

A meeting of the Social Work & Social Care Scrutiny Panel will be held on Tuesday 26 August 2025 at 3pm.

Members may attend the meeting in person at Greenock Municipal Buildings or via remote online access. Webex joining details will be sent to Members and officers. Members are requested to notify Committee Services by 12 noon on Monday 25 August 2025 how they intend to access the meeting.

In the event of connectivity issues, Members are asked to use the *join by phone* number in the Webex invitation and as noted above.

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LYNSEY BROWN
Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services

BUSINESS

1.	Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest	Page
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT		
2.	Revenue & Capital Budget Report – Outturn 2024/25 and 2025/26 Revenue Outturn Position as at 30 June 2025 Report by Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership and Head of Finance, Planning & Resources, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership	p
ROUTINE DECISIONS AND ITEMS FOR NOTING		
3.	Review of Social Work Governance and Assurance across Scotland Report by Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership	p
4.	River Clyde Homes ‘Prison to Home Pilot’ (Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) Standards) Report by Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership	p

5.	Children & Families Redesign Foster Carer Fees Uplift Report by Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership	p
6.	Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 Report by Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership	p
The documentation relative to the following item has been treated as exempt information in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended, the nature of the exempt information being that set out in paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.		
7.	Governance of HSCP Commissioned External Organisations Report by Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership providing an update on matters relating to the HSCP governance process for externally commissioned Social Care services.	p

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Enquiries to - Diane Sweeney – Tel 01475 712147

Report To:	Social Work & Social Care Scrutiny Panel	Date:	26 August 2025
Report By:	Kate Rocks Chief Officer Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership	Report No:	SWSCSP/50/2025/CG
	Craig Given Head of Finance, Planning and Resources Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership		
Contact Officer:	Samantha White	Contact No:	
Subject:	Revenue & Capital Budget Report – Outturn 2024/25 and 2025/26 Revenue Outturn Position as at 30 June 2025		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 ☐ For Decision ☒ For Information/Noting

- 1.2 This report advises the Social Work and Social Care Scrutiny Panel on the outturn of the 2024/25 revenue budget and of the projected outturn on revenue and capital for 2025/26 as at 30 June 2025. The 2024/25 outturn is provisional subject to the audit of the annual accounts.
- 1.3 The revenue outturn position for 2024/25 for Social Care was an underspend of £0.051m, which reflected a reduction of £0.078m from the Period 11 projected overspend of £0.027m reported to this panel on 12 May 2025.
- 1.4 The current year, 2025/26 revenue projected outturn as at 30 June 2025 is an overspend of £0.659m.
- 1.5 The Social Work capital budget is £9.907m over the life of the projects with £6.433m originally projected to be spent in 2025/26. Expenditure on all capital projects to 30 June 2025 is £0.798m (12.40% of approved budget). Appendix 4 details capital budgets.
- 1.6 The balance on the Integration Joint Board (IJB) reserves at 31 March 2025 was £17.161m. Within this balance, specific reserves totalling £5.998m have been delegated to the Council for use in 2025/26. Also, within the IJB reserves balance, smoothing reserves of £3.193m are held in relation to delegated functions to the Council of a more volatile nature, to mitigate the risk of in year overspends, for use during the financial year if required. As at 30 June 2025, it is projected that £0.511m of the smoothing reserves will be utilised in 2025/26. This position will continue to be monitored throughout the financial year.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Panel notes the 2024/25 revenue budget outturn underspend of £0.051m.
- 2.2 That the Panel notes the transfers to earmarked reserves at 3.2 and the allocation of the final 2023/24 underspend of £0.051m to reserves as noted at 3.2.11.
- 2.3 That the Panel notes the projected current year revenue outturn of £0.659m overspend at 30 June 2025.
- 2.4 That the Panel notes the current projected capital position.
- 2.5 That the Panel notes the current reserves position.

Kate Rocks
Chief Officer
Inverclyde Health and Social Care
Partnership

Craig Given
Head of Finance, Planning and Resources
Inverclyde Health and Social Care
Partnership

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 The purpose of the report is to advise the Panel of the Revenue Outturn position for 2024/25, the current position of the 2025/26 Social Work revenue and capital budgets and to highlight the main variances contributing to the 2025/26 projected £0.659m overspend.

3.2 2024/25 Revenue Outturn

The tables below provide a summary of the position, including the impact on the earmarked reserves:

Service	2024/25 (£000)				
	Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance	Prior Variance	Variance Movement
Children & Families	13,483	17,879	4,396	4,504	(108)
Criminal Justice	19	12	(7)	(18)	11
Older Persons	31,769	30,654	(1,115)	(1,107)	(8)
Learning Disabilities	11,655	11,656	1	(112)	113
Physical & Sensory	3,500	3,238	(262)	(247)	(15)
Assessment & Care Management	1,972	2,037	65	74	(9)
Mental Health	1,623	1,490	(133)	(43)	(90)
Alcohol & Drugs Recovery Service	943	801	(142)	(140)	(2)
Homelessness	1,166	1,352	186	177	9
PHIC	2,100	2,058	(42)	(57)	15
Business Support	5,032	2,034	(2,998)	(3,004)	6
Delegated Social Work Budget	73,262	73,211	(51)	27	(78)
Transfer to EMR	1,135	1,135	0	0	(0)
Social Work Net Expenditure	74,397	74,346	(51)	27	(78)

Earmarked Reserves	2024/25 (£000)				
	Approved IJB Reserves	Revised IJB Reserves	Council-delegated Reserves	Projected Spend	Carry Forward
Earmarked Reserves	19,287	22,076	7,557	1,559	5,998
CFCR	0	.	0	0	0
Social Work Total	19,287	22,076	7,557	1,559	5,998

3.2.1 Children and Families

A net overspend of £4.396m was incurred for the service, mainly related to client commitments for the year and staffing within in house residential units. The reduction of £0.108m since the Period 11 reported position is largely due to additional income for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

3.2.2 Older Persons

Older Persons had an overall underspend of £1.115m for 2024/25. Lower bed numbers throughout the year and increased financial assessments contributed to an underspend of £0.541m within Residential & Nursing and additional recoveries of £0.233m. Anticipated delays getting new providers on-line following the commencement of the new care at home contract meant that an in-year underspend of £0.250m occurred.

3.2.3 Learning Disabilities

The year end position of a minor overspend of £0.001m mainly relates to a client commitments overspend of £0.259m, offset by an employee costs underspend of £0.203m, with a few smaller over- and underspends throughout the service. The increase of £0.113m since the position reported at Period 11 is largely due to an increase in client commitments with higher than anticipated housing support hours being delivered.

3.2.4 Physical & Sensory

A net underspend of £0.262m was incurred for the service, mainly related to an underspend in client commitments following reviews of care packages.

3.2.5 Assessment & Care Management

Assessment & Care Management had an overall overspend of £0.065m mainly related to an overspend of £0.046m against employee costs due to non-achievement of turnover target and other minor over and underspends across other budget headings.

