
Report To:	Inverclyde Council	Date:	26 September 2024
Report By:	Chief Social Work Officer	Report No:	FC/02/2024/JH
Contact Officer:	Jonathan Hinds Chief Social Work Officer Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership	Contact No:	01475 715282
Subject:	Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2023-24		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 There is a requirement on each Local Authority to submit an annual Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) report to the Chief Social Work Advisor to the Scottish Government. This enables the Chief Social Work Advisor to present a national picture of the social work profession and practice which in turn influences the development of social work practice and delivery.
- 1.3 The Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2023-24 at Appendix 1 seeks to provide an overview of the delivery of social work and social care services in Inverclyde. The report includes an overview of governance and accountability arrangements and examines service quality and performance of children and families, adult services and justice social work.
- 1.4 As with previous reports, the annual report for 2023-24 seeks to highlight the positive work undertaken and the continued strong track record of participation and consultation with the communities of Inverclyde, as well as considering the challenges and priorities for the year ahead.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members of Inverclyde Council are asked to note the content of the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2023-24 and approve its submission to the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor to the Scottish Government.

Jonathan Hinds
Chief Social Work Officer

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The requirement for each Council to have a Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) was initially set out in section 3 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and is also contained within section 45 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994. The role of CSWO in Inverclyde is currently fulfilled by the Head of Children & Families and Justice.
- 3.2 The role of the CSWO is to ensure professional oversight of social work practice and service delivery. This includes professional governance, leadership and accountability for the delivery of social work and social care services, whether provided by the local authority or purchased through the third sector or independent sector.
- 3.3 The CSWO Annual Report has been prepared in line with national guidance: 'The Role of the Chief Social Work Officer' (Scottish Government: 2016). This report also fulfils the statutory requirement for each CSWO to produce an annual report on the activities and performance of social work services within the local area.
- 3.4 The CSWO Annual Report for 2023-24 provides information on the statutory work undertaken on the Council's behalf, including a summary of governance arrangements, service delivery, resources and workforce.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 CSWOs produce annual reports, based on a template agreed with the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor. This focuses on local governance arrangements, service delivery, resources and workforce.
- 4.2 The annual report will be submitted to the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor and, along with reports from all other CSWOs in Scotland, will be used to prepare a national overview in due course.

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

Provision of statutory social work services requires appropriately qualified and skilled staff; analysis of activity and demand is intended to inform future service planning to continue to meet statutory duties.

5.4 Human Resources

N/A

5.5 Strategic

N/A

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 The CSWO Annual Report has been informed by information provided by managers across the HSCP; members of the HSCP Senior Management Team have also been consulted on the report content.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Appendix 1



Inverclyde Health and Social Care
Partnership (HSCP)

**Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) Report
2023 - 2024**

Greenock Ocean Terminal, Inverclyde's new cruise ship visitor centre and community facility was officially opened on 25 August 2023. The project, led by Inverclyde Council, is part of the £1 billion Glasgow City Region City Deal funded by the Scottish and UK governments, with contributions from Peel Ports and the George Wyllie Foundation via Dunard Fund. The facility features an arrivals and departures hall, Scott's restaurant and bar, and the Wyllieum, an exhibition and gallery space due to open in 2024, paying tribute to famous artist George Wyllie who worked in Greenock and lived in Gourock.

Photo: David Barbour Photography

Find out more about what Inverclyde has to offer at discoverinverclyde.com

This document can be made available in other languages, large print, and audio format upon request.

Arabic

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.

Cantonese

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

Gaelic

Tha an sgrìobhainn seo cuideachd ri fhaotainn ann an cànanan eile, clò nas motha agus air teip ma tha sibh ga iarraidh.

Hindi

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

Kurdish

Li ser daxwazê ev belge dikare bi zimanên din, çapa mezin, û formata dengî peyda bibe.

Mandarin

本文件也可应要求，制作成其它语文或特大字体版本，也可制作成录音带。

Polish

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formie audio.

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

Soraini

ئەم بەلگەنامەیە دەتوانرێت بە زمانەکانی تر و چاپی گۆمره و فۆرماتیکی دەنگی لەسەر داواکاری بەر دەست بکەیت.

Tigrinya

እዚ ሰነድ እዚ ብኸልእ ቋንቋታት: ብዓቢ ፊደላትን ብድምጺ ቅርጽን ምስ ዝሕተት ክቕርብ ይኽእል።

Urdu

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

Ukrainian

За запитом цей документ може бути доступний іншими мовами, великим шрифтом та аудіоформатом.



Inverclyde HSCP, Clyde Square, Greenock, PA15 1NB 01475 715365

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1. Foreword

I am delighted to present the Inverclyde Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report for 2023/24, my second report as Chief Social Work Officer in Inverclyde. This report describes the challenges and achievements over the past year and sets out the next steps in our ambition to deliver vital services for vulnerable people.

This report continues to highlight the hard work, professionalism, knowledge, skills, and experience of the social work and social care workforce. There are several significant pressures facing Inverclyde: an ageing population, increased demand for services, complexity of need, costs of social care, recruitment and retention of staff, new legislation and policy developments, the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our communities and the national cost-of-living crisis, with those living in the most disadvantaged circumstances being hardest hit.

Despite this challenging context, the people of Inverclyde, our workforce and our partners have continued to make positive achievements in supporting the safety, health and wellbeing of local people.

We continue to ensure that the voices of people who use services, as well as their carers, remain at the centre of how we plan and deliver services. We will therefore continue to strengthen good practice and learn from the experiences of people who use our services. For our young people, the Promise remains central to service design and I am extremely proud of the progress they, along with the team, continue to make.

I am incredibly grateful to my social work and social care colleagues across Inverclyde who, along with the local health workforce, have worked exceptionally hard throughout the past year. Their ongoing commitment has shaped how they continue to provide invaluable support to children, young people, families and adults when they need it most and they continue to inspire me. I hope that this report provides a helpful review of the past year, including successes, challenges and our plans for the year ahead.

Jonathan Hinds
Chief Social Work Officer

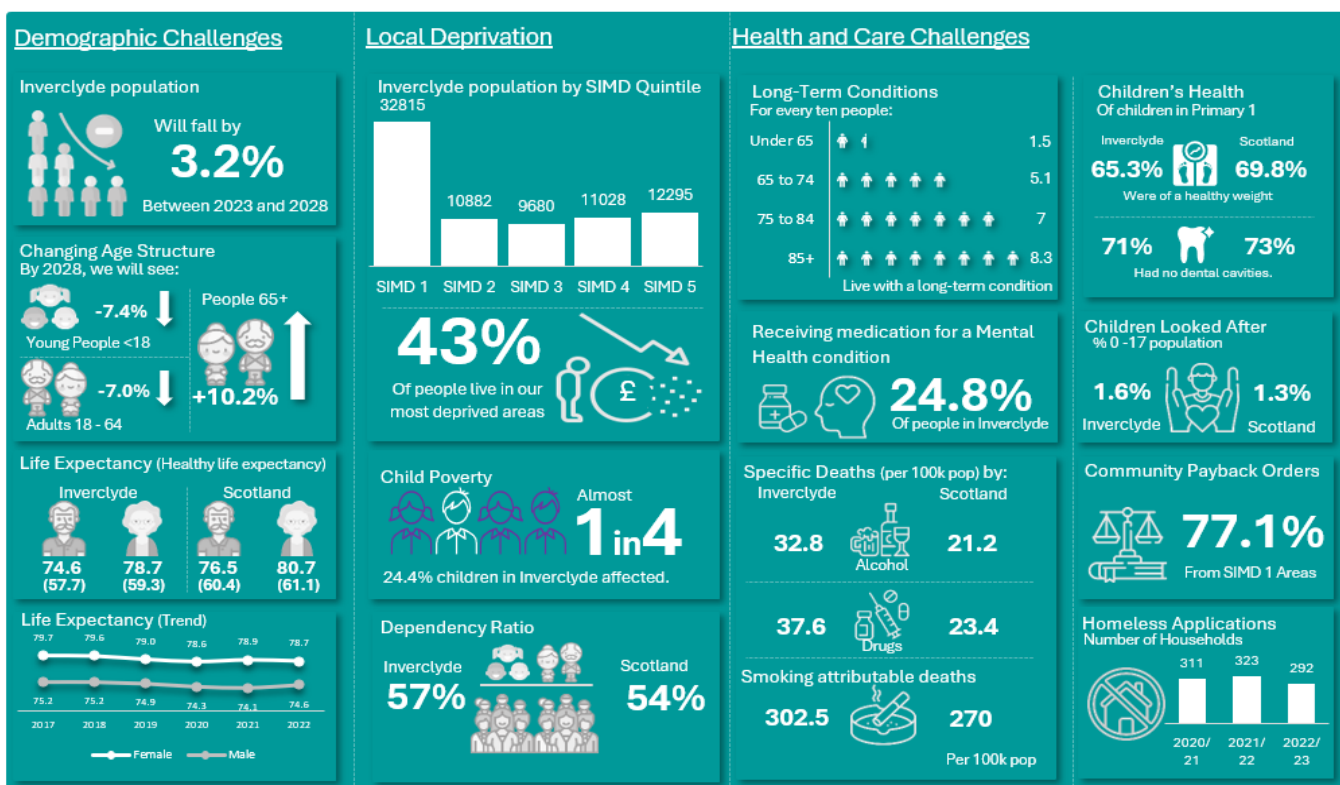


Jonathan Hinds
Chief Social Work Officer

2. Local Profile

Inverclyde today

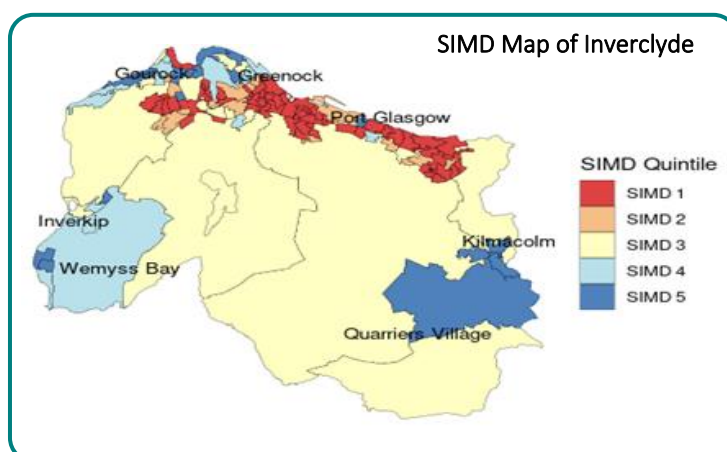
The following section provides some key information about Inverclyde, including local demographics and health and care demographics. A snapshot infographic from our Strategic Needs Assessment is below.



Our local challenges

The level of poverty and inequality in Inverclyde is stark. According to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), the levels of poverty and deprivation in Inverclyde are, proportionately amongst the highest in Scotland. It reports that **43%** of local people live in areas that are among the most deprived in the country (SIMD 1). This is second only to Glasgow, where 44% of the population live in SIMD 1 areas.

