
Report To:	Social Work & Social Care Scrutiny Panel	Date:	16 January 2024
Report By:	Kate Rocks Chief Officer Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership	Report No:	SWSCSP/03/2024
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Subject:	Children & Families Service Specification		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 Children and Families services in Inverclyde provide a range of supports and services to children, young people, families and carers. The current model of service delivery has adapted to changes in demand, including those arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, policy and legislative developments in recent years.
- 1.3 This report outlines the intent to develop a service specification to guide a redesign of children and families services in Inverclyde to meet changing needs, promote early help and family support, as well as targeted interventions that balance the needs and risks of children and young people.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members of the Social Work and Social Care Scrutiny Panel are asked to note the contents of the report.

Kate Rocks
Chief Officer
Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Children and Families social work and community health services in Inverclyde are provided within a well-established, fully integrated model of service provision. This has provided opportunities to develop shared ways of working to support children, young people and families.
- 3.2 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our children, young people, families and wider communities, as well as the workforce, has continued, alongside the cost-of-living crisis and its significant adverse effect on communities, already struggling with multiple deprivation.
- 3.3 The national policy landscape within which services are provided also continues to be shaped by resource pressures and policy developments, including the proposed National Care Service, National Social Work Agency and our commitment to #Keep the Promise.
- 3.4 Learning from recent years illustrates the compassion and commitment of the workforce as our greatest asset to tackle these challenges. Continued financial and demand pressures will continue to present challenges for the current model of service delivery, however this is balanced with an aspiration for children and young people in Inverclyde which provide a foundation to develop pathways to access appropriate services which can be responsive to a family's unique risks and needs.
- 3.5 As such, a service specification to guide the redesign of services will be developed during 2024, as part of a programme of consultation with our children, young people, families and carers, as well as our workforce and key partners. This will provide clarity about the design of the service and will provide a foundation to develop pathways for children and young people to access services within a tiered model of targeted intervention.
- 3.6 Relational practice will be integral to this model of tiered and targeted interventions, where the focus will be on strengthening relationships within families where children and young people are sustained in their families, homes and communities. Alongside this, earlier intervention approaches will enable family capacity to be strengthened within an overall enhanced pathway of assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation. Overall, this approach will recognise the capacity of families to change, within the context of strong local communities, which continues to balance the risks and needs of children and young people.

Principles of Redesign

- 3.7 Improving outcomes for children and young people, as well as supporting their families and carers, will be underpinned by the following principles:
- 3.8 **Shifting the balance of care:** to reflect differing approaches to intensive supports that reflect the needs of older young people moving towards greater independence and younger children to support them to remain in Inverclyde or return to the local area, reflecting learning from the Promise. This will also seek to address the current financial pressures on budgets, where external placements are the main factor in the current £1.4m projected overspend for children's residential services.
- 3.9 **Strengthening family capacity:** by developing more diverse, cross-sectoral supports to families at an earlier stage, with third sector partners, families will be strengthened to develop skills to give their children the best start in life and to keep them safe. This will seek to build on an existing early help test of change with a third sector partner where 34 families were supported last year.
- 3.10 **Increasing our fostering households:** where children cannot be looked within their families, we want them to live with nurturing, caring local households. We currently have 26 fostering

households registered locally, however there is continuing demand for local placements. By shifting the balance of care, we will target increasing our local fostering households within a rebranded, targeted approach with Council and third sector partners.

- 3.11 **Evidence-based approaches:** during 2022-23, the number of children on the child protection register reduced however remained 2% above the Scottish average. We will therefore develop a whole-system, evidence-based assessment and planning framework that builds on and supports family capacity to provide safe care for children.
- 3.12 **Workforce development:** within this model, new methods of working, including evidence-based practice approaches, will provide opportunities for staff to develop skills and expertise to that builds on established strengths of compassion and kindness, alongside strong community assets.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 It is proposed that a programme for redesign will be developed, with appropriate timescales, built around a model of tiered and targeted intervention. This is based on the work of Pauline Hardiker et al (1991) and has guided the following approach as outlined below:

- **Tier 1:** universal services for children, young people and families who require occasional support and assistance.
- **Tier 2:** vulnerable children, young people and families who require additional, focussed supports.
- **Tier 3:** children, young people and families with more complex needs who require targeted interventions to support their safety and wellbeing.
- **Tier 4:** intensive supports for children and young people who are suffering or would be otherwise likely to suffer significant harm.

4.2 Within this model, the needs of most children and families would be met by universal services. Where some children and young people require additional supports, they would be supported to access these. A smaller number of children and young people, along with their families, who experience greater complexity, would be supported through targeted interventions. Meanwhile, a small number of children and young people with greater complexities would require intensive supports to manage risk, support recover and enhance resilience.

4.3 Within this model, children, young people and families could move through services based on assessed need and risk, recognising that this can be a fluid process; therefore, the service will need to incorporate flexibility that reflects these changing needs, underpinned by effective, needs-led and risk-based assessment and planning.

4.4 Senior managers in children and families services will take this outline proposal forward, including the development of a shared mission, vision and purpose for children and families services as well as the development of a full service specification.

4.5 A programme of consultation and engagement with the workforce and partners, as well as young people and families will inform the development of this model.

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

The planned redesign of services for children and families supports 'Big Action 2' of the HSCP Strategic Plan 2019-24: 'a nurturing Inverclyde will give our children and young people the best start in life'.

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 EqlA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqlA is not necessary/screening statement.
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(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 A programme of regular consultation and engagement will inform the development of the service specification, including staff, partners, children, young people and families.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None