde HSCP NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC)	Port Glasgow	January 2023 – present (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ A pilot to support children under the age of five to achieve a healthy weight, by tackling issues of food security.</li> <li>→ Provides families with the resources and knowledge to make healthier choices around food including food vouchers, flat pack meals, parent cooking classes, and family activities focused on food and physical activity.</li> </ul>

## 1.2 Why is the Inverclyde Approach needed?

23% of children in Inverclyde are living in poverty<sup>3</sup> and their families have increasingly complex needs. Many families are still facing challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic and the current cost of living crisis. For example, according to NHSGGC's Health and Wellbeing Survey (2024), around 40% of people said that they had difficulty meeting food and/or home energy costs at least occasionally - this increased to 50% in the most deprived areas.<sup>4</sup>

In late 2019, Inverclyde Council and the Inverclyde Child Poverty Action Group collaborated with Public Health Scotland to map out support services for families living in poverty. They found that while there was a comprehensive set of services available, the offer of support within each service was too narrow.

It was understood that single programme interventions working in isolation would not effectively tackle the complex needs of families and help them out of poverty. Thus, a theory of change was developed to design a more holistic service offering. The theory of change was informally adopted by members of the Child Poverty Action Group. Unfortunately, COVID-19 interrupted efforts to take the theory of change forward.

When Inverclyde Council received funding for EAC, the theory of change was operationalised. RISE had already begun delivery with allocated funding from the Council to mitigate deprivation in the Greenock Town Centre area. EAC built on the whole systems approach adopted by RISE. The NHSGGC then introduced TU5 in Inverclyde and CPAF funding was awarded for the project with Home-Start. These circumstances presented an opportunity to formally test the Inverclyde Approach.

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<sup>3</sup> Inverclyde Child Poverty Action Group, Child Poverty Local Action Report (Year 6: 2024-2025), 3

<sup>4</sup> Inverclyde Child Poverty Action Group, Child Poverty Local Action Report (Year 6: 2024-2025), 6

## 1.3 How does the Inverclyde Approach align with wider strategic goals?

The Inverclyde Approach not only responds to the local situation in Inverclyde, but contributes to wider policies tackling child poverty.

[Best Start, Bright Futures](#) is the Scottish Government's overall plan for tackling child poverty. It is underpinned by the idea that 'no one action in isolation can make the change needed'. *Best Start, Bright Futures*, like the Inverclyde Approach, recognises the need for interconnected services rather than individual programmes.

Additionally, the Scottish Government is committed to a 'no-wrong door approach', which means no matter which service families contact, that service is able to support families or connect them to help that meets their needs, in the right setting.

A series of policies and funds support the Scottish Government's priority to end child poverty. Two of these fund projects within the Inverclyde Approach – the CPAF and the EAC.

The person-centred and whole systems thinking embedded in the Inverclyde Approach aligns with several Scottish Government policies, including but not limited to:

- [Getting it Right for Every Child](#) (GIRFEC) – focused on enhancing the wellbeing of all children and young people and building a flexible 'scaffold of support' around them. This policy places the child or young person and their family at the heart of services, with full participation in decisions that affect them.
- [The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund](#) – aiming to transform services that help families to ensure that all families can access preventative, holistic support, according to their needs and when they need it.
- [No One Left Behind Approach](#) – a long-term, scalable, place-based model of delivery for employability support that is person-centred and aims to integrate key services e.g., health, justice, social work and housing.

Beyond *Best Start, Bright Futures*, there is also alignment with strategies that address wider determinants of health and wellbeing. For example, [A Healthier Future: Scotland's diet and healthy weight delivery plan](#), [Active Scotland Delivery Plan](#) and [Scotland's Public Health Priorities](#).

The Inverclyde Approach not only responds to local needs, but aligns with national strategies for tackling child poverty and supporting whole family wellbeing.

## 1.4 Evaluation of the Inverclyde Approach

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the Inverclyde Approach and provides recommendations for implementing the Approach moving forward.

The report explores:

- **Methodology** – how the evaluation was designed and applied.
- **Collective impacts for families** – the impact of the Approach on families, including their relationships with services, health and mental wellbeing, and personal development journey.
- **Transforming ways of working** – how the Approach has changed ways of working to embed a whole systems approach.
- **Recommendations and next steps** – how the Approach should be implemented moving forward.

The Appendix provides additional outputs from the evaluation of the Approach, including a summary of the project data collection methods, the Inverclyde Approach theory of change, ripple effect map, project participation numbers and the blueprint for success with partnership.

# 2.0 Methodology

Urban Foresight collaborated with the projects and Inverclyde Council to design an evaluation that captured the impact of the Inverclyde Approach on whole family outcomes and how services worked together.

## 2.1 The evaluation approach

Urban Foresight worked with the projects and Inverclyde Council to co-design a theory of change (**Appendix 1**). The theory of change was an essential step, as it provided the first visualisation of how the inputs, activities, outcomes and impacts of the four projects fit together.

The theory of change also provided the foundation for developing an evaluation framework. Urban Foresight worked with the team to understand their needs for a more agile framework that incorporated all services and was streamlined to reduce Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) burden.

The final framework included twenty questions which focused on five themes: process learning, system activities, whole family impact, parent / carer impact, and child impact. It introduced four new research methods in addition to the projects' existing data collection activities: **evaluation meetings, insight reports, a workforce survey and ripple effect mapping - to capture process learnings and impact data.**

**Appendix 2** summarises the methods used by projects to collect their impact data.

### Evaluation meetings

The evaluation meetings were held monthly and brought together the leads of each project from Inverclyde Council, Inverclyde HSCP, and Home-Start. They focused on reflection and provided an opportunity to delve deeper into identified insights.

### Insight reports

Urban Foresight designed and distributed insight reports on a monthly basis - 24 insight reports were completed between July 2024 and January 2025.

These reports asked teams to share:

- What they had done – engagement with other services, events and/or activities held, and any changes to their referrals or ways of working.
- What went well.
- What did not go well and what they did to overcome any challenges.
- Any key learnings.

## Workforce survey

Urban Foresight designed a survey to engage the local workforce and build a better understanding of their knowledge about, and experience of, partnership working.

The survey included 17 questions designed to gather both qualitative and quantitative data on:

- Organisational background information.
- Awareness of, and referral to, other services in the system.
- Experience with partnership working.
- Experiences of trauma-informed training (where relevant).

A total of 22 people responded to the survey, roughly 50% from the public sector and 50% from the third sector, with one respondent from the private sector.

## Ripple effect mapping

Ripple effect mapping is an evaluation method that identifies and visualises the wider intended and unintended impacts of an approach over time.

Urban Foresight facilitated an in-person ripple effect mapping workshop with the project leads and a Council representative in July 2024. This session built an understanding of their journey to developing the Inverclyde Approach and captured the activities and impacts of the approach to-date. The map was updated on an ongoing basis to reflect progress to-date.

The map is displayed in **Appendix 3** with a link to the Kumu and the presentation.

## 2.2 Data analysis

**Urban Foresight completed qualitative, quantitative and systems mapping analysis on the data collected.**

This included:

- A thematic (inductive) approach to analyse this data, involving identification of insights. The team then met to agree on important themes.
- Quantitative analysis of survey data, to examine trends in the local workforce's awareness of, confidence in, and experience with partnership, referrals, and service data.
- Analysis of the ripple effect map to identify impact pathways for the Inverclyde Approach.

The collective analysis led to the development of recommendations that were sense-checked with the project leads.

## 3.0 Collective impacts on the whole family

The projects testing the Inverclyde Approach have had four main impacts on families; development of robust relationships with families, opportunities for activities as a family, supporting the health and wellbeing of the whole family and supporting the adults in families to progress in their employability and parenting journey. As the Approach facilitates a more interconnected set of services, their impacts are mutually reinforcing and therefore described as collective impacts.

### 3.1 Engaging with families

**The Inverclyde Approach has collectively reached 375 families (Appendix 4) – building strong relationships with them and facilitating activities for them to do together.**

Each of the projects have successfully engaged and supported a range of families in Inverclyde. However, the measurement of the number of families must further be contextualised with the depth of support families need and the impacts of engaging deeply.

Home-Start staff discuss the often “unseen funnel of effort” required to get families to the point of engaging with services and support.

“Our team are skilled in minimising any barriers for families as they may be faced with issues, such as distrust of services, unwillingness to accept outside help or anxiety around appointments. It may take weeks of trying to contact and set up a visit before the first meeting.” – Home-Start

### Strong relationships with services

Families engaging with these services often have extremely complex needs. To effectively support them or even help them get to a place where they feel comfortable engaging with services, the projects have invested significant time and resources building relationships with them.

Each of the projects have/had key positions that act as a familiar face within the service, to facilitate regular and sustained engagement with families and provide the time to build trust. The positions highlighted were:

- RISE – the Occupational Therapists.
- EAC – the Family Wellbeing Worker (FWW).
- Home-Start – the Intensive Family Support Worker and the Family Support Coordinator.



- TU5 – the leaders of activities in nurseries (existing staff members which parents are familiar with or other familiar faces like the Community Food Workers).
- Advice Services – dedicated point of contact for engagement in partnership services.

Families placed significant value on these roles. Their strong relationships with families served as the foundation to providing effective support. For example, Home-Start reflected on the impact of their Intensive Family Support Worker:

“For more complex families, our Intensive Family Support Worker often becomes a trusted adult especially with lone parents, helping them with the children or supporting a parent to spend one-to-one time with one child while looking after the others, accompanying them to mental health and GP appointments which they otherwise wouldn’t attend on their own.”

## Activities with the whole family

Facilitating activities for families to participate in together is another aspect of going deeper with engagement. The projects have designed many of their activities to provide families with the opportunity to eat healthy, cook, play, explore, and socialise together. Participating in activities together is an additional impact to the goal of the session itself e.g., learning about vegetables, as shown in the ‘Activities Together’ case study.

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## CASE STUDY 1:

### Activities Together: Thrive Under Five

#### What activity was run:

The pilot session of Dinky Diggers, run by Belville Community Garden, was completed at the beginning of 2024 in a local nursery garden. The session invited parents and carers to come along and participate with the children. Activities included bug hunting, chalk drawing/writing, climbing, digging and toasting marshmallows on the campfire.

#### What happened during the activity:

One child with additional support needs (ASN) attended the session with their parent. The parent was keen for their child to join in with the session, however, was anxious about the campfire and their reaction to other children in the session.

During the session, the child went over to the campfire where the leader of the activity was working. The child was calm and stopped to look at the fire and the leader. The leader talked with the child and offered them a long skewer with a marshmallow on the end. The leader was very calm and quietly spoke with the child, keeping them focused and providing encouragement. The child was engaged in the activity, looking at the marshmallow and the fire, raising and lowering the skewer to toast the marshmallow.

