

Argyll and Bute Council: Integrated Impact Assessment

About the proposal

Title of Proposal.

Draft Reduced Social Work Staffing

Intended outcome of the proposal.

Reduction of social work staffing with 9 FTE social work vacancies reducing the capacity to undertake the regulatory role of the council as part of the delegated services to the IJB.

How does your proposal align with strategy?

The HSCP does not consider that these proposals align to national policy or local strategy and would damage capacity for care as employment levels permanently reduce. This would be in the context of increasing need as the elderly population increases. The ability of the HSCP and the care sector to respond to future demand will be impaired. Reputational risk is thought to be significant. The HSCP will require to mitigate the risk through service redesign to ensure that service is prioritised and delivered as effectively as possibly ensuring that staff wellbeing is monitored. This is likely to be an outcome action for 2026-27 if approved.

Description of proposal.

4 FTE removed from Children and Families structure. Will result in delays and increased focus on child protection at expense of other services. Likely impact across education. 5 FTE removed from Adult Services structure. Will result in delays to assessments and increased workload for remaining staff. Potential impact on delivery of care at home reductions if assessments cannot be done.

Lead and Appropriate Officers

Lead officer.

Nicola Gillespie/ Caroline Robertson/David Gibson

Lead officer job title.

Heads of Service

Lead officer service.

Complex and Registered Services/Health and Community Care/ Children, Families and Justice

Appropriate officer.

Evan Beswick

Appropriate officer Job title.

Chief Officer

Who will deliver proposal.

Council HR/heads of service/team leads social work

Signed off by.

Date.

Evidence

Data – What data have you used to inform the IIA.

The assessment has taken into consideration workforce structure including current FTE levels, vacancy data, job roles and regulatory responsibilities. Financial monitoring and budget analysis detail current staffing costs and any potential savings forecasts. The proposed staffing changes will have a material impact on the capacity of the organisation to plan and deliver regulatory services for children and adults across Argyll & Bute, increase workload for remaining staff with potential impact on wellbeing. The HSCP has a predicted increase in demand for services and will require an increased focus on risk management and staff health and well being.

Other information – This may include reference to reports by other people / organisations relevant to the impacts you identified.

Advisory on a report to COGPP on the requirement for service prioritisation with reduced staff complement and requirement to progress redesign.

Consultation – What consultation / engagement have you carried out to inform the IIA? The proposal has been discussed internally with Heads of Service, Financial managers and HR Business Partner. It has been shared with the IJB and presented at Full Council as part of the overall council budget savings options. Managers are informed that vacancies will not be recruited to during the consultation period and have engaged with finance, HR, senior management and staff through the council process.

Gaps in evidence.

The proposed posts are vacancies and impact on service and staff is monitored on an ongoing basis. Evidence of difficulty to recruit and proposals around the mainstreaming of the ASP function may be helpful in mitigating the current ongoing risks.

Knock on affect.

Yes

Knock on affect details.

Reduction in flow across the whole system with impact on both preventative care, early intervention and public protection duties. Impact of staff welfare and wellbeing due to increased workload on the basis of current staff complement.

Monitoring – How will you monitor the impacts of your proposal.

Service performance monitoring and service impacts including staff welfare.

Fairer Scotland

Impact on service users

Service users	Impact
Mainland rural population	Negative
Island population	Negative
Low income	Negative
Low wealth	Negative
Material deprivation	Negative
Area deprivation	Negative
Socio-economic	Negative
Communities of place	Negative
Communities of interest	Negative

Impacts details.

Reduction in overall capacity to deliver regulatory services. Social Work service users may already be impacted by other factors which have identified a need for a regulatory services. Unpaid carers may be impacted in their ability to care or achieve care or respite

Impact on service deliverers

Service deliverers	Impact
Mainland rural population	Negative
Island population	Negative
Low income	Negative
Low wealth	Negative
Material deprivation	Negative
Area deprivation	Negative
Socio-economic	Negative
Communities of place	Negative
Communities of interest	Negative

Impacts details.

Primary operational delivery impact will be to the HSCP across the whole system as social work play a pivotal role in assessment, access to service and system flow so ripple effect to other professions. Impact on staff in respect of workload and wellbeing as regulatory workload increases.

Don't knows.

Due regard

It is anticipated that the proposed savings will potentially avoid any further measures such as voluntary redundancy. There is an opportunity to review ways of working within social work e.g. area teams, single points of access, use of customer service centre however despite carrying vacancies for a period and some hard to recruit posts it will in real terms reduce the staff complement available to undertake regulatory work.

Consumer duty

Does your proposal affect individuals, businesses or both?

Individuals

On the basis of your assessment, what are the likely impacts of your proposal?

Consumer	Impact
Choice	Don't Know
Fairness	Don't Know
Redress	No Impact
Safety	Negative
Information	Don't Know
Access	Negative
Representation	Don't Know

Positive impacts you have identified.

Negative impacts you have identified.

Social Work undertake a regulatory function on behalf of the council with the service delegated to the Integration Joint Board. The vacancies proposed impact on Children and Families and Adult services. In avoidance of redundancy, vacancies have been identified. Potential negative impacts are in access to a Social Worker in a timely manner.

What alternatives have you considered which can improve outcome for customers and/or reduce harm?

Alternatives are being considered to maximise capacity. This may require some restructuring however this is still in the scoping phase.

How have you reduced harm to consumers through the development of your proposal?

The removal of vacancies means there is no change to current workforce however this means that there will be no change to the current status quo without change of structure and process.

If you have not been able to reduce harm to your consumers, why not?

