

Council Leader Newsletter



The Improvement Service is the 'go to' organisation for Local Government improvement in Scotland.

The purpose of this newsletter is to update Council Leaders on key decisions made by the IS Board at its meeting in September 2024 and key business plan developments.

IS Board Update

Finance, Operations and HR Update

The Board noted that the management accounts for quarter 1 show estimated total funding secured for the year of £11,496,258, excluding investment income of £39,407. The Board approved our updated Redundancy Policy which reflects West Lothian Council's enhanced payment policy. The Board also considered the findings of our annual stakeholder survey, where we achieved an overall satisfaction rating of 88%.

Report from the IS Audit Committee

The Board noted that the Audit Committee met with the external auditor to review the Financial Statements, Audit Completion memorandum and Letter of Representation which were subsequently approved by the Board. No concerns or issues were raised by the external auditor, with the auditors issuing a clean audit report. The Audit Committee also agreed a revised scope for the 2024/25 internal audit on our Digital Public Services portfolio - the effectiveness of our procurement, contract management, risk management, control and governance processes for our Digital Public Services portfolio.

Light touch governance review

The Board noted the findings of a light touch governance review and agreed that an improvement plan will be presented at the December Board Meeting.

Strategic performance dashboards

The Board approved draft quarterly and annual IS performance dashboards which present finance, HR, communications and operational performance information.

IS Values

The Board noted the progress made to date to embed the IS values in the work of the organisation and to measure how effectively they are being delivered. The Board agreed to include a section in future board papers showing links to values and to also reflect at the end of each meeting that all business carried out reflects our values.

IS and Care Inspectorate Collaboration

Jackie Irvine, Chief Executive and Craig Morris, Head of Improvement Support at the Care Inspectorate joined the board meeting and noted their commitment to continue with the good collaboration taking place between the IS and the Care Inspectorate and confirmed that further areas of collaboration will continue to be reviewed.

Digital Public Services developments

The Board noted work undertaken by our Digital Public Services team with three early adopter councils (City of Edinburgh, Highland and Argyll and Bute) to develop a national visitor levy platform. They also considered the findings of a discovery report on the feasibility of developing a national platform for blue badge applications, which was undertaken in conjunction with 8 local authorities. Finally, the Board received a demonstration of work we have been undertaking with Young Scot to develop a 'show and go' mobile app.

Digital Identity Scotland

The Board received an update on work being undertaken by a sub-group of the Digital Identity Expert Group to undertake a componentry analysis of myaccount, which was an action agreed by the Joint Digital Strategy Leadership Board, led by Scottish Government and COSLA. The Board also noted that myaccount has achieved the milestone of having over 2.5 million account holders and that Stephanie Callaghan MSP tabled a parliamentary motion to mark and acknowledge this milestone on 22nd August 2024, which received cross-party support.

National Planning Improvement Hub

The Board noted progress on the [National Planning Improvement Hub](#).

Business development opportunities

The Board noted new grant income received since the Board meeting in June and potential business development opportunities which are being actively explored.

Key Business Plan Updates

Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Elected Member Briefing Notes

Webinar - Confidentiality: Councillors Code of Conduct

We hosted the above webinar with the Standards Commission for Scotland on 7th October for elected members on the topic of Confidentiality. The webinar supported members to understand:

- what is confidential information?
- when does confidentiality apply?
- why is this necessary?

Further webinars on the Councillors Code of Conduct will be held in the coming months.

Recently published briefing notes for elected members:

- [Early Learning and Childcare Sustainable Rates](#)
- [The Social Determinants of Mental Health](#)
- [How to be an effective community leader before, during and after an emergency](#)
- [Hate Crime and Public Order Act \(Scotland\)](#)

Solace/IS Transformation Programme

The [local government transformation programme](#) was launched by Solace Scotland and the Improvement Service at the end of 2022, and since that time we have been working together with partners and volunteers across local government and the wider public sector to put our ideas into action. You can [read more on progress](#). The implementation phase of the Programme is well underway with the project teams meeting on a regular basis. As a reminder these projects are:

- Officer-led whole system dialogue on public service reform.
- Collaboration within the local government sector on procurement.
- Analysis of local government's statutory and discretionary services.
- The full implementation of Crerar for Local Government.
- Development of a Digital To-Be State for Scottish Local Government.
- Identification of new digital shared services that could be delivered nationally or regionally.
- Active communities/participatory design.

Each project is being managed by a Project Sponsor and Project Director.