3.2.6 Mental Health

An underspend of £0.133m against budget arose for 2024/25. The main reason for the underspend were vacancies within the service of £0.171m partially offset by minor overspends across other budget headings.

3.2.7 Alcohol and Drugs Recovery Service

An underspend on employee costs of £0.171m was the main contributor to the overall underspend for the service of £0.143m.

3.2.8 Homelessness

The overspend of £0.185m against Homelessness related to net additional spend on agency staff of £0.073m, security costs of £0.058m and furniture costs of £0.108m, partially offset by reduced spend on client commitments £0.048m.

3.2.9 Planning, Health Improvement & Commissioning (PHIC)

The final underspend of £0.042m was broadly in line with the projected position at Period 11.

3.2.10 Corporate Director (including Business Support)

The final underspend of £3.003m was broadly in line with the projected position at Period 11, with pension monies and progress against the agreed savings being the main reasons for the underspend.

3.2.11 Allocation of final underspend to reserves

As part of the annual accounts process, and in line with the IJB reserves strategy, the IJB were asked to consider the allocation of the final Social Care underspend to reserves. The final allocation of the overall IJB underspend of £0.051m is as follows:

Transfer to Reserves for final underspend	£000s
General Reserve	(51)
Total	(51)

3.3 2025/26 Current Revenue Position

- 3.3.1 As at 30 June 2025, it is currently projected that Social Care will overspend by £0.659m. The tables below provide a summary of this position, including the impact on earmarked reserves.

Service	2025/26 (£000)				
	Revised Budget	Outturn	Outturn Variance	Prior Variance	Variance Movement
Children & Families	14,547	17,957	3,410	0	3,410
Criminal Justice	(110)	(110)	0	0	0
Older Persons	33,775	33,730	(45)	0	(45)
Learning Disabilities	12,327	12,390	63	0	63
Physical & Sensory	3,123	3,033	(90)	0	(90)
Assessment & Care Management	1,920	1,923	3	0	3
Mental Health	1,552	1,551	(1)	0	(1)
Alcohol & Drugs Recovery Service	1,014	1,018	4	0	4
Homelessness	1,237	1,237	0	0	0
Planning, Health Improvement & Commissioning	1,938	1,934	(4)	0	(4)
Corporate Director (incl Business Support)	7,372	4,691	(2,681)	0	(2,681)
Social Work Net Expenditure	78,695	79,354	659	0	659

Earmarked Reserves	2025/26 (£000)				
	Approved IJB Reserves	Revised IJB Reserves	Council-delegated Reserves	Projected Spend	Projected Carry Forward
Earmarked Reserves	17,161	17,161	5,998	2,089	3,909
CFCR	0	.	0	0	0
Social Work Total	17,161	17,161	5,998	2,089	3,909

Appendix 1 provides the details of the movement in the budget to date and Appendix 2 contains details of the projected outturn position. The material variances are identified by service below and detailed in Appendix 3.

3.3.2 Children and Families

Children and Families is currently projecting an overall overspend of £3.410m. Client commitments is projected to overspend by £3.115m. Both child-focussed and budget-focussed review groups will meet regularly throughout the year to ensure a focussed approach, with a view to management action bringing down the overall costs. The projected overspend is broken down by service area in the table below:

	Outturn Variance £m
Children & Families Client Commitments	
External Residential placements	1.512
Fostering, Adoption & Kinship including Continuing Care	0.323
Supported Living	0.456
Home Care, Respite, Direct Payment, Additional Support	0.824
	3.115

Within employee costs there is a net projected overspend of £0.141m, which is largely due to temporary posts within residential accommodation, together with underspends due to vacancies within the social worker teams, offset by overspends on additional hours, sessionals and overtime within residential accommodation.

- 3.3.3 It is currently expected that the overspend in the service can largely be managed within the overall position, however, smoothing reserves of £0.466m and £0.267 are available for use, in relation to Children's residential placements and Continuing Care respectively, if required should an overspend remain at the end of the financial year. As at period 3 a drawdown of £0.093m has been assumed against the Continuing Care reserve and reflected in the reported projected outturn position.

3.3.4 Older Persons

Employee costs for the internal care at home and community alarm services are currently projected to overspend by £0.190m. This is related to higher than budgeted spend on sessionals, overtime and travel. This position will be monitored throughout the year.

The external care at home service is projecting an underspend of £0.212m, which is mainly due to a reduction in the number of providers together with staffing shortages across the sector.

The positions noted above are the main contributions to an overall projected underspend of £0.045m for Older Persons.

A smoothing reserve is held for Residential and Nursing placements should it be required as the financial year progresses. As at period 3 a drawdown of £0.150m has been assumed and reflected in the reported projected outturn position.

3.3.5 Learning Disability

A projected overspend on client commitments of £0.422m, offset by a projected underspend of £0.280m on employee costs in relation to current vacancy levels, are the main reasons for the overall projected overspend for Learning Disability.

A smoothing reserve is held for Learning Disability client commitments should it be required as the financial year progresses, but it is currently not expected to be drawn.

3.3.6 Physical and Sensory Disability

Within client packages for physical and sensory disabilities, cost recoveries of £0.177m offset by an overspend of £0.059m are the main reasons for the variance reported.

3.3.7 Mental Health

A smoothing reserve is held for client commitments demographic pressures should it be required as the financial year progresses. As at period 3 a drawdown of £0.268m has been assumed and reflected in the reported projected outturn position for Mental Health.

3.3.8 Corporate Director (including Business Support)

Pension monies and progress against the agreed VER target are the main reasons for the projected underspend of £2.681m.

Pension Monies

Following the temporary reduction to the employer's superannuation contribution, the HSCP has £3.109m on a non-recurring basis to support the service redesign of Children and Families. As in 2024/25 this be used in full to offset the overspend currently projected. It should be noted that 2025/26 is the final year for this temporary funding.

Agreed Savings for 2025/26

The position against each savings target as at 30th June is shown in the table below.

Savings title	Required Saving £000	Achieved as at 30/06/25 £000	Saving still to be achieved £000
Education Placement Support	83	83	0
Redesign of Strategic Services	62	62	0
Review of Independent Living Services	466	466	0
Review Integrated Front Doors	270	270	0
Residential / Nursing care home beds	99	99	0
Business Support Review	198	198	0
Homemakers	167	167	0
Review of commissioning arrangements	146	146	0
New VER target	400	0	400
Review of Adult services self directed supports	600	600	0
	2,491	2,091	400

4.0 2025/26 Current Capital Position

4.1 The Social Work capital budget is £9.907m over the life of the projects with £6.443m projected to be spent in 2025/26. Expenditure on all capital projects to 30 June 2025 is £0.798m (12.40% of approved budget). Appendix 4 details capital budgets.

4.2 *New Community Hub*

The project commenced on site in early December 2024 following financial close with completion projected April 2026. The project is currently progressing to programme with a summary of works in the reporting period and on-going outlined below:

- Timber kit progressed with external wall panels, internal partitions, roof cassettes and trusses now being installed;
- Internal blockwork nearing completion with only the stair core and lift shaft to top out;
- External brickwork has progressed to damp proof course (DPC) level with slip sills being installed in advance of curtain walling screens which will be installed mid-August;
- External scaffold has now been installed to four sides of the building;
- East elevation upper car park partially completed;
- Steel frame now complete.

