

# Inverclyde Child Protection Committee

## Annual Report 2023-2025



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## 1. Foreword and Introduction

### Foreword: Stuart Jamieson, Chief Executive Inverclyde Council, Chair of Inverclyde Public Protection Chief Officers Group

Welcome to Inverclyde Child Protection Committee's Annual Report. The report sets out the developments and improvements from summer 2023 to March 2025 and includes the key priorities for the next year.

Partnerships are key in Inverclyde, with our communities, partners and workforce. This is reflected in the commitment of all agencies to protect children and to work together to improve the lives of them and their families. The Child Protection Committee is the key, multi-agency partnership which works with people living and working here to ensure Inverclyde is a safe place to grow up. It aims to promote the care and welfare of all our children and to protect them from abuse and harm.

This report reflects the commitment to learning and continuous improvement and, as Chair of the Public Protection Chief Officers Group, I am pleased to support this report which I hope you will find helpful in outlining the work of the committee and its future ambitions.



Stuart Jamieson  
Chair of Inverclyde Public  
Protection  
Chief Officers Group

### Introduction: Jonathan Hinds, Chief Social Work Officer, Chair of Inverclyde Child Protection Committee



Jonathan Hinds  
Chair of Inverclyde  
Child Protection  
Committee

I am pleased to introduce the 2023-25 annual report for Inverclyde Child Protection Committee. The work of the Committee over the past year has been founded on the strong partnerships that characterise Inverclyde's approach to supporting our communities and protecting our most vulnerable citizens from harm. This report provides information the work of the committee over the past year and includes data that illustrates the demand on services responsible for child protection practice in Inverclyde, as well as the work of sub-groups which we reviewed within the past year. This report is an opportunity to reflect on key activity over the past year, as well as setting out our priorities for the year ahead.

Over the past year, shifts in both the local and national landscape have influenced our committee membership and involvement in national working groups. These efforts focus on adapting practice to financial pressures, shaping policy and legislation, and maintaining a strong commitment to reducing risk for vulnerable children and families through relational, compassionate and outcome-focused approaches.

Previous annual reports have run across the academic year (September to August), however, to align with other, key strategic and improvement plans such as the Inverclyde Children's Services Partnership Plan, Inverclyde Child Protection Committee (ICPC) agreed to set future annual reports within financial years (1 April to 31 March). As this report covers this change, it includes information from September 2023 to March 2025.

Finally, on behalf of the Child Protection Committee, I would like to thank all partners and staff for their continued dedication, commitment and support to working together to improve the lives of children, young people and families in Inverclyde.

## 2. About Inverclyde Child Protection Committee

Inverclyde Child Protection Committee (ICPC) is a locally based, multi-agency strategic partnership which meets on a quarterly basis. The committee is responsible for the development, publication, implementation and evaluation of child protection policy and practice across Inverclyde. To support this, the CPC leads on multi-agency quality assurance of practice and uses performance measures to improve outcomes for children, young people and families involved in child protection processes.

### Our vision and purpose

The vision of the Committee is *'Sharing Responsibility – Protecting Children'* and the committee, in partnership with others including members of the community, aim to ensure that:

- Children get the help they need when they need it
- Professionals take timely and effective action to protect children
- Professionals ensure children are listened to and respected
- Agencies and professionals share information about children where this is necessary to protect them
- Agencies and professionals work together to assess needs and risks and develop effective plans
- Professionals are competent and confident
- Agencies work in partnership with members of the community to protect children
- Agencies, individually and collectively, demonstrate leadership and accountability for their work and its effectiveness
- The Committee will also aim to ensure that the views of service users inform its work.

### Our Values



Embedding the Nurturing Inverclyde approach across children's services



Driving continuous improvement through a culture of collaboration, high aspiration, reflective practice and learning for success



Mitigating the adverse consequences of child poverty through an extensive cross-cutting range of strategies



Involving children and young people in every aspect of policy, planning and service development and promoting their rights



Investing significantly in prevention and early intervention, especially from pre -birth to commencement at school

## Who we are: Membership of the Child Protection Committee

Representative	Organisation
Jonathan Hinds, Chief Social Work Officer	Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP): Chair
Michael Roach, Head of Education	Inverclyde Council: Vice Chair
Lead Officer Child Protection	Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)
Detective Superintendent K Division	Police Scotland
Public Protection Nurse Lead, Public Protection Service	NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC)
Locality Reporter Manager	Scottish Children's Reporters Administration
Assistant Director of Children's Services	Barnardo's
Third Sector Representative	Homestart
Head of Service Children and Families Social Work	Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)
Service Manager, Children and Families Social Work	Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)
Service Manager, Specialist Children's Services	Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)
Head of Legal Services	Inverclyde Council
Service Manager, Community Safety	Inverclyde Council
Principal Educational Psychologist	Inverclyde Council
Head Teacher Representative	Inverclyde Council
Practitioners Forum representative	Inverclyde Council

## Other committees

Within Inverclyde, services and organisations work within well-established partnerships to improve outcomes with people in our communities. As such, the work of the CPC links with wider strategic plans and committees within clear governance and reporting arrangements. This ensures that our

activity links to other local groups including the Children's Services Planning Partnership, strategic plans and public protection arrangements which are overseen by the Public Protection Chief Officers Group.

### Inverclyde Public Protection Chief Officers Group

Chief Officers across Scotland (Local Police Commanders and Chief Executives of Health Boards and Local Authorities) are individually and collectively responsible for the leadership, direction and scrutiny of public protection services and committees in their areas. They also have responsibility for maximising the involvement of those agencies not under their direct control, including the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and the third sector.

The Public Protection Chief Officers Group (PPCOG) is the forum with responsibility for shaping public protection arrangements across Inverclyde. It aims to strengthen the links between the Child Protection Committee and other statutory and regulatory functions.

The PPCOG is chaired by the Council Chief Executive and core membership is as follows:

- Divisional Commander, Police Scotland
- Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership
- Corporate Director, Inverclyde Council Education Services
- Area Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Nurse Director, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
- Locality Reporter Manager, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration.

The PPCOG provides collective and accountable strategic leadership, direction, governance, coordination and oversight of the development, delivery and improvement of public protection services and meets quarterly to review performance of public protection committees to deliver effective services and to address areas for improvement through inspection, audit or learning reviews.