People living in those areas are more at risk of the negative impacts of poverty and deprivation. As a result, they are more likely to experience several adverse outcomes, including physical health challenges, complex long-term medical conditions, negative mental health and wellbeing, social exclusion, and food insecurity.



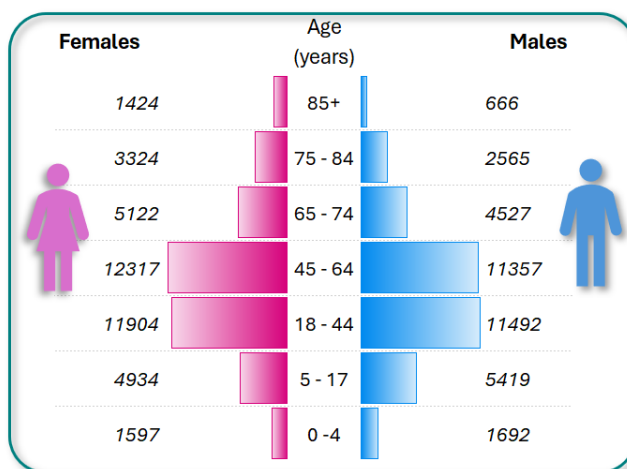
While levels of poverty and deprivation are high in Inverclyde, they are not spread evenly among the population. As the figure above shows, areas of high deprivation are not dispersed across Inverclyde, instead high deprivation areas are clustered across specific communities, particularly in Port Glasgow and the East End of Greenock.

As a result, levels of inequality in Inverclyde are high with many people and communities experiencing significantly less positive social, economic and health and wellbeing outcomes than residents in least deprived areas.

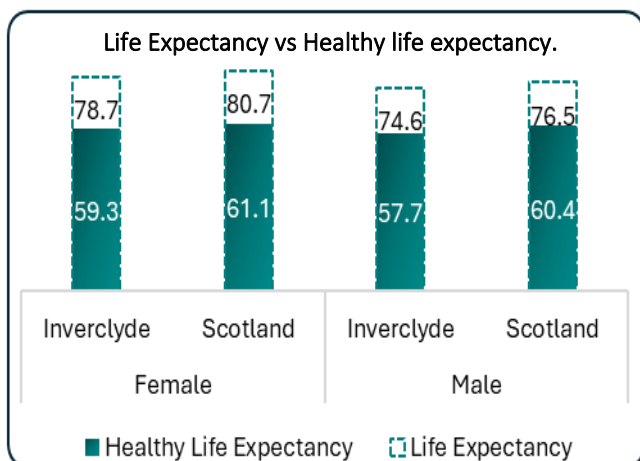
Population

The latest population estimates for Inverclyde were published by National Records for Scotland (NRS) in March 2023, estimating for mid-year 2022.

Overall, Inverclyde had an estimated total population of **78,340**. This accounts for only 1.4% of Scotland's total. Like other places in Scotland, the population of Inverclyde has decreased over the past few years. This is expected to continue with the local population expected to decrease by a further 3.2% by 2028. The image opposite shows the breakdown of the local population by sex and key age group. Overall, females account for **52%** of the local population.



Life and Healthy Life Expectancy



For the latest reporting period, for both men and women living in Inverclyde, their life expectancy is lower than that of the Scottish average. Here, women have a life expectancy of 78.7 years (against 80.7 years across Scotland), with male life expectancy reported as 74.6 years (with 76.5 years reported for Scotland).

Like overall life expectancy, the healthy life expectancy (HLE) of people in Inverclyde is lower than the Scottish average. The healthy life expectancy of females living in Inverclyde is 59.3 years, compared to 61.1 years for Scotland

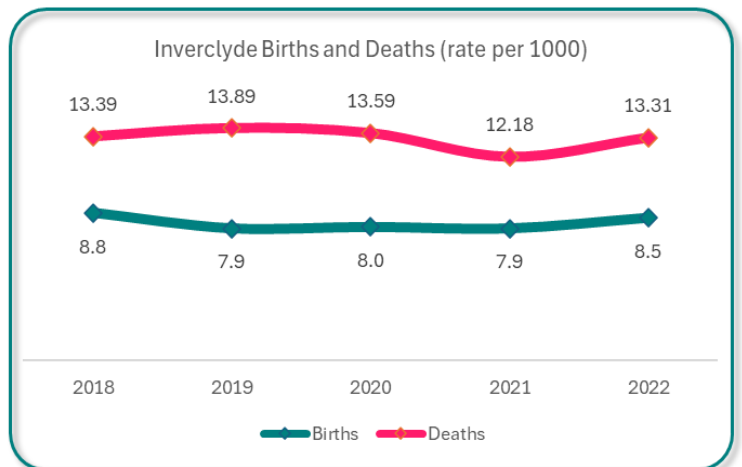
as a whole. Males in Inverclyde have a healthy life expectancy of 57.7 years, again lower than the Scottish figure of 60.4)

Births and Deaths

NRS reported an increase in the local birth rate in Inverclyde, rising to 8.5 births (crude rate per 1,000 of the local population). This is compared to 7.9 reported in 2021. At 8.5, the birth rate in Inverclyde was slightly lower than the overall Scottish figure of 8.6.

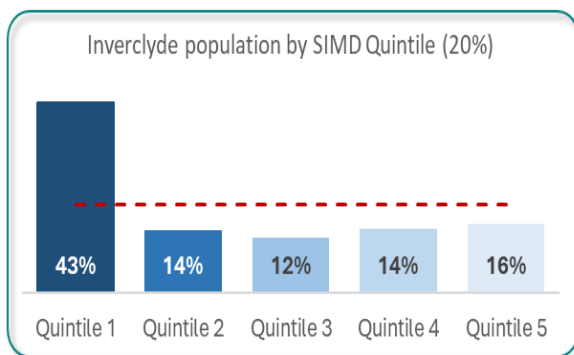
NRS also reported an increase in the rate of deaths in Inverclyde, rising to 13.31 per 1,000 (age-sex standardised rate). This compares to 12.18 per thousand reported in 2021. Again, the rate of deaths in Inverclyde is higher than 11.52 reported for Scotland as a whole.

The chart opposite demonstrates how the Inverclyde death rate has been continually higher than the birth rate over the past five years. This is a contributing factor to the local population decline.



Deprivation

As highlighted above, Inverclyde faces a significant challenge in the form of poverty and deprivation. The most recent SIMD figures (2020) highlight that **43%** of the local population live in areas that are considered the most deprived in Scotland.



The image opposite demonstrates the breakdown of SIMD quintiles in Inverclyde. As highlighted, over 40% of the local population live in the most deprived quintile, with the rest of the population more evenly distributed across the other four.

In addition, child poverty in Inverclyde is amongst the highest in Scotland, with almost 1 in 4 (24%) of local young people affected.

Strategic Direction

Within its strategic plan for 2019-24, Inverclyde Integration Joint Board (IJB) set out Six Big Actions (below) to achieve our ambitions and vision. This plan set the direction for how we would deliver services to improve the health and wellbeing of local people. The Big Actions gave a focused view of Inverclyde's health and care priorities and how services would support our communities.

<p>Big Action 1: Reducing Inequalities by Building Stronger Communities and Improving Physical and Mental Health</p>	<p>Big Action 2: A Nurturing Inverclyde will give our Children and Young People the Best Start in Life</p>	<p>Big Action 3: Together we will Protect Our Population</p>
<p>Big Action 4: We will Support more People to fulfil their right to live at home or within a homely setting and Promote Independent Living</p>	<p>Big Action 5: Together we will reduce the use of, and harm from alcohol, tobacco and drugs</p>	<p>Big Action 6: We will build on the strengths of our people and our community</p>

These big actions reflected conversations with people across Inverclyde including staff; those who use our services including carers; and our children and young people. Within Inverclyde we fully support the national ambition of ensuring that people get the right care, at the right time, in the right place and from the right service or professional.

The five-year plan was refreshed throughout 2022/23 to reflect updated priorities and key deliverables for 2023/24. The refreshed plan retained the Six Big Actions which link clearly with the nine National Outcomes for Scotland and the National Outcome Framework for Children, Young People and Community Justice. The refreshed plan and associated documents can be accessed here [Strategies, Policies and Plans - Inverclyde Council](#)

This refreshed Strategic Plan and associated Implementation Plan and Performance Framework led the IJB forward for 2023/24 and the next Strategic Plan and it is agreed priorities will inform the direction of Inverclyde HSCP over the next three years (2024-27).



Within the past year, Inverclyde Children's Service Partnership published their Integrated Children's Services Strategic Plan for 2023-26 which included an improvement plan focussed on the key outcomes they hope to realise for children, young people, and families by working together.

This Children's Services Plan builds on what worked well in the previous plan (2020-23) and planning what can be improved further. Through the lifetime of this plan the key focus remains progressing the delivery of more integrated services wherever possible and working together to support children and their families in Inverclyde. <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/assets/attach/16822/07-Inverclyde-Children-s-Services-Plan-1-003-DDA-Compliant.pdf>

3. Governance, Accountability and Statutory Functions

Role of the Chief Social Work Officer

Local authorities are required, under Section 3 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, to appoint a professionally qualified Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO). The CSWO is a 'proper officer' of the Council and the role in Inverclyde is fulfilled by the Head of Children & Families and Justice.

The role of the CSWO is to provide a strategic and professional leadership role in the delivery of social work services. The CSWO ensures professional oversight of social work practice and service delivery. This includes professional governance, service improvement, leadership and accountability for the delivery of social work and social care services, whether provided by the local authority or purchased through the third sector or independent sector. Social work services are delivered within a framework of statutory duties and powers and are required to meet national standards and provide best value.

Delivery of Statutory Functions

The CSWO has specific responsibilities in respect of statutory decision making and ensuring the provision of appropriate advice in the discharge of a local authority's statutory functions. The CSWO also has oversight of practice standards relating to services delivered by registered social workers, which will involve public protection and/or the restriction of individual liberty. This requires consideration of individual circumstances, regarding rights, risks, needs and capacity. These judgements are rarely simple, and often require taking account of a range of issues, including the risks to the wider community.

These legislative provisions include the placement of children in secure accommodation, transfers of children subject to supervision requirements, adoption, fostering, Community Payback Orders, statutory interventions linked to the Mental Health Officer role, Adults with Incapacity measures and the protection of children and adults at risk.

It has long been recognised nationally that the role of the CSWO is an increasingly complex one and recent years have seen several additional duties and responsibilities added to the role, within the context of most CSWOs holding a full remit in respect of professional leadership for key service areas and increasingly general management responsibility for often complex, integrated services. As such, from a local context, with the retirement of the interim Head of Public Protection, it is intended to review social work leadership arrangements to strengthen oversight of areas of legislative responsibility across all areas of social work including adults, children and justice social work. This will reflect the local commitment to high quality, social work practice based on upholding rights, managing risk, improving governance, accountability and outcomes for local communities.

Key legislation relevant to the Chief Social Work Officer responsibilities is noted below.

Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968	Children (Scotland) Act 1995
Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995	Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003	Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011	Social Care (Self Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013
Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014	Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014
Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015	Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016
Carers (Scotland) Act 2016	Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018
Duty of Candour (Scotland) Regulations 2018	Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019
Children (Scotland) Act 2020	

This will be further augmented during the next year with the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill, the United National Convention of the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 and updated national Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland.

