
Report To:	Social Work & Social Care Scrutiny Panel	Date:	26 August 2025
Report By:	Kate Rocks Chief Officer Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership	Report No:	SWSCSP/49/2025/MW
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Subject:	River Clyde Homes 'Prison to Home Pilot' (Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) Standards)		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☐ For Decision ☒ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 This paper outlines the progress that has been made locally in developing the Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) Standards in Inverclyde to prevent homelessness upon prison release and includes a collaborative protocol developed between River Clyde Homes (RCH), HSCP Justice Social Work (JSW), Inverclyde Community Justice Partnership (ICJP) and HSCP Housing Options and Homelessness Advice Service (HOHAS).
- 1.3 This report is provided to the Social Work and Social Care Scrutiny Panel to update on this progress of this pilot initiative.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members of the Social Work and Social Care Scrutiny Panel are asked to note the contents of the report outlining this collaborative pilot project to improve housing opportunities for individuals' returning to Inverclyde on completion of a custodial sentence.

**Kate Rocks
Chief Officer
Inverclyde HSCP**

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

SUSTAINABLE HOUSING ON RELEASE FOR EVERYONE (SHORE) STANDARDS

- 3.1 The Scottish Government envisions a progressive and well-coordinated justice system that helps build a fair, inclusive, and equitable society. This system is designed to hold individuals accountable for their actions while also supporting their rehabilitation. By helping people improve their life chances and contribute positively to their communities, the justice system aims to reduce offending and create safer communities. A key part of this approach is supporting individuals not only with housing but also by improving access to public services and encouraging long-term desistance from crime.
- 3.2 There is a well-evidenced and complex relationship between homelessness and offending. Spending time in prison increases the risk of homelessness and a lack of stable accommodation increases the likelihood of (re-)offending. This can lead to a self-perpetuating negative cycle. Access to suitable and sustainable housing with person centred support can increase success rates for those returning to the community and in reducing reoffending.
- 3.3 SHORE standards set a clear pathway to sustainable housing for people leaving prison that starts whilst still in custody and continues until their release. The standards aim to increase the individual's chances of reintegrating back into their community successfully, not just through meeting their housing needs, but also more holistically by improving access to other support services to reduce reoffending.
- 3.4 From a national policy perspective, the Scottish Government's Vision for Justice (2022) includes a clear aim to ensure those who have offended have access to housing which meets their needs. This was further reinforced in the National Strategy for Community Justice (2022) which has a priority action to *'Ensure that the housing needs of individuals in prison are addressed consistently and at an early stage by fully implementing and embedding the Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) standards across all local authority areas'*.
- 3.5 The *National Strategy for Community Justice Delivery Plan*, published in 2023, sets out a series of specific, time-limited actions designed to support national improvement across the strategy's key aims and priority areas. Among these is an improvement action focused on the publication of refreshed and updated SHORE standards. This work is being led by the Scottish Government in collaboration with a range of national partners, with a proposed delivery date of November 2025.

LOCAL CONTEXT

- 3.6 In 2022, the Inverclyde Community Justice Department undertook a Strategic Needs and Strength Assessment (SNSA) to inform development of a revised Inverclyde Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan. Housing and homelessness issues were highlighted as a recurring concern amongst service users, staff and partners.
- 3.7 Analysis highlights that during 2024/25, 320 households approached HOHAS for assistance due to being homeless or threatened with homelessness. 13% (40) of those households were individuals who had been discharged from either prison, hospital or care. Data collated as part of the SNSA indicated that Since 2015/16, people leaving institutions i.e. prison/hospital/care appear within the top 3 reasons for homelessness locally.
- 3.8 The Inverclyde Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan 'Community Matters' (2024) recognised the issues around justice and homelessness which led to the inclusion of a specific local aim addressing housing and homelessness issues in addition to the requirements of SHORE standards being implemented and embedded in Inverclyde.

