

## **The Highland Council**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee** held **remotely** on Wednesday, 10 February 2021 at 10.30am.

### **Present:**

Mrs J Barclay  
Mr B Boyd  
Mrs I Campbell  
Mrs M Cockburn  
Mrs M Davidson  
Mr J Finlayson  
Mr A Jarvie  
Mr D Louden

Mr W Mackay  
Mrs I Mackenzie  
Mrs L Munro  
Mrs M Paterson  
Mr D Rixson  
Mr K Rosie  
Mr C Smith  
Miss N Sinclair

### **Non Members also present:**

Mr I Ramon  
Mrs T Robertson

Mr D Macpherson  
Mrs A MacLean

### **Participating Officials:**

Mrs D Manson, Chief Executive  
Ms F Duncan, Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care and Chief Social Work Officer  
Ms F Malcolm, Interim Head of Integration Adult Social Care, Health and Social Care  
Mr I Kyle, Head of Improvement and Performance, Health and Social Care  
Mr G MacLachlan, Area Care & Learning Manager, Health and Social Care  
Ms J Jennett, Head of Service (Children YP & Fam), Health and Social Care  
Ms D Munro, Lead Officer (Child Prot. Committee), Health and Social Care  
Mr B Porter, Head of Support Services, Health and Social Care  
Mr M Mitchell, Service Finance Manager, Resources and Finance  
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance  
Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator, Performance and Governance  
Ms M Zavarella, Committee Administrator, Performance and Governance

**An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council.  
All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to Committee.**

**Linda Munro in the Chair**

### **Preliminaries**

#### **Covid-19 Deaths in the Highland**

The Committee sent their deepest condolences to the families and carers of the people in Highland who had sadly lost their lives to Covid-19, and special tribute was paid to Sue Roddick, who had worked for the Council's Social Work service for many years, and was greatly missed by all.

## **New ECO Health and Social Care**

Fiona Duncan was welcomed to her first Committee in her role as ECO, and she gave a brief summary of her experience and plans for her role.

The Committee **NOTED** the preliminaries.

### **1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan**

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Mrs D Mackay and Ms E Roddick.

### **2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

The Committee **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Item 9 – Mr A Jarvie and Ms L Munro (non-financial)

Ms L Munro declared a general financial interest as a Self-directed Support Specialist but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her from taking part in the meeting.

#### **Additional Item: Good News**

At the request of the Chair, the Committee **AGREED** to take this additional item and the Committee **NOTED** the following items of good news:

- a Financial Inclusion Project was addressing the high level of unclaimed benefits by families with young children;
- there had been a delivery of 617 devices through the Connecting Scotland scheme to ensure the most vulnerable children, young people and families were not digitally excluded;
- Helen Gilpin, the Lead Nurse for Looked After and Care Experienced Young People, had been accepted onto the Queens Nursing Institute for Scotland Programme for a Queen's Nurse Award; and
- Kirstie-Ann Duncan, a care experienced young person, had successfully completed a business course and was now attending the City of Glasgow college studying law. At the College Development Network annual awards, held on the 3 of December 2020, she won the student of the year award.

The Committee **AGREED** to provide further information to Mr J Finlayson on Helen Gilpin, Lead Nurse for Looked After and Care Experienced Young People.

### **3. Presentation: Public Health Vaccination Programme, Dr Tim Allison, Director of Public Health and Policy, NHS Highland Taisbeanadh: Prògram Banachdachaidh Slàinte a' Phobaill, Dr Tim Allison, Stiùiriche Slàinte a' Phobaill is Poileasaidh, NHS na Gàidhealtachd**

Dr Allison's presentation included Covid-19 case statistics, including for the new variant; test & trace issues; progress with the vaccination programme, including in care homes and the housebound; and targets for completion of the different vaccination priority groups.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- although Highland had the lowest Covid-19 case rate on mainland Scotland, there was no room for complacency, as evidenced by recent outbreaks;
- information was sought and provided on the availability of test & trace staff in future and it was explained that while there were now staff on fixed term contracts, there was also some reserve capacity of trained people;
- the vaccination of residents over the age of 50 in Knoydart was appreciated;
- it was anticipated that when schools re-opened there would be an increased demand for testing, and clarification was sought and provided in relation to the location of Covid-19 priority post-boxes for the return of home tests. Attention was drawn to the pilot for the use of fire stations for testing and to the courier service offered to people unable to get to a priority post box, either community transport or private courier services;
- the 'jabs for cabs' scheme, which involved taxis providing safe transport for vulnerable or elderly patients to attend vaccination appointments, was welcomed and it was suggested community funding might be used to help with this;
- information was sought on reported glitches in the home testing system on Skye and Dr Allison would check this had been resolved;
- attention was drawn to the importance of providing essential information to parents on how to administer a home test to a child, with reference to the discomfort it could cause to obtain an adequate sample for testing. A summary of the different types of test was provided (PCR and lateral flow);
- gratitude was expressed to staff in Care Homes given the distress and trauma they had experienced along with the families of elderly patients who had lost their lives to Covid-19;
- the public should continue to attend their GP for non-Covid-19 medical issues and it was hoped that relief could be provided to GP practices providing vaccinations to allow them to continue with their usual work. It was explained that the responsibility for the vaccination roll-out lay with the Health Board and if GPs were unable to meet the requirements, the Health Board would be obliged to source an alternative mechanism, something that in remote and rural Highland would be challenging. Highland, unlike most of Scotland, was following a GP-led model for the vaccination roll-out;
- clarification was sought and provided on the priority groups for vaccination, which had been decided by the Scottish Government;
- in relation to people being made aware of their priority for vaccination and their level of clinical vulnerability, this was being undertaken by GP practices;
- it was suggested that some people might not be self-administering the home Covid-19 test accurately. However, it was explained that it could be especially challenging in some areas for tests to be undertaken by a health professional, especially for people unable to leave their home; and
- Members paid tribute to the families who had lost people to Covid-19 and to the health and social care staff who had helped to care for them.