#### What were the impacts for the family:

The parent was taken aback and could not believe how calm and focused their child was throughout the activity. They were very moved, became less anxious for their child and left the session happy, reassured and emotional. The parent could not wait to share the experience with their partner at home. The child even made a toasted marshmallow for their parent.

The campfire and one-on-one time spent with the parent in this outdoor environment was invaluable for both the child and their parent. The parent plans to take part in future sessions.

#### What can other services learn:

Services should create opportunities for not only parents and children to spend time together, but the opportunity for parents to see their children experience new things and go outside their comfort zone in a safe and supportive environment. These opportunities can help support parents' wellbeing around their child and build stronger relationships between parents and their children.

## 3.2 Supporting the health and wellbeing of the whole family

The Inverclyde Approach has effectively supported families to maintain and/or improve their health and wellbeing. The projects provided opportunities and resources for families to make progress on their emotional wellbeing, embed movement into their daily lives, eat healthier food, and build healthier habits around food.

### Facilitating emotional wellbeing

The projects have, and are continuing to, facilitate emotional wellbeing through both reducing crisis states e.g., stress and feelings of isolation, as well as building support structures e.g., links with their community to support longer-term emotional wellbeing.

#### Reducing crisis states

The projects have helped to support families' emotional wellbeing by intervening to disrupt crisis states. The projects achieved this by directly providing mental health support. For example, RISE provided one-on-one support to participants through an Occupational Therapist. RISE staff reflected on the impact of the intervention:

“Without the support of RISE, he would have given up and relapsed by this stage. Instead, he feels focused, has increased self-awareness on his strengths and assets and for the first time has engaged productively with mental health services.”

The projects have also helped to create circumstances that support families to move out of crisis states. For example, for EAC families, the provision of regular and affordable childcare had a significant impact on both the parents' and children's wellbeing.

The end of year 2023/24 childcare questionnaire captured the impacts of ASC on families. 93% of parents agreed they felt less stressed and more supported, while 100% of parents agreed that they felt reassured.

“It has been an absolute life saver. My stress levels over childcare are non-existent now. I can go to work every day without worrying all the time. So, thank you so, so much” – EAC parent.

Additionally, the ASC has supported the children's wellbeing through creating a stable routine for them, which has been especially beneficial for children with ASN.

“My child is settled, and it gives her routine while we are going through autism assessment, and the team couldn't be more accommodating” – EAC parent.

## Supporting long-term wellbeing

In addition to moving families out of crisis state, projects have also helped to families to build structures to support their long-term mental health. This has been achieved through the creation of safe spaces, where families can come, connect with other parents, access support and build a community. For example, Home-Start families have benefitted from safe spaces, such as family group and special events like the Summer 2024 safari trip.

Figure 1 shows the results from the Wellbeing Survey sent out to Home-Start families, which found that:

- 100% of respondents reported improvements to some extent in their emotional health and wellbeing.
- 89% of respondents reported feeling less isolated and having made more connections with other parents to some extent.

One Home-Start parent reflected:

“Knowing we have somewhere to come to that feels safe, the kids can play and learn, and I know I can be honest about how I am really feeling.”

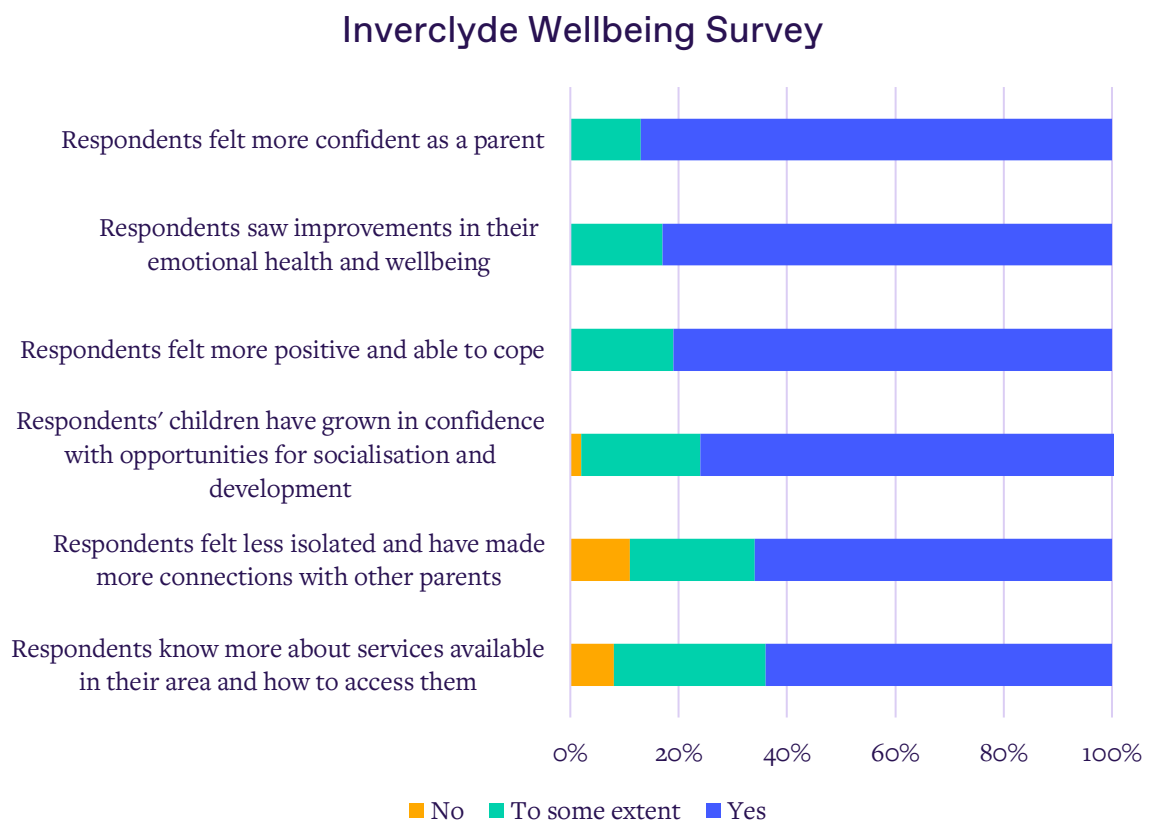


Figure 1: Results of the Inverclyde Wellbeing Survey sent out to Home-Start parents.



Figure 2: Home-Start Summer 2024 safari trip.

The special events, e.g., the Summer 2024 trip, provided additional opportunities for creating connections (Figure 2).

**“It means a lot as it gets us out the house which makes me less isolated and on a little trip that they wouldn’t normally go on and gave me the opportunity to meet new friends without financial hardship” – Home-Start parent.**

Family Group and the special events have effectively supported the creation of longer-term emotional wellbeing through connections to other parents. Additionally, the events have provided opportunities for the children to grow their emotional wellbeing through interaction and connection with other children: 98% of respondents reported their children have grown to some extent in confidence with opportunities for socialisation and development.



# Embedding movement and physical wellbeing into daily life



Figure 3: Home-Start family activities.

The projects have supported and are continuing to support families to build healthier lifestyles by providing opportunities to participate in regular movement.

For example, RISE supported participants to embed movement in their daily life through the provision of a gym pass. This enabled access to spaces to be physically active. 71% of participants made progress on healthy lifestyles through their participation in RISE (Figure 4).

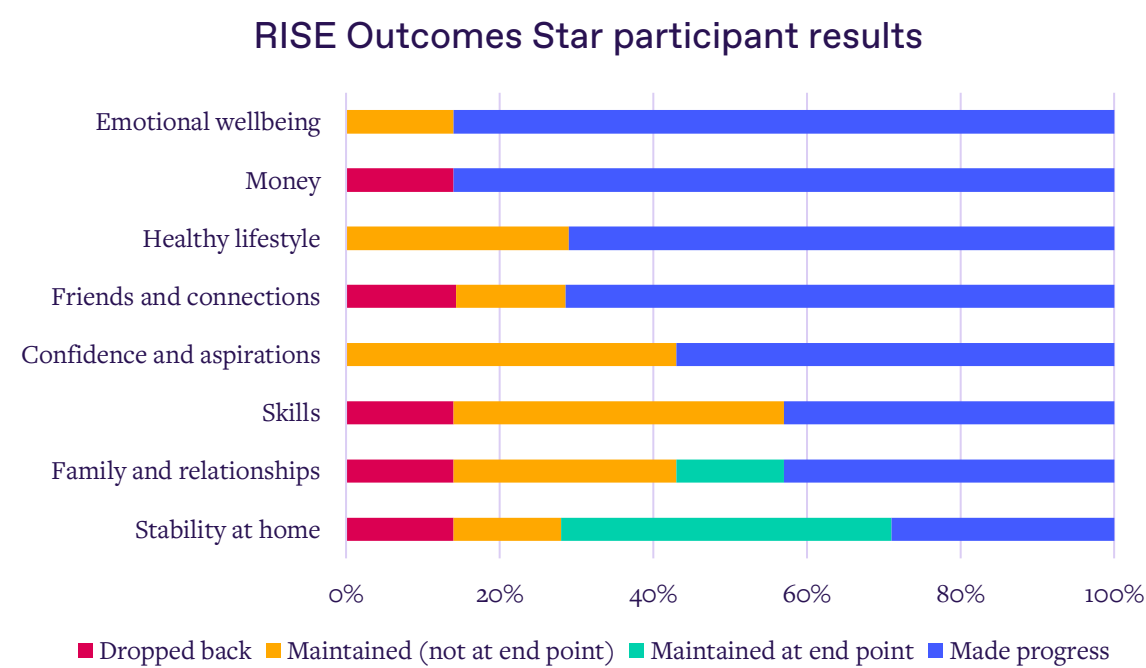


Figure 4: RISE Outcomes Star final results from project participants.

The projects have also facilitated specific opportunities for families to be active regularly, as a family and in their communities. For example, the TU5 programmes offer a variety of ways for families to be active together suited to their interests and needs (Table 2).

"Had a great time having some outdoor fun with [my child] at nursery. I could see that [my child] loved getting involved in activities [they] normally wouldn't such as toasting marshmallows. Overall, I thought it was a great activity to teach little ones about the outdoors" – Dinky Diggers parent participant.

Table 2: Summary of TU5 physical activity programmes.

Programme	Description	Number of sessions (as of January 2025)	Average number of families attending
Morton in the Community	Football for fun sessions for children and parents.	10	5
Dinky Diggers	Provided by Belville Community Gardens, the session is an outdoor activity for children and parents playing childhood games e.g., chalking, bug hunting, parachute games, fire lighting and marshmallow roasting.	27	15
Zumbini	Zumba for children under five and their parents with music, movement and musical instruments. Delivered at nurseries.	24	12

## Improving access to, and relationships with, food

The final important way in which the projects are supporting health and wellbeing is through food. Importantly, the projects are enabling access to food, providing healthier food options and supporting families to build better relationships with food.

