
Report To:	Social Work & Social Care Scrutiny Panel	Date:	5 January 2023
Report By:	Kate Rocks Chief Officer Inverclyde HSCP	Report No:	SWSCSP/08/2023/AS
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Subject:	Proposal to Fund Final Year MSc Social Work Students to Commit to Work for Inverclyde HSCP for 3 Years		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to attract self-funding MSc students who are not currently employed by Inverclyde HSCP to ensure an intake of newly qualified social workers (NQSW) to Inverclyde.
- 1.3 There is an urgent need to recruit and retain social workers. The work force plan has identified that the recruitment and retention of staff in health and social care sectors has become a challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased that pressure in some qualified roles, especially that of social workers. It is imperative that we consider ways in which we can make careers in social work in Inverclyde more attractive and retain our qualified social workers.
- 1.4 In return for funding of their final year of study, these students would commit to working for Inverclyde HSCP for 3 years. This work would be in a qualified social worker role.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Social Work & Social Care Scrutiny Panel is asked to note that the proposals in this report, namely that the Inverclyde HSCP implements an approach whereby it funds up to ten final year MSc Social Work Students at a cost of 150k, where on successful qualification these students would commit to working for Inverclyde HSCP for 3 years, in a qualified social worker role.
- 2.2 The Social Work & Social Care Scrutiny Panel is asked to note that the proposals in this report will be submitted to the Inverclyde Integration Joint Board to secure the appropriate approvals for the funding of this initiative, with there being a separate report to a future meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee exploring the potential of a wider adoption of this approach to assist other Council areas that suffer similar recruitment challenges.

Kate Rocks
Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 There is an urgent need to recruit and retain social workers. The work force plan has identified that the recruitment and retention of staff in health and social care sectors has become a challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased that pressure in some qualified roles, especially that of social workers. It is imperative that we consider ways in which we can make careers in social work in Inverclyde more attractive.

3.2 The current registered social work vacancies across the HSCP is as follows;

Children and Families is 6 FTE
Children and Families 1 FTE Senior Social Worker.

There are also 8 FTE new posts split across the HSCP. The Health and Social Care Partnerships across Scotland received resources direct from the Office of the Chief Social Work Officer, Scottish Government for Adult Social Workers these are being targeted to young people going through transition as we have identified capacity issues. The HSCP have used the avenues open to it regarding adverts in Myjobscotland in an attempt to recruit staff but are competing with larger Councils who pay higher salaries.

3.3 Inverclyde Quality and Learning Team already has established relationships with University of the West of Scotland, Strathclyde University, Caledonian University and the Learning Network West. This would allow for identification of suitable students and discussion about experience and aptitude. Some of these students will undertake placements with Inverclyde's Practice Learning team already.

3.4 Eligible students would be invited to attend an open day where representatives from social work teams and Quality and Learning could provide information about the support available in Inverclyde.

3.5 The MSc in Social work is a two year course and Student Awards Agency Scotland will only provide funding at an undergraduate course level and not at a post graduate level at a cost of 12-15k dependant on the university. In some circumstances the Scottish Social Services Council can provide a bursary of £3,300 per year.

The objective of this payment is to secure the services of a number of newly qualified registered Social Workers. Other partnerships across Scotland run similar schemes to attract new registered Social Workers to their partnerships.

As part of the recruitment process potential new staff will be asked to sign an agreement to commit to the partnership for a specified period of time after qualifying. There is also a well understood process to clawing back money from new recruits if they leave the partnership before the agreed time. The payment to new staff will be made on receipt of their qualifications being made.

3.6 This initiative would complement existing plans to attract social workers to Inverclyde.

- Inverclyde Quality and Learning Team is currently piloting the Scottish Social Services Council supported year for NQSW and is in a position to offer new workers training, increased supervision and mentorship. This supported year is likely to become mandatory and Inverclyde has already developed support for NQSW. This scheme offers strong incentives for NQSW to seek employment with Inverclyde.

- The Quality and Learning Team is also developing a traineeship scheme for current employees who may wish to qualify as social workers. This “grow your own” approach will allow experienced staff to move into qualified roles, thus providing a balance of experience within teams.
- There is some evidence that universities are receptive to this idea and would engage with identifying eligible students.

3.7 All students who have been granted facilities under this scheme will be required to sign a ‘*letter of undertaking*’ prior to the payment of any fees. This undertaking requires students to agree to remain and continue in the service of the Council for a period of **3 years following the completion of the course** in order for the organisation to gain maximum benefit from the acquired knowledge and skills of this investment.

If an employee leaves or is dismissed within this 3 year period, he or she will be required to reimburse the Council on a basis proportional to the completed months of post qualification service e.g. an employee who leaves the Council's employment 12 months after completing the course of study, would be required to pay back 66% of the overall cost.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 To attract self-funding MSc students who are not currently employed by Inverclyde HSCP and would ensure an intake of newly qualified social workers (NQSW) to Inverclyde.
- 4.2 In return for funding of their final year of study, these students would commit to working for Inverclyde HSCP for 3 years. This work would be in a qualified social worker role.
- 4.3 There is the potential of a wider adoption of this approach to assist other Council areas that suffer similar recruitment challenges, and the possible exploration of this will be included in a future report to the Policy & Resources Committee.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial	x		
Legal/Risk		x	
Human Resources	x		
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)		x	
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty	x		
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing	x		
Environmental & Sustainability		x	
Data Protection		x	

5.2 Finance

One off Costs. The approval of the Integration Joint Board is required for the proposed use of Reserves.

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report (£000)	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A		23/24	150	IJB Reserves	

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

None

5.4 Human Resources

None

5.5 Strategic

Ensures recruitment and retention of qualified social workers

5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

None

(a) Equalities

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

x	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required (to follow).
	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.

5.7 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.

5.8 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.

5.9 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