The image below illustrates the partnerships and committees responsible for protecting the public in Inverclyde:



### 3. What we have done: our business plan for 2023-25

Public information, engagement and participation	
What we set out to achieve	How did we do
Build on our processes of co-production with our children and families by working together on a local public information campaign for introduction in early 2024.	Public information was updated on the Council website. We continue to work towards including children and families in public awareness activity.
Develop our use of social media to raise public awareness of child protection issues in partnership with our children and young people and our colleagues in education and health services.	We worked with partners in Health and Council communications teams to regularly share public information on social media channels by services including Inverclyde Health Visiting Team, Children's Rights, Your Voice, Homestart etc.
Support the continued implementation of the Mind of my Own resource to obtain our children and young people's views. This will include measuring impact by seeking feedback from participants to ensure participation is helpful and inclusive.	HSCP Child Planning and Improvement Officers and the iPromise team led on the roll out of the Mind of My Own app. Regular impact studies being undertaken to measure usage and share feedback with services to support improvement. Across 3 years MOMO has delivered <b>200+ statements</b> from <b>104 children</b> and young people. Use of the app has been extended for a further year.
Focus on improving awareness of advocacy services with staff, children and young people to improve uptake and ensure that children and young people's views are heard and acted upon.	An audit of advocacy services uptake was completed. Work to enhance the profile of advocacy services was undertaken across multi-agency services. Chairs of all children's planning meetings now ensure that advocacy services have been offered to families.
Build on the progress made regarding implementation of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 by reviewing our child protection processes within a calendar of audit activity.	Child protection awareness sessions were updated to reflect the National Guidance 2021, including for newly qualified social workers and Education in-service days. Briefings on multiagency child protection procedures were provided to multi-agency staff. Our annual programme of audit and improvement activity was updated to reflect NG21. Quarterly IRD audit activity has supported further improvement work eg: improving timescales



	for IRDs and multi-agency information sharing. Audit activity shows greater consistency and more robust interim safety planning for children included within reports.
Explore how trauma informed practice can reshape child protection processes including meetings, paperwork and language. What additional help can we offer parents who are caught up in child protection processes?	Supported by external partners, a local Trauma Informed Ready Reckoner was developed to inform our Inverclyde Neglect Toolkit. Child protection information leaflets updated to ensure improved accessibility particularly for younger children. Children's planning processes and templates were benchmarked as part of preparation to implement Signs of Safety and Healing across multi-agency services. Partnership working with the Why Not Trust is extending their online 'village' of peer support to care experienced parents and parents to-be.

Continuous improvement	
What we set out to achieve	How did we do
Agree and undertake a programme of audit and review activity taking into account findings from analysis of local and national management information and other emerging issues. Reporting findings and sharing learning as appropriate.	Our quarterly National Minimum Dataset informed outcome-focussed audit activity. CPC sub-groups were reviewed to enhance focus on data and improving outcomes. A continuous programme of audit activity for children at risk of harm was implemented to shape future improvement work.
Embed audit as an organic part of practice. Ensure it is no longer seen as a top-down process but part of peer review and challenge.	Operational practitioners participated in quarterly IRD audit to enhance learning opportunities. Findings were shared directly with practitioners to support continuous learning and practice improvement. Learning from Learning Reviews has been developed within a systems-based model to support systemic improvements.
Work on becoming more outcomes focused on our collation of data, collecting information that is meaningful to our children and young people.	We worked with other partnerships and national scrutiny agencies to strengthen the focus of audit activity to focus on the impact of interventions to protect children and young people.
Ask the question ' <i>so what does this tell us</i> ' about the quantitative data we collect.	This informed the development of re-shaped CPC sub-groups, including enhanced focus on management information and analysis to support improved outcomes.
Remember that development via practice is the most useful approach to ensuring policy and guidance 'works'.	This aim was implemented within delivery of Assessment of Care training, including a strengthened focus on trauma-informed practice within the Neglect Toolkit. Multiagency child protection practitioner's procedures were updated to reflect practitioner feedback. Multiagency Oversight of Complex Case Meetings provided enhanced insight into how child protection interventions are working in practice.
Build on our use of contextual safeguarding so that its approach is embedded in all our practice where extra familial harm is present.	A contextual safeguarding sub-group was established, and an implementation approach will be included within 2025-26 Business Plan. Sidestep Inverclyde was introduced by Action for

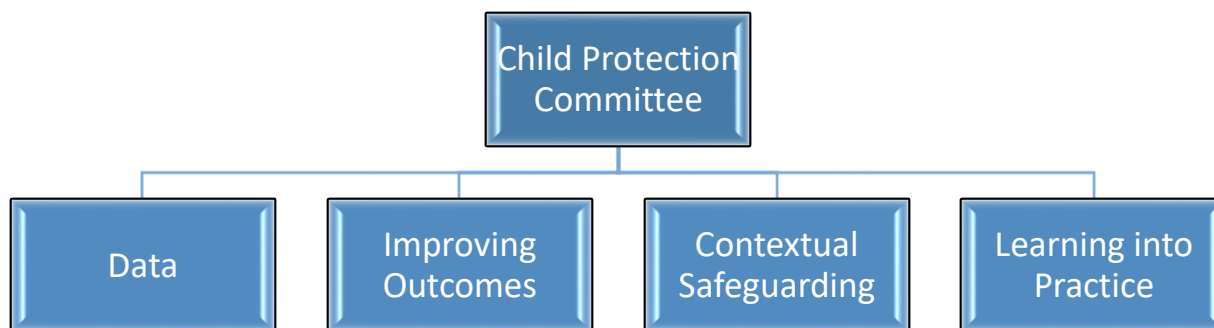
	Children, working with children and young people to divert them from involvement in criminal exploitation.
Introduce coaching and modelling of best practice wherever we instigate new learning.	Staff supervision and modelling best practice. Inverclyde has been one of the pilot areas for the Supported Year for newly qualified social workers who have received additional coaching and mentoring as part of their induction year.

Strategic planning and connections	
What we set out to achieve	How did we do
Continue to strengthen our communication with other initiatives within Inverclyde that promote the protection and welfare of children.	The iPromise team, Corporate Parenting Lead and Children's Rights Officer have supported multi-agency colleagues across public protection by continuously linking us back to children's views. A closer working relationship with Inverclyde's Child Poverty Action Group was established alongside an ambition to link CPC activity with other strategic plans eg: through the HSCP Strategic Plan 2024-27 and Children's Services Partnership Plan 2023-26.
Continue to build on our partnership work with colleagues across Scotland to share best practice and improve communication.	Learning was shared from local and national Learning Reviews and reflective learning events. Improved data collection and analysis is underway to strengthen focus on outcomes. Best practice guidance was shared with West of Scotland and national child protection groups.
Ensure the strategic objectives of the Scottish Government and Inverclyde HSPC are reflected in our vision, values and aims.	Membership of CPC Scotland continues to help us to shape our priorities to ensure they are in line with national objectives, including contextual safeguarding, online harm and the impact of poverty and neglect.