The Committee **NOTED** the update on the Covid Vaccination Programme.

**4. Presentation: The Promise, Fiona Duncan, ECO for Health and Social Care**  
**Taisbeanadh: An Gealladh, Fiona Duncan, Àrd-Oifigear Gnìomhach airson Slàinte agus Cùram Sòisealta**

The Promise, Scotland's ambition for children and young people: "We grow up loved, safe, and respected so that we realise our full potential."

The presentation covered how The Promise had been put together between February 2017 and February 2020, driven by those with lived experience of the care system. A summary was provided of the seven reports that had been produced and the five foundations, as well as budget issues and plans for the future, which included honest assessment, collaboration with Community Planning Partnerships, keeping the promise as corporate parents, partnership working and building networks.

Discussion of The Promise was taken as part of Item 5.

The Committee **AGREED** to give their commitment to helping all vulnerable children to feel loved and have the childhood they deserved.

## 5. Corporate Parenting Board and The Promise Bòrd Pàrantachd Chorporra agus An Gealladh

There had been circulated Report No HSCW/01/21 dated 25 January 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion of this Item and Item 4, the following issues were considered:

- the Chair welcomed the report and presentation as a radical new way of working with the Community Planning partners to realise the ambitions for Looked After children. She acknowledged the ten-year implementation plan but urged prompt action and change;
- officials were thanked for their work on the report and reference was made to the importance of the five foundations and to the focus on family relationships and giving children a safe and happy childhood;
- attention was drawn to the challenges being faced by some Community Planning Partnerships, with some meeting infrequently, and it was felt this must be addressed and properly resourced, with appropriate and clear leadership, and up to date locality plans. Regular updates would be provided to the committee;
- pupil engagement with online schooling varied considerably and was of concern, as was the lack of day care for children with special needs;
- the importance of action, appropriate timelines and effective governance was highlighted, along with engagement with partners on key elements of transformation;
- attention was drawn to the importance of community action to protect vulnerable children, and preventative spend to achieve this;
- the positive impact of having Children's Champions at area-level was highlighted and should be reinstated; and
- Members were reminded of training on 26 February 2021 at 11.30am on 'Who Cares, Scotland' and corporate parenting.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the findings of the Independent Care Review and the seven output reports;
- ii. **NOTED** the challenges and the assessment of where we were now, and the cross-cutting collaborative work needed to do, to achieve the aspirations of The Promise;
- iii. **NOTED** the Corporate Parenting Board's approach to improving outcomes for Care Experienced Children, Young People and Care Leavers;
- iv. **NOTED** the priorities identified by the Corporate Parenting Board; and
- v. **AGREED** a report be presented to the Committee on 19 May 2021, if the information was available by then, on progress with expanding the Children's Champion project.

## 6. Revenue Budget Monitoring 3rd Quarter 2020/21 Sgrùdadh Buidseit Teachd-a-steach Ràith 3 2020/21

There had been circulated Report No HSCW/02/21 dated 26 January 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- the planned reprofiling of the budget for 2021-22 was welcomed, with particular reference to the budget for out-of-authority care and temporary agency spend;
- in response to queries about Social Worker vacancies, a summary was provided of recent successful campaigns to recruit new and experienced Social Workers;
- in response to a query about the reported £1.2m staff costs (by subjective) in Annex 1 of the report, a breakdown of this would be provided to Mr Rixson;
- concern was expressed in relation to underspends on family teams, especially in relation to Self-Directed Support (SDS). It was explained that this was largely because most residential and respite care facilities were closed due to Covid-19 restrictions, and alternative services tended to cost less. A breakdown of the SDS figures for 2019-2020 excluding residential and respite care was requested and reference was made to Scottish Government guidance on alternative SDS expenditure, with many requests having been approved and much work being undertaken to source alternatives for families. A report on SDS was planned for the Committee in May 2021. It was important to also provide support to service providers to ensure they were still in operation once Covid-19 restrictions had been lifted; and
- an explanation was sought and provided on the £2.5m expenditure that was directly attributable to Covid-19 issues, and how this had been reported;

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the revenue budget outturn forecast for the year; and
- ii. **NOTED** the mitigating action, and ongoing risks and uncertainties arising from Covid19 in relation to these forecasts;
- iii. **AGREED** to provide further information on the £1.2m of staff costs (by subjective) reported in Annex 1 of the report to Mr Rixson; and
- iv. **AGREED** to provide to the Committee a breakdown of expenditure on Self-directed Support for 2019-20, showing how much was spent on residential and respite care and how much on other expenditure.