- 3.9 In August 2024, Riverclyde Homes and Inverclyde Community Justice Partnership, hosted a SHORE Standards Conference that included representation from Inverclyde Council and HSCP services and the four main local housing providers. Presentations were delivered by the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and Glasgow City HSCP on their development of the SHORE standards.
- 3.10 Following this event a commitment is now in place between RCH, HSCP JSW, ICJP and HOHAS to undertake a pilot aimed at ensuring housing and support is in place prior to the point of liberation to prevent a traumatic homelessness journey at the end of a prison sentence. Although homelessness figures for Inverclyde are relatively small compared to other local authority areas, it is locally understood that this population are often caught in a negative cycle of repeat homelessness. Pathways away from homelessness are being implemented by HOHAS teams in collaboration with other HSCP services to prioritise homelessness prevention.
- 3.11 The pilot will initially support 10 individuals from the Inverclyde area with a planned liberation date within the next 12 months. Those identified will be offered early access to support to source appropriate housing, ensuring choice and control in the decision-making process and access to appropriate housing from the first day of liberation.
- 3.12 RCH have previously attempted a similar pilot on a smaller scale with good success and are committed to supporting this collaborative approach through joint assessment approaches and ensuring appropriate properties are available in a timely manner. The protocol emphasises the need for individuals to have access to a wide range of needs-led supports, including existing HSCP, third sector and voluntary supports.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 A protocol document has been prepared by River Clyde Homes in partnership with Inverclyde HSCP and Inverclyde Community Justice Partnership. The protocol document is appended as appendix 1.
- 4.2 Appropriate monitoring will be carried out throughout the pilot project, with adjustments to practice made as necessary. If the pilot demonstrates positive outcomes over the twelve-month period, this collaborative approach to preventing homelessness among individuals leaving prison should be considered as a model for wider local implementation.
- 4.3 The pilot also presents an opportunity to explore innovative and locally responsive approaches tailored to the specific needs of Inverclyde. This aligns with the Scottish Government's expectations for national implementation and supports the objectives of the Local Housing Strategy, including the commitment to embed SHORE standards by December 2027.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal/Risk		X
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

5.3 Legal/Risk

No implications

5.4 Human Resources

No implications

5.5 Strategic

The actions proposed are considered in line with the Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy and Inverclyde HSCP Strategic & Partnership Plan.

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

5.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts which relate to this report.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

5.8 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Consultation activity took place in 2024 by Inverclyde HSCP in preparation of the Inverclyde Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2023-28 (ENV053/23/SJ/MM). Inverclyde Environment and Regeneration Committee (2 November 2023).
- 7.2 Inverclyde Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP) 2024 (SWSCSP/16/2024/JH). Inverclyde Social Work and Social Care Scrutiny Panel (14 May 2024).

Prison to Home – SHORE Pilot Protocol

Operational Overview

The Prison to Home pilot aims to provide a more compassionate, coordinated, and effective pathway for individuals leaving custody in Inverclyde. The pilot is designed to reduce reliance on homelessness applications and improve access to stable housing and support services upon liberation.

The Prison to Home pilot is a collaborative initiative between River Clyde Homes (RCH) and Inverclyde Council Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). It aims to support individuals with convictions who are returning to Inverclyde from the Scottish Prison Service (SPS), by offering up to 10 tenancies through RCH during the 2025/26 financial year. The protocol will take effect from July 2025 and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all partners involved, as well as the support available to individuals participating in the pilot.

Purpose: Housing Pathways and Support Upon Liberation

Many individuals leaving custody face significant barriers to securing stable accommodation. Often, their only option is to apply for housing under the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003, which can lead to temporary placements in hostels or other short-term accommodation. This pilot offers a more compassionate and planned alternative, helping individuals transition into the community with dignity and stability. By reducing the need for homelessness applications, the pilot also aims to lessen the emotional and financial impact of homelessness across Inverclyde.

Pilot Approach

The pilot introduces a proactive, person-centred approach that seeks to:

- Avoid homelessness declarations by facilitating direct access to appropriate housing options.
- Coordinate support between Justice Social Work, Housing Services, and third-sector partners to ensure individuals receive tailored assistance.
- Embed SHORE standards in practice, ensuring housing needs are considered as part of pre-release planning.
- Strengthen reintegration by improving access to wider public services, including health, benefits, and community support.

Responsibilities of Community Justice

- Identify individuals who have spent 12 months or more in custody and would benefit from the pilot.

- Ensure participants are willing to engage with support services during custody and post-liberation.
- Support individuals in completing housing applications.
- Ensure agreed support arrangements are in place for the duration of the tenancy.
- Provide pre-liberation support tailored to tenancy readiness, including access to qualifications where appropriate.
- Maintain regular communication with RCH and HSCP Criminal Justice Team to coordinate support.
- Conduct a formal review of progress 12 weeks post-liberation.
- Establish strong communication channels to address tenancy issues promptly.
- Provide a Community Matters Pack to each participant.