## 4. CPC sub-groups

The work of the Child Protection Committee is supported by activity led by sub-groups, whose membership reflects the multi-agency nature of the CPC itself. These have reflected our wider strategic priorities and over recent years: quality improvement and learning, child exploitation and practice learning and development subgroups. These groups were key to delivering our objectives, however over the past year, members agreed to revisit these arrangements. This sought to build on the ongoing developments in national policy, the impact of and learning from the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis in Inverclyde. Subgroups were reconfigured, with Terms of Reference being developed for each which also informed the development of the CPC business plan for 2025-26.

These new arrangements reflect the importance of quality improvement, learning and the increased local and national focus on contextual safeguarding, where children and young people are at risk of harm within the community. Practice learning is included within all subgroups whilst Learning into Practice seeks to share local and national learning from Learning Reviews, Serious Adverse Event Reviews and Reflective Learning events. These revised arrangements commenced in autumn 2024 and are outlined in *Figure 1*, below:



*Fig. 1: Child Protection Committee subgroups*

Each subgroup has multi-agency membership and is led by a CPC member; each group reports on their activity and progress to the CPC and members of each subgroup will also attend CPC meetings to improve connections and transparency between subgroups and the Committee itself.

Each subgroup meets on a minimum 12-weekly basis to progress actions. A summary of their area of focus and key activity during the last year is detailed below:

### Data subgroup

#### Key focus:

- Collation and analysis of the National Minimum Data Set (NMDS) and other data as reflects the local profile, CPC and PPCOG.
- Develop a dashboard of reliable, outcome-focused multi-agency data.
- Identify practice learning and audit needs that improves practice and keeps children safer.

#### Summary of activity:

- Using outputs from the Promise Data Conference to develop whole life stories with a focus on impact.
- Traced a child's journey through Health, Education, Barnardos and Children First with a focus on learning from each service's approach to gathering data.
- How outcomes for children and young people whose names were placed on Inverclyde's Child Protection Register in the past year can be developed into stories to support families involved in child protection processes in the future and to provide qualitative feedback to inform improved practice.
- Analysis of indicators within the National Minimum Dataset both to evidence service output and impact on children and their families.

### Improving Outcomes subgroup

#### Key focus:

- Develop and implement a programme of ongoing multi-agency audit, self-evaluation and quality assurance activity.
- Inclusion of children and families to identify impact and effectiveness.
- Informed by the Quality Improvement Framework.
- Identify areas of good practice.
- Identify learning needs for improvement and training.

#### Summary of activity:

- Examined themes emerging from local Multiagency Oversight of Complex Cases meetings, including the impact of intergenerational harm on family functioning; ways to work with families where services find it hard to engage with them; child protection registration as part of the 'lifetime scaffolding' for some families; developing a practice document and coaching sessions to support practitioners working with complex families where there is multigenerational trauma.
- Scoping work around neglect, including how to support earlier intervention where there are concerns about harm.
- Improving co-production and participation; build on feedback from parents about their experience of child protection processes to support our compassionate and trauma responsive child protection practice. This will include exploring a support system of peer parental advocacy within child protection processes.

### Contextual Safeguarding subgroup

#### Key focus:

- Develop and review the effectiveness of contextual safeguarding approaches across multi-agency services.
- Identify emerging risks.
- Identify gaps in practice learning.
- Develop outcome measures to assess effectiveness.

#### Summary of activity:

- Location mapping exercise to identify locations where young people meet this can be for many pro-social reasons, however, can also present potential risk and harm to young people. Work to be developed includes 'heat mapping' areas to better understand where harm may occur and to support multi-agency activity to reduce harm and risk outside the home.
- Awareness-raising activity around contextual safeguarding including development of a 7-minute briefing.
- Linking with local and national initiatives via the Harm out with the Home pan-local authority group, aiming to reduce harm to young people travelling into Glasgow City Centre and other areas where there is a risk of exploitation, linking with the Local Area Interest Network to share research and practice with English and Welsh counterparts.

### Learning into Practice subgroup

#### Key focus:

- Use National Guidance to inform local decisions about whether to convene a Learning Review
- Develop a practice framework for identification of other appropriate review pathways.
- Share local and national learning from Learning Reviews and Significant Adverse Event Reviews (SAERs).
- Identify gaps in practice learning.

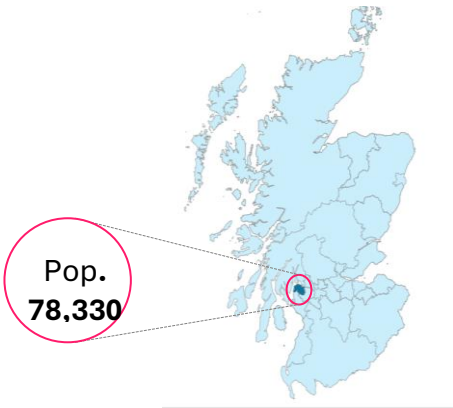
#### Summary of activity:

- This subgroup has oversight of local Learning Reviews and recently published national reviews, including implementation of improvement actions and oversight of improvement work. From autumn 2025 this sub group will operate jointly with the Adult Protection Committee. This reflects situations where there is joint learning between the two committees on both a local and national basis. It also reflects an increasing commitment to work across public protection as well as within individual committees.

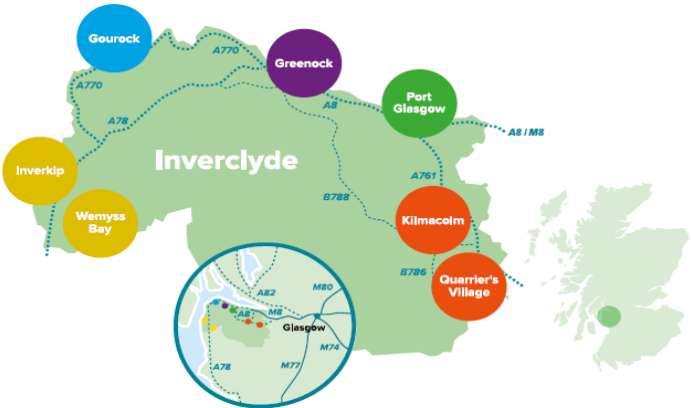
Subgroups reflect current priorities and practice and will be regularly reviewed to ensure they continue to support the needs of the local area and shape inform the ongoing priorities of the CPC.