### Access to food

Many families struggle with food security and projects have intervened to help families access food. For example, Home-Start provides hot rolls for families at the Family Group. Their families may not always have access to hot food and therefore having a regular space where they know they will have that provision has been extremely impactful for parents:

"Having a hot roll at group sometimes can be the only hot thing I have to eat that day" – Home-Start parent.

TU5 also provides food vouchers to families, to be used at major food retailers including Tesco.

## Provision of healthier food options

The projects have also provided healthier food options to families, promoting wider healthy eating habits. For example, EAC's ASC ensured 87 children between September 2023 and April 2024 had regular access to healthy snacks and drinks four days a week during term-time. A further 489 children in Port Glasgow attended EAC's breakfast club in the same time frame and had access to healthy breakfast options.

The end of year 2023/24 questionnaire showed that just under 50% of parents strongly agreed that their child ate a better variety of foods.

TU5 has also directly provided healthy food options to families through three programmes.

- Peas Please – to deliver two pieces of vegetables each week for six weeks to all nurseries in Port Glasgow.
- Soup bags – to deliver soup bags to families in nurseries (600 soup bags over 2024/25).
- Flat pack meals – to deliver all ingredients for a healthy meal, a recipe book and a QR code to a video of a community cook making recipes (over 1,159 meals given out over 2024/25).

Additionally, these programmes have helped create opportunities for families to cook healthy food and eat meals together in their home.

“I think the flat pack meals were very good and the instructions were very easy to follow. My daughter loved helping me cook using this and I will definitely be making more recipes from the book.” – TU5 family.

## Building better relationships with food

Finally, the projects supported families to improve relationships with, and skills around, food. For example, TU5 runs three types of programmes that provide space for families to learn about food, experiment with new foods, and understand where their food comes from together (Table 3).

Table 3: Summary of TU5 programmes focused on improving relationships with, and skills around, food.

Programme	Timeline	Description	Impact
Joint events between TU5 and Inverclyde Food Network (ICFN)	2024	→ Families are engaged in activities to support healthy eating, such as making healthy alternatives e.g., pitta pizzas, fruit kebabs and vegetable skittles and playing the “where does it grow?” game using fresh fruit and vegetables.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Children tried new fruits and vegetables.</li><li>→ Children demonstrated curiosity regarding their food.</li><li>→ Parents were able to get support and advice on getting their children to eat more healthily.</li></ul>



Nursery gardening	March – July 2024	→ ICFN attended the nursery garden monthly to show children how to garden e.g., pull weeds, dig holes and plant herbs, vegetables and flowers.	→ Gardening at the nursery gave children the opportunity to learn about where their food comes from, what goes into growing their food, and to practice being curious about food.
Drop-in events	Ongoing	→ For example, the Moveable Feast, a three-course meal run monthly at various venues across Inverclyde which is open to everyone in the community. The meal is free, or families can leave a donation.	→ Provides families with the opportunity to eat with other families and be served at the table by volunteers. → Reduces the loneliness and isolation of families.

## 3.3 Supporting parents and carers to progress in their employability and parenting journey

The Inverclyde Approach has helped families progress in their personal development journey, no matter where they are on the journey or what the milestones and destination look like. The projects are supporting parents through three pathways employability, financial wellbeing, and wider parenting and life skills.

### Enabling parents to progress in employability

The projects have supported parents / adults to progress in employability in three ways – supporting their development of aspirations and confidence, helping them to build the skills to progress, and supporting them into new opportunities.

For example, RISE supported participants in all three of these areas.

- 57% of participants were found to have improved their confidence and raised their aspirations during the programme (Figure 4).
- 43% made progress on their skills during the programme (Figure 4). As of March 2024, three participants had completed training and/or further education, and three were in the process of completing courses.
- As of March 2024, six participants had moved into some form of employment or education (full-time, part-time, university and college programmes).

The projects did not just directly offer employability support, but the interventions themselves provided the right circumstances for parents and carers to progress. For example, access to reliable, regular and affordable childcare provided EAC parents and carers the time they needed to engage in education, employment, or training:

- 100% of families contacted for a wellbeing check agreed that without the ASC provision it would be either very difficult or not possible at all for them to work or attend education.
- 89% of those families reported that they now work full-time because of this programme and have been able to increase their working hours due to the flexibility that ASC allows.

**“The ability to work full time as a single parent which would not have been possible otherwise and the financial drain of childcare would not have been feasible” – EAC parent.**

Finally, the projects have created opportunities within their own services for families to continue to develop their capabilities. For example, when families reach the end of their time with Home-Start, they are encouraged to attend Home-Start’s Volunteer Training Course.

The Volunteer Training Course prepares participants to volunteer at Home-Start, providing them with the necessary skills and confidence to do so. Six Home-Start parents have participated in the training and all six have gone on to volunteer at Home-Start. The ‘Pathways into employability’ case study explores the impact of these opportunities.

## CASE STUDY 2:

### Pathways in employability: Home-Start

#### Where did we start:

A lone parent was referred to Home-Start by their Health Visitor. The parent was dealing with a number of mental health challenges, which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 lockdowns, and they were isolated with little family support.

#### How did we progress:

Following several visits from Home-Start's Family Support Coordinator (FSC), the parent trusted the service enough to try attending Family Group with their child. On the morning of the group, the FSC directly supported the parent to help them feel comfortable to come in, have coffee and let their child play with toys.

The safe, supportive environment of the Family Group was a turning point for the parent. Through the encouragement of others, the parent gradually became an active participant in the group, offering assistance to fellow parents and volunteering to meet other parents in town before the sessions.

#### Where did we get to:

The parent soon assumed a Parent Helper role, which serves as a valuable transition for those who no longer require Home-Start services, but still wish to remain involved and build their confidence. When the parent's child started school, they took the next step and attended Home-Start's Volunteer Preparatory Course. The parent is now a much-valued Volunteer Group Worker, volunteering twice a week at Home-Start's Parent and Family Groups.

#### What can other services learn:

When serving families, there are many elements of employability, and steps along the employability journey. Furthermore, employment may not be the final aspiration. Progression in personal development needs to be celebrated and recognised as impactful for families. Opportunities, within spaces where families have existing strong relationships, such as volunteering, should be leveraged to help parents grow.



*Figure 5: Home-Start family group.*

# Facilitating financial wellbeing among families

The Inverclyde Approach projects have helped families strengthen their financial wellbeing. While progression on an employability journey contributes to financial wellbeing, projects have also more directly supported economic security through ensuring uptake of eligible benefits, facilitating access to hardship funds, improving financial habits and helping families access tailored financial support services.

## Supporting full benefits attainment

The projects supported participants to build their financial wellbeing through helping them to claim their full entitled benefits.

For example, RISE helped programme participants realise financial gains in the form of unclaimed social security entitlements – in particular disability-related benefits. Realised financial gains totalled over £64,000 per annum for ten of the programme participants. During the programme, 86% of participants were reported to make progress with respect to money (Figure 4).

Additionally, the projects have helped families access non-governmental economic support. For example, the CPAF-funded coordinators in Home-Start have helped families secure £5,292 in total benefits in the form of:

- Hardship payment funds – The Buttle Trust, Save the Children, and others.
- Children in Need grants for specific household items.
- Foodbank vouchers.

## Financial security support

The projects supported families by helping them to access the right support for their situation, at the right time. For example, in the end of year 2023/24 questionnaire, 50% of respondents agreed that their income had improved since the beginning of the EAC.

All EAC families are encouraged to take part in a financial wellbeing assessment when they first enter the service. Over 70% of survey respondents completed a financial wellbeing assessment. All 18 families who were spoken to during the wellbeing check were also offered a referral to Advice Services – eight families initially accepted the referral.

Furthermore, in the wellbeing check, families were found to need support on a variety of issues, including but not limited to: threat of redundancy, barriers to understanding benefits as English was not a first language, and benefits with Kinship placement. This conversation helped the FWW to understand where families needed support, ensuring they were connected to relevant support services. Investing the time in a conversation with families ensured that the most effective support for families' financial wellbeing could be offered.

## Building wider parenting, life skills and confidence

The Inverclyde Approach has supported the personal development journey of parents / carers by helping them to build their capacity and confidence in their role as a parent and their skills to provide for their family.

For example, Home-Start both provides an environment that fosters personal development and offers specific courses to support parents / carers on their journey. 87% of respondents from the Inverclyde Wellbeing Survey felt more confident as a parent from their engagement with Home-Start (Figure 1).

All Home-Start families are offered learning and development courses to help build their capabilities. Three specific courses support families to build their self-worth and capabilities (Table 4).

Table 4: Home-Start parenting capacity building courses.

Course	Description	Families participated	Outcomes
Equip for Life course	Designed to build confidence, peer support and self-worth using a mixture of teaching, interaction and tasks in a safe and welcoming environment.	9	Supporting families to get to the point of participation in this course often marks a milestone in their journey of change.
Antenatal Mellow Parenting course	Delivered by an accredited Family Support Coordinator and is completed on a one-to-one basis in the family's home.	3	Increase in wellbeing following the course.

The projects have also helped to support parents to develop specific capabilities to help them in their role as parents. For example, Home-Start offers a two-hour Infant and Child First Aid Course to all their parents. These sessions help to build parents' confidence to know what actions to take if faced with a medical emergency. Ten parents have participated in the training so far and have received a certificate and first aid kit upon completion.

Additionally, TU5 provides Community Cooking Sessions, which aim to improve parents / carers cooking skills and abilities to cook at home. The pilot included four sessions arranged over a four-week period. This was initially aimed at mums with young children and had six parents attend the sessions. All recipes made at the sessions were simple, suitable for children and families, and mainly included five ingredients with plenty of vegetables, herbs, spices, and beans.

In 2024/25, Community Cooks delivered 14 cooking courses. This included 43 cooking demonstrations with over 376 people in attendance. The sessions provide parents / carers the opportunity to improve their cooking skills, get advice around healthy eating, learn more about nutrition, and find ways to include more fruit and vegetables into their family's diet.

TU5 also provides opportunities for parents and carers to progress within this setting. The TU5 coordinator shared:

“A parent from TU5 has delivered their first session as a community chef and started their first cooking class. This is a single parent with two children who really struggled and needed a lot of support from agencies but has gone on to complete an REHIS accredited course and is now teaching other parents.”

# 4.0 Transforming ways of working towards a whole system approach

The Inverclyde Approach not only serves the whole family, but it considers the different touchpoints within the system which support a family. The projects have been working holistically in ways that align services, empower communities, and embed learning.

This section outlines the process learning gathered since June 2024, which demonstrates that the projects have successfully made progress on transforming ways of working.

Specific structures of the system have been identified that both help and hinder the projects' ability to transform ways of working (Table 5).