The CSWO meets at regular intervals with the Chief Executive of the Council about matters relating to the delivery of social work and social care and is a non-voting member of the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) and a member of the HSCP Strategic Planning Group (SPG).

In representing the unique contribution of social work services in the delivery of public protection, the CSWO attends the Inverclyde Public Protection Chief Officers Group (PPCOG) to provide professional advice. During the past year, the Terms of Reference for the PPCOG were reviewed, whilst members approved and reviewed action plans from learning reviews, alongside providing collective and accountable strategic leadership, governance and oversight of public protection arrangements across Inverclyde.

The CSWO has further responsibilities within local public protection arrangements including as Chair of Inverclyde Child Protection Committee, a member of the Adult Protection Committee and the North Strathclyde Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) strategic oversight group.

4. Service Quality and Performance

How social work services are improving outcomes for children, young people and families

Request for Assistance (RfA) Team

The focus of the Request for Assistance team is to provide a first point of contact for referrals to children and families social work, undertaking initial assessments and supporting families to get the right help at the right time.

During 2023/24, the team undertook 1,642 initial assessments, an increase of 284 compared to the previous year. In addition, the team provided initial advice and guidance to families on 301 occasions, compared to 480 occasions in 2022/23. The RFA team attended 41 'Team Around the Child' meetings where they supported multi-agency planning and assessment as part of the GIRFEC pathway. In addition, the team provided initial assessments and support to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children arriving in Inverclyde via the National Transfer Scheme or unaccompanied young people coming to Inverclyde via other routes.

	2023/24	2022/23
Initial Assessments Completed	1,642	1,358
Advice to families	301	480
Initial Referral Discussions	171	175
No further social work input	1,086	1,010

As work progressed in the redesign of early help services, utilising the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, the team focussed on improving how families are identified and supported to access the most appropriate services in relational ways that are timely, sustainable, non-stigmatising and needs-based with a focus on systemic whole family wellbeing.

As part of the local whole family wellbeing response, an Early Help Hub was developed as a pilot, with the aim of improving cross-sectoral, trauma-informed access to services that build capacity in children, young people and families. The hub is being implemented in partnership with Educational Psychology colleagues and a Therapeutic Intervention Worker and, following evaluation, is expected to be fully implemented later in 2024.

Earlier Help and Family Support

During 2023/24, children's services continued to develop early help and support; this included additional funding to enhance provision by Homestart to scale up support to families with at least one child under five years old. Over the past year, the service focussed on the following:

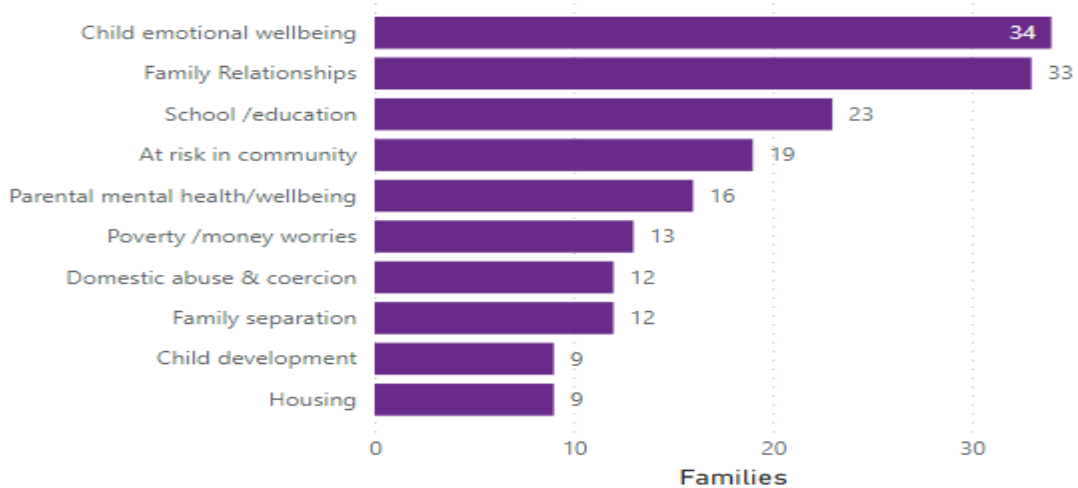
- Early intervention/prevention and empowering parents to self-manage, with support and guidance to achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes for each family.
- Providing opportunities for increased social inclusion, peer support and reduced loneliness.
- Providing emotional support and increase resilience, offering parents support to take steps to get involved in their local communities and strengthening social bonds.
- Recruit and train new local volunteers to provide practical and emotional support to vulnerable families.
- Deliver weekly groups, providing peer support to vulnerable families, increasing resilience.
- Provide one to one support as needed to increase community engagement and improve wellbeing.
- Provide training and development opportunities to all families and volunteers through partnership working.

One to One support was provided through a range of approaches including individual peer groups and community activities such as buggy walks. A range of parenting and training opportunities were provided including Mellow Bumps (7-week antenatal course for parents), CAP Money Course (money coaching), Equip for Life (to build confidence and self-worth) and Blank Canvas (supporting maternal mental health).

Using an individualised peer approach which included training 29 volunteers, a total of 161 families were supported during 2023/24 to access a range of supports including mental health and wellbeing, housing, literacy, nursery engagement and welfare benefits. Workers also supported families who required more intensive and/or regular support. Weekly groups included perinatal wellbeing, a parent group, family groups, a New to Scotland group and a dedicated Dad's group on behalf of the HSCP.

A further key partnership continued to develop over the past year, with the Children 1st Family Wellbeing project, co-located with the Request for Assistance (RfA) social work team. Here, they connected with families where there was no requirement for formal social work intervention. This approach provided additional early help and family support within a relational practice and strengths-based model. Over the past year, 84 young people were introduced to the service, most of whom were aged 12–15-years old, with school/education, parental mental health, family relationships and being at risk in the community (contextual safeguarding) the most common areas of concern.

Top 10 Challenges for families



Meanwhile, Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) provided by Children 1st worked with 14 families and a further 18 families participated in restorative family meetings. This approach has been informed by the national guidance for Part 12 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 which includes 'principles of collaboration, participation and dignity, involvement and informed choice', allowing the family to be a part of the solution.



64 Inverclyde children and families supported by the Financial Wellbeing Service



A total of £12,091.99 of debt managed.



A total of £50,773.48 income maximised.

Inverclyde communities were also particularly affected by the cost-of-living crisis. As such, financial wellbeing support, as part of the Children 1st Family Wellbeing Service, was offered to 64 families, with over £50,000 income maximised.

Furthermore, Children 1st Bide Oot (the only partnership between a children's charity and outdoor

education centres) offered families the opportunity to experience the benefits of bringing together outdoor education and long-term family support. During the past year, four Inverclyde families attended Bide Oot, to strengthen relationships, build confidence, and to support long-term positive benefits for mental health, relationships and emotional wellbeing.

Following the residential weekend, Children 1st family wellbeing teams continued to support families to improve their relationships to build their capacity and to stay connected to activities in their local areas.

Child Protection

Over the past year, 87 child protection investigations were undertaken involving 150 children. This is slightly lower than last year, when 95 child protection investigations were undertaken, involving 144 children.

The average number of children on Inverclyde Child Protection Register (CPR) over the past year was 34, albeit this can increase or decrease slightly in relation to larger or smaller families joining the register. Inverclyde is slightly above the Scottish average for the number of children on the child protection register (3 per 1,000 of the population aged 0-15 years compared to the Scottish average of 2.3 per 1,000 of the population aged 0-15 years) based on national data for 2023. During 2023/24, 97% of children were included on the child protection register for less than one year and 64% were included for less than six months.

The number of children whose names were removed from the child protection register (de-registrations) remained similar to the previous year, with an average of 15 de-registrations taking place per quarter. The number of children who were re-registered within 12 months of being de-registered increased marginally. The local multiagency Oversight of Complex Cases Group reviewed children who remain on the register for a longer period or were re-registered and found that this reflects the complexity of some family situations, where intergenerational trauma can often impact on recovery from harm. In a small number of cases, the group recognised the need for services to plan for different levels of support throughout childhood.

Parental mental health difficulties, parental drug use and domestic abuse remain the main categories of recorded concern. Neglect, which is high on the national average of categories of concern, features as a consequence of other categories of concern and activity into the next year will focus on how neglect can be better recognised as a primary concern. Meanwhile, further work around recognising neglect was undertaken in 2023/24 and this will be developed on a multi-agency basis over the next year, reflecting the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis on many families in Inverclyde.

Inverclyde Child Protection Committee (CPC) is a locally based, multi-agency strategic partnership responsible for the design, development, publication, distribution, implementation and evaluation of child protection policy and practice across Inverclyde. The CPC met quarterly over the past year and led on oversight of quality assurance of multi-agency practice, to ensure that performance measures lead to improving outcomes for children and young people. CPC recently launched a redesign of our core sub-groups (which support CPC business) to ensure they reflect local strategic priorities, informed by local child protection data, to enhance earlier interventions to families in need. Further information will be reported on within the CPC Annual Report for 2024.

Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) and Bairns' Hoose

Formed in 2019 as a pilot area for the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM), the North Strathclyde Partnership includes Inverclyde and three other local authority areas. This brought together a co-located team of police, social workers and the Children 1st trauma recovery team, using the Barnahus European Promise Standards. The Barnahus model is underpinned by the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child to deliver a trauma responsive, rights-based and recovery focussed approach from the point children disclose abuse or harm, with a purpose being to avoid children having to give multiple interviews with different agencies in different locations.

The SCIM pilot aims to ensure that:

- joint investigative interviews of children (where there is a suspicion of criminality on the part of an adult) are conducted in a trauma informed manner.
- children and their non-abusing care giver have access to support and advice with an opportunity to express their views, needs and concerns to inform a best evidence approach.
- all interviews take place in a safe child friendly, age-appropriate way that considers any developmental or additional needs.
- all children and their families will receive the practical and emotional support they require to recover.

In 2023/24, a total of 36 interviews were undertaken with children and young people from Inverclyde. On average, interviews took place within six days of the referral being submitted to the Child Interview Team. An evaluation of Joint Investigative Interviews as evidence in justice proceedings is currently underway.



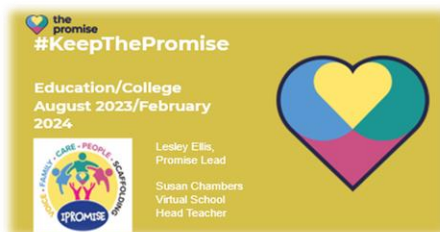
Furthermore, the partnership opened the first Bairn's Hoose in Scotland, in August 2023. Here, holistic support provides the child and their family with trauma-sensitive care and safety planning. This model will continue to support children from Inverclyde to be supported and to feel comfortable within a private, calming and welcoming environment.