Capacity for the projects is being provided through the volunteers that have come forward from across the sector, supported by a Programme Management Office within the Improvement Service. Monthly progress updates on the transformation programme continue to be submitted to Solace branch meetings. Project Sponsors and Directors have also started to provide 'deep-dive' reports with a view to providing further detail on each of the projects.

Change Management Support

Our Change Management Team continues to provide all councils with support for operational and transformational change. Our latest Change Manager's Network event was held on Thursday 5 September which focused on the 'shape' of change and transformation resources. This session was a chance to hear from colleagues taking a centralised Programme Management Office approach and to compare how different areas are positioning, configuring and resourcing transformation/change.

Our next sessions are planned for:

Week commencing 21st October: Service Design in Local Government. This is a chance to hear from colleagues who are engaging with service design supports in different ways across local government.

Week commencing 2nd December: Local Government overview report - a Transformation lens. This session is a chance to engage with and unpack the Accounts Commission's local government overview report and look ahead to next year's thematic area.

We also provide direct support to councils where required, for example, we delivered an in-person workshop for a range of colleagues in one council on Supporting Effective Change.

Local Government Connect Network

We have now launched The Local Government Connect Network, which is designed to bring together professionals in the early stages of their local government career and promote collaboration across all 32 Scottish local authorities and local government partner organisations.

We held our first event in August to introduce members and mentors to the network, and this was also an opportunity to shape how the network develops. We have now established the committee that will oversee the running of the network and work is underway pairing mentors and mentees.

Organisational Development Local Authority Network

Our OD Network events bring colleagues together virtually every six weeks. Recent events included an Open Space session on 14 August, and a key topic session on 27 September which focused on the recently published [Scotland's Local Government Workforce Report 2024](#). 32 colleagues from 22 councils participated in the sessions.

Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)

We were delighted to welcome two new members to the ELC team who joined over the summer - Vicki Keirnan, ELC Workforce Manager and Rob Beal, ELC Service Design and Planning Manager.

Vicki will be supporting local authorities with workforce development and examining ways to address some of the thematic challenges faced by the sector, as well as exploring ways to effectively monitor the Real Living Wage payment to staff in the private, voluntary and independent sector.

Rob will lead on the Outcomes and Measurement Framework project, as well as working closely

with councils to help overcome challenges in increasing uptake of funded places for two-year-olds, ensuring these services reach the children and families who need them most.

Our Data and Intelligence Project Officer has recently led on the development of a Council Profiler. This draws together not only the most up to date information on local authorities but makes more easily available all historic data to identify trends and enhance understanding of the delivery of ELC.

In early September, the team facilitated an event hosted by the ADES Early Years Workforce and Quality Subgroup. It brought together over 20 representatives from local authorities' early years networks for a day of productive workshops, focused on enhancing the quality and future of the ELC profession.

Protecting People

Embedding trauma-informed and responsive organisations, systems and workforces: National Learning Event

On 11th September, we hosted a national learning event in partnership with the Scottish Government, COSLA and NES to share information about the progress and impact of embedding a trauma-informed and responsive approach across Scotland's services, systems and workforces. Attended by over 700 professionals, the event provided an opportunity to share the learning from a number of new reports published by the Improvement Service and the Scottish Government, as well as to hear directly from local authorities driving forward this work. More information about the learning from this event is available on the Improvement Service [website](#).

16 Days Toolkit and Calendar 2024

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international campaign from 25th November – 10th December. The IS supports the development of a toolkit of resources to add value to local 16 Days campaigns across Scotland to maximise the impact of the campaign. The updated 2024 Toolkit can be accessed and downloaded for free on the Improvement Service [website](#). This page also hosts a national calendar of events demonstrating the huge variety of work taking place across Scotland during the campaign. We will also host a series of webinars on key topics throughout the campaign, which will be open for registration soon.

Authentic Voice: Embedding Lived Experience Peer Networking Sessions

The [Authentic Voice Project](#) is led by SafeLives and the IS, and works with stakeholders across Scotland to understand what support is needed to embed lived experience of violence against women and girls (VAWG) safely and effectively into systems and services. Beginning in November 2024, the Authentic Voice project will host a series of online networking workshops. While the focus will primarily be on VAWG, the workshops will be relevant to anyone working across organisations/ policy areas to responding to violence, abuse and/or other experiences of trauma in Scotland.