Works planned to commence/complete in the forthcoming period include:

- Completion of timber frame;
- Internal blockwork completion;
- External brickwork panels commencing;
- Roofing works commencing;
- Curtain walling commencing.

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 Proposals for this paper are contained within the Recommendations at Section 2.0.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 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

6.2 Finance

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

6.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.4 Human Resources

There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

6.5 Strategic

There are no strategic implications

6.6 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. No policy changes/implications

(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. No policy changes/implications

(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.

6.7 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.

6.8 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

x

YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

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.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 There has been no consultation in relation to this report

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 Not applicable

Social Work
Budget Movement - 2025-26

Period 3 1 April 2025 -30 June 2025

Service	Approved Budget £000	Movements					Revised Budget £000
		Inflation £000	Virement / Reallocation £000	Supplementary Budgets £000	IJB Funding £000	Transfers (to)/ from Earmarked Reserves £000	
Children & Families	14,439	0	75	33	0	0	14,547
Criminal Justice	(110)	0		0	0	0	(110)
Older Persons	34,084	0	(309)	0	0	0	33,775
Learning Disabilities	12,044	0	283	0	0	0	12,327
Physical & Sensory	3,222	0	(99)	0	0	0	3,123
Assessment & Care Management	1,849	0	71	0	0	0	1,920
Mental Health	1,674	0	(122)	0	0	0	1,552
Alcohol & Drugs Recovery Service	974	0	40	0	0	0	1,014
Homelessness	1,186	0	51	0	0	0	1,237
Planning, Health Improvement & Commissioning	1,927	0	11	0	0	0	1,938
Corporate director (including Business Support)	8,083	0	(2)	0	0	0	8,081
Contribution from General reserves	(709)	0		0	0	0	(709)
Totals	78,662	0	(0)	33	0	0	78,695

Budget Movements Detail

£000

Inflation

0

Virements

Supplementary Budgets
C&F Living Wage Inflation

33

Social Work

Revenue Budget Projected Outturn - 2025/26

Period 3 1 April 2025 -30 June 2025

2024/25 Actual Subjective Analysis £000	Approved Budget £000	Revised Budget £000	Projected Outturn £000	Projected Over / (Under) Spend £000	Budget Variance %
38,369 Employee costs	37,201	38,463	38,691	228	0.59
1,678 Property costs	1,153	1,153	1,306	153	13.27
1,412 Supplies & services	1,184	1,336	1,349	13	0.97
343 Transport & plant	325	312	254	(58)	(18.59)
973 Administration costs	780	883	942	59	6.68
54,993 Payments to other bodies	61,680	62,228	63,093	865	1.39
(27,668) Income	(23,661)	(25,680)	(26,281)	(601)	2.34
70,100	78,662	78,695	79,354	659	0.84
0 Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	0	0	0	0	0
70,100 Social Work Net Expenditure	78,662	78,695	79,354	659	0.84

2024/25 Actual Objective Analysis £000	Approved Budget £000	Revised Budget £000	Projected Outturn £000	Projected Over / (Under) Spend £000	Budget Variance %
16,929 Children & Families	14,439	14,547	17,957	3,410	23.44
57 Criminal Justice	(110)	(110)	(110)	0	0.00
29,242 Older Persons	34,084	33,775	33,730	(45)	(0.13)
10,544 Learning Disabilities	12,044	12,327	12,390	63	0.51
3,254 Physical & Sensory	3,222	3,123	3,033	(90)	(2.88)
1,847 Assessment & Care Management	1,849	1,920	1,923	3	0.16
1,396 Mental Health	1,674	1,552	1,551	(1)	(0.06)
706 Alcohol & Drugs Recovery Service	974	1,014	1,018	4	0.39
1,504 Homelessness	1,186	1,237	1,237	0	0.00
Planning, Health Improvement &					
2,361 Commissioning	1,927	1,938	1,934	(4)	(0.21)
Corporate director (including					
Business Support					
2,260	7,374	7,372	4,691	(2,681)	(36.37)
70,100	78,662	78,695	79,354	659	0.84
0 Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	0	0	0	0	0
70,100 Social Work Net Expenditure	78,662	78,695	79,354	659	0.84

Social Work

Material Variances - 2025/26

Period 3 1 April 2025 -30 June 2025

2024/25 Actual £000	Budget Heading	Revised Budget £000	Proportion of budget £000	Actual to 30/06/25 £000	Projected Outturn £000	Projected Over/(Under) Spend £000	Percentage Variance %
	Employee Costs						
7,088	Children & Families	7,275	1,814	1,509	7,312	37	0.51
13,005	Older Persons	14,250	3,553	3,090	14,546	296	2.08
2,713	Learning Disabilities	3,032	756	567	2,751	(281)	(9.27)
895	Homelessness	1,184	295	264	1,121	(63)	(5.32)
2,074	Planning, Health Improvement & Commissioning	1,541	384	558	1,436	(105)	(6.81)
2,861	Business Support	2,883	719	595	2,842	(41)	(1.42)
28,636		30,165	7,521	6,583	30,008	(157)	(0.52)
	Non-Employee Costs						
	Children & Families:						
5,135	PTOB - External residential placements	3,031	758	988	4,543	1,512	49.88
352	PTOB - Supported Living	0	0	82	456	456	
2,916	PTOB - Adoption, Fostering, Kinship and Continuing Care placements	2,704	676	813	3,027	323	11.95
1,454	PTOB - Home Care, Respite, Direct Payments, Additional Support	200	50	235	1,024	824	412.00
	Older Persons:						
4,622	PTOB - External Homecare packages	4,865	1,216	268	4,653	(212)	(4.36)
	Learning Disabilities:						
13,343	PTOB - External client packages	13,519	3,380	2,079	13,941	422	3.12
	Physical Disabilities:						
2,409	PTOB - External client packages	2,729	682	485	2,611	(118)	(4.32)
	Corporate Director (including Business Support)						
0	PTOB - Non-Recurring Pension monies	3,109	777	0	0	(3,109)	(100.00)
0	PTOB - VER Target	(400)	(100)	0	0	400	(100.00)
30,231		29,757	7,439	4,950	30,255	498	1.67
58,867	Total Material Variances	59,922	14,960	11,533	60,263	341	0.57

Social Work

Capital Budget 2025/26

Period 3 1 April 2025 -30 June 2025

Project Name	Est Total Cost	Actual to 31/03/25	Approved Budget	Revised Estimate	Actual to 30/06/2025	Estimate 2026/27	Estimate 2027/28	Future Years
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Social Work								
New Community Hub	9,707	1,774	6,433	6,433	798	1,500	0	0
Swift Upgrade	200	0	0	0	0	200	0	0
Social Work Total	9,907	1,774	6,433	6,433	798	1,700	0	0