*Table 5: Summary table of the enablers and barriers for transforming ways of working*

Barriers ↴	Enablers ↴
De-prioritisation of partnership working in resource constrained environments.	Structures that support a coordinated approach e.g., shared strategic spaces.
Workforce perceptions on partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Inaccessibility of referral systems.</li> <li>→ Incompatibility of internal systems, including data sharing.</li> <li>→ Competing priorities and funding.</li> </ul>	Trauma-informed training for the workforce. Workforce perceptions on partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Better understanding of the local support offer.</li> <li>→ Ability to share best practice.</li> <li>→ Opportunity to align approaches across services.</li> <li>→ Improvement of services for families.</li> <li>→ Increased personal confidence in referrals.</li> <li>→ More efficient use of resources.</li> </ul>
Co-design fatigue.	Involving families early and in every step from design to delivery. Integrating co-design into ongoing engagement.
Short-term funding opportunities paired with high expectations and delayed internal processes.	Transformational shift to evaluation methods to support continuous testing and learning. Funding opportunities that support the time investment required to build relationships between services and with families.



## 4.1 Aligning local services to create a coordinated approach

At the centre of a whole system approach to tackling child poverty is the alignment of local services. The projects have ensured a coordinated approach to service delivery and engagement with families. This has been achieved through four structures that support a partnership approach. However, the projects still face challenges around connecting to some services and regarding capacity.

### Building the infrastructure for a coordinated approach

The projects have collaborated to align work between themselves and the wider system through the evaluation infrastructure, partnership approaches, joint working and shared strategic spaces.

#### 1/ Evaluation infrastructure

As noted, a key part of Urban Foresight's evaluation approach was implementing monthly evaluation meetings, which began in June 2024.

Prior to the monthly meetings, there was not a set space or time for the four projects to come together. Team members reflected that there was great value in having dedicated time to sit down with the other projects, review what has been happening in the past month, what has gone well, and where there have been challenges.

The ripple effect map (**Appendix 3**) shows that these meetings allowed trust to be built between the projects. This was a key impact that resulted in TU5 building partnerships with the other services, Home-Start formalising their relationship with the Council, and helping to foster a more collaborative environment.

#### 2/ Partnership approach

Building on the relationships developed within the shared monthly meetings, the projects have taken a partnership approach with this test of change. This approach is best illustrated by two key relationships.

First, is the relationship between TU5 and Home-Start. Figure 7 shows how this partnership has developed through multiple pathways:

- Home-Start has joined TU5's Steering Group, which feeds into decision-making and direction setting for the service.
- Home-Start also offers TU5 referrals to all their families. Since this practice has begun, Home-Start has heard positive feedback from the families, who have shared that they like the recipes and participating in TU5's activities is encouraging them to cook as a family.
- Home-Start and TU5 are co-locating, meaning they are delivering services in shared spaces. Home-Start has attended TU5's stay and play sessions and they jointly planned an event with Financial Inclusion.

The second such relationship is the partnership approach of Home-Start and Advice Services, which aims to develop smoother signposting pathways into Advice Services.



“The partnership with Advice Services through the CPAF project has delivered measurable and tangible benefits for the families I support. Developing a collaborative approach, we have established a closer working relationship between Home-Start and Advice Services and a more open and transparent exchange of information. Together with the existing support we provide at Home-Start, this strengthened partnership has enhanced our capacity to address families’ needs.”

– Intensive Family Support Worker.

Figure 8 maps out the evolution of this partnership, which formally began with the assignment of a dedicated point of contact within Advice Services for Home-Start. This contact visited Home-Start’s monthly meeting to introduce themselves and start to build relationships with the Home-Start staff.

To strengthen the relationship and ensure alignment, the projects implemented regular catch-ups. Additionally, they adapted the way in which information was being shared, to enable the contact to share updates on the families directly with the FSCs.

The partnership was further iterated upon to offer joint appointments with both the point of contact and a FSC – co-locating the services for families.

This partnership approach has improved the ability of both projects to serve families and meet their needs. The partnership approach case study shared in the latter part of this section demonstrates the extent of the impact.



Figure 6: Child playing at Home-Start.

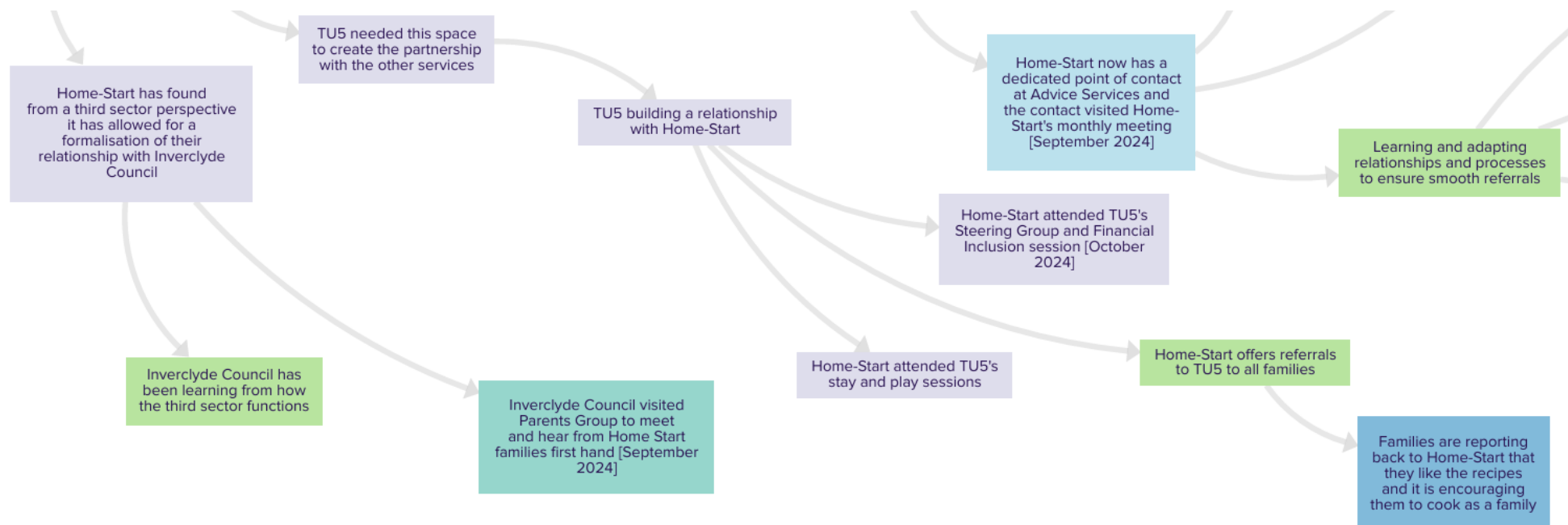


Figure 7: Screenshot of the ripple map showing the relationship between Home-Start and TU5.



### 3/ Joint working across the system

The projects have taken a partnership approach within the test of change and have worked to improve joint working with the wider system.

For example, TU5 undertook significant joint working across the local and national system around the issue of emergency infant food. TU5 met with the Scottish Government and local teams around Scotland regarding this issue. Following this meeting, TU5 worked in partnership with the Breast Feeding Coordinator, local third sector organisations, health, social work and ICFN to develop a local pathway for emergency infant feeding in Inverclyde (Ripple effect map – **Appendix 3**).

This example illustrates a small sample of the connections the projects have built across the system to support a partnership approach. The projects are applying the Inverclyde Approach more broadly to begin to create a more interconnected set of services for families.

### 4/ Shared strategic spaces

Finally, the projects have transformed existing or created new shared strategic spaces to support engagement, coordination and shared learning. This has ensured the sustainability of partnerships beyond the test of change.

For example, in the beginning, there was a desire from the project teams to be more connected to the Inverclyde Child Poverty Action Group. Home-Start has now joined this group, ensuring all projects in the Inverclyde Approach are represented in this strategic space.

This space has been leveraged to share learning on the approach. Urban Foresight attended one of the groups meetings in January 2025, to present the ripple effect map and explore the journey of the Inverclyde Approach and what had been achieved to-date. Inverclyde Council and Home-Start also presented impacts specifically from the CPAF funded aspect of the project.

The projects are able to use this space as a way to check-in with each other as well as align with the wider child poverty landscape in Inverclyde.

Additionally, a local implementation group has been developed in response to EAC round two. The project teams plan to have continuity between the members of this group and the Local Child Poverty Action Group, to continue to develop the Inverclyde Approach (Ripple effect map – **Appendix 3**).

There are now multiple structures which provide the time and space for the projects to interact, and which are independent from this evaluation. This ensures that the projects can continue to coordinate and develop a sustainable partnership approach.

## CASE STUDY 3:

### Partnership approach: Home-Start

#### Where did we start:

A lone-parent self-referred into Home-Start due to struggling with the aftermath of a relationship breakdown. The parent was very isolated, on long-term sick leave from their job as a support worker and struggling with their own mental health. The parent faced challenges engaging with services and was hesitant to seek assistance for their mental health concerns, as they knew many healthcare professionals through their job.

#### How did we progress:

Home-Start's FSC encouraged the parent to visit their GP and request a referral for mental health support. The parent was also paired with a Home-Start Home Visiting volunteer, who provided both emotional and practical support on a weekly basis. This support enabled the parent to engage in community activities with their child and reduce the family's isolation.

With a trusted relationship established, the parent confided in her FSC about their financial worries - they had contacted a trust deed company for advice about their debt. The FSC discussed the income maximisation support that could be offered through the collaborative work with Advice Services. Initially hesitant, they cancelled appointments but felt more at ease when accompanied by the FSC.

#### Where did we get to:

After some initial phone consultations, the parent began attending appointments and experienced a sense of relief as their debt burden started to ease. During the income maximisation assessment, it was discovered that the parent was not receiving all the benefits they were entitled to since they were no longer employed.

The Advice Worker recommended applying for adult disability payment, based on the parent's health condition, and assisted them in completing the application. The parent's application was approved, and they are now receiving adult disability payment.

#### What can other services learn:

The comprehensive and combined support provided by Home-Start, the FSC, the Home Visiting volunteer and Advice Services has had a significant impact on families, as it ensures they do not have to navigate the system alone. Services should take a partnership approach to help them meet the needs of families better than they could independently.

## Barriers to coordinating services

There have been great accomplishments with coordinating services through this test of change. However, it has also revealed parts of the system where there is further work to be done.

Throughout the evaluation, the project teams gained a better understanding of the need for specific employability support when parents are ready for that guidance. To serve these needs in the near future, EAC round two and the Fairer Futures Partnership have recruited a dedicated employability worker to bridge the gaps into improved outcomes, learning, training, and employment outcomes.

This dedicated worker will help address the employability support needs of parents and carers engaging in EAC round two and the Fairer Futures Partnership. However, recruiting employability support is not sustainable due to the constrained funding environment. While there have been challenges meeting that need through existing capacity within the Council, the projects reflect that moving forward they must focus on:

**"Creating opportunities and requests from employability services at the earliest stages of the project development."**

Additionally, creating a more coordinated approach is challenging in capacity and/or resource constrained environments. Services in these situations must balance the immediate need for service provision with investment in building strong foundations for partnership. A key example of this has been the Health Visitors. While this is a central service to connect and coordinate with, there has been a massive shortage of Health Visitors.