This networking series will be open to:

- Professionals currently working to embed lived experience of VAWG and trauma in their organisation or policy area; and
- People interested in undertaking future work to embed lived experience of VAWG and trauma.

Child Poverty

Thanks to funding from the Scottish Rural Network, we have been able to recruit a Rural Child Poverty Project Officer who will be joining us in November. They will take forward the work on rural child poverty around mapping, how to share data to target families in need, further work into the rural cost of living and how to tackle the challenges of engaging with those with lived experience of poverty in local areas.

United National Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

We continue to support local authorities to develop their approach to meeting the requirements of the UNCRC for example, delivering UNCRC workshops to Orkney Island's Head Teachers, developing an afternoon workshop for Renfrewshire's Children's Services Partnership and delivering training for Renfrewshire Council's Elected Members. This month we are also working with Community Councils offering them insights into how to hear the voices of children and young people in their communities.

The Scottish Government have published statutory guidance and parts 2 and 3 of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 have now been published to support public authorities to interpret the legislation and their reporting requirements. The guidance and further resources are available at <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/8cf833a607b445209ecc11295288fd37>.

- [Statutory guidance on Part 2 of the UNCRC \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#)
- [Clarification of inherent obligations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#)
- [Sources to guide interpretation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#)
- [Statutory guidance on Part 3 of the UNCRC \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#)

The first meeting of the Children's Rights Budgeting Action Inquiry took place on 23 September, which brings together 6 local authorities (Falkirk, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire and Shetland Islands) who are interested in developing their approach to children's rights budgeting. The Inquiry is designed to allow participants to actively work on building their understanding of children's human rights and what approaches to implementing children's rights budgeting might work at local level. The approach is focused on learning and having access to ongoing support and time to reflect and share their experiences with others.

A seminar on Public Financing for Children's Rights (children's rights budgeting) will take place on 6th November to explore different international approaches to budgeting for children's rights and how these might work in a Scottish context. Directors of Finance have been invited to attend this event.

Shaping Places for Wellbeing

The Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme has been running since 2022 supporting seven local Project Towns to take a place-based approach across Scotland. The Project Towns were Alloa, Ayr, Clydebank, Dalkeith, Dunoon, Fraserburgh and Rutherglen.

The Programme aims to improve Scotland's wellbeing and reduce inequalities through changing

our collective approaches to the places where we live, work and play, enabling partnership-based, wide-ranging action at a local level, while addressing the health of our planet.

Whilst the Programme is running until December 2024, the resources on our website will remain and a reduced amount of support will continue to be available from the Planning for Place Programme within the Improvement Service. Our support sits at three levels:

1. [Website resources](#): We have a full range of resources and tools available on our website that illustrate the support we have given others, their impact and how to undertake the same process.
2. [Learning network](#): Where those leading change locally can come together to share learning. This includes 'Masterclass' webinars showcasing what is working for others and exploring the key elements of a place-based approach. We have already held one Masterclass with another 3 scheduled throughout October and November. You can catch up on the [first webinar](#) or find out more and sign up to the ones coming up.
3. [Bespoke support](#): We can provide a limited amount of bespoke support and training for anyone wanting more direct support.

Economic Outcomes

We have received funding from Scottish Government to recruit a Community Wealth Building Project Officer and interviews are taking place early October. The officer will support local authorities in their work on community wealth building, including supporting an officer network, mapping what is going on across all 32 local authorities and sharing this in one location and facilitating engagement and the sharing of best practice.

Employability Partnership - No One Left Behind (NOLB)

The priority this quarter has been completing and publishing the [Employability Strategic Plan 2024 – 2027](#). The plan was launched by Tom Arthur MSP and Councillor Maureen Chalmers, the COSLA Community Wellbeing Spokesperson, at an event in South Lanarkshire on 13th September.

The main priorities of the Strategic Plan, which has been jointly developed by Scottish and Local Government, are:

- Continuing to improve the employability system
- Raising awareness and uptake of employability support
- Tackling child poverty by increasing parental income from employment
- Supporting disabled people and those with a long-term health condition
- Delivering jointly with wider public services.

Two emerging priorities – Working with employers to improve outcomes and Just transition to net zero – will further develop over the life of the plan. Working groups are being set up to support the delivery of the 25 priority actions contained within the plan.

Scottish Climate intelligence Service

The Scottish Climate Intelligence Service was officially launched online on Thursday 26 September, with an opportunity for attendees to hear what the service is, what it will do for local authorities in Scotland and to see how the ClimateView platform which underpins the service works to help

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action planning to reduce carbon emissions. The event was recorded and is available via the [SCIS website](#) and on the [SCIS LinkedIn feed](#).