12.40% App Budget
12.40% Rev Est
0.00% Slippage

Social Work
Earmarked Reserves - 2025/26
Period 3 1 April 2025 -30 June 2025

Project	Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager	Total Funding 2025/26 £000	Projected Spend 2025/26 £000	Amount to be Earmarked for 2025/26 & Beyond £000	Lead officer Update
Tier 2 School Counselling	Margaret McIntyre	168	60	108	School counselling contract renewed. Commitment held for future years.
Whole Family Wellbeing	Margaret McIntyre	677	480	197	Spending Plan submitted to SG. Will be fully utilised over the period of the funding currently assuming to 2026-27.
Refugees	Maxine Ward	3,754	669	3,085	For continued support for refugees in Inverclyde area. New Scots Team, third sector support, interpreting, education support etc. Income received to fund planned spend over 25/26 and next 3 financial years at this stage
Autism Friendly	Alan Best	79	48	31	To implement the National and Local Autism strategies with an aim to create an 'Autism Inclusive Inverclyde'.
Integrated Care Fund	Alan Best	84	37	47	Fully committed. Ind sector lead costs committed 24/25 and 25/26.
Delayed Discharge	Alan Best	31	31	0	Fully committed. .
Winter Pressures Care at Home	Alan Best	386	386	0	Care and support at home review commitments plus ongoing care at home requirements being progressed. Maximising indep/CM work.
Carers	Alan Best	274	100	174	Consultation with carers being carried out to identify most appropriate use of funds. A range of commitments under way to be incurred in 2025/26 financial year with further developments ongoing.
ADRS fixed term posts	Maxine Ward	103	18	85	For continuation of contribution to fixed term MIST posts .
CORRA Residential Rehab	Maxine Ward	87	48	39	New Reserve for CORRA Residential Rehab Project. Funds will be utilised over the life of the project in line with the project plan.
Temporary posts	Craig Given	317	174	143	Will be fully utilised over 24/25 and 25/26.
Welfare	Maxine Ward	38	38	0	Fully committed.
Council delegated reserves		5,998	2,089	3,909	

Social Work

Earmarked Reserves - 2025/26

Period 3 1 April 2025 -30 June 2025

Project	Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager	Total Funding 2025/26 £000	Projected Spend 2025/26 £000	Amount to be Earmarked for 2025/26 & Beyond £000	Lead officer Update
Pay contingency	Craig Given	392	0	392	To address in-year pay pressures as required.
Client Commitments - general	Kate Rocks	628	268	360	To address potential demographic pressures.
Adoption/Fostering/Residential Childcare/ Kinship	Margaret McIntyre	466	0	466	To address in-year pressures as required.
Continuing Care	Margaret McIntyre	267	93	174	To address in-year pressures as required.
Residential & Nursing	Alan Best	531	150	381	To address in-year pressures as required.
Learning Disabilities Client Commitments	Alan Best	382	0	382	To address in-year pressures as required.
Learning Disabilities Redesign	Alan Best	527	400	127	Community Hub fit out costs reserve. Includes £200k contribution to build costs.
IJB ADP	Maxine Ward	369	115	254	Fully committed - remaining balance relates to MIST posts, allowable earmarking for use in 25/26.
IJB Mental Health - Action 15	Katrina Philips	0	0	0	Fully committed.
IJB Mental Health Transformation	Katrina Philips	381	103	278	Fully committed towards ANP service within MH.
IJB Contributions to Partner Capital Projects	Kate Rocks	599	0	599	
IJB Primary Care Support & Public Health	Hector McDonald	367	138	229	A number of initiatives ongoing within these funds e.g. Thrive under 5, Smoking prevention, GP premises improvement.
IJB Prescribing Smoothing Reserve	Alan Best	922	218	704	To address in-year pressures as required.
IJB Addictions Review	Maxine Ward	269	106	163	Redesign transition funding including Residential Rehab costs.
IJB Innovation Fund	Kate Rocks	557	344	213	Expenditure on projects approved by the Transformation Board and IJB. Updates reported regularly to both the Transformation Board and IJB. Projects can be Council, Health or Joint.
IJB Staff L&D Fund	Jonathan Hinds	402	100	302	Training board led spend for MSC students, staff support, Grow your own and ongoing Social work Adult/Child protection training.
IJB Homelessness	Alan Best	34	34	0	Redesign transition funding. Balance committed for continuation of temp posts in 25/26.
IJB Swift	Jonathan Hinds	913	90	823	For project implementation and contingency.
IJB WP MDT	Alan Best	47	47	0	Fully committed - balance to fund costs of committed posts 25/26.
IJB WP HSCW	Laura Moore	55	55	0	Fully committed - balance is for ongoing Band 5 and 6 posts commitments
IJB Care Home Oversight	Laura Moore	81	0	81	Any unused funds at year end to be earmarked for continuation of workstreams including Call before you convey.
IJB Digital Strategy	Alan Best	119	119	0	Analogue to Digital commitments - spending plan ongoing.
IJB MH Recovery & Renewal	Katrina Philips	321	8	313	Earmarked for continuation of board-wide facilities improvement and workforce wellbeing initiatives.
IJB LD Health Checks	Alan Best	64	0	64	To fund central team work re LD Health checks led by East Renfrewshire.
The Lens Project	Margaret McIntyre / Alan Best	55	55	0	Projects identified to take forward.
IJB Severance Costs Contingency	Kate Rocks	1,349	348	1,001	IJB Reserve for severance costs.
IJB Free Reserves	Craig Given	1,066	155	911	Planned use of Reserves agreed by IJB.
Overall Total		17,161	5,035	12,126	

Report To:	Social Work & Social Care Scrutiny Panel	Date:	26 August 2025
Report By:	Kate Rocks Chief Officer Inverclyde HSCP	Report No:	SWSCSP/48/2025/JH
Contact Officer:	Jonathan Hinds Chief Social Work Officer Inverclyde HSCP	Contact No:	01475 715282
Subject:	Review of Social Work Governance and Assurance across Scotland		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☐ For Decision ☒ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to advise the Social Work and Social Care Scrutiny Panel of the publication, by the Care Inspectorate, of the 'Review of Social Work Governance and Assurance across Scotland'.
- 1.3 The report was published in May 2025 and the review focussed on how well social work governance and assurance arrangements across Scotland support leaders to:
- ensure statutory duties are carried out safely and effectively;
 - enable social work staff to be supported, accountable and effective in their practice;
 - assist social work staff to uphold core social work values.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members of the Social Work and Social Care Scrutiny Panel are asked to:
- (i) note the findings of the national review and local improvement activity;
 - (ii) consider requesting an update report for a future meeting of the Panel.