Responsibilities of River Clyde Homes (RCH)

- Provide up to 10 unfurnished Short Scottish Secure Tenancies (SSSTs) across Inverclyde.
- Support individuals in completing housing applications.
- Assign a named housing officer to each participant.
- Complete assessment and support planning with the individual.
- Offer access to the Financial Wellbeing Team and Housing and Community Connector.
- Assist with benefit applications and request direct housing payments where appropriate.
- Arrange home fire safety visits with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.
- Let properties sensitively, considering individual needs, restrictions and vulnerabilities.
- Hold regular meetings with partners to monitor progress.
- Conduct a formal review with partners after 12 weeks.
- Convert SSSTs to full tenancies after 6 months if successful, or extend SSSTs if needed.

RCH Financial Wellbeing Team

The Financial Wellbeing Team provides tailored support with financial assistance and benefits. Individuals can access this support once they have pre-signed a tenancy agreement, allowing for early engagement while still in custody. Universal Credit applications can be initiated upon rehousing, with referrals made by the assigned housing officer.

RCH Housing and Community Connector

The Housing and Community Connector focuses on preventing homelessness by offering advice and support. Referrals are made by the housing officer to ensure individuals receive the help they need to sustain their tenancy.

Responsibilities of Inverclyde Council HSCP Advice Services, New to Scotland and Homelessness

- Liaise with SPS and RCH to ensure timely housing support for pilot participants.

- Strengthen links with Criminal Justice and Addiction Recovery Teams to assess support needs.
- Collaborate with RCH to ensure tenancy essentials are in place.
- Provide tailored tenancy support through the Rapid Rehousing Support Team and Throughcare services.
- Facilitate referrals from the Financial Wellbeing Team to Advice Services for welfare rights representation.

Responsibilities of the Tenant

Individuals offered a tenancy through this pilot will be supported to understand and meet the responsibilities associated with their new home. A key requirement is an upfront rent payment equivalent to one week's rent—typically between £80 and £90—prior to signing the tenancy agreement. This payment may come from:

- Personal savings
- Income earned during custody
- Support from family
- Discretionary Housing Payment (if eligible)
- Vicar's Relief Fund

Tenants will sign a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement (SSSTA), which provides a six-month period of security. Unlike a full Scottish Secure Tenancy, the SSSTA can be ended after six months without court proceedings. If the tenancy is sustained successfully, it may be converted to a full tenancy after 12 months. If further support is needed, the SSSTA may be extended for another six months.

Tenants are expected to:

- Pay rent weekly
- Be respectful of neighbours
- Comply with the terms of their tenancy agreement

These responsibilities are discussed during the sign-up process and revisited during a “settling-in” visit within the first week, which also covers satisfaction with the property and any emerging support needs.

Each tenant will have a patch Housing Officer as their first point of contact for any tenancy-related concerns, including:

- Difficulty paying rent
- Changes in personal circumstances
- Neighbourhood or antisocial behaviour issues
- Additional support needs

The Housing Officer will make contact prior to release to offer guidance and discuss expectations. If the tenant has outstanding charges from previous tenancies, arrangements

will be made to address these. Tenants will also receive a visit from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) for home fire safety advice.

Background on Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreements

SSSTAs are governed by Section 34 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and may be offered in specific circumstances, such as:

- A history of eviction or an Antisocial Behaviour Order (ASBO)
- The need for supported accommodation
- Relocation for employment
- Temporary housing for those experiencing homelessness
- Occupation of a property scheduled for redevelopment

SSSTAs are issued for a minimum of six months. If neither party ends the tenancy, it automatically renews (known as tacit relocation). Tenants have many of the same rights as those with full tenancies, but with limitations around:

- Eviction
- Subletting
- Right to buy
- Succession

Measures of Success

The pilot success will be measured by:

- 75% of tenancies transitioning from SSSTA to full Scottish Secure Tenancy
- 75% of tenancies sustained for more than 12 months
- 75% of tenants supported into independent living within 12 months
- 75% of tenants avoiding homelessness presentations

Review Process

Review meetings will be held every two months during the first year to ensure strong communication and early resolution of any issues. A formal annual review will be conducted by River Clyde Homes and HMP Greenock.

Pilot Ownership

- Elaine Cannon – Head of Housing Services, River Clyde Homes
- Ian Hanley – Community Justice Lead Officer
- Gail Hughes – Service Manager, Criminal Justice Social Work
- Lesley Robertson – Service Manager, Homelessness and New to Scotland Team