5. **Overview of Inverclyde** The latest population estimates for Inverclyde were published by National Records for Scotland (NRS) in October 2024, estimating for mid-year 2023.

Inverclyde, situated in west central Scotland, is amongst the smallest local authority areas in Scotland, home to **78,330 people**. This amounts to only **1.4% of Scotland** overall population. Like other places in Scotland, the population of Inverclyde has decreased over the past few years. This is expected to continue with the local population expected to decrease by a further **3.2% by 2028**. Within this decrease we are witnessing a shift in the local age structure, decreases in younger people and working age adults being offset by an increase in the population of those aged 65 and over.



Women account for **51.8%** of Inverclyde’s population, with men accounting for **48.2%**. Women account for a greater proportion of the population of Inverclyde compared to Scotland, with women accounting for **51.4%** nationally.



Age Group	% Inverclyde	% Scotland
0 to 17	17.5%	18.5%
18 to 64	59.7%	61.2%
65 plus	22.8%	20.3%

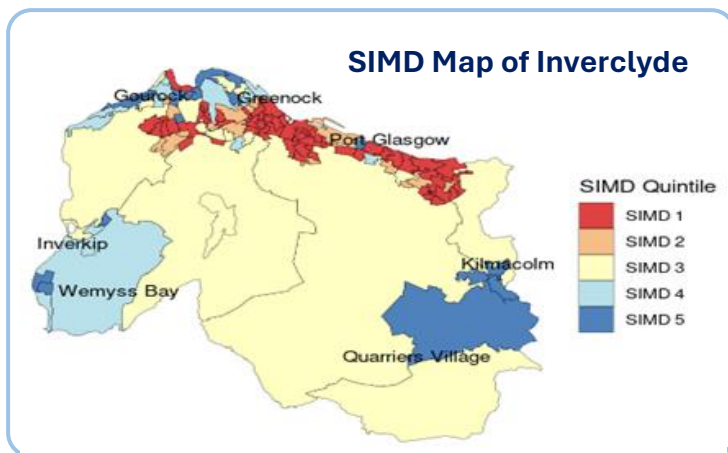
Source: NRS population projections for Scottish Areas June 2022

The level of poverty and inequality in Inverclyde is stark. According to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), the levels of poverty and deprivation in Inverclyde are, proportionately amongst the highest in Scotland. It reports that **43%** of local people live in areas that are among the most deprived in the country (SIMD 1). This is second only to Glasgow, where **44%** of the population live in SIMD 1 areas.

People living in those areas are more at risk of the negative impacts of poverty and deprivation. As a result, they are more likely to experience several adverse outcomes, including physical health challenges, complex long-term medical conditions, negative mental health and wellbeing, social exclusion, and food insecurity.

While levels of poverty and deprivation are high in Inverclyde, they are not spread evenly among the population.





As the *SIMD map* shows, areas of high deprivation are not dispersed across Inverclyde, instead high deprivation areas are clustered across specific communities, particularly in Port Glasgow and the East End of Greenock.

As a result, levels of inequality in Inverclyde are high with many people and communities experiencing significantly less positive social, economic and health and wellbeing outcomes than residents in least deprived areas. Almost **1 in 4, 24.4% of Inverclyde's**

**children, are living in poverty.** This is one of the highest in Scotland.

## 6. Our Child Protection Information

The CPC collects a range of management information including from the National Minimum Dataset, a measure which child protection committees use to monitor progress against a range of national indicators.

### Interagency Referral Discussions

An IRD is a formal meeting between Police, Health, Social Work, and Education (if applicable) to assess concerns that a child may have experienced or is at risk of harm. It identifies actions to reduce harm. While the IRD may conclude that child protection thresholds are not met but support is still needed, it can also determine that significant harm is present, triggering a fuller assessment and possible child protection planning. **Figure 2** below, shows *Police Scotland* data for the number of children who were subject to an Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD) over the reporting period.

Number of children subject to IRD Discussions

Aug-Oct	Nov-Jan	Feb-Apr	May-Jul	Aug-Oct	Nov-Jan	Feb-Apr	May-Jul	Aug-Oct	Nov-Jan	Feb-Apr
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
22/23	22/23	22/23	22/23	23/24	23/24	23/24	23/24	24/25	24/25	24/25
70	88	85	93	96	96	123	111	102	128	122

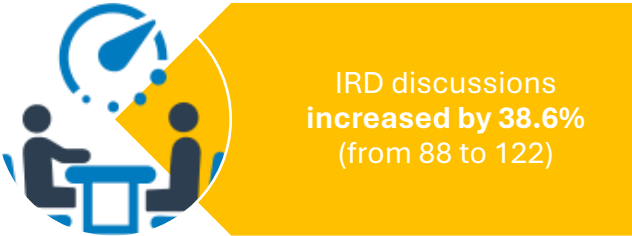
Fig. 2: Number of children subject to IRD Discussions 2022-23 to 2024-25

### Trend in IRD Discussions

Between Q2 2022–23 and Q3 2024–25, IRD discussions increased by 38.6% (from 88 to 122). We believe this reflects an increase in complexity of some family circumstances along with increased stressors on parents because of the cost-of-living crisis.

An IRD may decide:

- no further action: partners feel that the child is not at risk of significant harm (though they may require ongoing support from social work)
- a social work-led child protection investigation involves working with the child, their family, and support services to agree a plan to keep the child safe. This may happen voluntarily, without formal child protection measures. If concerns persist, a Child Protection Planning Meeting may be held, which can lead to the child being placed on Inverclyde’s Child Protection Register.



### IRD Data Review and Quality Improvement

IRD data is reviewed quarterly using both quantitative and qualitative measures to assess performance and identify areas for improvement. Over the past four years, the quality and consistency of IRD reporting

have shown steady improvement. Notably, there has been increased standardisation in how practitioners input information, contributing to more reliable and actionable data.

Joint Investigative Interviews

Where a crime may have been committed against a child, a Joint Investigative Interview (JII) will usually be undertaken, with the child’s agreement. Led by specially trained Police Officers and Social Workers, this is a trauma informed and trauma responsive approach to securing evidence, where the child is supported to talk about what has happened. Disclosure rates for Inverclyde children since moving to the Scottish Child Interview Model have **reached almost 90%, a significant achievement**.