The Bairns Hoose also enables Joint Investigative Interviews to be recorded, where they can be used as evidence-in-chief, avoiding the child retelling their story and being further traumatised by the court process. Work continued over the past year to provide live links to Court, to enable cross examination that is age appropriate, relevant, trauma sensitive and asked in a way that the child will most likely understand, ahead of a live Court hearing or trial. This can enable the child to avoid long waits for a case to go to Court, which can make it even more difficult for a child to recover.

iPromise

In Inverclyde, the strategic direction and purpose was governed by the iPromise Board, chaired by the Council Chief Executive and three young people. The iPromise team are responsible for ensuring the voices of all children and young people are heard at the Board, promoting Inverclyde's well-established pledge to #nothingaboutuswithoutus.

HSCP and Council Education teams continued to work together to raise awareness of the Promise and specific education outcomes from plan 21-24 were extended from primary and secondary education to West College Scotland, who are now represented on iPromise Board.





In May 2023, the iPromise team were nominated for the 2023 Pride of Inverclyde awards and received highly commended outstanding achievement for the previous year.

In August 2023 we held a large community event, following on from event held in 2022 when the iPromise team introduced The Promise to the wider community to raise awareness. This was a joint venture with Proud2bactive.

iPromise in Hearings

As part of our work to improve the experience of children and young people in children's hearings, an event was held in the Beacon with 53 in attendance. The purpose was to provide an opportunity for relationship building with all partner agencies and to discuss how we improve our hearings for our children, young people and families. Each person was invited to discuss their role in preparing for a hearing and then topics. We shared views of our young people as to how we can do better.



Language awareness - Podcasts

Due to the improvement to language around care experience, the iPromise Team participated in a podcast to share how language has been changed in assessments and the impact this has had on young people.

Link: [Lesley and Erin from Inverclyde talk about the negative impact language can have on young people](#)



The LENS Project

During 2023/24, the HSCP partnered with The LENS to develop an 'Ideas to Action' Programme which supports Inverclyde's vision and ambition to deliver The Promise and improve outcomes for our children and young people. As part of the programme, the HSCP pledged £50,000 to develop and test up to six ideas.





From an initial launch event in September 2023, attended by over 60 social work, health and education staff, 12 applications were submitted by staff for the Ideas to Action Programme and shortlisted by a Project Team. Six ideas were chosen for the developing ideas workshops which focused on business storytelling, modelling and value proposition, prototyping and securing investment. There were also opportunities for local children, young people and families to be involved in the project design.

The workshops led to an Investment Event in December 2023, where each team pitched their idea to an investment panel. Six ideas were presented, and all had development potential, with financial investment being provided to four:

- ★ **Feel Good Fund:** create bespoke experiences in our children's houses by investing in relationships, equipment and activities where anything is possible.
- ★ **Home from Home:** provide improved family time space as a 'home from home' for relationships to thrive in an environment made for families.
- ★ **The Practice Pad:** provide independent living skills to our young people at an earlier stage and support them to practice living on their own in a safe, supported environment, before they take on a tenancy.
- ★ **Throughcare Hub:** a person-centred, flexible, and supportive environment for young people to learn new skills, gain qualifications and grow in confidence at their own pace.

The other ideas, which will be organisationally supported are:

- **Connected 2 Care:** earlier, meaningful relationships with our families, bridging the disconnect, building trust, resilience, and support before crisis.
- **It Takes a Village:** a community-based approach to provide practical support, life skills and ongoing nurturing, to support our young people as they navigate their own lives.

Award

Aileen Wilson, Team Lead for Residential services, won the Inverclyde HSCP Leader of the Year award in February 2024. This award qualified Aileen to be shortlisted for the wider NHSGGC Celebrating Success Staff Awards for Leader of the Year. This was a well-deserved accolade in recognition of Aileen's commitment to delivering the Promise and improving outcomes for the children and young people of Inverclyde.



Fostering

By the end of 2023/24, there were 26 fostering households in Inverclyde, caring for 38 fostered children and young people. Across Scotland, the demand for foster carer placements continued to present significant capacity challenges; locally, awareness activity included media and digital campaigns to encourage people to consider becoming foster carers for Inverclyde children. The team worked alongside third sector colleagues to reach a wider audience. In the next year, further targeted activity will promote fostering to the registered workforce in Inverclyde to become short break carers.

In August 2023, the Scottish Recommend Allowance for foster carers and kinship carers was introduced nationally and backdated to 1 April 2023. This followed the introduction, in 2022/23, of a 25% uplift in fostering fees introduced locally which takes Inverclyde foster carers above the set rate all local authorities must pay. Our foster carers continued to play a vital role in supporting children and young people by providing them with a loving home and a nurturing family environment.

Adoption

During the pandemic, the number of people who enquired about becoming adoptive parents increased, however the number of children whose permanency plans progressed did not increase at the same rate due to the significant impact of the pandemic. The number of approved adopters continued to be higher than the number of local children seeking adoptive families during 2023/24. In response, the service focussed on supporting front line workers to progress children's permanence plans through legal processes, whilst re-assessing family circumstances and ensuring parents or carers had the opportunity to take part in parenting capacity assessments. Mentoring support from the adoption team enabled new workers to develop their skills to undertake this work. The model has improved certainty around outcomes for children and, with this intensive support, children who have been looked after and cannot return home will have more timely, accurate assessments around their future needs. This approach will enable children to have permanent families at a younger age and enhance the number of local foster carers.

Inverclyde Adoption and Permanence Panel, led by an independent Chair, comprises a medical advisor and a legal advisor as well as Panel members from a range of professional backgrounds or with relevant direct experience. During 2023/24, our Panel included senior social work and health managers, an Educational Psychologist, Education Services representative, our Children's Rights Officer and an adoptive parent.

The Panel registered plans for children who required to be cared for out with their birth family, approved prospective adopters and foster carers, and approved matching between prospective adopters and children as well as reviewing foster carers, their development needs and supports.

Kinship

The kinship care service continued to see a further increase in the number of formal and informal kinship carers, reflecting a three-year trend. By the end of 2023/24, there were 100 formal kinship carers caring for 132 children and young people in Inverclyde, around half of whom were informally looked after by kinship carers, without the need for a formal, statutory Order.

The service offered ongoing support to all carers and provided access to the Family Ties support group, financial advice, family outings and events over the course of the year. Training was provided to kinship carers and input at support groups from other partners included alcohol services and the Kinship Care Advice Service for Scotland, (KCASS).

The local Kinship Panel continued to review kinship carers and to ensure that carers' incomes were maximised, and other supports provided. Meanwhile, as part of continuous improvement, the views of kinship carers were sought throughout the year via email, text messages and surveys.

Supporting Young People

Within Inverclyde, 115 young people were eligible for throughcare, continuing care and aftercare support, with 97 people being actively supported in 2023/24. The team continued to support young people in a relational way to increase their self-esteem and develop positive options as they move towards independence in adulthood. Access to training, education and/or employment opportunities, as well as practical and financial skills helped to create a safe environment for young people.



115 young people eligible for Throughcare and 97 young people engaged with the team

The team has five transition flats and over the past year, young people were supported to develop independent living skills to prepare them to take on their own tenancies.



A further 19 young people were supported by Continuing Care.

Intensive supports across evenings and weekends were also expanded during the last year to include young people from the age twelve on the edges of care. The service also supported young people who successfully moved on to further education settings outside Inverclyde.

The service has established, strong links with partners in education and housing services who have supported individual plans for young people and enhanced key relationships.

Moving into 2024-25, the service will enhance and expand continuous access to supports based on the views and needs of young people to improve their opportunities and outcomes.

Throughout 2023/24, the Throughcare team supported our Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) and young people, including ensuring access to English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) classes. A drop-in service at evening and weekends has enabled some young people to access supports, however the team will engage with and consult young people in the next

year to better understand the barriers they experience accessing services to help shape our future delivery model.

During 2023/24, our partnership with Action for Children brought the Sidestep Project to Inverclyde for young people aged 11-18 years who may be at risk of involvement in serious organised crime, being coerced or manipulated into criminal exploitation. Through 1:1 and group sessions, young people have been able to take part in focussed work to identify the young person's needs and interests and create an individual action plan to provide intensive targeted support, offering diversionary activities. The project also works alongside families to address vulnerabilities and strengthen family relationships to help reduce the risk of young people becoming involved in organised crime or exploitation.

Disabled Children and Young People

The longer-term impact of Covid-19 continued to be evidenced over the past year, in terms of both children and young people with disabilities and community-based organisations. The service continued to see a high number of families seeking assessment and support which was reflected in higher rates of crisis and supporting more families experiencing greater complexity. Self-directed support as an empowering approach for families continued to be promoted, however limited availability of service providers and staff presented challenges for families over the past year. Nevertheless, more families accessed self-directed supports during the past year, with other children accessing residential short breaks.

Meanwhile, over 40 children and young people accessed community short breaks and social opportunities via our commissioned third sector partner. A key focus over the past year was engaging with other care providers to respond to the very small number of children and their carers requiring intensive packages of care at home or away from home. This will continue to be a priority area in the next year, alongside working with partners to reduce the number of disabled children and young people experiencing avoidable hospital admissions or becoming looked after and accommodated.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

During 2023/24, services supported a small number of children and young people who arrived in the UK without family support, via the National Transfer Scheme (NTS), where local authorities across the UK participate to provide support and protection. The increasing number of unaccompanied children arriving in the UK, as well as the High Court ruling that unaccompanied young people should not be placed in hotels, meant that there was increased demand for care placements.





A working group has continued to meet monthly to review demand, best practice and interagency support for young people. This has supported closer working relationships between HSCP children and families and New Scots teams, whilst wider working relationships and multi-agency supports were also continually developed, including with Guardianship Scotland, advocating on behalf of young people who may have been trafficked.

How Social Work Services are improving outcomes for adults

Statutory mental health services

Demand for mental health services within Inverclyde continued to be high over the past year and Mental Health Officers (MHO) provided a critical role in keeping people safe. This is a statutory role as defined within the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000.