There are now 3 Local Leads in place in the Capacity Building Team who are engaging with their Councils to identify their support needs. The first 'How to' ClimateView platform user sessions for the SCIS have taken place, with 77 officers attending and all local authorities represented. All authorities now have their 'sandbox' set up and there are 71 accounts active to assist in learning how to use the system.

Public Service Reform

The Public Service Reform team continues to work with councils on their pathfinder projects on tackling child poverty. We will be engaging with the five new 'fairer futures partnerships' to discuss how we can support their work.

The development of Performance Management Frameworks has been a focus of the team in recent weeks, working alongside the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership and North Lanarkshire Council to guide co-design sessions with partners. These Frameworks look to evidence how changed approaches and partnership working in the short term are contributing to impact on long term outcomes on child poverty and family wellbeing.

Community Planning

Following the June meeting of the Scottish Community Planning Network (SCPN), work has been underway to set out plans to strengthen the offer of support available out with the well-established quarterly meetings. This includes the addition of "Spotlight Sessions"- topic specific online workshops focussed on hearing directly from Community Planning Partnerships (CPP's) and sharing best practice, as well as the introduction of more informal regional and thematic working groups to support development.

Identification and sharing of best practice has been another focus, with a LOIP review having been completed in June to provide a clearer picture of what the main priorities are nationally and begin to pinpoint best practice examples that could be used for sharing of learning. Two case studies are currently being written and are on track to be ready for wider circulation before the end of the year, with ongoing work planned to begin to look further into the impact Community Planning is having nationally.

Digital Public Services

mygovscot myaccount

mygovscot myaccount has been hitting some big milestones lately. The platform now has over 2.5 million account holders which means that over 50% of the eligible Scottish population have now signed up for a mygovscot myaccount. 2024 also marks ten years of mygovscot myaccount; it has come a long way since its launch in 2014. The platform continues to go from strength to strength as we add more features and functionality.

We have recently added a new security feature to mygovscot myaccount– passkeys. Passkeys will ensure the mygovscot myaccount user experience is familiar and consistent. A simple verification of their fingerprint or face, or a device PIN - the same action that consumers take multiple times each day to unlock their mobile phones, tablets or other devices - will now provide easy and secure access to mygovscot myaccount.

This sign-in method is more secure than the traditional username and password and is also easier for users. Using the passkey option will reduce the number of forgotten password enquiries, helping to maintain access to mygovscot myaccount over time. Account holders can now set up their passkey via the option on the existing mygovscot myaccount sign in page.

Right to Work powered by mygovscot myaccount

East Ayrshire Council has recently onboarded the Right to Work (RtW) service. RtW is powered by mygovscot myaccount. It's also live with COSLA, the Improvement Service and Robert Gordon University.

Using a UK or Irish Passport, or Yoti app, an applicant will receive an email asking them to sign into the Right To Work Identity Verification Service. Their identity will be verified using the Yoti Identity Service. Council agents can download proof of the right to work checks and attach it to the candidate's HR file.

parentsportal.scot

We have recently onboarded the 20th local authority to parentsportal.scot with others currently going through the onboarding process. The service is now available in 1,483 schools, with over 228K registered parental subscribers securely linked to over 275K approved pupils, with over 54K NEC Cards (to children aged between 5-10) issued via the parentsportal.scot platform.

Data and Intelligence

One Scotland Gazetteer

The Gazetteer team is now offering Council IT and Procurement departments support to help establish data governance practices around use of the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN). The offer involves reviewing current data flows and usage and advising where efficiencies can be implemented. This shall assist with streamlining digital service provision, while preventing duplication of effort and resource inefficiency.

We are also sharing information sources with data custodians that will be used to underpin work relating to identifying dangerous and tall buildings. The information will not only be available to local authorities but will also be used by the Scottish Government as well as the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service via the One Scotland Gazetteer; once again, utilising the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) to link critical information sources across the Scottish public sector.

Spatial Hub

Heads of Planning Scotland recently signed a letter of support for the Spatial Hub to begin to host all necessary local government and third-party planning constraints datasets. This relates to the information that enables planners to make informed decisions about what should be allowed to be built where and includes information indicating the location of utility installations, environmental protection areas and sites of contamination. This further establishes the Spatial Hub as the planning and environment evidence base for Scotland and ensures that this important data is hosted in a single place and is able to be efficiently used and analysed by all of Scotland's planning community in the decision-making process.