Child Protection Planning Meetings

Child Protection Planning Meetings (CPPMs) are meetings where practitioners and the child’s parents work to identify ways to reduce risk. They result in a child protection plan whose progress in reducing risk is monitored via monthly core groups up to the next meeting known as the Review Child Protection Planning Meeting (RCPPM). *Figure 5*, below, includes data over the past year which evidences that numbers have remained consistent with previous years.

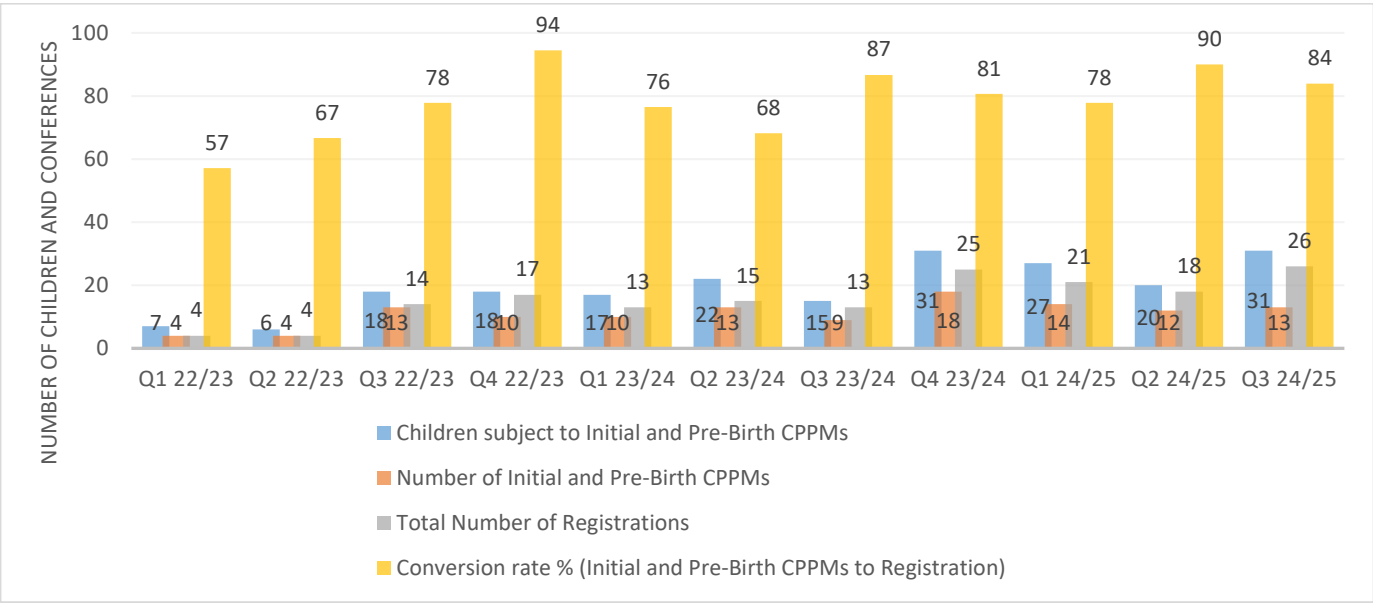


Fig. 5: Child Protection Planning Meetings 2022-23 to 2024-25

Key points:

- **Highest number of CPPMs:** 31 in Q4 2023/24
- **Highest conversion rate:** 94% in Q4 2022/23
- **Consistently high conversion:** 6 of the last 8 quarters at >75%

Child Protection Register 3-Year Trend

Inverclyde’s Child Protection Register holds the names of children who have a child protection plan and can alert services where a child has been assessed as at risk of significant harm, for example where a child moves school or attends an Accident and Emergency department. As of April 2025, **51 children** were listed on Inverclyde’s Child Protection Register, the highest number in three years. This reflects a growing awareness and action around child safety concerns, with sustained attention on children at risk of significant harm. Also included is the number of children whose names were removed from the child protection register (de-registered).

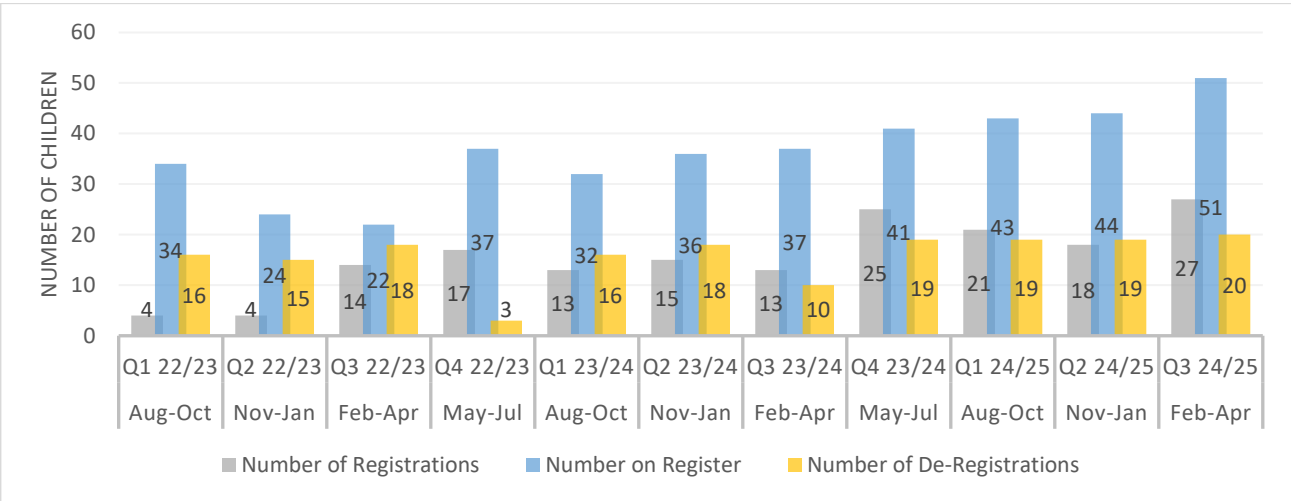


Fig.6: Child Protection Registrations and de-registrations 2022-23 to 2024-25

Re-registrations on the child protection register

Figure 7 illustrates the number of children whose names were removed from the child protection register and subsequently re-registered within three, six, 12 or 24 months.

This reflects the number of children who were re-registered and rather than number of family groups. Where children are re-registered within 24 months, a Multiagency Oversight of Complex Case Meeting is convened. This enables the partnership to reflect on any themes and examines opportunities for learning. One theme we have noted is the complexity of some of our families with intergenerational trauma impacting on their capacity to sustain improvements over a longer period. Sometimes, therefore, families require a second period of targeted support.



