

## POVERTY



## Inverclyde Council

### The Inverclyde Approach – Tackling Child Poverty

**The Inverclyde Approach delivers a place-based and whole family approach to support those living in poverty or facing inequalities, based on the premise that alleviating poverty requires a network of interconnected partners and collaborations to address families' increasingly complex needs.**

This brings together four distinct projects, delivered by a range of partners:

- Routes into Supported Employment (supporting men aged 20-40 with a range of complex issues, including recovery from addiction)
- Early Adopter Communities (a locality-based approach to delivering affordable childcare)
- Home Start (supporting families with an emphasis on parents with mental health concerns and children under five)
- Thrive Under 5 (providing families with children under five with resources and knowledge to make healthier choices around food)

The Inverclyde Approach evolved from a theory of change developed by the Inverclyde Child Poverty Action Group to respond to a pressing local priority: tackling child poverty in a community where around 22% of children are living in poverty after housing costs, with many families experiencing increasingly complex challenges exacerbated by the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing cost of living crisis.

This case study focuses on the early adopter communities project. This involved piloting a locality-based approach to delivering affordable childcare to families who are low income or who are one of the child poverty priority families. Family wellbeing support is provided to families who require additional support including advocacy. Transportation to the childcare, healthy snacks and

activities are provided to children participating. This integrated system of support aims to strengthen financial wellbeing, access to childcare, employability, and whole-family support. It reflects a values-based belief that families are experts in their own lives and, when supported through co-ordinated, trauma-informed services, they can move toward improved, sustainable outcomes.

A multi-agency partnership coordinated this work, with the shared approach ensuring that childcare is not viewed in isolation, but as a gateway to broader social and economic opportunities. This was supported by Early Adopter Community funding from the Scottish Government.

The overarching methodology of the initiative is to:

- reduce child poverty through better collaboration.
- create a person-centred service with users at the heart of service design and delivery; and
- use data to identify needs and start to track progress to provide support that leads to lasting improvement in people's lives while providing them with opportunities and choice.

The Early Adopter Community prioritised a co-design approach to ensure that services effectively meet the needs of the community at the earliest intervention. Before the service started, an online survey was distributed asking families about their thoughts on childcare, how they currently use it, and their needs, with 169 families responding. Through co-production workshops, the partners gained valuable insights into the challenges and aspirations of parents and families, as well as data on service needs and preferences. Various engagement strategies have been put in place to maximise participation, e.g. hosting events in accessible locations and offering child-friendly activities.

Early results indicate significant benefits to families engaged in the initiatives. For example, families report improved household income, many due to childcare access that enabled additional work hours or promotional opportunities. Access to financial well-being advice has also helped families understand the impact of job changes before taking action.

To date, the Inverclyde Approach has collectively reached 375 families in Inverclyde. Progress has been made across all four child poverty drivers, with positive impacts on families, children, and parents, including:

- Development of robust relationships between families and services. Strong relationships with families served as a foundation to providing effective support.
- Opportunities for activities as a family with many opportunities on offer, including eating healthy, cooking, playing, exploring, and socialising together.
- Supporting the health and well-being of the whole family. An end-of-year childcare questionnaire (2023/24) captured the impacts of after-school care on families: 93% of parents reported feeling less stressed and more supported, and 100% reported feeling reassured.
- Supporting the adults in families to progress their employability and parenting journey. A Wellbeing Survey showed that 100% of respondents reported improvements to some

extent in their emotional health and wellbeing. 89% of respondents reported feeling less isolated and having made more connections with other parents.



#### B'Hive at Boglestone Community Centre Official Opening

An independent evaluation found that applying the Inverclyde Approach to developing and delivering local projects and initiatives has successfully addressed the many factors that contribute to child poverty by delivering a collaborative and co-ordinated framework of support that is adaptive and co-designed by the communities it aims to serve, leading to better outcomes for families. The document is available to view on Inverclyde Council's website: [Inverclyde Alliance Board Meeting 16 June 2025 - Inverclyde Council](#) (agenda item 9). This report recommends that the Council and its partners consider wider integration of the Inverclyde Approach by embedding the approach across the authority to support whole-family working, prioritise relationship-based practice, and empower communities; and creating an environment for sustainable change through adapting internal processes, align funding opportunities, and adopt transformative monitoring and evaluation methods to support changemaking efforts. The evaluation report provides a blueprint for building successful service and family partnerships to address child poverty.

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