**"Numbers of referrals are a bit slower [as] our Health Visitors are short on staff and under a lot of pressure" – TU5 coordinator.**

Partnership working and referrals may get deprioritised when services are resource constrained. That is a reality of the environment, but it means, through no fault of any individual service, that it is more challenging to coordinate services.

## 4.2 Supporting the workforce to implement a coordinated approach

To effectively coordinate and align services, the local workforce must be given the knowledge and skills to facilitate a partnership approach. The workforce survey sent out in summer 2024 provides insight into perceptions around partnership, the existing partnership landscape, and how well equipped the local workforce feels to implement this.

Since the workforce survey was administered, the projects have begun to implement changes to support their workforce on the partnership approach.

### The baseline

The survey captured the workforce's awareness of the system, the referral process, and the existing relationships between services.

#### Awareness of the system and the referral process

The survey demonstrated clear strengths in the workforce's knowledge and awareness of services. 81% of respondents agreed they are aware of all the relevant services in Inverclyde and over 71% agreed they know where to find information on services in Inverclyde (Figure 9).

However, staff noted there is a missing link with referral processes. Only 57% agreed that they feel confident in the referral process and only 52% agreed they find it accessible (Figure 9).

**“Referral processes are not always easy to understand, and waiting lists are a barrier to people accessing the correct support at the correct time.”**  
– Third sector staff member.

While the workforce felt confident in their knowledge of the system, creating a coordinated approach faces challenges if the workforce feels the system is not sufficiently organised to connect people to services when they need it.

## To what extent do you agree that you...

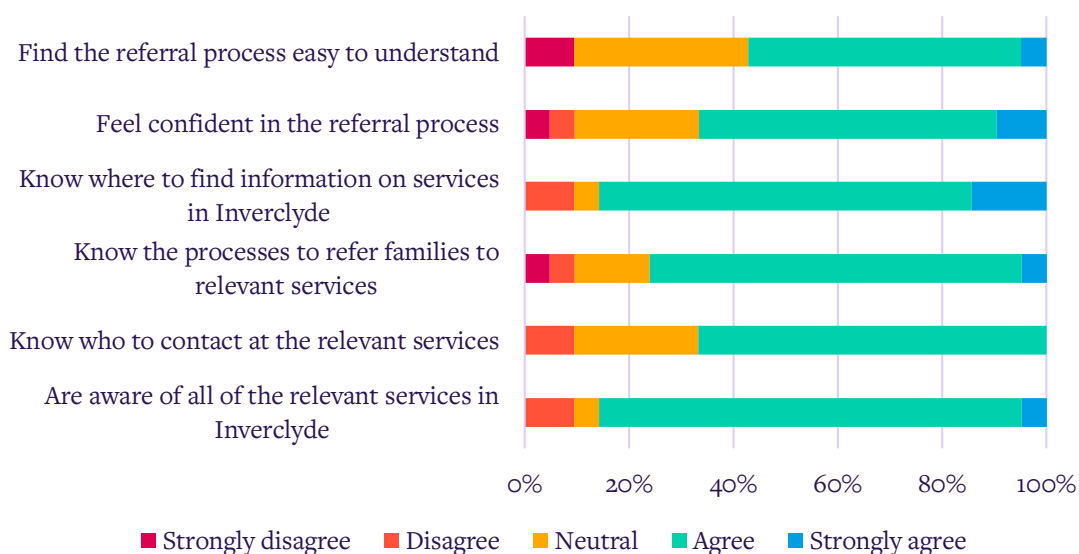


Figure 9: Workforce survey results on a question asking about respondents understanding, confidence and awareness of the local referral systems.

### Relationships between services

The survey also showed some existing partnerships within the system. 62% of respondents defined their relationship to other services as “we partner / collaborate with other services” (Figure 10).

One public sector staff member reflected:

“I have worked in collaboratives and in partnerships within the council and across the local community planning partnership and with local community groups.”

The existing connections between services provides a strong foundation for coordinated working moving forward.



## How would you define your relationship to other services in the system?

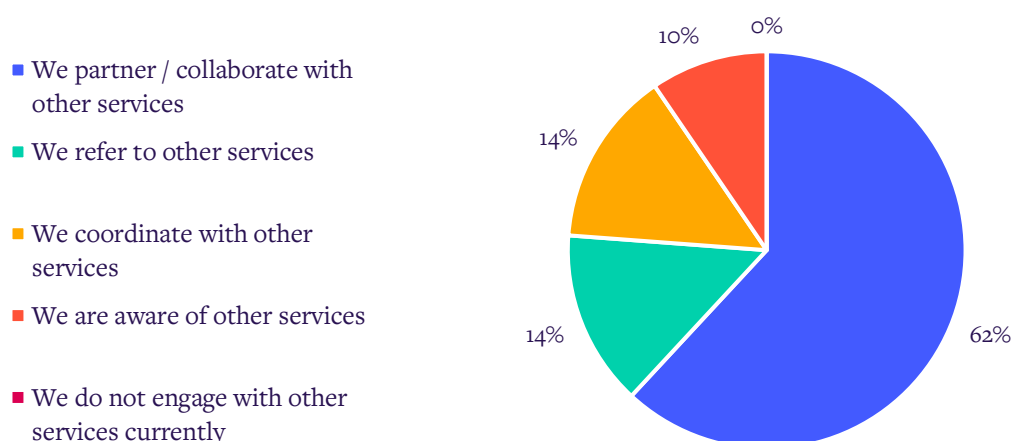


Figure 10: Workforce survey results from a question asking respondents how they would define their relationship to other services in the system.

## Perception and experiences of partnerships

The survey also captured a snapshot of the perceived benefits and challenges of partnership approaches from respondents' experience.

### Benefits of partnerships

The main benefits that emerged included:

- Better understanding of the local support offer.
- The ability to share knowledge and best practice.
- The opportunity to align approaches across services.
- The improvement of services for families.
- Increased personal confidence in referrals.
- More efficient use of resources.

### Challenges of partnerships

The core challenges of partnership that emerged included:

- An incompatibility of internal systems, creating barriers to sharing knowledge.
- Data protection challenges around sharing information.
- Mismatched priorities between organisations.
- Tension in partnerships, caused by organisations competing for the same funding.

## Trauma-informed training

The survey also explored respondents' experiences of trauma-informed training. Over 60% of the respondents participated in trauma-informed training in their workplace. One major theme emerged from their reflections on how the training has influenced their approach to working with families experiencing poverty.

The respondents reflected that the training prompted a change in mindset to consider the impact of trauma on families in their everyday working. This centred around three reflections:

- How living with poverty can be and often is a source of trauma.
- How earlier trauma can impact families' relationships with services today.
- How much work is needed before those who have experienced trauma feel ready to access support, function in life and progress in their journey.

However, two respondents also reflected that poverty was not expressly tied into the trauma-informed training and therefore the training did not have a clear impact on their work. This could point to a need for establishing a clearer link between trauma and poverty in the training materials.

## The first steps to supporting a shift within the workforce

The survey provided valuable insight into the views of the workforce in summer 2024. The projects have taken early steps to support their workforce to leverage a coordinated approach and changes within the workforce have occurred as a result of the implementation of a partnership approach.

Advice Services worked to support a shift in mindset within its workforce.

“Partnership working is crucial to monitor the success of the project. Historically, Advice Services would “take ownership” of a client we are supporting. We have had to adjust our perception of this - the referrer is the trusted service, and we are providing assistance to them. For them to best support their client, it needs to be an integrated approach. Changing the mindset of existing Advice Worker staff on the reasoning of this approach has been challenging but worthwhile and may be something that we look at within the wider team.” –  
Advice Services.

As a result of their successes with Home-Start, Advice Services is aiming to replicate this relationship with other services in the system. The ripple effect map (**Appendix 3**) shows how the experience of, and learning from, this relationship has led Advice Services to undertake some organisational re-structuring to better support this way of working.

Home-Start has also reflected on the impact of their partnership with Advice Services, acknowledging that implementing the partnership approach itself has helped to enhance their ability to support families.

“Collaborating on cases with Advice First has bolstered our confidence in addressing financial issues with families, knowing we have a trusted partner who will follow through. Seeing successful outcomes has been very rewarding.”

– Home-Start Coordinator.

New shared strategic spaces also help to address challenges around competing agendas, as the projects now dedicate space to discuss and align agendas. While there are ongoing challenges to overcome, the projects have been able to leverage the benefits of partnership working and begin to collaborate to overcome the challenges.

## 4.3 Empowering communities

**Empowering communities to lead and shape services is an essential part of a whole system approach. The projects have engaged families in this process through both formal co-design methods and integrated co-production into ongoing service delivery.**

### Co-design methods

The projects used co-design approaches to gather information on families' needs, to support service design and understand their experiences with ongoing services. The methods used included surveys, focus groups, and co-design events.

For example, EAC completed an in-depth co-design process to ensure the ASC offering was designed with families' needs at the centre. Prior to beginning the service, an online survey was released which asked families about their thoughts on childcare, how they currently use it, and their needs – 169 families responded.

To further contextualise the survey results, a Project Officer attended six attainment work groups at the local primary schools. Both of these early methods helped to define the need for flexible, affordable childcare before and after school and during the holidays.

Another example is Home-Start's use of co-design events:

- Home-Start partnered with Save the Children to run a co-design event in June 2024.
- In January 2025, Scotland's Social Justice Secretary visited Home-Start where the Minister heard from parents about the impact that poverty is having on families supported by Home-Start. Parents specifically highlighted the negative effects of having benefit income wrongly stopped.

### Integrating co-design into ongoing engagement

The projects also embedded co-design in their day-to-day work. This meant prioritising building relationships, meeting families in spaces where they already are, and supporting families when they self-organise.

#### Prioritising building trusted relationships

The projects focused on building strong relationships with the families as a basis for co-design. For example, EAC leveraged the FWW role to invest time in building trust with the families and help strengthen future co-design. Additionally, the project has recruited a dedicated co-design worker, who started in September 2024, to direct EAC's engagement with families.

Furthermore, prioritising relationship building was found to have a positive impact on participants. For example, RISE took a person-centred approach that focused on building rapport with participants. The participants reported the difference in their experience of RISE compared to other services. Advice Services will be taking this learning, and evidence of what worked for participants, forward in other services.

“[The participant] reports he has spent most of his life feeling disillusioned by his experience with statutory services but describes that RISE feels different because he feels valued within this system and there has been flexibility around his engagement.” – Community Support Worker.