**Zero re-registrations within three months** from Quarter 3 2022/23 - Quarter 2 2024-25



**Zero re-registrations within six months** from Quarter 3 2022/23 - Quarter 2 2024-25



**Six re-registrations within 12 months** in from Quarter 3 2022/23 - Quarter 2 2024-25



**Six re-registrations within 24 months** from Quarter 3 2022/23 - Quarter 2 2024-25

Figure.7: Re-registrations 2022-23 to 2024-25

## Age of children on the Child Protection Register

Nationally, more children aged 0-4 are included on child protection registers. This reflects vulnerabilities, time at home and their reliance on adults to care for them, as well as being less able to communicate if something is not right. Contrary to national figures, in Inverclyde, over the last seven quarters, children aged 5–10 have consistently represented the largest proportion of child protection registrations. While actual numbers are small, this does leave us with questions as to whether we are identifying risk early enough in some cases, something we are currently looking at in more detail. A significant number of unborn registrations suggests effective early identification and pre-birth planning. Registration rates for older children (11–15 years) show a gradual rise in recent quarters. While actual numbers are very small this reflects the introduction of Care and Risk Management procedures (see page 20) which are intended to identify and support young people at risk of harm outside the home.

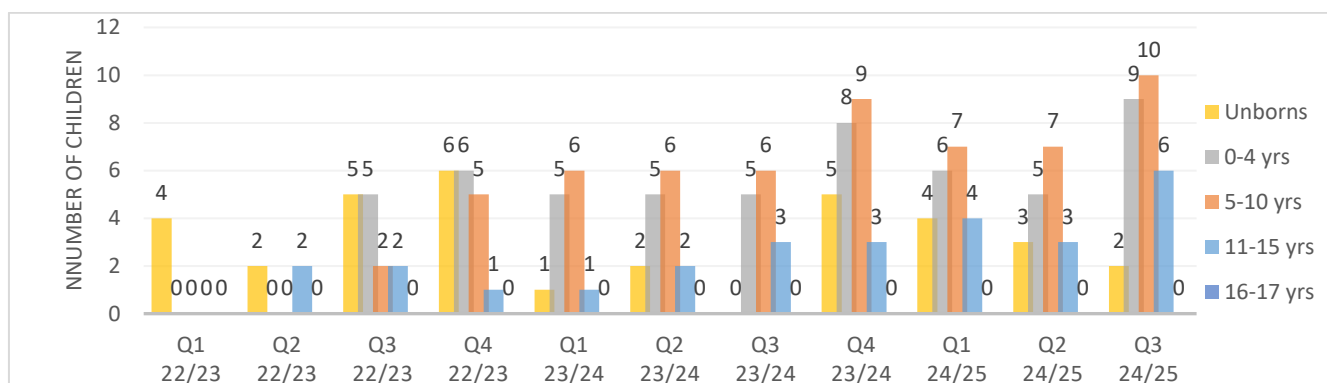


Fig.8: Age of children on the child protection register

Work is always being taken forward to explore how children at risk of harm can be identified sooner with partnership work key to this.

## Key Highlights (Q1 22/23 to Q3 24/25)



### Most registered group: 5–10 yrs:

67 registrations - consistently high across last 7 quarters.



### High proportion of unborns:

In 6 of the 12 quarters, **unborn registrations >4** – suggesting proactive pre-birth planning.



### Older children increasingly registered:

11–15 yrs group rose to **6 registrations in Q3 24/25**, from 0 in Q1 22/23






**Q3 24/25 peak:** Highest total registrations in the dataset: **27 children**.

















## Care and Risk Management

Care and Risk Management (CARM) is a risk assessment and risk reduction approach for Children and Young People whose behaviour presents a risk of serious harm to themselves or others, for example through child sexual or criminal exploitation or episodes of violence. Over the last year, all children and families' social workers and first line managers have completed training in the delivery of CARM and briefings have been provided to multi-agency partners. CARM was launched in August 2024 and is likely to support a small number of young people, however this will enable the development of support and protection plans for young people which echo child protection procedures for younger children.

## Areas of concern

After an investigation, a child may be placed on the child protection register; sometimes multiple reasons are identified. *Figure 9*, below, summarises the main concerns identified where a child's name was added to the child protection register during 2023-2025

	No change from previous year
	Increase from previous year
	Decrease from previous year
<5	Less than five

	Nov- Jan	Feb- Apr	May- Jul		Aug- Oct	Nov- Jan	Feb- Apr		
	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24	Annual	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Annual	
<b>VULNERABILITY FACTORS:</b>									
Services finding it hard to engage	<5	0	<5	<5	0	0	<5	<5	
Child affected by Parent/Carer Learning Difficulty or Learning Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Child affected by Parent/Carer Mental Ill-Health	5	<5	5	11	6	<5	6	15	
Child experiencing Mental Health Problems	0	<5	0	<5	0	0	0	0	
Domestic Abuse	7	<5	13	22	7	8	9	24	
Parental Alcohol Use	<5	0	0	<5	<5	<5	<5	6	
Parental Drug Use	7	<5	<5	12	6	8	5	19	
Child displaying Harmful Sexual Behaviour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Online Safety	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Child placing themselves at risk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>IMPACTS ON / ABUSE OF THE CHILD:</b>									
Physical Abuse	<5	<5	<5	6	<5	<5	<5	9	
Emotional Abuse	0	<5	<5	<5	<5	0	0	<5	
Sexual Abuse	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Criminal Exploitation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Child Trafficking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Neglect	5	7	<5	16	5	<5	6	14	

Female Genital Mutilation	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	→
Honour-based abuse and Forced Marriage	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	→
Child Sexual Exploitation	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	→
Internet-enabled Sexual Offending	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	→
Underage Sex	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	→
Other Concern(s)	<5	6	7	<b>15</b>	8	6	<5	<b>18</b>	↑
<b>Total number of registrations</b>	15	13	25	<b>53</b>	21	18	26	<b>65</b>	↑

Fig 9: Vulnerability Factors and Impact on/Abuse categories

With updated categories developed via National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021, within Inverclyde there has been an increase in the number of children and families who services '*find it hard to engage*'. This is an important development in how concerns can be identified and will be reflected in audit activity to examine the effectiveness of how services respond.