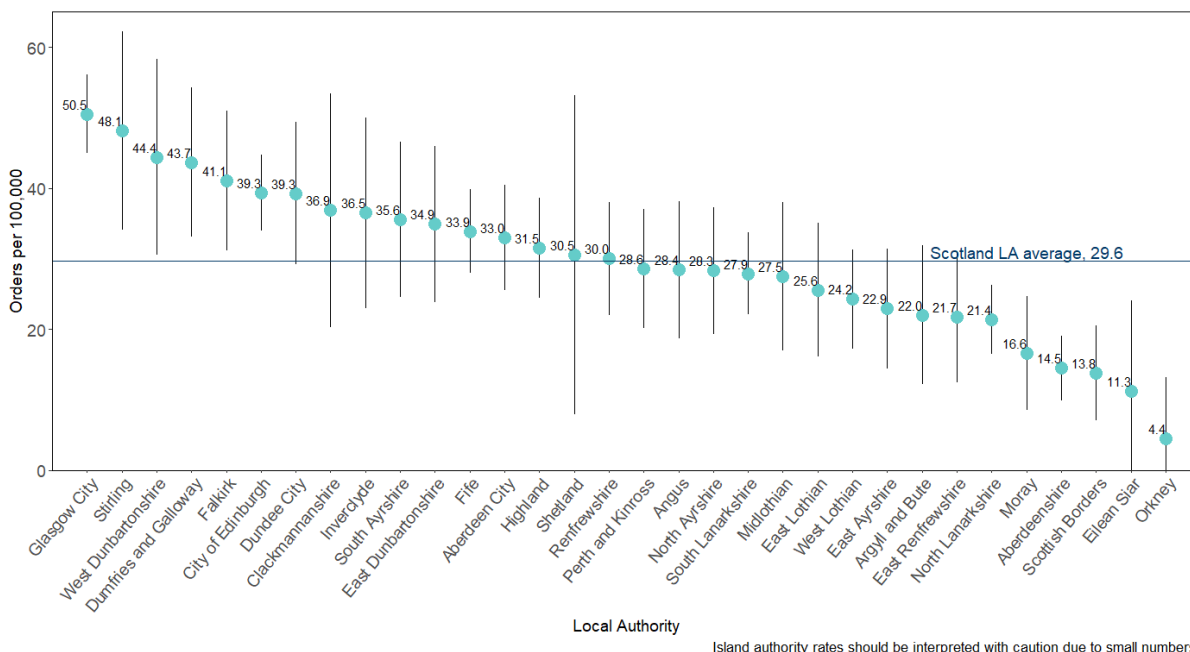
The MHO service saw an increase in private and local authority Adults with Incapacity Act (AWIA) applications, time-limited Guardianship orders and more complex multiple tribunals for Mental Health Act (MHA) work.

-  209 Guardianships: welfare and finance.
-  46 Local Authority Orders with a designated MHO.
-  163 Private Orders with a named MHO.
-  MHOs operate a weekly monitored waiting list.

A waiting list initiative introduced last year improved the outcomes for individuals seeking to take on Guardianship roles. Meanwhile, a dedicated team member attended weekly delayed discharge planning meetings to take forward cases which require MHO intervention.

Inverclyde, like many other areas, saw an upward trend in Mental Health Act activity over the past year. Immediate response was provided for Mental Health Act assessments, whilst out of hours (OOH) responses were provided via the Glasgow and Partners Emergency Social Work Service.

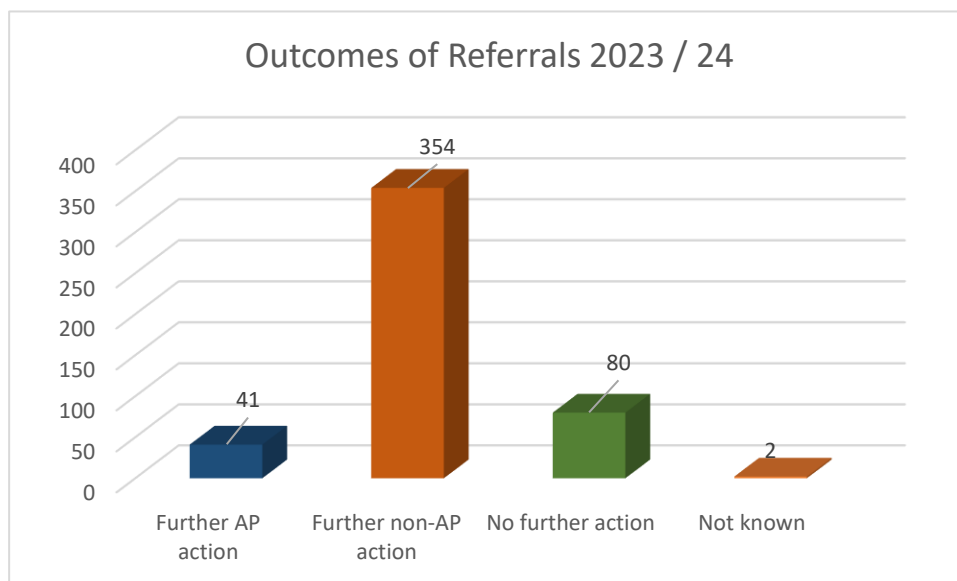
The 2023 Mental Welfare Commission report on Mental Health Act Orders recorded Inverclyde as having higher than average activity across a range of interventions. Inverclyde had rates of Compulsory Treatment Order (CTO) per head of population at 36.5% compared to the Scottish average of 29.6%.



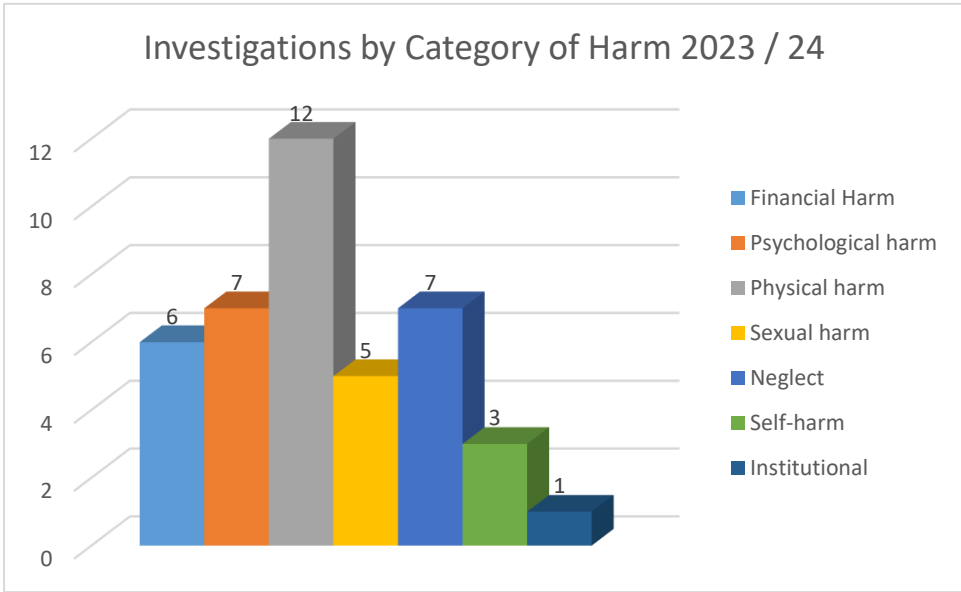
Adult Support and Protection (ASP)

During 2023/24, Adult Support and Protection referrals increased by 53% from the previous year, from 310 in 2022/23 to 477. The number of referrals moving to adult protection investigation continued to reduce, to 8.5% in 2023/24, from 11% in 2022/23 despite overall referrals increasing.

During the last year, a total of 12 case conferences took place, of which seven were initial case conferences and five were review conferences. Of the 477 referrals received, 74% required further action but not under ASP legislation. Of those individuals where an adult protection investigation took



place, 65% were aged over age 65 and 56% were female, with physical harm, psychological harm and neglect being the top three indicators of concern.



Local initiatives during 2023/24 included provision of Distress Brief Intervention, unscheduled care work (including monitoring people who repeatedly attended hospital emergency departments), providing stress and distress training to care home staff, Trauma Informed Practice sessions and Maximising Independence work.

During the next year, the service will work to increase the availability of and access to advocacy services to ensure the voices of a supported person and/or carer are heard, using a trauma informed approach. This will provide an important opportunity to work with local trauma champions to imbed trauma informed practice.

A range of training took place over the last year, including adult protection awareness, financial harm and Council Officer training sessions. Over the next year, work will be taken forward to align with training plans for with child protection colleagues.

Meanwhile, the development of the Inverclyde ASP Learning and Development Strategy for 2024-26 will provide a pathway where multi-agency staff can access in-house training and externally provided learning and development opportunities.

- ✓ Nine Adult Protection Awareness sessions.
- ✓ Six Financial Harm sessions.
- ✓ Two Hate Crime sessions.
- ✓ Two Council Officer (five-day training sessions).
- ✓ Two Council Officer refresher training sessions.

Within Inverclyde, the Community Mental Health Service includes a number of teams who provided a range of services to local communities over the past year.

The Primary Care Mental Health Team (PCMHT) is an integrated service which provided short term interventions to people with mental health problems alongside a step up/step down facility as a responsive approach to identified need, vulnerability and risk.

Meanwhile, the Adult Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) and Older Persons Mental Health Team (OPMHT) provided mental health services, including specialist assessment and interventions to people experiencing more severe/enduring mental health conditions, again within an integrated, multidisciplinary model of care.

The multidisciplinary team (MDT) consists of Social Workers, Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Psychologists, Psychiatrists and support staff with specialist mental health knowledge, skills and experience. Social Workers continued to provide a critical role in the assessment and review of individuals whilst ensuring statutory requirements of the Adult Support and Protection Act continued to be fulfilled.

During the past year, in response to wider recruitment challenges, a Service Stratification protocol identified demand/capacity issues and supported prioritisation of service to those most in need due to risk and vulnerability, whilst recognising statutory responsibilities. Staff were supported to prioritise their caseloads based on risk, informed by criteria agreed across NHS GGC. Professional oversight by social work and nursing Team Leads was a critical element to ensure safe service delivery for individuals alongside managing continued service demand.

The close relationship between Alcohol and Drug Recovery Services and Mental Health services continued and a joint improvement programme commenced to improve the experience of people requiring urgent mental health care who also have substance use concerns. Services worked together over the past year to progress consistency of experience for people to receive timely and most appropriate interventions and will be further developed in the year ahead through collaboration with third sector partners to improve service user outcomes and experience.

An example of this partnership approach has been evidenced by the team working with our Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) providers, Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH), for people who required intensive support but not a clinical mental health service. Feedback has been positive, with both referrers and individuals reporting good experiences. The DBI programme will continue to be an important component to deliver the right help at the right time to individuals seeking support.

Challenges over the past year, in common with other service areas, included recruitment and staff wellbeing, responding to significant demand (including potential neurodivergence identified in adulthood). In response, however, a local multidisciplinary implementation group was convened to support implementation of the NHS GGC mental health strategy.

Joint inspection of adult services: integration and outcomes – Focus on people living with mental illness

In October 2023, the Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland commenced a joint inspection of adult services: integration and outcomes, with a focus on people living with mental illness. The inspection was undertaken using the Joint Inspection of Adult Services Integration and Outcomes Quality Improvement Framework, structured around the following inspection question: ‘how effectively is the partnership working together, strategically and operationally, to deliver seamless services that achieve good health and wellbeing outcomes for adults?’

A range of activity was undertaken, including:

- reading health and social work records.
- consideration of a position statement and supporting evidence prepared by the HSCP.
- a survey of partnership staff, including third and independent sector colleagues.
- engagement with people who live with mental illness and their unpaid carers.

The inspection report will be published in May 2024 and will include evaluation of the service and a series of key findings. Although a number of improvement actions were already underway within adult services during 2023/24, an updated improvement action plan based on the report findings will guide further improvement activity in the year ahead.

Alcohol and Drug Recovery Service (ADRS)

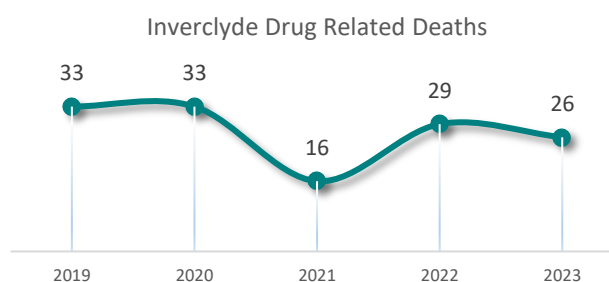
Inverclyde Alcohol and Drug Recovery Service (ADRS) is an integrated multidisciplinary team delivering a range of evidence-based care and treatment for adults in Inverclyde experiencing harm from alcohol and drugs.