### Meeting families where they are

The projects ensured that co-design activities involved services going to families in spaces which were accessible and familiar to them. This not only reduced the burden for families but ensured the projects were taking a trauma-informed approach. For example:

- RISE integrated co-design into exit conversations with programme participants.
- EAC focused on having structured conversations with parents as they collected their children from ASC.
- Home-Start’s relationship-based one-to-one support means the project informally engages families in conversations on an on-going basis about their needs and experiences.
- TU5 amended its evaluation approach to begin asking all delivery partners to conduct an evaluation of their services. This means that parents have the opportunity to feed into the service at the delivery locations.

### Supporting families when they self-organise

The projects have also enabled opportunities for parents to be more directly involved in the decision-making process through joining existing decision-making spaces or creating their own.

For example, during the test of change, two parents joined the TU5 Steering Group and now have a platform to share their experiences, shape activities, and play a role in decision-making.

Additionally, Home-Start’s engagement with families has inspired parents to form a group for families with neurodiverse children. Families have been empowered to create spaces where they can advocate for their needs and help shape services (Ripple effect map – **Appendix 3**).

### Being mindful of the value of families’ time

Balancing engagement with families is difficult – not only in making sure it is accessible to them, but avoiding co-design fatigue.

“Getting the correct time and place that suits the needs of families is difficult. Families are asked for their input into lots of services and to participate in lots of consultations, this means that they may have ‘fatigue’ in participation in this type of engagement.” – EAC project coordinator.

Families’ time and input is valuable and while prioritising co-design is an important aspect of the Inverclyde Approach, projects must be mindful of the investment being asked of families.

## 4.4 Embedding continuous learning

The Inverclyde Approach has embedded continuous learning processes which has enabled the use of on-going learning to create change in services as they have been delivered, and the collection of learning to help shape future projects.

### How learning has been applied throughout the project

#### Structures to support continuous learning

The test of change has used three evaluation methods to support ongoing learning:

- Insight reports – submitted monthly by each project to record process learning. Team members shared that the insight reports were a valuable space for reflection.
- Monthly meetings – to discuss key reflections from the insight reports as a wider team.
- Ripple effect map – the first ripple mapping exercise occurred in-person and helped team members develop a greater understanding of the collective project (Ripple effect map – **Appendix 3**). The map has also been used to share back learnings to wider audiences e.g., Local Child Poverty Action Group.

#### How learning has been embedded to-date

The relationship between Home-Start and Advice Services best demonstrates how the projects have applied their learning to adapt processes and improve their ways of working to best serve families (Figure 4). Both projects took an iterative approach to working in partnership, including holding regular meetings between the teams, changing the way information flowed, and shifting to offer joint appointments for families.

Home-Start and Advice Services reflected on the process stating:

“Initially, there were some challenges as this was a new way of working that needed review of processes from both parties, however these were overcome, and the partnership has gone from strength to strength.”

The ongoing learning process not only served to refine the relationship between Advice Services and Home-Start, but this refined approach to partnerships has also begun to be implemented in other services, mostly notably between EAC and Advice Services. A dedicated Advice Services worker has attended EAC outreach events and is starting to build relationships with both the EAC project team and EAC families (Ripple effect map – **Appendix 3**).

## How learning is being applied to future projects

The projects have also collected learning from this test of change and have plans to apply it to future projects or future iterations of existing projects. In some cases, this application is already underway.

With the completion of RISE in December 2024, the project is in the unique position to have completed its evaluation and have final takeaways that can be applied to future projects. This was important to projects for two reasons.

First, the evaluation process itself took a whole systems approach. The RISE evaluation was led by the Corporate Director for Education and Communities and attended by three Corporate Directors, Service Managers, and team leaders from across three services within the local authority. It was held as a facilitated conversation / forum about what went well and where there might have been challenges. Team members involved in this process found it to be extremely valuable.

“The project has now ceased, however, the review highlighted areas where processes could have been improved and the communication between services was useful. The outcome was an understanding that the principles around the whole systems approach to RISE was beneficial to the service user, however, the existing processes created the challenges that prevented the proposed outcomes from being achieved.” – Project manager.

Second, the outcomes of the evaluation itself were extremely insightful, demonstrating:

- The importance of integrating financial inclusion through all interventions.
- The value of streamlining services to support a single point of contact for clients.
- Required changes in the approach to effectively engage other departments in the Council.

The projects plan to use this learning to directly inform the new Fairer Futures Partnership project and EAC Round Two in Inverclyde.

Additionally, wider learning about how to implement and support the Inverclyde Approach is already shaping other projects in the locality. For example, informing the Values-based leadership programme and feeding into further engagement for the changes at Boglestone Community Centre (Figure 11).

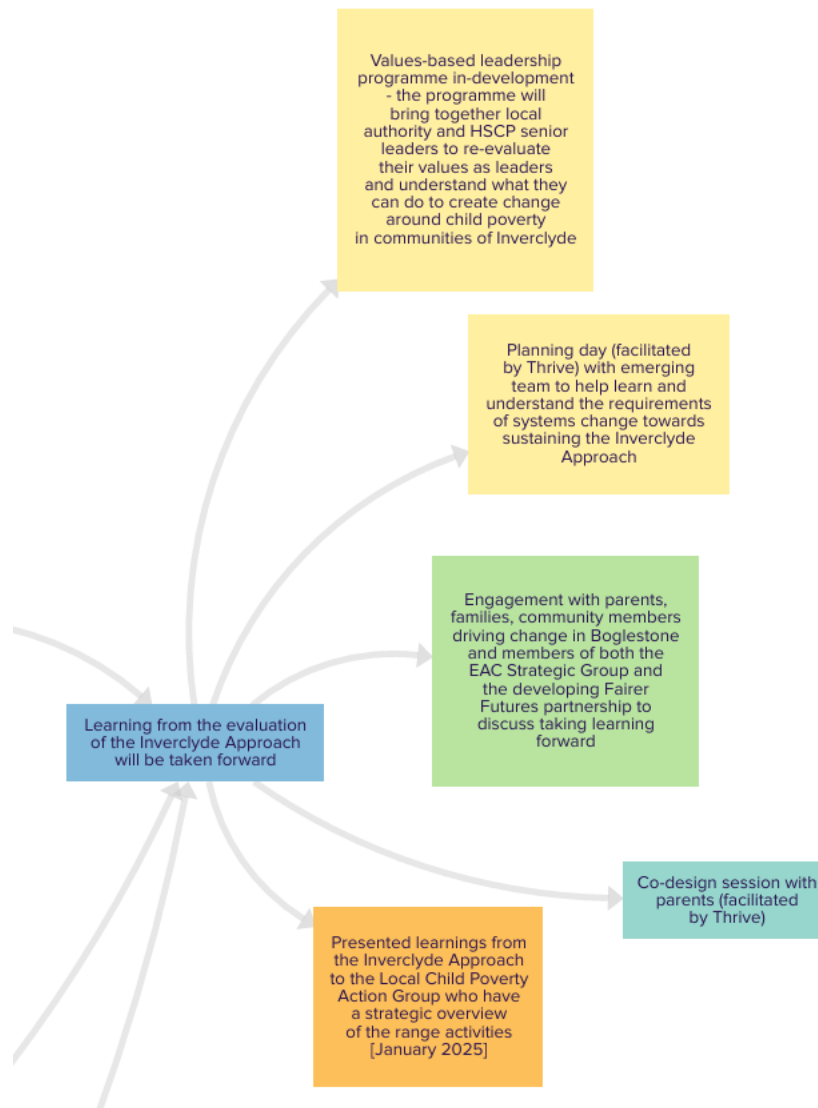


Figure 11: Screenshot of the ripple effect map showing how learning from the Inverclyde Approach is already being applied.



## 4.5 Navigating the tackling child poverty environment

The Inverclyde Approach exists within a system that currently has barriers which impede projects' ability to effectively create change and implement the Approach. These challenges centre around funding, expectations around delivery, and internal processes.

The first barrier to implementing the Inverclyde Approach is the tendency for short-term funding opportunities. Short-term funding and the expectations around what will be achieved within that timeframe has created challenges for the projects.

“There is a lot of work to do and lots of unknowns. This makes it feel overwhelming and difficult to know where to begin. The impact of having funding approved and grants organised is that there is pressure to deliver the correct thing quickly, not taking into account that we are testing and trialling systems for EACs” – EAC project coordinator.

The projects feel there is pressure to deliver the correct solution within condensed timeframes, which may not align with the realities of tackling child poverty. Additionally, short-term funding is contradictory to the evidenced need to invest time and resources into building relationships with families and strong foundations for partnerships between services.

“[We have] challenges around the speed of expectations and how quickly everything needs to be implemented.” – Project manager.

Finally, projects face challenges with slow internal processes, which further exacerbate the pressure of truncated timelines. For example, projects feel they cannot be agile when recruiting for a post within a new project.

“Challenges employing people into the posts, the internal processes are difficult, seeking approval and the timescale to appoint is frustrating. [We ended up] identifying people from within the organisation who have the skills, knowledge and experience.” – Project manager

Project teams found internal processes slow progress and further delay reaching tight timelines for delivery.

## 4.6 A blueprint for success: partnerships in a whole family approach

The evaluation of the test of change has provided insight on how to build and maintain successful, trusted relationships and partnerships between services. **Appendix 5** outlines a blueprint for applying the Inverclyde Approach to partnerships based on the critical success factors identified in the evaluation.

# 6.0 Recommendations for tackling child poverty

## 6.1 Integrating the Inverclyde Approach

This evaluation demonstrates that the Inverclyde Approach should be integrated more widely across the locality. There are four recommendations for how to continue to support the implementation of the Approach (Table 6).

Table 6: Tackling child poverty recommendations.

Recommendation ▼	Summary ▼
<b>1/ Shift mindsets on poverty and how it needs to be tackled.</b>	Services should work to shift mindsets of the workforce and senior leadership to ensure that everyone understands the complexity of tackling child poverty and the importance of taking a partnership and trauma-informed approach. This is the foundation of implementing the Inverclyde Approach.
<b>2/ Invest in working together to serve families.</b>	Services should invest in working together through a partnership approach to provide a coordinated support offer for families that is place-based and person-centred.
<b>3/ Prioritise familiar faces in services.</b>	Services should prioritise having dedicated roles that act as a central point of contact for families. This ensures families build relationships with, and trust in, services, and encourages them to discuss their needs more openly.
<b>4/ Empower communities to be involved in creating services that work for them.</b>	Services should integrate opportunities for co-design in their ways of working to meet families' support and accessibility needs. This ensures services are fit for purpose, use resources effectively and place people at the heart of service delivery.

# 1/ Shift mindsets on poverty and how it needs to be tackled

Services should work to shift mindsets of the workforce and senior leadership to ensure that everyone understands the complexity of tackling child poverty and the importance of taking a partnership and trauma-informed approach. This is the foundation of implementing the Inverclyde Approach.