This data shows that the vulnerability factors of parental mental health, domestic abuse and parental drug and alcohol use remain the **main categories of concern**. During 2024, bespoke training sessions were developed around parental mental health, whilst joint work with the Violence Against Women multiagency partnership and Inverclyde Alcohol and Drug Partnership enabled the development of training and support to staff around domestic abuse and parental drug use. Furthermore, within our 2024-27 business plan, we intend to commission evidence-based interventions around the risk of violence against women and girls.

## 7. Key Activity 2023-25

### Multiagency Oversight of Complex Cases

Alongside audit activity aligned to the National Minimum Dataset, reviews have taken place as part of our Multiagency Oversight of Complex Cases Meetings. This is a multiagency forum which reviews plans and interventions where:

- (i) children's names have been on the child protection register for more than one year.
- (ii) children have been supported by a child protection plan more than once in a two-year period and
- (iii) in any situation where the team around the child identifies a need for further support, this process can offer additional insight into existing plans and help identify patterns or themes for consideration by the Improving Outcomes subgroup. These emerging themes will inform the subgroup's work over the coming year.:

- Working with key decision makers (Sheriffs, Children's panels) to intervene where neglect is a concern, including how to best evidence the need for intervention.
- Working with families where services struggle to engage with them to evidence effective and lasting change.
- The use and impact of multi-agency chronologies to identify patterns of behaviour, inform dynamic risk assessment, planning and review.
- The impact of intergenerational harm on family functioning.
- How the Promise can positively influence practice particularly around keeping families together.
- Child protection registration as part of 'lifetime scaffolding' for some particularly vulnerable families.
- The impact of organisational change on our capacity to build continuity into relationships with families.

### Learning and Reflection

In Inverclyde, there is a dedicated focus on learning as a continuous process to inform practice improvement. However, in accordance with national guidance, a more formal learning review may be commissioned by a child protection committee where a child has died or has been at risk of significant harm. This approach supports learning and improvements in the protection of children and young people. Since September 2022, Inverclyde Child Protection Committee has commissioned two learning reviews. In addition, a reflective learning event took place in February 2025 with the adult protection committee from another partnership area to examine how cross-boundary working and different legislative and policy arrangements within public protection could be improved.



## Learning Reviews

These evidenced good multi-agency communication within teams around children and an enduring commitment to supporting families. Learning was also identified around support to young people struggling with drug use and how care experienced young people are supported to move towards independent living, safely. This has led to a range of actions which have been taken forward to improve multi-agency services to children, young people and families, as outlined below.

### Youth drug support services:

- improved pathway to support young people moving to adult alcohol and drug recovery services, reflecting feedback from young people.
- enhanced support to children and young people whose parents or siblings are struggling with drug or alcohol use (signposted on the Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) webpages.
- children and Families social work provide a targeted, tier 3 intervention for children and young people who use drugs, where this has been identified as having a significant impact on their life. (health, education, relationships, conflict with the law).
- working with staff at the Enterprise Centre at St Stephen's High School to provide awareness sessions to Inverclyde's schools.
- strengthened links with school guidance teachers and training available to social work, health, education or third sector organisations.
- harm reduction and prevention sessions for young people including how to access specific supports.

### Inverclyde Practice Pad:

- Launched in 2024 as part of a partnership between the HSCP and The Lens Project, to provide a base for young people transitioning from residential to independent living.
- The house has been co-designed with young people and enables a young person moving in to personalise it with their own effects.
- Located close to one of the HSCP's children's houses with 24/7 staff support available.

### Vulnerable Young People (VYP) improvements:

- Updated operational guidance to include young people at risk of sexual and/or criminal exploitation and young people going missing, reflecting contemporary research.
- Weekly risk assessment and planning meetings (Police Scotland, Education, Social Work and Community Safety) to enable earlier identification of young people at risk and to develop targeted interventions.
- Contextual Safeguarding subgroup supports this work alongside interventions by Sidestep (Action for Children) to address commercial and criminal exploitation.
- Connection with the Harm outwith the Home pan-local authority project, particularly where young people travel to central Glasgow and other high-risk areas. This has supported a wider network of support for young people experiencing, or at risk of, exploitation.

### Care and Risk Management (CARM):

- Since implementation in 2024 a small number of young people have been supported, supplemented by practitioner training in the Short-Term Assessment of Risk and Treatability: Adolescent Version (START: AV) risk assessment tool.
- Inclusion of Action for Children's Sidestep project where there is evidence of criminal exploitation helps to reduce risk and divert young person towards pro-social activities.
- Ongoing evaluation by CPC as a subset of the National Minimum Dataset.

### Support of children and young people who are struggling with their mental health:

- School Counselling service: support offered to 201 children and young people during 2024-25, ranging from P6 to S6, of whom **82 children and young people** reported an improved outcome after accessing support.
- Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services accessed by **227 children and young people**.
- Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing Services accessed by **987 children and young people**.
- CAMHS Clinical Nurse Specialist/Psychological Therapist for Care Experienced Children and Young People, working closely with social workers, residential staff, and young people to support mental health.

### Care and protection for 16+ requesting termination of Compulsory Supervision Order (CSO)

- Work to integrate the provision of child protection to all young people up to the age of 18, as reflected in National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021/23 and its foundation in the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Improving transitions to adult services, including where young people do not wish to seek support via child protective services, with supporting guidance to be developed.
- Closer alignment between Inverclyde Child and Adult Protection Committees, within revised public protection arrangements, reflecting wider, national ambitions.
- Young people aged between 16 and 18 who have been looked after at home, or away from home, have access to Throughcare Services, this is expanded further, below.

### Roll out of trauma informed and trauma responsive practice

In June 2023, Inverclyde Council made a leadership pledge of support to become a trauma informed and responsive organisation. As a first step this meant that leadership at all levels understands and commits to supporting the vision of a trauma informed services, organisations and communities and embodies the trauma informed principles in leadership practice and creates accountability for long-

term change. It also means that a trauma informed approach is seen as integral to how services work with people. Over the past 3 years a multiagency team has delivered:-

- a rolling calendar of multi-sector staff training at Levels 1 (Trauma Informed) and 2 (Trauma Skilled) of the National Trauma Transformation Programme to support awareness and implementation of trauma informed approaches in all roles
- developed and rolled out trauma informed leadership sessions designed to support the key role of leadership in embedding trauma informed transformation
- creation of three trauma informed lead ambassador roles, who have a responsibility for encouraging and raising awareness of trauma informed and trauma responsive practice across their areas of work
- worked to meaningfully involve people with lived and living experience of trauma in the collaborative design and delivery of services, e.g. via the iPromise Board.
- Improved feedback mechanisms to inform work to evaluate and improve services.
- Ongoing review of new and existing policies and processes to reflect trauma informed approaches and development of a guidance document to support this

#### Expansion of Throughcare Team and offer of out of hours support

- Service specification for HSCP children and families' services include the development of out of hours support to young people.
- Weekend support currently provided to young people in the community who require emotional support, crisis support and to follow up on specific concerns out of hours.
- Monthly drop in for young people to seek practical support and to inform the work of the local Promise Board.

