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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 February 2024</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director - Education, Communities and Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/04/24/RB/MR</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Morna Rae</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712065</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Bereavement Charter Mark</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 This report provides the Committee with information on the development of a Bereavement Charter for Inverclyde Council to improve the experience that staff have when they are affected by bereavement. It links to the National Bereavement Charter for Scotland and proposes a Bereavement Policy and related training.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee agrees to support the Bereavement Charter work for Inverclyde Council.

**Ruth Binks**  
**Corporate Director**  
**Education, Communities & Organisational Development**

### 3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 Over two years ago, a range of professionals and individuals came together to reflect on the nature of bereavement support in Scotland. The result of their work was the production of a National Bereavement Charter for Scotland. More detail can be obtained on the website:

<https://scottishcare.org/bereavement/>

3.2 The Charter provides a set of statements which describe how in Scotland we can support a person or a group of people experiencing bereavement. The charter is underpinned by a desire to make sure that in Scotland we do all that we can to support people who might be experiencing difficulties following the death of someone they know or somebody in their community.

3.3 Inverclyde Council and Inverclyde HSCP recognises that it is the responsibility of everyone within our organisation to ensure that this is achieved and have been working closely with Compassionate Inverclyde/Inverclyde Cares to use the Bereavement Charter for Scotland as the vision which will support all work across Inverclyde Council and Inverclyde HSCP. A Working Group has developed a Bereavement Charter which reflects what we currently do and what we aim to do to improve the experience that staff have when they are affected by bereavement/loss.

3.4 As part of the development of the Charter awareness raising sessions were undertaken to tie in with Demystifying Death Week 2023. Events took place across Scotland, including a local event on Wednesday 3rd May at the Beacon Arts Centre. There was also promotion of the Charter animated video across staff groups and Bereavement Training for first line managers provided on 4 and 5 May 2023.

3.5 To qualify to display the Charter Mark, an employer must first agree to meet at least three out of five criteria. The following are proposed for Inverclyde Council.

1. *All staff are informed that their organisation is endorsing the Bereavement Charter and given an opportunity to watch the Charter animation: <https://vimeo.com/592277288>* Promotional work on this was undertaken in May 2023, and will be periodically reinforced.
2. *Senior Management has developed/adopted a Bereavement Policy for the organisation.* Once we receive the Charter Mark the developmental work on the policy will be undertaken. This can be based on the ACAS Bereavement Policy template and will align with current provisions for bereavement leave etc. This policy will be brought for Committee approval in due course.
3. *The organisation will develop and display a workplace bereavement charter.* The charter has been developed by the Working Group and is available at Appendix 1.

3.6 On receiving the Charter Mark, we will:

- Endorse and display the Bereavement Charter for Scotland;
- Promote our own unique Bereavement Charter for the organisation;
- Support conversations about bereavement and how it affects our employees, and
- Facilitate staff to attend bereavement training (training is provided free of charge via Child Bereavement UK).

3.7 Adoption of these measures will support the health and wellbeing of Inverclyde Council employees through better supporting those who are experiencing bereavement.

#### 4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Committee agrees to support the Bereavement Charter work for Inverclyde Council.

#### 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 and Children/Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		X
Environmental and Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

#### 5.2 Finance

There are no financial 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 legal/risk implications arising from this report.

#### 5.4 Human Resources

Adoption of the Bereavement Charter will support the health and wellbeing of employees.

#### 5.5 Strategic

The matters referred to in this report are of relevance to the following Council Plan 2023/28 Theme:

### **Theme 3: Performance**

- Our employees are supported and developed.

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 The TU Liaison Group have been consulted and are fully supportive of applying for the charter. Membership of the Working Group is made up of staff across both the Council and HSCP, including Libraries, Homecare, Education, Facilities Management, Clinical and Care Governance, Information Governance, Legal, Health Visiting Team, School Nurse, Health Improvement, Welfare Rights – MacMillan, Corporate Policy, Assessment & Care Management, Education Psychology and Finance. There was also a focus group held at Pottery Street.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.

**Inverclyde Council**  
**Bereavement Charter**

The Bereavement Charter for Scotland provides a set of statements which describe how people and communities who are bereaved can be supported. It aims to provide support for people who are bereaved, facing bereavement or have experienced a bereavement in their community.

Inverclyde Council strives to be a compassionate, bereavement-friendly employer. We therefore endorse the Bereavement Charter for Scotland and additionally have created an Inverclyde Council Bereavement Charter.

Dignity and respect are at the heart of our Bereavement Charter.

**What we do**

- We have procedures in place to compassionately support employees who have recently been bereaved or suffered a loss
- We have guidance for managers who provide support to employees during the grieving process
- We respect our staff's right to confidentiality during the grieving process
- We have a flexible approach to time off and returning to work following a bereavement or loss, tailored to individual needs
- We have a flexible approach to staying in touch following a bereavement or loss
- We signpost employees to relevant sources of information, resources and support
- We will ask the employee, in preparation for their return to work, how they would like to manage difficult moments in the workplace, for example, via a safe space or time out
- We will manage sensitive work tasks in an empathetic way
- Prior to an employee's return to work, and in consultation with the member of staff, we will consider flexible working arrangements, where service requirements allow
- We will explore ways to provide additional support for staff who require it including, for example, counselling or participation in relevant support groups

**What we aim to do**

- We will devise and implement a Communication Plan to raise awareness of our Bereavement Charter amongst our employees and Elected Members
- We will offer bereavement training to managers to enable them to continue to adopt a caring approach to staff
- We will recruit, train and support Bereavement Ambassadors who will assist with the implementation of our Bereavement Charter across the Council
- We will devise a Bereavement Policy which will complement our Bereavement Charter
- We will review our approach to bereavement support, taking feedback from staff who have been affected by bereavement
- We will support local and national remembrance events
- We will review our Bereavement Policy