What	Support, facilitate and enable the shifting of mindsets in both the workforce and senior leadership, to embed a whole system and trauma-informed approach to poverty.
Why	<p>Those working to address poverty need to understand that there are multiple factors which contribute to families' experiences of poverty, including income. A partnership approach enables services to address these factors systematically, as well as enabling services to intervene upstream and support families before they reach crisis states.</p> <p>It is also important for everyone to understand the need to support families with trauma as a part of service delivery. A trauma-informed approach enables services to shift their structures, organisation and delivery to prioritise building trust and promoting safety.</p> <p>This understanding from senior leadership ensures the cultural and operational changes needed to support the Approach, such as funding allocation and altering ways of working. This understanding from the workforce ensures buy-in for implementing the Approach and will ensure they themselves work more effectively. Finally, it empowers everyone to embody the values of the Inverclyde Approach, challenge the status quo and have difficult conversations to ensure organisations can better support for people experiencing poverty.</p>
How	<p>Senior leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Continue to run additional sessions, such as the values-based leadership programme.</li><li>→ Encourage those in these roles to promote a whole system, trauma-informed approach to poverty in their organisations / departments.</li></ul> <p>Workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Facilitate formal training and/or structured conversations – e.g., trauma-informed training in the workplace.</li><li>→ Begin to implement a partnership approach – as the experience of Home-Start demonstrates, there is a lot of value in the workforce observing the impacts of a partnership approach in practice.</li></ul>
Priority	Immediate, as this is the foundation for integrating the Inverclyde Approach across the locality.

## 2/ Invest in working together to serve families

**Services should invest in working together through a partnership approach to provide a coordinated support offer for families that is place-based and person-centred.**

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<b>What</b>	Services should invest in partnerships based on trusted relationships and look to collaborate with other services, including community and voluntary sector support, early and often.
<b>Why</b>	A partnership approach ensures that families are given person-centred support. It means that services are aligned and able to offer coordinated assistance, connecting families to the help they need, when and where they need it.
<b>How</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Follow / implement the blueprint to creating successful partnerships.</li><li>→ Leverage structures that create the space and time for working together. Avoid creating new structures, rather maintain, enhance or consolidate existing ones to reduce time and resource burden on partners. These could be:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Shared strategic spaces e.g., local strategic meetings.</li><li>○ Communities of Practice.</li><li>○ Co-location opportunities e.g., joint appointments / delivery.</li></ul></li><li>→ Support and enable community and voluntary partnerships.</li></ul>
<b>Priority</b>	3-6 months

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### 3/ Prioritise familiar faces in services

Services should prioritise having dedicated roles that act as a central point of contact for families. This ensures families build relationships with, and trust in, services and makes them feel more comfortable sharing their needs.

---

What	Prioritise having the time and staff resources within services to build trusted relationships and create a ‘face of the service’ that acts as a dedicated point of contact for families.
Why	Familiar faces within the Inverclyde Approach were essential to building rapport and trust between families and services. These relationships meant families felt more comfortable disclosing needs, as well as accepting support and referrals.
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Ensure that existing key positions in services that fulfil this role are maintained and sufficiently resourced.</li><li>→ Where there is no position currently, develop a new position or adapt existing roles and responsibilities to provide this level of engagement.</li></ul>
Priority	Ongoing

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## 4/ Empower communities to be involved in creating services that work for them

Services should integrate opportunities for co-design into their ways of working, to better meet families' support and accessibility needs. This ensures services are fit for purpose, use resources effectively and place people at the heart of service delivery.

---

What	Integrate co-design into every day working and support the whole family to be involved in shaping the design, delivery and evaluation of services.
Why	<p>Services are the most supportive to families when they have been involved in their development and implementation. This approach ensures services are meeting their needs, in a way that is accessible to them and allows services to adapt on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Co-design also allows services to use resources effectively by reducing the provision of help that does not meet families' needs.</p>
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Meet families where they are with co-design opportunities – combine into existing engagement where possible and take a trauma-informed approach.</li><li>→ Integrate families into decision-making spaces, not just co-design events.</li><li>→ Support parents / carers to create their own groups or join existing groups that feed into service design and delivery. Offer support to them when they self-organise.</li><li>→ Balance opportunities for engagement with quality/depth of engagement – prioritise holding fewer opportunities with more depth of engagement to avoid co-design/engagement fatigue. Where possible and applicable, work in partnership with other services to hold joint co-design events.</li><li>→ Ensure feedback loops – share back to families how their input is being used.</li></ul>
Priority	Ongoing

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## 6.2 Creating a more supportive environment for changemaking

This evaluation of the test of change showed that the system has fundamental barriers that prevent or restrict services' abilities to implement the Inverclyde Approach. There are three recommendations for changes in the system to more effectively tackle child poverty (Table 7).

Table 7: Creating a more support environment for changemaking recommendations.

Recommendation ▾	Summary ▾
<b>1/ Ensure internal processes are adaptable.</b>	All services should adapt their internal processes to better support whole system and whole family approaches. This will ensure that services can be more agile in response to changing circumstances and more effectively work together.
<b>2/ Create supportive funding opportunities.</b>	Funders should create long-term funding opportunities that are designed to support whole system and whole family approaches. This will ensure that funding expectations and timelines reflect and support the time investment required to build trust with families and coordinate services.
<b>3/ Adopt transformative M&amp;E approaches.</b>	Funders and senior leadership should ensure M&E approaches reflect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ the depth of support families require.</li><li>→ the work across the system needed to achieve this.</li><li>→ the time investment required to facilitate the depth of support shifting from transactional services to transformational changes for families, and communities.</li></ul>



# 1/ Ensure internal processes are adaptable

All services should adapt their internal processes to better support whole system and whole family approaches. This will help services be more agile in response to changing circumstances and work more effectively together.

---

What	Internal processes, especially within statutory services, are adapted / adaptable to support a whole system and whole family approach.
Why	<p>A lack of agility in internal processes can be a challenge, especially in environments where timelines are constrained by external factors e.g., funding. Rigid internal processes can also be misaligned or actively hinder partnership approaches.</p> <p>A more flexible approach enables a service to be more responsive to place-based needs and more easily develop and maintain partnerships.</p>
How	<p>→ Investigate ways to enable information sharing between services. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Data sharing agreements.</li><li>○ Data protection / shared consent forms.</li></ul> <p>→ Enable statutory services to shift ways of working in line with the capabilities of the third sector.</p>
Priority	3-6 months – changing the structures of the system that hinder the Inverclyde Approach is one of the early steps to enabling transformation.

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## 2/ Create supportive funding opportunities

Funders should create long-term funding opportunities that are designed to support whole system and whole family approaches. This will ensure that funding expectations and timelines reflect and support the time investment required to build trust with families and coordinate services.

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What	Create and/or enable long-term funding opportunities and the associated processes that support whole system and whole family approaches.
Why	The current funding environment largely does not reflect the complexities associated with tackling child poverty. Expectations around outcomes are often misaligned, with the short timelines attached to funding. This does not support long-term systems change efforts.
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Create funding opportunities that are longer-term – this will ensure stability of support for services and families, as well as allowing for a thorough test and learn approach.</li><li>→ Enable more collaborative funding opportunities – where both statutory and third sector services can jointly apply for funding.</li></ul>
Priority	1-2 years

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### 3/ Adopt transformative M&E approaches

Funders and senior leadership should ensure M&E approaches reflect the depth of support families require, the work across the system needed to achieve this, and the time investment required to facilitate the depth of support shifting from transactional services to transformational changes for families, and communities.

What	Expectations for projects and the corresponding M&E approaches align with the complexity of tackling child poverty.
Why	<p>M&amp;E methods and expectations often do not consider the depth of support families require, fail to effectively capture the impacts of collaboration across the system, and do not recognise the time investment required.</p> <p>Shifting M&amp;E approaches to capture transformational change will help to support understanding and acceptance that employability might not be the final outcome for all families. It will also help to capture the impacts of different ways of working.</p>
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Change mindsets around recognising the upfront investment required to build and maintain partnerships between services and relationships with families.</li><li>→ Reflect change in mindset in M&amp;E approaches – setting outcomes around supporting families along the journey.</li><li>→ Leverage systems methods which capture the wider impacts often missed by traditional evaluation methods e.g., ripple effect mapping.</li><li>→ Place equal if not more emphasis on qualitative outcomes in evaluations compared with quantitative assessments.</li><li>→ Consider an embedded evaluation partner to support M&amp;E – this will ensure objectivity and allow the workforce to focus on delivering services for families.</li></ul>
Priority	1-2 years

## 7.0 Next Steps

The evaluation of this test of change has demonstrated that the Inverclyde Approach effectively addresses the many factors contributing to child poverty. Not only have the projects supported positive outcomes for the whole family, but they have begun to develop a coordinated system of support that is adaptive and shaped by the families it aims to serve. These results suggest the Inverclyde Approach should be implemented more widely across the locality.

This assessment aimed to test the Inverclyde Approach through the RISE, EAC, Home-Start and TU5 projects. The evaluation has demonstrated that the Inverclyde Approach enables projects to provide a depth of support to families, through prioritising relationship building and opportunities for activities as a family.

Providing depth of support over breadth has allowed projects to help families build their mental and physical wellbeing and progress on their personal development journey. This whole family impact is further contextualised by the way in which services are working together.

The projects have transformed ways of working through building structures to enable a partnership approach, beginning to create a workforce ready for this approach, empowering families to shape services and embedding continuous learning.

The test of change has been successful, showing the Inverclyde Approach enables services to work in ways which more effectively support families living in poverty. With this evidence, the Inverclyde Approach should be implemented more widely across the locality and changes should be made to the wider system to create an environment that supports this.

Families living in poverty have complex needs and to effectively provide the required support, when they need it and in spaces that are best for them, services need to take a whole systems and whole family approach, and adopt the Inverclyde Approach.

Moving forward, the Council plans to develop a distinct brand for the Inverclyde Approach. This will further support an identifiable model for services to adopt and unify behind.