The National Register for Scotland (NRS) reported 26 drug-related deaths in Inverclyde in 2023. This was the third highest rate in Scotland, behind only the Glasgow City and Dundee City Council areas. While still too high, this is lower than the 29 reported in the previous year and represents decreasing trend over the past five years.

During the past year, Inverclyde Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) refreshed their strategy, with reducing drug-related deaths a key priority. The ADP will develop a new delivery plan in 2024/25, focussing on prevention activity, care and treatment. An Alcohol Youth Worker post was also created

and a Harm Reduction and Capacity Building Officer commenced work with multi-agency partners.

Assertive outreach support was provided to people who found accessing the service to be a challenge and this approach was further extended to people at risk of or having experienced a non-fatal overdose (NFOD). An information sharing agreement and pathway with Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) highlighted people known to SAS following an NFOD and has been embedded in service delivery.



Inverclyde Residential Rehabilitation Pathway also commenced, with third sector partners Turning Point Scotland (TPS), to develop a recovery model providing fast access to help, care and treatment options including residential rehabilitation and working to overcome any barriers.

Nationally, in response to the national rate of drug related deaths, Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards across Scotland continued to shape the priorities of the service during 2023/24. These standards adopt a rights-based approach, ensuring individuals have choice in their treatment and can access the right support for where they are in their recovery journey.

Care at Home

During 2023/24, work was undertaken to streamline processes and promote earlier joint working to prevent people becoming unnecessarily delayed in hospital. This included joint planning by the social work team at Inverclyde Royal Infirmary and mental health officer colleagues to reduce delays for our most vulnerable citizens. The number of bed days lost to delayed discharges continued to reduce and, by the end of March 2024, had improved by 44.6%.

Improved response times for people awaiting care at home support before discharge from hospital contributed here, alongside a test of change to provide rehabilitation-focused support immediately following discharge.

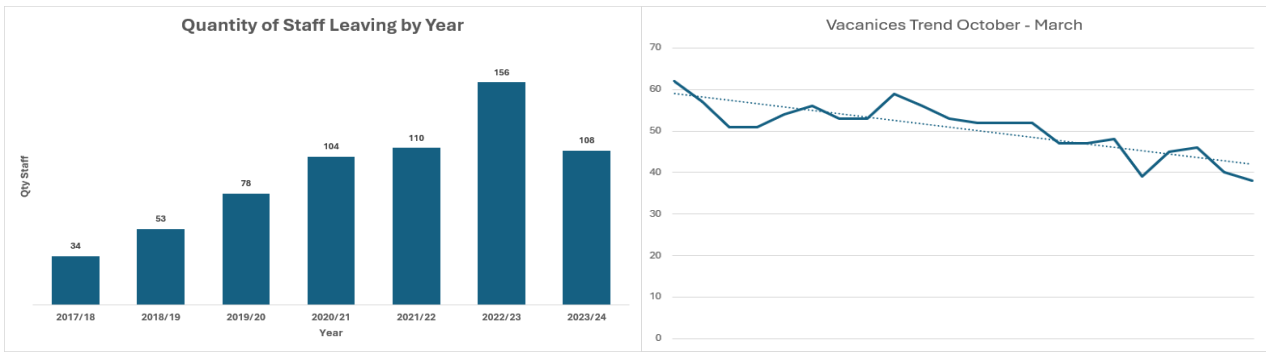
The ongoing redesign of Care at Home also contributed to this improvement, as part of wider service improvement activity to meet the needs of our local communities. The redesign of care at home services has now resulted in the integration of reablement principles across all teams, ensuring that a reablement approach is embedded across the entire service user journey.

Key outcomes of the redesign include:

- Reduction in travel time for staff leading to more efficient visit schedules.
- Enhanced use of real-time data for decision-making, allowing for prompt responses to changing situations and improved monitoring of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Nevertheless, the social care sector continued to face significant challenges across Scotland and beyond, particularly regarding recruitment and retention of staff. These challenges continued to be exacerbated by increased demand for care services and competition for skilled workers.

In response to these challenges, a targeted recruitment campaign was launched within the last year to highlight local regrading of social care staff. The introduction of the Social Care Worker role, which recognised the complexity of tasks, proved to be effective in attracting new talent and retaining existing staff. The regrading initiative also improved job satisfaction and positioned the service as a more appealing option for employment. As a result, the service saw an increase in applications for care positions, contributing to a more stable workforce.



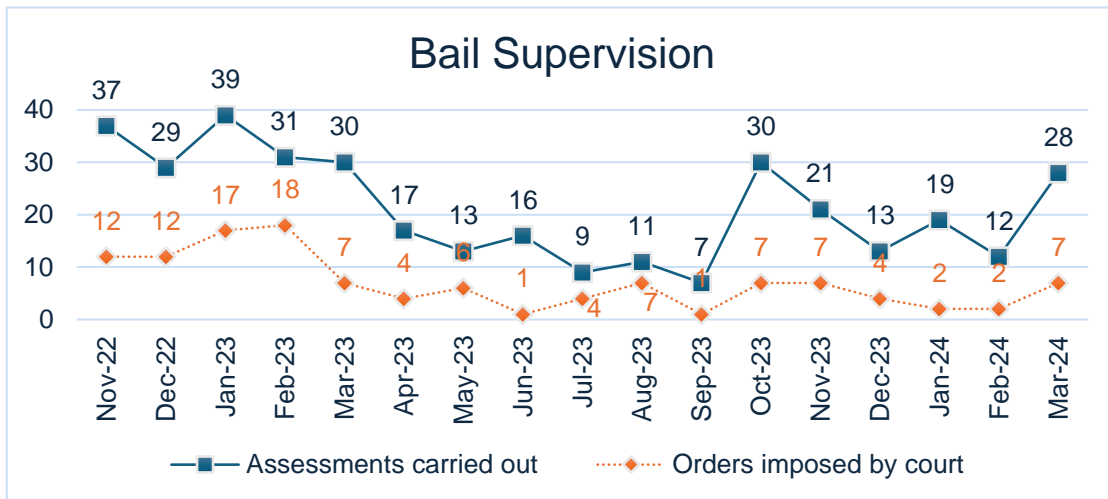
Moving forward, priorities for the service will be to:

- monitor the impact of the redesign on service delivery and staff satisfaction.
- maintain focus on recruitment strategies that emphasise the benefits of regrading and career development opportunities within the service.
- regularly review and adapt our approach to address ongoing challenges in the care sector.

How Social Work Services are improving outcomes for people involved with Justice services

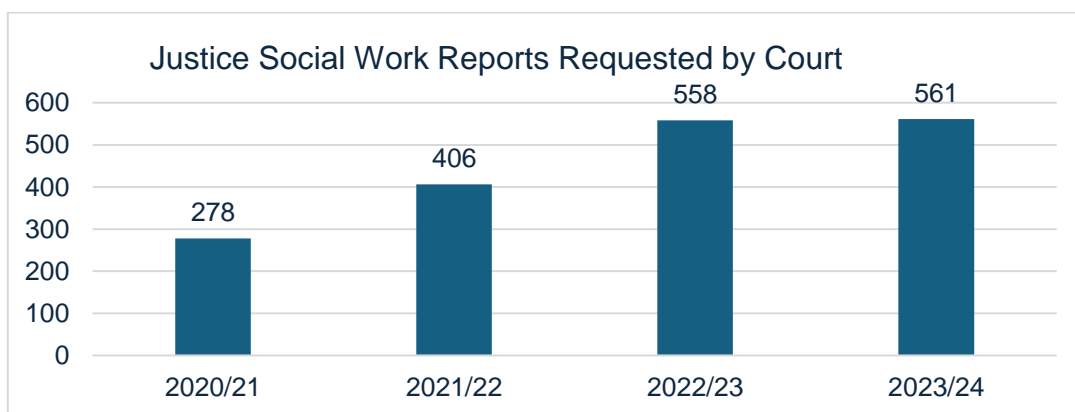
Bail Supervision

Now in its second year, the bail supervision service continued to provide the Court with a direct alternative to custodial remand. Since its launch, the service carried out a high number of assessments, a significant proportion of which have resulted in bail supervision orders being made.

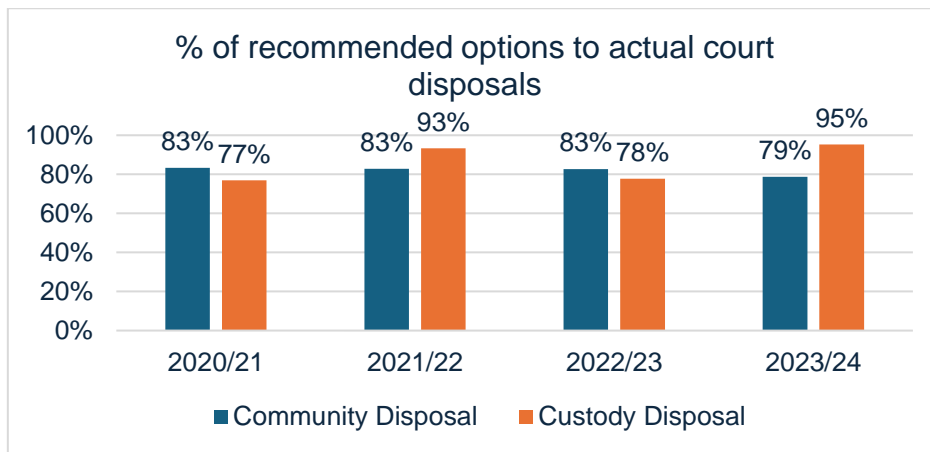


Justice Social Work Reports

One of the key areas of responsibility for Justice Social Work is the provision of reports to the Court. The number of reports requested by the Courts steadily increased over the past year and, by the end of March 2024, exceeded pre-pandemic levels.



As part of continuous feedback and evaluation, Sheriffs at Greenock Sheriff Court advised that they found the level of detail and analysis within reports to be invaluable to their sentencing decisions. The service monitored the correlation between the sentences recommended by report writers and the actual Court disposals made, as indicated below:



To further develop practice, the service has adopted the Scottish Government’s revised Justice Social Work Report template which seeks to reduce duplication of information enhances analysis. The service will monitor the quality and consistency of assessments in the year ahead.

Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

Hosted by Inverclyde HSCP, the North Strathclyde MAPPA unit continued to fulfil a key role in public protection across the six North Strathclyde local authority areas. Within the past year, an Independent Chair of the Strategic Oversight Group was appointed to further strengthen governance arrangements.

MAPPA enables key stakeholders such as the Police, Scottish Prison Service, local authorities, NHS, and other, duty to co-operate agencies, to work together to protect communities, reduce the risk of re-offending and support rehabilitation, as evidenced in the case study below.