**Kate Rocks
Chief Officer
Inverclyde HSCP**

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Care Inspectorate undertook a review of social work governance and assurance arrangements between June and November 2024 and considered the delivery of adults, children & families and justice social work services.
- 3.2 The report was published in May 2025 and can be found at the following link: [Review of social work governance and assurance across Scotland 2025](#). The report acknowledged the complex legislative and policy landscape within which social work services are planned, delivered and evaluated, including 43 pieces of legislation, in addition to national regulations, policy, guidance and directions. In addition, the report reflected the different approaches taken in local areas to the integration of health and social care services, delivered through Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) where 34% have all social work functions delegated (as is the model in Inverclyde), 44% have solely adult social work services delegated and 22% have justice social work delegated alongside adult services.
- 3.3 Furthermore, the review team recognised that social work and social care services are provided within the context of significant challenges including finance and workforce, demographic pressures, increasing demand and complexity, alongside the enduring impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.
- 3.4 The review was undertaken remotely using the following methods:
- **document review:** including Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) annual reports, social work governance terms of reference, risk registers and improvement plans;
 - **national staff survey:** frontline social workers, paraprofessionals and occupational therapists as well as first-line managers;
 - **structured interviews and focus groups:** including all CSWOs and regional focus groups;
 - **conversations** with eight Council Chief Executives.
- 3.5 The aims of the review were to:
- highlight how CSWOs and other social work leaders can influence governance and assurance;
 - explore how social work values were upheld in practice;
 - identify what is working well;
 - recognise the challenges faced by local leaders and staff and where improvement is required;
 - understand how social work staff understand and experience social work governance and practice.

3.6 The national perspective

Nationally, 3,935 frontline staff and first line managers responded to the staff survey and, alongside the document review and interviews/focus groups, the review identified several key messages, summarised in Figure 1, below:

Clarity, understanding and effectiveness of governance arrangements	1. Overall, social work leaders and managers worked effectively within often complicated governance arrangements. In most cases these arrangements were well understood by staff.
	2. Oversight and assurance were enhanced by dedicated 'social work governance boards' or their equivalent.
Role and influence of social work	3. Social work influence was at times more limited within health and social care partnerships where it had a less equal level of representation.

	4. The role of the chief social work officer was important in promoting and amplifying the voice of social work.
Social work values	5. Staff, managers and leaders felt confident to promote and uphold values within social work services. There was a strong belief in the importance of social work values to support ethical practice.
Assurance, oversight and the management of risk	6. Overall, social work assurance was mostly effective
	7. Social work services were managing significant levels of risk relating to financial and staffing resources. The impact of both of these risks was amplified in island and rural settings.
Arrangements to enable staff to be supported, accountable and effective	8. Overall staff felt supported to deliver effective services.
	9. Most social work staff benefitted from appropriate professional supervision arrangements and received learning and development opportunities which supported them to deliver their role.

Fig. 1: Summary of key messages

3.7 The report also noted some additional high-level messages for national consideration:

- Scotland's social work services were finding the ability to match supply with demand exacerbated by increased levels of complexity. This meant that social work was at risk of being unable to fulfil its statutory duties in some service areas.
- Staff were concerned that traditional relationship-based practice was being replaced by 'transactional' or 'episodic' engagement with people and children who use services. This was particularly the case within adult social work.
- A national approach is required to tackle the recruitment and retention crisis. Social work sustainability is particularly impacted by the enduring financial position. Change is needed to support the vital role of social work services.

3.8 The local perspective

As part of the participation of Inverclyde HSCP staff and practitioners in the review, surveys were completed by 110 frontline practitioners and managers (2.8% of the national total). Of these, 38% worked in children & families services, 24% in adult services, 15% in mental health services and 10% in alcohol & drug services, with the remainder from Justice and Disability Services. In addition, 52% of staff who responded were front line social workers, compared to 42% nationally.

3.9 From the analysis of local surveys, the following key messages were identified:

- Staff are confident in helping people access services.
- The organisation implements a range of interventions and approaches to which ensure people's rights are upheld.
- Staff feel less supported to undertake professional and legislative duties and more supported to take part in annual appraisal and learning/reflective practice.
- Staff are confident about raising concerns and risks with their line manager.
- Staff understand line management and reporting responsibilities to managers and leaders.

3.10 Furthermore, people felt supported to uphold social work values, there was a clear leadership vision to improve outcomes for people and there was a clear understanding of social work governance arrangements, as well as the ability to access specialist advice to identify and mitigate risk.

- 3.11 The local analysis also indicated that staff recruitment and retention had been challenging for first line managers, with subsequent impact on caseloads at times. In addition, staff and first line managers identified areas where they felt improvements could be made; these were focussed on training and development opportunities, the use of performance and quality improvement information to help staff carry out their duties safely, and feeling listened to by leaders and managers involved in improving services.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Many of the local findings echoed national findings, particularly around resource challenges, increased demand and complex needs and the need for staff to provide responsive interventions and support to the people they are working with.
- 4.2 The key messages from the national review and local findings have been shared with the HSCP extended management team. They will also be considered along with the results of the annual iMatter workforce survey (which is provided to the full HSCP workforce) which has been published within the last month, as part of work to strengthen our governance arrangements, staff wellbeing and learning and development approaches. These will also inform activity to deliver key actions within the HSCP Workforce Plan 2022–25, including ‘access to training opportunities which support staff personal and professional development and supports the delivery of high-quality services’, as well as ‘fostering workforce cultures, kind and compassionate leadership that supports wellbeing and positive workplaces’.
- 4.3 In addition, the fundamental importance of relationship-based practice is embedded in several redesign workstreams in children & families, homelessness and integrated adult services, whilst local work to address the impact of the national social worker recruitment challenge enabled most social worker vacancies to be filled since the start of the year, with continued investment in the ‘Grow our Own’ programme and financial support to final year MSc students joining the HSCP.
- 4.4 Finally, within the revised senior leadership arrangements implemented this year, the CSWO is developing a social work governance group which will augment existing governance arrangements, to ensure staff understand social work governance, how it informs and is reflected in the work of committees overseeing social work delivery and how social work is appropriately represented in other management and governance arrangements. This will build on the existing, well-established arrangements within Inverclyde and ensure the focus on delivering social work services reflects social work values and how performance information is used to develop services, manage risk and support staff wellbeing and development.
- 4.5 Members of the Social Work and Social Care Scrutiny Panel may therefore wish to request a report to a future meeting to provide an update on progress here.

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

N/A

5.4 Human Resources

N/A

5.5 Strategic

Activity to strengthen social work governance and assurance processes will support the progression of the HSCP's strategic objectives.

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.

N/A

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 N/A

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

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
Contact Officer:	Maxine Ward Head of Addictions, Advice Services, New to Scotland and Homelessness Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership	Contact No:	01475 715365
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

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/51/2025/MM
Contact Officer:	Margaret McIntyre Head of Children, Families and Justice Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership	Contact No:	01475 715282
Subject:	Children & Families Redesign: Foster Carer Fees Uplift		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 ☐ For Decision ☒ For Information/Noting

1.2 This report is to inform the Social Work & Social Care Scrutiny Panel of the HSCP Children's Services redesign, which has at its heart the recognition of the importance of families, including specifically the critical role of local foster carers in providing safe nurturing care to some of Inverclyde's most vulnerable children and young people.