# Appendices



# Appendix 1: The Inverclyde Approach theory of change

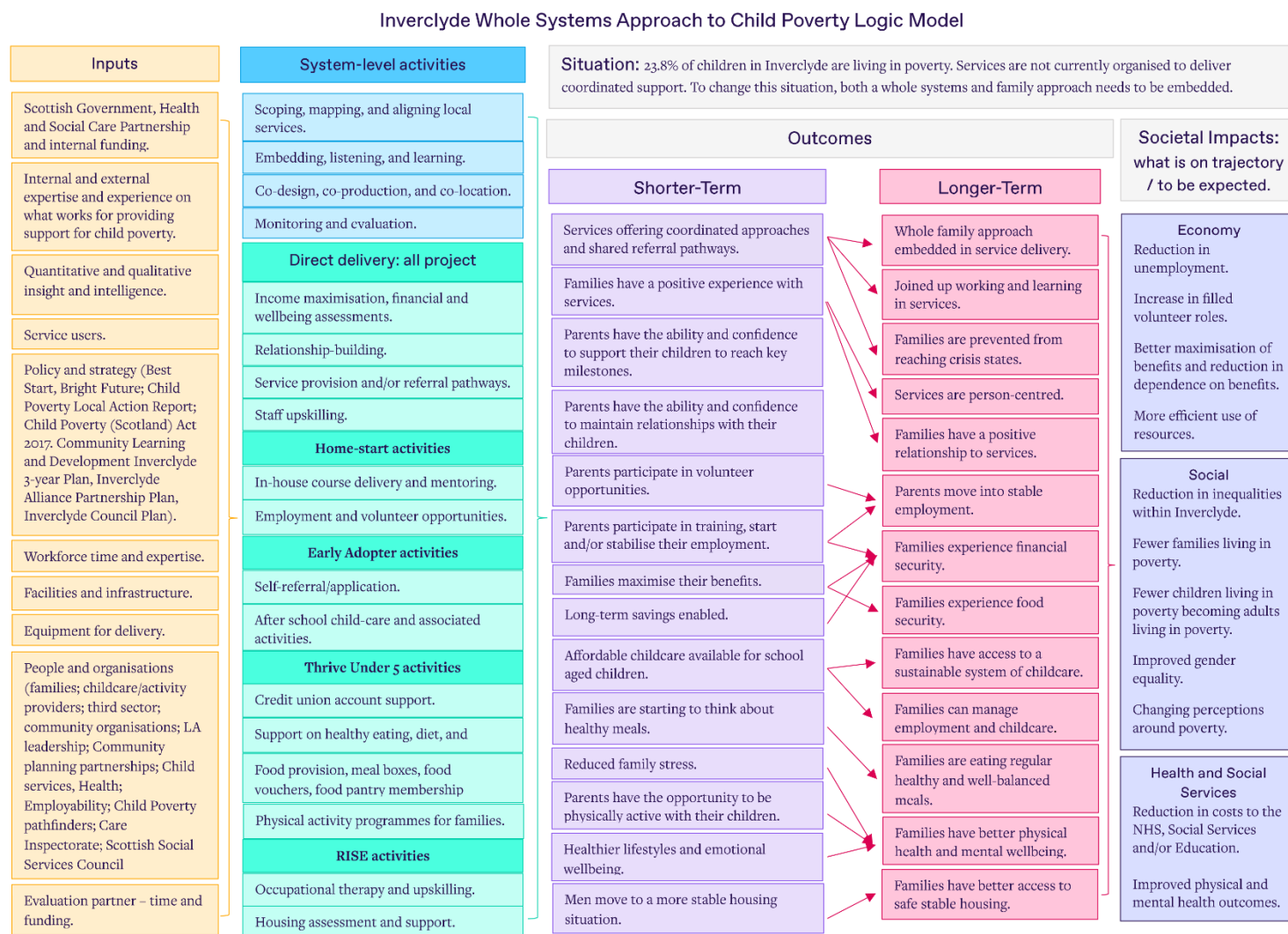


Figure 12: the Inverclyde Approach logic model.

## Appendix 2: Project data collection methods

For the duration of the evaluation, the projects continued to collect data through their existing mechanisms. Urban Foresight verified what data was required from the projects and all data was shared with Urban Foresight for analysis in January 2025.

**Table 8 summarises the methods used by projects to collect their impact data.**

*Table 8: Summary of project data collection methods.*

Service	Methods
RISE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Monitoring and reporting of participant outcomes – carried out by the Community Support Workers and Occupational Therapists.</li> <li>→ Triangle Outcomes Star.</li> <li>→ Exit conversations with participants – carried out in October 2024.</li> </ul>
EAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ End of year 23/24 childcare questionnaire.</li> <li>→ Quarterly reporting through the Scottish Government framework.</li> <li>→ Family wellbeing call – carried out by the Family Wellbeing Worker in February 2024.</li> <li>→ BASK (childcare provider) evaluation.</li> <li>→ Co-design methods – informal and formal engagement throughout the project.</li> </ul>
Home-Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Inverclyde Wellbeing Survey – sent out to families January 2025.</li> <li>→ Charitylog system – Family Support Team logged every interaction and intervention with families.</li> <li>→ Family wellbeing assessment reviews – skills and wellbeing tracking completed quarterly with families.</li> </ul>
TU5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Delivery partner evaluations – monitoring participation, activity outcomes and the collection of parent / carer feedback for all activities on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>→ Internal monitoring of referrals.</li> </ul>

# Appendix 3: Ripple effect map

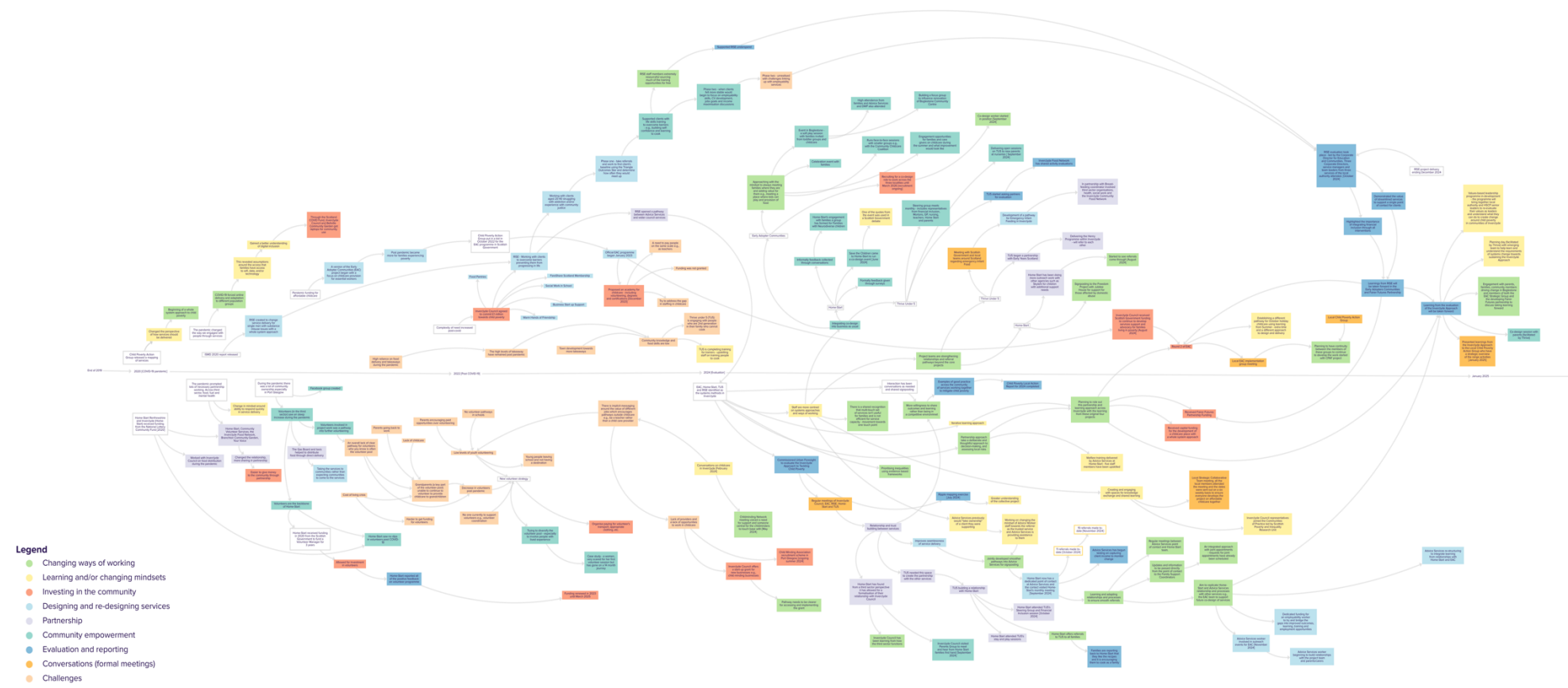


Figure 13: *Inverclyde ripple effect map in Kumu.*

*Presentation of the ripple map.*



# Appendix 4: Who is the Inverclyde Approach reaching?

The projects each have a unique family focus and collectively reach a broad range of the families living with poverty in Inverclyde. Table 9 provides a summary of who the projects are reaching.

Table 9: Numbers of the families reached by the projects as part of the Inverclyde Approach.

Project	Family focus	Timeline	Number of families engaged
<b>RISE</b>	Men aged 20-40 with a range of complex issues including being in recovery, offending and homelessness.	2021-2024	46
<b>EAC</b>	Families on low-income or one of the priority families.	2023-2024	67
<b>Home-Start</b>	Families with complex needs such as mental health, disabilities, domestic abuse and child protection	2024	72
<b>TU5</b>	Families with children under the age of five.	2023-2025	190

## Appendix 5: A blueprint for success

The evaluation of the test of change has provided insight on how to build and maintain successful partnerships between services. Table 10 outlines a blueprint for applying the Inverclyde Approach to partnerships.

Table 10: A blueprint for success - the factors that support a successful partnership for both services and families.

What?	Why?	Theme
<b>Ensure dedicated contacts.</b>	A dedicated contact helps to kick-start the partnership. Like how families benefit from familiar faces – partnerships flourish with them as well. Following the establishment of a dedicated contact, it is important to ensure the relationship between services is embedded.	Relationships
<b>Create opportunities to build trust between services.</b>	Establishing trust is essential to the success of partnerships and to ensure each organisation has the confidence to refer.  An introduction meeting, face-to-face, if possible, provides the opportunity to understand each other's work, processes, approaches and expectations for the partnership. Regular contact should occur following this, to maintain trust and deepen relationships.	Values-based leaders
<b>Align goals and objectives.</b>	Shared goals and objectives, for families and for the partnership itself, will facilitate effective collaboration. These should be developed together at the introduction meeting or soon after.	Shifting from transactional to transformational changes
<b>Move beyond referrals, towards co-location.</b>	Co-location ensures that services are coming to families where they already are and often in spaces that are trusted and safe. This reduces the burden on families and presents a stronger partnership between services to families.  Co-location could be held at one service's space or a neutral space, such as a community centre.	Place-based and Person-centred
<b>Upskill staff.</b>	Upskilling staff formally or informally through the partnership will help them to be more informed and support families on wider issues e.g., welfare. It will also support staff to be more flexible in their approach to working with other services and families.  The goal is not to replace other services, but to ensure the workforce has the knowledge and skills to identify	Trauma-informed and Values-based

	the next steps in the support offer for a family and confidently connect them with other organisations.	
<b>Be adaptable and flexible in approaches to partnership.</b>	<p>This approach to partnership will be new to many. It requires a willingness to be flexible and to adapt the approach to partnership, as services learn more about working together.</p> <p>This test and learn approach will help tailor the partnership to the unique context and needs of the services and the families they support, for example the adjustment of how frequently services communicate or how information is shared between them.</p>	Shifting away from failure towards learning, testing and adapting



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