
Report To:	Social Work & Social Care Scrutiny Panel	Date:	23 February 2023
Report By:	Kate Rocks Chief Officer Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership	Report	SWSCSP/14/2023/CG
	Craig Given Head of Finance, Planning & Resources Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership		
Contact Officer:	Marie Keirs	Contact No:	01475 715365
Subject:	Cost of Living Support		

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 of the range of measures agreed by the IJB at its meeting of 28 November 2022 to provide cost of living support for citizens of Inverclyde as follows:-

- Increase access to Health staff to cash assistance under Section 12 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and Section 22 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to reduce the impact of harm through the cost of living crisis and promote welfare principles as per the legislation.
- Ensure that the increased cash distribution meets the principals of Early Help by Health Staff having direct access to resources without referral to Social Work.
- Increase the provision of warm boxes to Care at Home service users and Third sector.
- Create small grants to Third Sector providers for hardship payments for affected individuals within the community.

1.3 These proposals mirror the current arrangements that are being implemented in some of the HSCPs across NHS GG&C and are an enhancement of the wider suite of financial inclusion and anti-poverty response between all partners within Inverclyde.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work and Social Care Panel:-

- 2.1 Notes the agreement to widen access under Section 12 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and Section 22 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to funding to health staff employed in Health Visiting, Family Nurse Partnership, Advice Services, Community Mental Health and Occupational Therapy to a maximum of £0.300m, to be funded from 2022/23 underspend.
- 2.2 Notes that a Standard Operating Procedure has been developed which ensures delivery within a governance framework.
- 2.3 Notes the distribution of an initial 500 warm boxes to service users receiving a Care at Home package from HSCP and commissioned providers via colleagues in Education Services at an estimated cost of £0.030m, funded from the 2022/23 underspend.
- 2.4 Notes the work with the Third Sector to implement a new funding distribution scheme to assist individuals in the community and promote social welfare under Section 10 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 up to the value of £0.100m, funded from 2022/23 underspend.
- 2.5 Notes the progress to date detailed in Section 4

Kate Rocks
Chief Officer
Inverclyde Health & Social Care
Partnership

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

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 Section 12 and 22 payments

The cost of living crisis is at the forefront of everyday life across Scotland. Many individuals and families in Inverclyde are already affected by poverty and the current situation is adding to the difficulties faced, affecting increasing numbers of working people and those who would not normally approach our services. Frontline staff are increasingly seeing the effects of this and even with the range of supports available, often a referral to Social Work is required to access immediate funding for those in crisis. The ability to increase the number of staff that can have access and distribute hardship and destitution funding via the Section 12 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and Section 22 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to a wider cohort of staff that will have immediate access to hardship and destitution funding. This will improve access to universal early help, reduce duplication from services in their response and improve resident's ability to access help due to more simplified pathways.

- 3.2 At its September 2022 meeting, Glasgow City IJB approved the request 'to allow Children's Services Health Visiting and Glasgow City Family Nurse Partnership to make Section 22 destitution payments to enable a more flexible, needs-led response to financial hardship, fuel poverty and destitution.'

Extending the scope and reach of Section 12 & 22 payments and a cash first approach to immediate assistance in Inverclyde will support our strategic planning intentions including:

- Strategic Plan- Six Big Actions
- Children's Services Plan
- Child Poverty Action Plan
- Financial Inclusion Strategy
- Local Outcomes Improvement Plans - Inequalities

4.0 Progress to date

4.1 Section 12 and 22 payments

Since the IJB gave its approval on 28 November 2022, officers have developed a standard operating procedure, and have updated and simplified forms for the Section 12 and Section 22 cost of living support which have been distributed to HSCP staff. A number of drop in sessions are also underway to allow staff who are unfamiliar with the legislation the opportunity to ask questions, and to empower them to issue funds as they carry out their duties. These have been well attended with 50 staff from a range of services including homelessness, school nursing, occupational therapy, welfare rights and business support coming along to drop in sessions so far and a further session is also scheduled for any who have been unable to attend.

- 4.2 The funds will be disbursed on a cash first approach, but a supply of supermarket vouchers have also been purchased to make available as an alternative option, should this be more appropriate. An electronic solution, which would allow cash, heating vouchers and shopping vouchers to be issued via mobile phones or email addresses, is also being explored and will be made available as soon as it is ready, but is expected to go live by the time Scrutiny Panel meets.
- 4.3 Expenditure will be monitored centrally by the Finance team, who will analyse the use of funds on an ongoing basis over the coming weeks to ensure sufficient funds and vouchers are available when and where they are required. The management team and staff will be kept up to date on the level of funds and be informed in advance when the funds are coming to an end to allow control of expenditure.

4.4 An amount of £0.050m from the agreed £0.300m has been allocated to the team within the Council responsible for the Warm Hand of Friendship programme, for continuation of their current project, which is in line with the cost of living support principles set out.

4.5 Warm boxes

500 warm boxes have been prepared and issued to residents of Inverclyde since the IJB gave their agreement of the expenditure in November 2022.

4.6 Third Sector funding initiative

We are working with third sector partners, CVS to facilitate the allocation of £0.100m to constituted community organisations via an application process to be notified locally via their e-bulletin. A Service Level Agreement has been set up to ensure that funds are allocated to all areas within the Inverclyde region, and that they are issued in a secure and equitable manner. Monitoring data will be received from CVS on a two weekly basis to provide us with information on the geographical areas and amounts being issued.

We are also in discussion with other local organisations who can facilitate the issue of funds as they go about their day to day business.

4.7 Data

Data will be held on the number and amount of payments issued, whether they have been issued to individuals or families, geographical areas of beneficiaries and also the SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) level for each area to allow us to analyse the level of need addressed and any trends emerging for future consideration.

4.8 Finance

Spend will be recorded and monitored by Finance, and regular updates will be provided to the Senior Management Team. Staff will be notified prior to and also when the funds come to an end. Updates on spend will be provided to both Scrutiny Panel and IJB via the budget monitoring reporting process. Should an under spend remain against any of the allocated funds at the end of the financial year, this will be earmarked for continuation of support in 2023/24.

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

All financial implications are discussed in detail within the report.

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
03156	various	2022/23	£0.430m	underspend	One –off funding – any underspend to be earmarked at year end

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

Section 22 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that Local Authorities can support the welfare of children in need by “giving assistance in kind, or in exceptional circumstances, cash”.

The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 makes it a duty for Local Authorities to promote welfare in their area. This duty includes providing, in terms of Section 12, helps to “a person in need requiring assistance in kind, or in exceptional circumstances, cash”.

Section 10 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 allows the Local Authority to make contributions by way of grants or loans to any voluntary organisation whose sole purpose is the promotion of social welfare.

5.4 Human Resources

The decision to extend access to Section 12 and Section 22 funding to additional health staff does not affect access to that funding for Council staff with existing access.

As detailed in the report, an operating procedure has been developed and staff drop in sessions organised to address any issues.

5.5 Strategic

The proposals in this report will contribute to the targets and priorities set out in the plans and strategies highlighted at Paragraph 3.2 of this report.

5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

(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 EqlA will be made available on the Council website in due course.
	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 EqlA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqlA 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 – The agreed actions will support improvement of families' quality of life and the reduction of health and social inequalities.
	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.
✓	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.

N/A

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.

5.9 **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.

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 has been jointly prepared by the Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health Social & Care Partnership and the Head of Finance, Planning and Resources, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 There are no background papers for this report.