The HSCP note that they consider the reduction in service as to be not in line with national policy however are required to work within the budget available and would seek to explore different ways of working within the regulatory context.

Classification: OFFICIAL

Children rights and wellbeing

DIRECT and INDIRECT impacts on children and young people

Direct refers to policies/measures where children are the focus of the proposed changes.

Examples include childcare, school breakfast clubs, child protection, looked after children or youth sports activities.

Indirect refers to policies/measures that are not directly aimed at children but will have an impact on them.

Examples include local welfare support schemes, work preparation classes for parents, housing supply and design, policies on air quality, or local transport schemes.

Are there any aspects to your proposal which directly impact on children?

Yes

Direct impact on children details.
provision of regulatory services

Are the any aspects to your proposal which indirectly impact on children?

Yes

Indirect impact on children details.
provision of regulatory services impacting on the wider family and caring network

Children rights

This section asks you to think about how your proposal affects children's rights, first by considering the 'general principles' articles, and then by thinking about the rest of the articles.

Complete the options relating to the general principles.

You should check against these whether your proposal contributes in a positive or negative way to the rights of children, whether the impact will be neutral / won't have an impact at all, or whether you don't know what the impact will be.

Children rights	Impact
Article 2: (non-discrimination) The Convention applies to every child without	No Impact

Children rights	Impact
discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.	
Article 3: (best interests of the child) The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.	No Impact
Article 6: (life, survival and development) Every child has the right to life. The council must do all it can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.	Don't Know
Article 12 (respect for the views of the child) Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.	No Impact

In addition to the General Principles, you should consider whether any of the other articles are relevant to your proposal.

We have provided you with a list of UNCRC articles and descriptions of what they are. If you do not identify any of the other Articles as being of relevance, the assumption will be made that the proposal's impact on this right will be neutral.

Have you identified any other article as being relevant to your proposal?

No

Children's wellbeing

For each wellbeing indicator, review whether your proposal will result in an improvement to children's wellbeing or not. List of Wellbeing Indicators, with an explanation of what they are.

Children wellbeing	Impact
Safe	Don't Know
Healthy	Don't Know
Achieving	No Impact
Nurtured	Don't Know
Active	No Impact
Respected	No Impact
Responsible	No Impact
Included	No Impact

For the indicators where you believe your proposal will result in reduced children's wellbeing, explain what these reductions will be.

For the indicators where you believe your proposal will result in improved children's wellbeing, explain what these improvements will be.

If you have identified any indicators as being relevant to your proposal, but you do not know what the impacts will be, explain how you will monitor impact as your proposal progresses.

For the indicators of safe, nurtured and healthy we don't know the longer term impacts of a permanent reduced staff complement. We are unable to forecast the demand as would the potential for an ageing population however there may be impacts on caring families which impact on the ability of children to live a full life as they would without formal caring responsibilities.

Island Community

How many islands does your proposal affect?

All

Which islands are affected by your proposal?

Does your proposal impact on Island communities?

Island community	Impact
Demography	Negative
Economy	No Impact
Society	Don't Know

Describe any positive impacts you have identified.

Describe any negative impacts you have identified.

Social Work would continue with the current staff complement with no further recruitment to existing vacancies. this would maintain the service at current level with no option for addressing current capacity issues within the current operational model.

If you do not know what the impacts will be, you should reflect this in your monitoring arrangements for the proposal.

Describe how your proposal affects the islands communities you have identified differently from other communities including other islands communities and mainland areas.

We do not know how society or communities on islands would be distinctly impacted if the current complement is maintained with no further recruitment. Islands based services will not be directly affected by the vacancies on island but may be affected by mainland travelling adult social workers primarily from Oban.

How will you ensure your proposal delivers equivalent levels of service to the islands communities you have identified compared to other areas, including mainland areas? (In your answer you should include descriptions of: • alternatives you have considered to improve or mitigate the impacts identified, • how you have reduced negative impacts on islands communities, and • how your mitigations will vary between communities, if relevant.) .

We do not know how society or communities on islands would be distinctly impacted if the current complement is maintained with no further recruitment. Islands based services will not be directly affected by the vacancies on island but may be affected by mainland travelling adult social workers primarily from Oban.

If you have not been able to mitigate impacts, why not?

There will be impacts on capacity which may require to be addressed through process within the regulatory context.

Equality impact

Equality impact on service users

Service users	Impact
Disability	Negative
Race	No Impact
Marriage and civil partnership	No Impact
Religion or belief	No Impact
Sex	Negative
Pregnancy and maternity	No Impact
Age	Negative
Sexual orientation	No Impact
Gender reassignment	Don't Know

Impact on service users.

Social work by nature will work with people who have an identified need which requires their support which they are unable to resolve independently. Those with disability, older adults, children and wider families and we do not know any impacts for gender reassignment as have no evidence of impacts across the age range at present. Sex has been noted as a negative impacts as women tend to be disproportionately impacted through caring roles, this however would require to be monitored. Reduced staffing will reduce permanent longer term capacity under the current operational model.

Don't knows identified.

Pregnancy and maternity are noted as don't know as social work work closely with midwifery in this are potentially in maintaining child/family safety and wellbeing.

Equality impact on service deliverers

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Age	No Impact
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Gender reassignment	No Impact

Impact on service deliverers.

Primary operational delivery impact will be to the HSCP across the whole system as social work play a pivotal role in assessment, access to service and system flow so ripple effect to other professions. Impact on staff in respect of workload and wellbeing as regulatory workload increases.

Don't knows identified.

Due regard.

The proposal seeks to avoid redundancy of currently employed staff by reduction of capacity through existing vacancies.