Case Study

Mr A was in custody preparing for release. He received a diagnosis of autism 10 years ago but had no supports for this, relying on his family. He had never lived independently and his levels of capacity were unknown, however it was identified that he could not return to his family home upon release.

Mr A was accepting of this, but his family were concerned that he would not be able to cope in an independent tenancy.

The prison based social work (PBSW) team worked closely with community justice and health colleagues to arrange a capacity assessment. Following this, Mr A began a life skills course to prepare him for independent living.

Social work and homelessness staff worked to secure appropriate accommodation with a local housing provider. Homelessness staff visited Mr A in custody to support him with the forms and benefits applications.

Mr A’s family prepared the property prior to release to ensure that the transition was as comfortable for Mr A as possible with familiar items from home in place.

An autism specialist supported Mr A upon release and advised staff about how to work with Mr A. Staff also undertook neurodiversity and autism training. Following his release, Mr A was supported to move to his

accommodation his resettlement to-date has been successful.

In addition to organising risk management meetings across the six local authority areas, the MAPPA unit delivered a range of training and development opportunities to multi-agency staff during 2023/24, including to housing providers across North Strathclyde, to enable them to better understand their role in the MAPPA process. This led to an invitation to present to the National Sex Offender Liaison Officer Forum and, in turn, to other housing providers out with the North Strathclyde area. The team also provided inputs to the Inverclyde Community Justice Partnership Third Sector Forum and the local GP Practice Managers Forum.

Prison Based Social Work

The prison based social work (PBSW) team at HMP Greenock continued to support the risk management team, integrated case management and parole processes. During 2023/24, the Scottish Prison Service's Secondary Assurance Pilot was introduced, to gain external assurance of risk management plans for the highest risk and most complex prisoners prior to them progressing to unescorted community access. This was a welcome initiative as part of public protection, although it significantly changed working practices, processes and responsibilities. As one of only two prison establishments as part of this pilot, social work, prison and Risk Management Authority colleagues worked to develop skills and confidence in this area of practice.

Early Action Systems Change – Women in Justice

The Early Action Systems Change - Women in Justice project continued throughout 2023/24 to progress two tests of change. This included training to targeted HSCP and third sector staff following the National Trauma Training Pathway (NTTP). A number of staff successfully completed training at level 1 (Trauma Informed); level 2 (Trauma Skilled) and level 3 (Trauma Enhanced). Staff worked closely with the local Trauma Informed Practice Lead Officer (TIPL0) to develop evaluation and delivery models.

The second strand was the establishment of a Women in Justice Support Group (WJSG), which meets weekly. The women designed the group structure, all of whom have lived or living experience of the justice system. As well as seeking opportunities for peer support and networking, sessions included domestic abuse, healthy/unhealthy relationships, anger management, emotional regulation, substance misuse issues and homelessness.

By seeking to improve the experience of other women in the justice system, the group developed "Attending Court" and "Community Sentencing Options" leaflets to raise awareness and understanding for women about what happens when they attend Court and to improve understanding of community-based disposals. The WJSG also supported the development of Inverclyde's Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan by contributing to the consultation and helped to develop an engagement model for people with experience of the justice system.

We are currently looking at sustainability of this Group going forward and beyond the life of the Project.

The Women in Justice project was recognised last year, when they were invited to present the work of the project to the national Pride in Practice Social Work Conference in Dundee.

Inverclyde Community Justice Partnership continued to meet throughout 2023/24. The Partnership held its annual development day at HMP Greenock in September 2023 and focussed on exploring the challenges faced by those prisoners resettling into the Inverclyde community, including hearing from people in custody who spoke about their experiences. The Partnership is further exploring the issues identified to improve support and planning for people returning to Inverclyde from custody.

In October 2023, the Community Justice Partnership facilitated workshops on 'Our people, our community, our vision - Inverclyde's journey in understanding trauma and poverty'. This brought together the work of the Community Justice Partnership in conducting a Strategic Needs and Strengths Assessment, the work of the Women's Project around trauma informed and responsive Justice Services and the use of data to drive improvement in Justice Social Work Services.

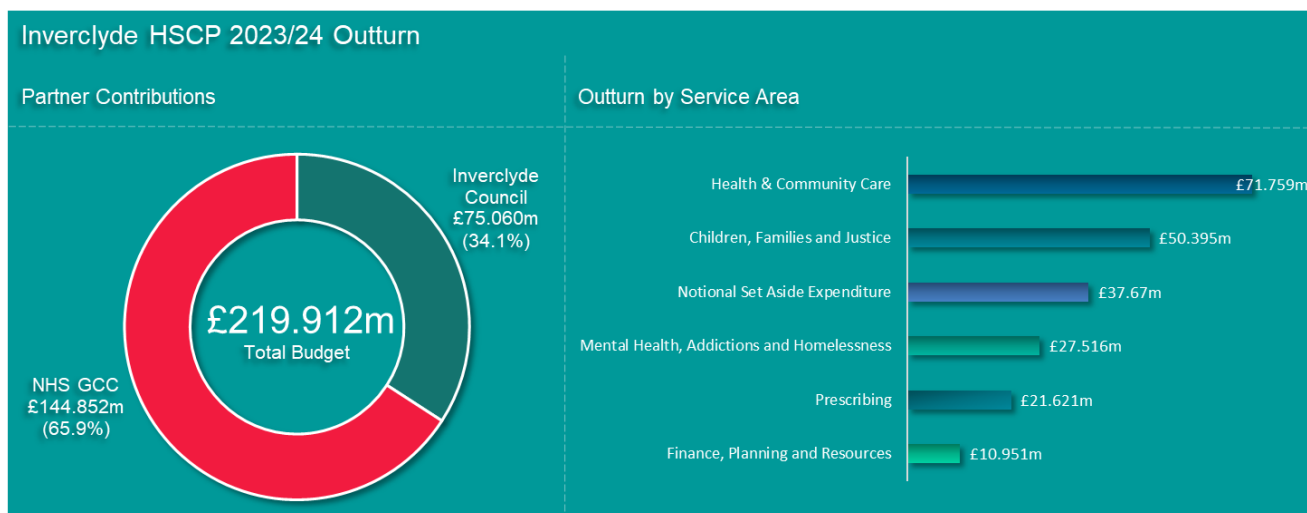
A particular focus of activity during 2023/24 was the development of the Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan. This included extensive consultation during early 2024, seeking the views of those with lived experience, staff and partners on the plan. When published, the plan will outline how partners will work together to reduce offending and the impact of offending on individuals and communities in Inverclyde. This will reflect five strategic aims, four of which reflect the identified aims of the National Strategy for Community Justice (*Scottish Government 2022*) and a locally determined outcome. The five aims are:

- Optimise the use of diversion and intervention at the earliest opportunity (national).
- Ensure that robust and high-quality community interventions and public protection arrangements are consistently available (national).
- Ensure that services are accessible and available to address the needs of individuals accused or convicted of an offence (national).
- Strengthen the leadership, engagement, and partnership working of local and national community justice partners (national).
- Improve housing and homelessness outcomes for individuals in the justice system (local aim).

The CJOIP its associated documents and annual plan requirements will be submitted to Community Justice Scotland and can be found at www.inverclyde.go.uk/communityjustice

5. Resources

On 25th March 2024, the IJB approved a two-year budget, including £5.2m of planned savings and efficiencies over 2024/25 and 2025/26, along with the use of £0.7m of reserves in 2024/25 to meet the remaining budget gap for the year. How this budget was allocated is demonstrated in the image below:



Financial Challenges

The HSCP was overspent by £0.843m in 2023/24 at the financial year end and this was offset by use of existing smoothing reserves.

Social care overspends of £3.380m were incurred within children and families residential placements, fostering, adoption and kinship care packages. This was partially offset by underspends of £2.946m in Client Package costs across adult services, vacancies in most services and over-recovery of client income in Adult Services.

Health overspends of £1.764m were incurred within the prescribing budget and were partially offset by vacancy underspends.

At the start of the year the HSCP had a smoothing reserves balance of £6.592m. This is to facilitate managing services of a volatile nature and a contingency for any pay award deficits. During the year, a total of £3.676m was drawn down for these purposes. In addition, a specific severance cost reserve of £1.492m was created as part of the budget setting process to pay for any voluntary redundancy costs incurred as part of the 2024/26 savings programme. This leaves a total smoothing reserve balance of £4,408m available for use in 2024/25 onwards in addition to our savings plan.

The IJB continued to hold a Transformation Fund to fund projects and activities which will realise future efficiencies for the Partnership. A closing balance of £1.326m was recorded.

Reserves for Winter Pressures/Planning amounted to £1.735m across various workstreams. £0.525m net expenditure was incurred in 2023/24, with the remaining £1.21m to ease pressure on care services in 2024/25. General Reserves of £1.561m are also held for the partnership.

Overall opening reserves of £24.262m were held on 1 April 2023. During the year £10.130m of Earmarked Reserves were used to fund specific spend and projects. An additional £5.155m was added to Earmarked Reserves including £0.709m allocated to general reserve as part of the budget process approved by the IJB to temporarily fund the 24/25 as part of the overall approved savings.

6. Workforce

HSCP Workforce

Inverclyde HSCP has a workforce of approximately 1,700 people. We recognise that if local people are to achieve the outcomes that matter to them, they need to have access to a confident and skilled workforce.

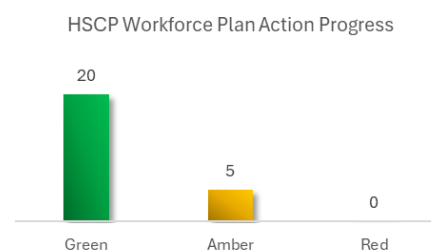


The Workforce Plan (2022-25) [Strategies, Policies and Plans - Inverclyde Council](#) sets out the key workforce strengths and challenges under the current financial pressures and how we will meet the changing health and social care needs of local people.

The plan identifies the 5 key actions where Inverclyde HSCP will:

1. Plan to achieve the right workforce with the right skills in the right place at the right time.
2. Attract a workforce which reflects the diversity of our population and continue to improve equality, diversity, and inclusion in our workforce.
3. Ensure staff have access to training opportunities which support their personal and professional development and supports the delivery of high-quality services.
4. Ensure staff feel valued and rewarded for the work they do, and that NHS Scotland and Social Care employers are employers of choice.
5. Foster workforce cultures, kind and compassionate leadership that supports wellbeing and positive workplaces.

The plan is supported by 25 sub-actions and progress is regularly reported to the Integration Joint Board. By the end of 2023/24, 80% of Workforce Plan actions were on target and assessed as green. The chart opposite shows the progress of all actions.



Staff recruitment and retention

Throughout the past year, several initiatives designed to support the recruitment and retention of staff were progressed, led by our Training Board. Following design work last year, a “*Grow Our Own*” Initiative was implemented, with nine paraprofessional staff securing support to obtain a social work qualification. Three members of staff will complete a post graduate qualification to work as social workers within two years. A further six people will commence on an undergraduate pathway in the next year and will be able to work as social workers over the next 3-4 years.

As well as funding the course fees, this initiative enabled staff to pursue a qualification without the worry of reducing their salary or job security: two of the main barriers identified by staff who considered a professional qualification.