1.3 At the IJB on 24 March 2025, members considered and reviewed the children and families budget pressures, as a consequence of the increasing cost of external fostering and residential placements for children looked after away from home. It was identified that the increased costs of continuing care, with no national funding for this legislative duty, provided to Inverclyde Council by Scottish Government, has resulted in significant placement sufficiency and budget pressures.

Ongoing work as a key strand of the redesign is to increase the number of local fostering placements for children and young people. Benchmarking against comparative authorities established that our fostering fee for carers was not competitive, particularly compared to neighbouring areas, which impacts on our ability to recruit and retain foster carers. IJB were advised that further work with an option appraisal had been undertaken to consider increasing our fostering fees to ensure that we attract the quality and the number of foster carers in the short to medium term to provide care for our children and young people in Inverclyde. Evidence and research demonstrate where children and young people continue to experience care and routine within a family setting that continues to foster the relationships that matter to them with their extended family, school, and community results in substantially better outcomes.

A further report was presented to the IJB on the 23 June 2025 with detailed analysis of the benchmarking activity in respect of fostering fees locally and nationally. It was proposed an enhanced fostering fee to retain existing foster carers and attract new fostering households was a significant priority to ensure fostering sufficiency across a range of age groups and placement options dependent on the needs of the child. The IJB agreed and gave a direction for the HSCP Children's Service to proceed with the uplifted fee of £350 per child per week for all foster carers, as part of our integrated recruitment and retention fostering strategy.

The fee was introduced quickly following communication with foster carers with clarity regarding issuing the new enhanced fee in time with the fostering pay run in mid-July. While early in its implementation, many foster carers have shared how delighted they are, as they feel that their contribution as foster carers has been recognised and valued by Inverclyde Council. Foster carers have also told us the difference the fee will make in their lives with the children they foster to reduce the financial pressures many families face with the cost-of-living crisis. Foster carer feedback is important to the service, and we shall continue to engage and listen to the voice of our carers and the children they look after as being at the heart of our service aligned to our redesign and to the Promise.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Social Work & Social Care Scrutiny Panel members are asked to:

- (i) Note the outcome from the analysis of the benchmarking of foster carer fees.
- (ii) Note the increase in foster carer fees to existing foster carer households and note the intended increase of our minimal target of five new fostering households, at an annual additional cost of £350,000.

Kate Rocks
Chief Officer
Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Inverclyde HSCP Children and Families services are on a significant transformational journey of service redesign and change to improve outcomes for children and families. IJB and SWSCSP members have already considered a range of data, capturing our local challenges around the number of children and young people who require to be looked after away from home. These complex pressures result in children and young people having to be placed in high-cost external fostering and residential care provisions, often out with Inverclyde.
- 3.2 This position reflects a broader context of national challenges, particularly linked to the significant financial pressures for families and carers with the cost-of-living crisis, and for local authorities with the increasing costs of care, for vulnerable children and young people. Previous reports evidenced that the most significant budget pressure arises from the increasingly complex combination of risk, need and demand, requiring the provision of external residential and foster care for children and young people. Critically, the human costs are experienced when children’s broader connections to family, friends, schools and communities, are disrupted as most external provision is often out with Inverclyde.
- 3.3 Inverclyde Council has committed an additional, recurring investment of £700,000 for 2025-2026, to support transformation across HSCP children’s services. In addition to £700,000 the Council also agreed to increase by a further £1.300m to £2.000m over the period 2026/27 to 2027/28.
- 3.4 As reflected in the report to IJB in March and June, the proportion of Inverclyde’s children who are looked after is illustrated in Figure 1, below, compared with national data:

	Inverclyde	Scotland
Looked after at home (with family)	81%	89%
Kinship care	52%	33%
Internal fostering	20%	24%
External fostering	8%	10%
Residential (internal and external)	20%	10%

Figure 1: Number of looked after children: Inverclyde and Scotland

- 3.5 By comparing local placement data with national data, looked after children from Inverclyde are:
- 8% less likely to be looked after at home.
 - twice as likely to be in a residential placement.
 - 6% less likely to be in a fostering placement.
- 3.6 Furthermore, the number of Inverclyde children in external foster care placements doubled over the past two years, from 8 children in 2022 to 16 children in external foster placements in 2024. Additionally, the numbers of young people entering high-cost external residential care has also been increasing. The financial impact of this demand is reflected in the projected overspend position for the HSCP.
- 3.7 In line with the increase in use of external foster care placements, there are currently 20 fostering households (internal foster carers) registered with Inverclyde Council, having reduced significantly, from 34 in May 2020. This is a reduction in capacity of 41% and the impact of this has been that fewer local care placements are available to Inverclyde children who require to be looked after away from their family. This reflects the national picture, where the number of newly registered fostering households has reduced significantly over the past five years across Scotland.

- 3.8 When considering local, benchmarking and national data, the use of foster care placements has been lower in Inverclyde over recent years than the national picture. On average, 19% of looked after children are either in internal or external fostering placements, compared to the average of 30% in other local authority benchmarking areas and 34% nationally. Comparative data also illustrates that Inverclyde uses residential placements twice as often as the other local authority benchmarking and national areas.
- 3.9 The average annual cost of an external fostering placement is £64,000. This compares with an average annual cost of an internal foster care placement of £30,000. The costs of external residential care annually are significant e.g. ranging from a spectrum of £250,000 to £450,000+ per child.
- 3.10 The Scottish Recommended Allowance, introduced in 2023, provides a national minimum allowance for the child in foster care, however the skilled payment also known as the fostering fee is a matter for each local authority area to determine the rate. Inverclyde's fostering fee/skilled payment structure is long-standing and has not been reviewed for many years. In comparison to other areas, it is also complex in its design and implementation where the lowest weekly fee paid to foster carers is £195.75 for either one or two children (not per child). This is significantly lower than neighbouring local authority areas, with whom potential foster carers living in Inverclyde could be registered with those local authorities.
- 3.11 Inverclyde HSCP values the experience and support our existing foster carers provide to our children and recognises that to ensure that we grow and develop our services we need to retain our existing foster carers and recruit new carers. Our ambition is to attract new local fostering households for our children and young people that maintains their relationships, friendships and connections within Inverclyde.
- 3.12 As part of the benchmarking activity, we completed an options appraisal to consider the optimum fee / skilled payment that reflects our ambitions to grow and develop our fostering households to provide high quality care and support that is trauma informed supporting recovery, and if safe to do so, the reunification of children and young people back to their birth families.

If Inverclyde increased the weekly fee to foster carers, across all age ranges, the full year impact of the increase when applied to current fostering households was projected, alongside five additional fostering placements being registered each year.

Figure 2, below, provides information on this, outlining three options to increase fostering fees. This proposes a clearer fee structure, reflecting the importance of fostering in terms of the commitment of foster carers and the importance of developing a skillset across all stages of a child's development.