Digital Planning

We have produced interactive maps and analysis to support three planning authorities in visualising their housing land supply (Aberdeen City, North Lanarkshire and Clackmannanshire). This is a way to make the information easier to understand and interact with, both for the public, Councillors and planners. We have also enhanced the national planning application dataset to make it more accessible to users.

tellmescotland.gov.uk

We have committed to continued improvement to the tellmescotland site, including adding analytics so local authorities can monitor how many views their public notices receive. We are also reaching out to local authorities who do not fully utilise tellmescotland for all notice types, to offer them training and access, so that they can publish a wider range of public notices.

Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF)

The [LGBF Dashboard](#) now publishes data releases on a monthly basis, to provide Councils with access to more timely data. We are continuing to engage with councils to explore how the LGBF Dashboard can be used and adapted to support local approaches to performance reporting, including the development of bespoke dashboards and a basket of priority LGBF indicators aligned to local council plans, for example.

The LGBF Board are continuing to evolve the suite of LGBF measures to reflect policy priorities which are of critical importance to local government, including climate change and financial sustainability. We are working with the Directors of Finance to explore which areas of financial sustainability require a stronger focus within the LGBF, and whether there would, for example, be value in including additional measures which focus on areas such as the use of reserves to balance budgets, and the percentage of savings achieved. We are also working with the Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN) to further expand the suite of Climate measures within the LGBF to include more tightly scoped and directly controllable measures of emissions which will help to directly track the progress of Councils. We have already added measures on Electricity, Transport and Natural Gas Emissions and are undertaking development work with SSN to improve the underpinning data quality of the Corporate and Waste Emissions indicators to allow future inclusion.

Following completion of the first pilot of our new Peer Collaborative Improvement approach, we are currently evaluating the benefits provided by this approach, and considering how we might refine and improve the methodology used, before identifying next steps in terms of further pilots and wider roll out. The first pilot focussed on the Scottish Welfare Fund, and involved colleagues from Falkirk, Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire and Midlothian councils to test this new approach. COSLA colleagues were also involved and provided a key role in linking local practice to the development of national policy.

Peer Collaborative Improvement is a key element of the LGBF Board's commitment to develop and deliver a more assertive approach to sector-led performance improvement, with LGBF positioned as a key cornerstone, and has received support from the IS Board, Solace and COSLA Leaders. As such, peer collaborative improvement forms a central strand of the Scottish Local Government Assurance and Improvement Framework (SLGAIF) which has been developed by the IS and COSLA to provide robust evidence of the expansive landscape of governance, reporting, performance improvement, audit and scrutiny which currently relates to local government.

Local Government Data Platform

We are in Phase 2 of this ambitious data transformation project, and a delivery plan for this phase has been approved by the LG Data Platform Oversight Group. The Oversight Group is co-chaired by Louise Long, Solace and Jane O'Donnell, COSLA, and involves the Digital Office for Scottish Local Government, IS, Public Health Scotland and Scottish Government. Phase 2 of this project focusses on the necessary arrangements to deliver simplification and streamlining of the reporting landscape, as well as delivering improved co-ordination of the data collection that continues to be necessary for assurance purposes, reducing the effort for manual data collection and improving the re-use of data collected. The key deliverables are:

1. Improved governance and reductions in the reporting landscape.
2. Improved data standards to enhance the quality and re-use of data provided.
3. Improved orchestration of data returns using scheduled workflows to create improved co-ordination.
4. Greater automation of data collection and distribution, by running a proof-of-concept with selected returns to establish capacity to support further automation.
5. Improved access and re-use of data, via the development of a business intelligence tool which provides data exploration, visualization and sharing features.

Regular progress reports will be considered by the Oversight Group who meet bi-monthly, and a final Phase 2 report on key findings and next steps will be brought back to Solace and COSLA Leaders later in 2024.

Community Planning & Community Planning Improvement Board (CPIB)

The latest [CPIB Newsletter](#) provides an update on the CPIB's work to provide leadership and improvement support for community planning in Scotland, and to generate valuable evidence-based solutions to the significant challenges facing communities and local partnerships. This newsletter has been circulated to the Chairs of all CPP Boards across Scotland as well as Community Planning partner organisations.