Further developments included peer support, as well as learning and study support to ensure high-quality practice learning placements. The *Grow Our Own* initiative is a long-term plan to provide stability across the social work workforce and address the national challenges in social work recruitment. It is a clear commitment to hard working talented staff across the Health and Social Care Partnership who have ambitions to progress into qualified social work roles.

Over the last year further activity included offering financial incentives for candidates who completed their MSc qualification, where the HSCP reimbursed the final year of fees for five candidates, all of whom committed to working in Inverclyde for at least three years.

Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) Supported Year

Over the past year, the training team developed supports to supervisors to enable them to understand and fully engage with their role in the NQSW Supported Year. This was designed to focus on continuous professional development and included learning opportunities to meet organisation and team needs in addition to the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) continuous professional learning requirements.

Inverclyde is now in the third year of the NQSW Supported Year Early Implementation Pilot and this experience will be invaluable to prepare for the national launch of the NQSW Supported Year in October 2024. Locally, operating procedures have been developed to support all NQSWs and supervisors throughout this supported year as well as creating a NQSW Continuous Professional Learning toolkit, including guidance regarding mandatory learning requirements.

During 2023/24, the training team continued to provide a hub approach to practice learning where most practice educators are based in the training team and link workers in placement settings. Placements in the past year were offered across Children & Families, Children's Houses, Justice Services, Adult Services and more recently in The New Scots Integration Team and the Homelessness Team.

Supporting Learning

The SVQ team during 2023/24 delivered eight awards across SVQ 2, 3 and 4, including managers undertaking the SVQ 4 Care Services and Leadership in Management award, practitioners undertaking the Social Services and Health Care (SSHC) award, with 24 more people due to commence their training, as well as a number of practitioners undertaking the Social Service Children and Young People (CYP) award.

A range of training courses were provided over the past year for adult support and protection awareness, financial harm awareness, ASIST suicide prevention, What's the Harm, Promoting Positive Behaviour and Assessment and Support Planning. Short life working groups also led on developing themes from a Training Board development day held in 2023, concentrating on HSCP induction programme and core skills training. Meanwhile, the core skills group developed a bespoke assessment and support planning course for home care managers.

Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act

Work continued towards the implementation of the Health and Care (Staffing) Scotland Act from 1st April 2024. The aims of the Act are to enable safe and high-quality care and improved outcomes for those experiencing healthcare or care services through the provision of appropriate staffing. This means having the right people, in the right place, with the right skills at the right time.

A local Programme Board, jointly chaired by the Chief Social Work Officer and Chief Nurse, will monitor progress and share local and national updates. Following implementation, NHS Boards will be required to follow a specified Common Staffing Method to inform decisions about staffing levels in an open and transparent way. This applies to all community nursing teams in Inverclyde and will include other clinical areas as more tools are developed nationally.

[Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report \(2016-24\)](#)

In 2022, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), undertook an audit of IJBs across Scotland, assessing their compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Following this audit, the EHRC provided advice, support and learning sessions to all IJBs to help them better meet their obligations under the Equality Act.

With support, Inverclyde HSCP put in place an Equality Improvement Action Plan to ensure that we are prepared to meet its obligations to. Throughout 2023/24, the Equality Improvement Action Plan has been delivered, resulting in several local successes, including:

- ✓ The establishment of a local HSCP Equalities Steering Group.
- ✓ The establishment of an Equality Peer Network who have received enhanced equalities training and can offer advice in their own service areas.
- ✓ Developed an equalities training programme for IJB members.
- ✓ Equalities E-Learning Training is part of the HSCP induction for new members of staff.
- ✓ Completion of an Audit of EIA compliance across the HSCP, culminating in a new local EIA process and guidance for all staff.
- ✓ Enhanced joint working on equalities with local third sector partners and networks.

These key actions were supported by a set of local actions and the improvement plan was overseen by the established HSCP Equality Group. To date the plan is progressing well, with many local actions now complete. Some key successes highlighted in the mainstreaming report include:

Establishment of Equality Governance and Peer Support Group: During 2023/24, the HSCP established an Equalities Steering Group for senior managers. A Peer Support Network was also established where colleagues can act as equality champions for their service.

Development of staff: All HSCP staff have access to a range of training and learning resources, including various mandatory courses on equalities awareness. Staff also attended training by Police Scotland on awareness of Hate Crime.

Equality Impact Assessments: an improved approach to undertaking Equality Impact Assessments included enhancing staff awareness and confidence. The HSCP is also working with third sector colleagues to use an EQIA in their own services.

Engagement Activity: Throughout 2023/24 the HSCP worked with partners to seek the views and opinions of local people to improve our services. This primarily focussed on those with lived experience of HSCP services.

Communication: Improved communication of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) across the workforce included sharing information on training opportunities, surveys and staff forum information including the Staff Disability Forum, BME Staff Network and LGBTQ+ Staff Forum.

Our Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report (2016-24) can be found on our website here: [Inverclyde Equality Mainstream and Outcomes Report \(2016-24\)](#)

[New Equality Outcomes and Equality Plan](#)

Following EHRC support, the HSCP is developing a new set of Equality Outcomes that will be published by the end of April 2024. A draft set of Equality Outcomes have been identified by the HSCP Equality Steering Group. These draft actions are:

1. We have improved our knowledge of the local population who identify as belonging to protected groups and have a better understanding of the challenges they face.
2. Children and Young People who are at risk due to local inequalities, are identified early and supported to achieve positive health outcomes.
3. Inverclyde's most vulnerable and often excluded people are supported to be active and respected members of their community.
4. People that are New to Scotland, through resettlement or asylum, who make Inverclyde their home, feel welcomed, are safe and able to access the HSCP services they may need.

The new Equality Outcomes will be included in a new equality plan, which will also include our mainstreaming intentions. This will demonstrate how we will build on the positive work already undertaken in embedding equalities into the day-to-day practice of Inverclyde HSCP.

Recognising Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic

In September 2023, our Proud2Care young people were asked to provide their views on care experience becoming a protected characteristic in Inverclyde. Elected Members subsequently agreed a motion to strengthen the recognition of care experienced people in the local area including within equalities impact assessments.

7. Looking Ahead

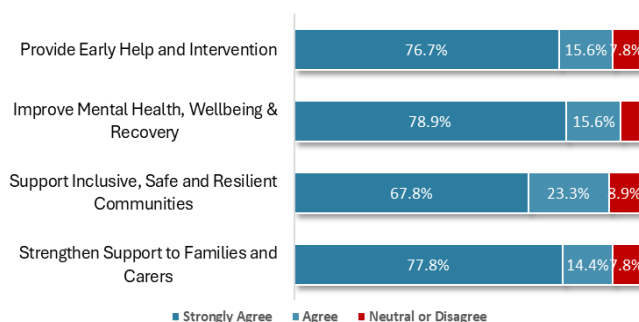
Over the next year, a number of factors will influence how services improve, develop and grow to have greater impact and improve outcomes for our local communities.

Work has continued to develop a new three-year strategic plan that will inform the IJB and HSCPs strategic direction from April 2024-27. The development approach was approved by the Strategic Planning Group in July 2023 and set out key steps, including engagement with local people and stakeholders, reviewing the Six Big Actions in the previous Strategic Plan, considering the findings from our Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA), and reviewing local and national policies and plans.

Following a period of development and stakeholder engagement, a suite of four strategic priorities were identified to inform the plan. They are:

- Provide Early Help and Intervention
- Improve Support for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Recovery
- Support Inclusive, Safe and Resilient Communities
- Strengthen Support to Families and Carers

Consultation on these priorities took place during January and February 2024. The chart opposite shows that 90% of those who responded to the consultation agreed or strongly agreed with the priorities.



These endorsed priorities will now be the basis for developing a strategic action plan and supporting outcomes framework. Following IJB approval, the new Strategic Plan will be implemented from 1 April 2024.

The Children and Families service will continue to redesign how services are delivered, to keep children and young people in Inverclyde, safe, healthy, and able to achieve positive outcomes as they grow up. Overall, this approach will recognise the capacity of families to change, within the context of strong local communities, which continues to balance the risks, needs and aspirations of children and young people. In doing so, the focus of Children and Families services will include:

- Shifting the balance of care by reducing the need for external residential placements and develop more supports for children and young people to remain in or return to Inverclyde.
- Earlier intervention approaches that enable family capacity to be strengthened.
- Developing the skills of our workforce.
- Creating a tiered support model, ensuring all children and families receive the support that is right for them.
- Using evidence-based approaches that build on and support family capacity to provide safe care for children.

Relational practice will be integral to a model of tiered and targeted interventions which recognises the strengths of relationships within families where children and young people are sustained in their families, homes, and communities. As part of this, we will adopt Signs of Safety and Healing,

an evidence-based practice model, to improve the quality of our work and ensure consistency for children and families, where they are at the heart of assessment, decision-making and planning.

Children and Families services will also continue to implement the successful Ideas to Action during 2024, as part of investing in improving the experiences and outcomes for our children, young people and families. Adult social work and social care teams will explore the potential to adopt a similar approach in the next year, as a further commitment to our services being directly influenced by the views of our workforce and people who use our services.

Legislation to create a National Care Service for Scotland was first introduced to parliament in June 2022. Stage 1 reading of the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill was completed in January 2024 and Stage 2 is expected to continue into late 2024. This is expected to change the way social work and social care services are delivered and it remains to be seen how this will impact all services across Justice, Children, Families and Adult Social Care. The Chief Social Work Officer will continue to contribute to national discussions on the implications for the social work profession, operational delivery of services, governance and professional standards.

Inspection and scrutiny activity will continue to shape social work priorities and the work of the HSCP in the year ahead. The report of the joint inspection of adult services, with a focus on services for people living with mental illness will be published in May 2024. Although a number of areas of improvement are already underway, the report by the Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland is expected to reflect positive achievements and good practice, alongside recommendations that will be included in a forthcoming improvement action plan for adult services.

The financial landscape to provide social work and social care services to the communities of Inverclyde will remain extremely challenging and this is reflected in the continuing budget plan for the next two years. As services experience significant demand, we will continue to explore innovative, inclusive services in partnership with local people, as well as third sector and independent sector providers. Providing quality, effective services that improve outcomes for people, whilst also identifying savings, will be a significant challenge during 2024/25, however consultation with communities has already helped to shape our priorities for the year ahead.

Strengthening social work governance, oversight and leadership will be an important aspect of how we move ahead. As we review our current arrangements, we will need to ensure the necessary capacity for the statutory Chief Social Work Officer role to be fulfilled, to support improvement actions arising from scrutiny and inspection, enhance public protection arrangements and take account of the likely implications of the proposed National Care Service and National Social Work Agency.

Throughout this report, I have referred to the importance of the voices and views of people who use our services in decision-making and planning. Empowering individuals, communities and our workforce will therefore continue to be central to planning and developing services in partnership to make a difference.

Finally, my thanks once again go to my social work, social care and health colleagues, alongside our partners. The successes of the past year are theirs and their commitment and dedication to working with our communities in Inverclyde will continue to be our greatest strength in the year ahead.