Revised weekly fee	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Per child	£300	£325	£350
Full Year impact of increase	£194,00	£226,000	£259,000
Five additional fostering placements (increase applied)	£78,000	£85,000	£91,000
Total	£272,000	£311,000	£350,000

Figure 2: Options and costings: additional cost for revised fostering model.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 Decision of the IJB, 23 June 2025

The costings in Figure 2 above detailed the financial commitment required to increase weekly fostering fees to support retention and ongoing development of existing foster carers, as well as the ability to attract new foster carer households, as a key strand of the redesign of children's services to make a sustainable impact on the longstanding financial burden on the HSCP and ultimately to improve the balance of care.

- 4.2 Given the criticality of needing to increase our local fostering capacity to improve outcomes for children and young people and rebalancing the burden of care and the impact this is having on financial pressures for the HSCP. IJB determined that option 3 potentially had the greatest impact in reducing Inverclyde HSCPs dependency on external care provision and improving our local fostering recruitment and retention strategy. **IJB thus gave a direction for the new enhanced weekly fee for all foster carers of £350 for each child in their care across all age ranges ensuring an equal simplified fee structure.**

- 4.3 The enhanced fostering fee for existing, and with the addition of up to five new fostering households, would cost a projected additional **£350,000 annually**. This funding is provided from the additional Council investment in HSCP Children's Services as detailed above.

4.4 Implementation of the Enhanced Fee Feedback Update

Foster carers were notified of the IJB direction in June 2025. The enhanced payment was issued in the second week of July 2025 timed with the fostering pay run. Foster carers were encouraged to discuss any queries, while sharing any feedback with their Supervising Social Worker. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from foster carers. Many expressed their delight, happiness and surprise in the investment in fostering. There was a strong view that this money signalled a real recognition of the vital role that local foster carers play in the care and protection of Inverclyde's most vulnerable children and young people. The feedback also highlighted the cost of living challenges many carers experience and the difference the increased fee while make to their day-to-day lives with the children. As a service we value the feedback of our foster carers and will continue to engage with them.

It is therefore recommended that the SW&SCSP members:

- (i) Note the increase in foster carer fees to existing foster carer households and note the intended increase of aiming to recruit five new fostering households at an annual additional cost of £350,000.

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		
Human Resources		
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	x	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		
Environmental & Sustainability		
Data Protection		

5.2 Finance

The additional annual cost of the proposed increase in fostering fees and number of foster carers is £350,000

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 (000)	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Family placement	Fostering fees	23/06/25	350		

5.3 Legal/Risk

N/A

5.4 Human Resources

N/A

5.5 Strategic

Activity to increase foster carer fees is intended to retain existing foster carers and attract new foster carers to register with Inverclyde Council. This aligns with the HSCP strategic priorities, namely:

- Provide Early Help and Intervention.
- Support Inclusive, Safe and Resilient Communities.
- Strengthen Support to Families and Carers

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 This report builds on the previous extensive work, which includes previous and current on-going consultation with legal, commissioning, procurement, finance officers and on-going engagement with staff, children and families.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 N/A

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/52/2025/JH
Contact Officer:	Jonathan Hinds Chief Social Work Officer Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership	Contact No:	01475 715365
Subject:	Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☐ For Decision ☒ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to update members of the Social Work and Social Care Scrutiny Panel on work undertaken to meet the requirements of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members of the Social Work and Social Work Scrutiny Panel are asked to:
- a) note the content of the report; and
 - b) note the report to the Scottish Government (Appendix 1).

**Kate Rocks
Chief Officer
Inverclyde HSCP**

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act (HCSSA) was enacted by the Scottish Parliament and received Royal Assent on 6 June 2019. Its implementation was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic, coming into effect on the 1 April 2024 and makes provisions in relation to staffing by the National Health Service and by providers of care services.
- 3.2 The HCSSA legislation provides a statutory basis for the provision of appropriate staffing in health and care services, to enable safe and high-quality care and improved outcomes for service users. It builds on existing policies and procedures within both health and care services. Effective implementation aims to embed a culture of openness and transparency, ensuring staff are informed about decisions relating to staffing and able to raise concerns.
- 3.3 Inverclyde HSCP instigated a Safer Staffing Programme Board, chaired by the Chief Nurse and Chief Social Work Officer, which meets regularly to coordinate the implementation of the Act with representatives across relevant Health and Social Care teams.
- 3.4 Section 3(2) of the Act places duties on local and integration authorities when “planning or securing the provision of a care service from another person under a contract, agreement or other arrangement”. Specifically, this states that such authorities must have regard to:
- (a) the guiding principles for health and care staffing; and
 - (b) the duties relating to staffing imposed on persons who provide care services.
- 3.5 Section 3 (6) of the Act places a duty on authorities “as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year” (by 30 June 2025) to publish information on:
- (a) the steps they have taken, and
 - (b) any ongoing risk that may affect their ability to comply with Section 3(2) of the Act.
- 3.6 There has been significant consultation between the Scottish Government, the Care Inspectorate, CoSLA and integration authorities on the wider interpretation and scope of the reporting duty in Section 3(6) of the Act. The Scottish Government has said that, as each local authority/integration authority operates differently, the guidance has flexibility to sit alongside existing processes, policies and procedures.”
- 3.7 The HSCP Strategic Commissioning team has liaised with Council Legal Services who provided guidance in relation to inclusion of duties under the Act in relevant tender documents and procurement exercises as required. This liaison will continue for current and future procurement activities.
- 3.8 In addition, Strategic Commissioning colleagues have updated documents under the Contract Management Framework to ensure alignment with the Act.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The Scottish Government produced a template for the reporting duty under the Act which consists of two questions which reflect Section 2(5) of the Act:
- Please detail the steps you have taken as an organisation to comply with section 3(2) of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019;
 - Please detail any ongoing risks that may affect your ability to comply with the duty set out in section 3(2).

- 4.2 The completed template for Inverclyde HSCP was submitted to Scottish Government by the deadline of 30 June 2025 and is included at Appendix 1. Along with publication of this report on the Council website, this meets the duty under Section 3(6) of the Act.

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		✓
Legal/Risk		✓
Human Resources		✓
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)		✓
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		✓
Environmental & Sustainability		✓
Data Protection		✓

5.2 Finance

There are no specific Finance implications arising from this report.

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

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report

5.4 Human Resources

There are no specific human resources implications arising from this report.

5.5 Strategic

Publication of the template enables Inverclyde HSCP to fulfil its duty within the Act and its commitments in the relation to purchased services outlined within the strategic plan and our vision that "Inverclyde is a compassionate community, working together to ensure people live active, healthy, and fulfilling lives."

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.
✓	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.
✓	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.
✓	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.
✓	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.
✓	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 The report has been informed by consultation with relevant senior officers in the HSCP and members of the local Programme Board.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership - Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019: Annual Report

Declaration

Name of local authority / integration authority: Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership

Report authorised by:

Name: Jonathan Hinds

Designation: Chief Social Work Officer

Date: 16th May 2025

Details of where the report will be published: <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/health-and-socialcare>

Commissioning and reporting duties for local and integration authorities under the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 (HCSSA)

1. Please detail the steps you have taken as an organisation to comply with section 3(2) of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019.

Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership (IHSCP) have awarded sixteen contracts, for Registered Care Services, in the financial year April 2024 to March 2025. These sixteen contracts are a mixture of Direct Awards and Tenders. Service area breakdown is as follows:

- 4 Children and Families Services
- 6 Older People Services
- 1 Mental Health Services
- 1 Learning Disability Services
- 1 Primary Care Service
- 3 Services that cover various Client Groups

IHSCP have taken the following steps to comply with 3(2) of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019.

During Procurement Process:

Stipulate that prospective providers must ensure staff are appropriately registered with SSSC or NMC as required.

Assess prospective providers in relation to staffing arrangements proposed to meet the tender requirements. This assessment contributes to overall technical evaluation and may include questions related to:

- Staff training and experience.
- Meeting service outcomes.
- Meeting individual outcomes.
- Support for staff wellbeing.
- Arrangements for ongoing appraisal and supervision, and
- Quality assurance systems.

At point of Contract Award

Terms and conditions of Inverclyde Council Health and Social Care contracts ensure that:

- Providers take cognisance of the HSSCA. Specific clauses are inserted into our Contracts. (For contracts that were awarded pre-inception of HSSCA retrospective Minute of Variations have been issued).
- Staff have PVG checks where required.
- Providers fulfil statutory obligations concerning the employment of staff and are required to ensure they have a sufficient number of suitably trained, qualified and competent staff, in accordance with legislative duties and any Regulatory Body conditions, as well as any additional requirements set out in the Service Specification.
- Providers are required to provide the Council, on request, with full details of all staff job descriptions, person specifications and titles and provide equivalent information in respect of any volunteers or students participating in or involved in the provision of services.
- The Provider is required to comply with all Scottish Government and regulatory and statutory requirements in relation to safe recruitment.
- Providers adopt Fair Work practices including:
 - (a) a fair and equal pay policy that includes a commitment to support the Living Wage (as published by the Living Wage Foundation) including, for example, being a Living Wage Accredited Employer accredited with the Living Wage Foundation or Scottish Living Wage organisation.
 - (b) clear managerial responsibility to nurture talent and help individuals fulfil their potential, for example, a clear career path that individuals can follow including Modern Apprenticeships and the development of Scotland's young workforce.
 - (c) promoting equality of opportunity and developing a workforce which reflects the population of Scotland in terms of characteristics such as age, gender, religion, or belief, race, sexual orientation, and disability.
 - (d) support for learning and development.
 - (e) stability of employment and hours of work, and avoiding exploitative employment practices including, for example, no inappropriate use of zero hours contracts.
 - (f) flexible working including, for example, flexitime and career breaks and support for family friendly working and wider work life balance.
 - (g) support progressive workforce engagement, for example, Trade Union recognition and representation where possible, otherwise alternative arrangements to give staff an effective voice.
- A whistleblowing policy is in place; and
- Providers understand and comply with Human Rights obligations.

During the Lifetime of the Contract

A robust contract management framework is in place which gives assurances to IHSCP and Council that services are being delivered in line with the contract.

The framework details how IHSCP and Providers will be monitored across the duration of the framework either via governance meetings, contract monitoring visits or any other visit that is required.

The governance process is in place for all providers, regardless of type of service or spend and includes six-monthly governance meetings. During these meetings, Providers outline how they ensure they continue to meet their duties within the HCSSA (subject to their requirement to adhere to this).

The contract monitoring template may change upon enactment of the HSCSA to provide better assurance to the HSCP that providers are working in line with requirements, however staffing is already a key area that is monitored during all visits to providers.

Currently contract monitoring covers:

- Organisational / Management issues.
- Services provided.
- Record keeping.
- Service user finances.
- Review procedures.
- Activities.
- Dependency levels & staffing levels.
- Service access/termination Issues.
- Complaints procedures.
- Medication Procedures.
- Review of Policies and Procedures.
- Inspection reports.
- Outcomes.
- Staffing issues (including recruitment practice, training records, supervision records).

While the team has a duty to scrutinise services in line with contractual obligations, this is always conducted in a supportive manner, with a clear focus on improving outcomes for individuals who use services. The contracts and commissioning team have well established working relationships with the Care Inspectorate, as well as colleagues from across the HSCP and wider health and social care system.

The Contracts and Commissioning team have close working relationships with provider organisations and out with formal contract monitoring visits, there can be multiple points of contact with providers in a period of a week. Each point of contact represents an opportunity to discuss any issues which may be impacting upon a provider's ability to deliver services effectively and to improve outcomes for individuals.

This established process allows for an assessment of the guiding principles of the Act:

- Improving standards and outcomes for service users.
- Taking account of the particular needs, abilities, characteristics, and circumstances of different service users.
- Respecting the dignity and rights of service users.
- Taking account of the views of staff and service users.
- Ensuring the wellbeing of staff.
- Being open with staff and service users about decisions on staffing.
- Allocating staff efficiently and effectively; and
- Promoting multi-disciplinary services as appropriate.

At point of Service Review

A service review provides an opportunity for the HSCP to gather information from a service from across the lifetime of a contractual period and to support future commissioning considerations. Service Review templates may be updated upon enactment of the HSCSA in

order to more fully capture how providers have worked to the guiding principles for health and care staffing.

Currently, service reviews will allow for an in-depth assessment of the following areas:

- Current Service Provision.
- Service Demand/Uptake/Outcomes (Quantitative Information).
- Service User and Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback.
- Contract Performance.
- Partnership Working.
- Management and Staff Information.
- Funding and Sustainability.
- Organisational Governance.

This process already allows for an assessment of the guiding principles of the act:

- Improving standards and outcomes for service users.
- Taking account of the particular needs, abilities, characteristics, and circumstances of different service users.
- Respecting the dignity and rights of service users.
- Taking account of the views of staff and service users.
- Ensuring the wellbeing of staff.
- Being open with staff and service users about decisions on staffing.
- Allocating staff efficiently and effectively; and
- Promoting multi-disciplinary services as appropriate.

2 Please detail any ongoing risks that may affect your ability to comply with the duty set out in section 3(2) (as specified above)

- The current financial context for Inverclyde IJB and the cost pressures facing local commissioned providers is projected to require difficult decisions to be made regarding overall health and social care service provision. There is a risk that this may impact on the ability to continuously improve services and outcomes for service users and service sustainability. One area which is placing a high risk on services is the National Insurance increase for employers, which without funding from Scottish Government will lead to significant pressures.
- Linked to the above risk, ongoing challenges in staff recruitment and retention in commissioned services may lead to a reliance on agency staffing models, with potential impact on (i) the continuity of care for service users and residents and (ii) the benefit to individuals' outcomes which derives from strong relationships and understanding with staff.
- While a broad suite of support is available at a national level there is a risk that (i) access to this support varies across commissioned services particularly given ongoing service pressures; and (ii) that the impact of increasing demand coupled with financial challenges and issues in recruitment and retention negatively impact on the wellbeing of staff.