#### Reflective Learning Event

A reflective learning event was held jointly with child and adult protection committees in another partnership area in February 2025 which identified a range of overarching themes to support shared practice improvements between areas and across child and adult protection committees.

These included:

- Recognising the clear, warm commitment of practitioners, the quality of relationships and multi-agency wraparound support.
- Commissioning arrangements between local authorities and including key people in decision-making meetings.
- How practitioners in children's and adults' services can better understand the respective legislative frameworks and best practice guidance.
- Earlier transition planning from children to adult services
- Multi-agency processes including the death of a child and escalation of concerns.

An action plan was agreed with actions pertaining to Inverclyde CPC and our partner area. Some are also shared with Inverclyde Adult Support and Protection Committee, including:

- Earlier, multi-agency transition planning for young people with complex needs.
- Transitions guidance that includes best practice approaches to managing follow-on care for education leavers.
- Practice guides which include key legislation and guidance for children and adults (Child Protection, Looked After and Accommodated Children, Adult Support and Protection, Adults with Incapacity, Guardianship) and to deliver briefings in this area.

All learning actions will be taken forward by the Learning into Practice subgroup and will be reflected in the CPC Business Plan, whilst liaison with our partner area will continue to support implementation together.

### Signs of Safety and Healing

The Signs of Safety approach is a relationship-grounded, safety-organised approach to child protection practice, created by researching what works for professionals and families in building meaningful safety for vulnerable and at-risk children. The purpose of the approach is:

*To enable professionals to undertake all child protection practice with a rigorous focus on child safety by equipping agencies to establish their practice, policy, procedures and organisation so that professionals can do everything humanly possible to put the parents, children and everyone naturally connected to the children at the centre of the assessment, decision-making and planning and give them every opportunity to come up with and apply their ideas before the professionals offer or impose theirs. Full family and network involvement is always pursued whether the child lives permanently with or outside their biological family so that everything is done to enable the child to sustain lifelong connection with their family, culture and community of origin throughout all child protection involvement.*

Signs of Safety and Healing places parents, children and everyone naturally connected to the child at the centre of the assessment, decision-making and planning, rather than where professionals often define problems and what is required to solve them. As such, Inverclyde introduced this approach to multi-agency child protection practice. The implementation of Signs of Safety commenced in December 2024 and will continue over the next three years. Work undertaken so far includes:

- Training of an initial cohort of Social Work teams in the approach
- Baseline survey of parent and children's views
- Baseline audit of case files
- Updating of Wellbeing Assessments so they are Signs of Safety compliant
- All Social Work staff will be trained by the end of May
- Training of partners will then commence.

To date, **70 staff have been trained across four cohorts**. Further training to partners will be offered in autumn 2025, alongside thematic training to key partners including SCRA and foster carers. The implementation of Signs of Safety and Healing sits within a wider strategic focus guided by [GIRFEC principles and values - Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) - gov.scot](#) principles of effective and early intervention.

## 8. Looking ahead: our priorities for 2025-26

### ICPC Business Plan 2025-26

<b>Public information, engagement and participation</b> Over the next twelve months we will
We will work in partnership with our children, young people and their families to help shape and influence how we design, deliver and assess the impact of services for children at risk of harm.
We will continue to refine and upgrade our public communications via Council Webpages and other media.
We will support the use of the Mind of my Own resource to obtain our children and young people's views. This will include measuring impact by seeking feedback from participants to ensure participation is helpful and inclusive.
We will develop an online public awareness campaign which encourages people to look out for 'red flags' of harm and alert services when they are worried about a child or children.

<b>Continuous improvement</b> Over the next twelve months we will
We will ensure support for children, young people and families is strengths-based and outcome-focused via implementation of Signs of Safety and Healing.
Our Improving Outcomes subgroup will gather information from a range of data to help us to develop interventions that improve children's situations.
We will improve use of the Assessment of Care Neglect Toolkit and intervention where there are indicators of neglect at the earliest stages. This will help to ensure that fewer children and young people experience neglect due to improved identification of need, assessment and earlier family support.
We will refine our understanding of the impact of poverty on neglect via work we are undertaking with CELCIS within our Data subgroup and enhance data currently collected by adding information around childhood disability and ethnicity.
Informed and influenced by the experiences of our young people, we will work together to co-design interventions and supports which improve young people's feelings of safety, inclusion, belonging and ambition in the local community via our Contextual Safeguarding subgroup.

### **Strategic planning and connections**

#### **Over the next twelve months we will**

We will continue to strengthen our communication with other initiatives within Inverclyde that promote the protection and welfare of children. This includes Violence Against Women and Girls where we will promote the use of Safe and Together principles in supporting families affected by domestic abuse. We will also work with Inverclyde's Child Poverty Action Group to help alleviate poverty, which we know is an additional stress factor for families.

We will continue to build on our partnership work with colleagues across Scotland to share best practice and improve communication via the West of Scotland and National Lead Officers groups. This includes sharing data to encourage equity and developing best practice guidance.

We will ensure national and local strategic objectives are reflected in our vision, values and aims, including through participation in Child Protection Committees Scotland and Social Work Scotland meetings, utilising the learning and best practice initiatives which emerge from these forums.

## Glossary of Terms

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
ADP	Alcohol and Drug Partnership
ADRS	Alcohol and Drug Recovery Services
APC	Adult Protection Committee
ASP	Adult, Support and Protection
CARM	Care and Risk Management
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CPPM	Child Protection Planning Meetings
CSO	Compulsory Supervision Order
CSWO	Chief Social work Officer
CYP	Children and Young People
GIRFE	Getting it for everyone
GIRFEC	Getting it right for every child
HSCP	Health and Social Care Partnership
ICPC	Inverclyde Child Protection Committee
IJB	Integration Joint Board
IRD	Interagency Referral Discussions
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
NHS	National Health Service
NRS	National Records for Scotland
RCPPM	Review Child Protection Planning Meeting (RCPPM).
RfA	Request for Assistance
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SMT	Senior Management Team
VAWP	Violence Against Women Partnership
VYP	Vulnerable Young People
WAHP	Welfare Advice and Health Partnership