Across the next 12 months, the CPIB will consider the vision, strategy and set of actions needed nationally, to provide further support to CPPs as they take local action to tackle deep-rooted inequalities and improve wellbeing. Public service reform will be central to this, and the CPIB will explore the opportunities for community planning partners and Community Planning as a way of working to help accelerate the reform that we need to see to deliver on the preventative shift as outlined by Christie.

As a starting point, and building on work undertaken to date, the CPIB Action Plan outlines the commitment of CPIB members to work together to deliver practical action to drive forward change at a local level. The plan includes the following priorities:

1. To support implementation of new and existing local models relating to Third Sector funding.
2. To work with Scotland Excel to bring greater co-ordination in procurement in relation to Climate Action.
3. To support co-ordination and streamlining of Climate funding at a local level.
4. To encourage greater focus of City Deal money on Climate Change.
5. To promote good practice & learning on local progress in data sharing in relation to poverty, including Child Poverty.
6. To develop national principles on data sharing and risk levels.
7. To encourage partners to recognise, resource and sustain the places (inc. 3rd Sector) where nurturing relationships happen to improve wellbeing outcomes for children and young people.
8. To encourage CPPs to put in place mechanisms for collective prioritisation and decision-making in relation to allocating funding in relation to wellbeing for children and young people.

There are, however, key areas where national action is essential and the Chair of the CPIB (Greg Colgan, Chief Executive, Dundee City Council) continues to engage with national politicians and policy makers to take these forward. These asks include:

1. To address the fragmentation of the climate funding landscape by consolidating and aligning national budgets and funding streams.
2. To secure sustainable funding for the third sector, recognising their instrumental role in the development and delivery of early intervention offers and relationship-based alternatives to statutory service delivery, including in key areas such as whole family wellbeing approaches.
3. To give greater emphasis to the provision of flexible and multi-year funding to enable available resources to be better used in ways that reflect priorities for communities.
4. To reduce reporting requirements, including in relation to Child Poverty Action Reports.

Further updates, newsletters and Board papers are available on the [CPIB website](#), where colleagues can access further detail on the evidence gathered by the CPIB and on the engagement taking place with local and national partners.

Research

We are continuing to work on a number of projects as part of our research plan. Some highlights and publications include:

- [A report](#) prepared for the Scottish Government exploring the workforce's views and attitudes to

trauma and the National Trauma Transformation Programme, has now been published.

- We have carried out a “Business Baseline” survey on behalf of Business Gateway. Over 600 business owners in Scotland participated in the research. Early results indicate high levels of confidence in business prospects (74%), but there are also significant challenges, with 61% saying they are likely to require business support in the coming year. A publication with the full results will be released later this year.
- We supported the analysis of the SPDS/Solace/IS [report on workforce planning](#), which was published at the SOLACE Conference in September.
- We prepared and published a new report on [demographic change and its impact](#).
- The team successfully bid with West Lothian Council for funding through the Child Poverty Accelerator Fund. This will allow us to work to develop our approach to modelling unmet need by using council-held and publicly available data.
- We carried out analysis of IS stakeholder survey results. These show 88% of respondents were satisfied with IS products and services and 83% said the IS has a positive impact on their work

Our [research and analysis offer](#) has been launched, with the team able to deliver research projects on a cost recovery basis.

Evaluation

We are currently working on our third evaluation report on the Place Based Investment Programme - Direct Grants. The report will contain evidence of the impact created by the funding and includes case studies from Glasgow City, Aberdeenshire and West Lothian Councils. It will also seek to highlight the potential effect of discontinuation of the funding.

The [findings from the initial evaluation](#) of the Welfare Advice and Health Partnerships ‘Test and Learn Programme’ funded by Scottish Government were presented at an event in COSLA in September.

This model of delivering advice services is particularly effective in engaging with those individuals who do not traditionally use advice services- almost 90% had not previously used advice services. The findings from this evaluation show that over 16,000 individuals used the service during the ‘test-and-learn’ period, making financial gains of £23 million.

A Social Return on Investment Analysis has been carried out on Cosy Kingdom - a free and impartial energy and debt advice service available to all tenants and homeowners across Fife. We will also be working with Dundee City Council to carry out social value analysis of their approach to delivering advice services in primary care and school settings.

Evaluation support is currently being provided to Fife and North Lanarkshire Councils.

Further information

If you have any questions on this information update or would like further information, please contact Sarah Gadsden, Chief Executive at sarah.gadsden@improvementservice.org.uk or 07901 513186. We hope you find the update helpful and would welcome your feedback.