## 7. Partnership Arrangements with NHS Highland – Update Ullachaidhean Com-pàirteachais le NHS na Gàidhealtachd – Fios às Ùr

There had been circulated Report No HSCW/03/21 dated 5 January 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following main issues were considered:-

- it was confirmed that it was achievable for the revised Integration Scheme to be agreed prior to the new financial year, and it is intended that the partnership review and framework be considered for Member scrutiny at the Joint Monitoring Committee on 8 March 2021, the meeting of the Highland Council on 25 March 2021, and the NHS Highland Board;
- it was confirmed that there would be consultation on the revised scheme with partner groups and relevant organisations;

- clarification was sought, and provided, that the revised scheme was being prepared on the basis of the Lead Agency Model;
- with regard to Member scrutiny for performance of adult social care services delivered, it was explained that given the revised governance of the Council the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee would be the appropriate forum for meaningful scrutiny; and
- it was further clarified that extensive meetings had occurred regarding the scheme with the Chief Executives, Directors of Finance, Strategic Lead Officers and Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care (and equivalent) from both the Highland Council and NHS Highland. In addition, there was an national meeting of Group Leaders and Chief Executives occurring across Scotland at 4pm on 10 February 2021 in light of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland report and it was agreed that this report would be circulated to Members of the Committee and updates provided to all Members thereafter.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. and **APPROVED** the current position and the proposed approach.
- ii. the partnership review and framework be considered for scrutiny at the Joint Monitoring Committee on 8 March 2021, the meeting of the Highland Council on 25 March 2021 and the NSHS Board on 30 March 2021; and
- iii. that a copy of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland would be circulated.

## 8. **Vulnerable Children Within the Highlands** **Clann So-leònte Taobh A-Staigh Na Gàidhealtachd**

There had been circulated Report No HSCW/04/21 dated 25 January 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following main issues were considered:-

- Members welcomed the report, commenting that it was impactful and raised important questions;
- despite some worry about children slipping through the care net, the report brought reassurance that the situation was being well managed, and it would be a relief to parents and children alike when pupils returned to school;
- the report demonstrated a range of issues for both the children and parents that had to be addressed and it was important to be alert to them and act appropriately. It was therefore proposed that funding be provided to support an early intervention programme to enable a proactive service for children and families. However, it was highlighted that the report recommended further investigation and interrogation of the data and it was felt that this should be undertaken first and the outcome of this would then inform the level resource required. The Chair therefore proposed that officers undertake a review of early intervention and prevention post Covid-19 and a report be brought back to the next Committee; and
- it was commented that reaching out to all vulnerable children was crucial in order to have their voices heard as traditional streams were not necessarily effective.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** contents of the report;

- ii. **NOTED** challenges of where we were now, and the proposals for interrogating the data and information. Firstly, to ascertain if an early intervention/prevention team was required or appropriate. Second, to assess whether our systems (across all partners) were robust so that any hidden harms could be identified, and to intervene appropriately; and
- iii. **AGREED** a review be undertaken of early intervention and prevention in response to Covid and the outcome reported to the next meeting on 19 May 2021.

**9. Annual Chief Social Work Officer Report 2019-2020**  
**Aithisg Bhliadhnaì Àrd-Oifigear Obair Shòisealta 2019-2020**

**Declarations of Interest – Mr A Jarvie and Ms L Munro declared non-financial interests in this item as Directors of High Life Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that the interest did not preclude their involvement in discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No HSCW/05/21 dated 25 January 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following main issues were considered:-

- the report was welcomed by Members;
- staff efforts in managing increased caseloads as a result of rising referrals was commended;
- clarification was sought, and provided, that increasing referrals could be due to a variety of reasons including legislation changes around domestic abuse and increased alertness of community partners as a result of training delivered. It was viewed positively that the trend suggested increased awareness which allowed for early intervention;
- financial difficulties were a major cause of crisis in many families and it was encouraged that the Council lobby for the universal credit uplift of £20 to continue as this helped families manage additional pressure that came with Covid-19. In response, the Leader of the Council suggested a meeting be convened with herself, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, Head of Revenues and Customer Services, Executive Chief Officer (Health, Social Care and Wellbeing) and Member representatives from each political party to discuss drafting a letter to both governments for the continued support of the £20 Universal Credit uplift and other support needs if identified;
- Care at Home staff had been working tirelessly throughout the pandemic and deserved distinct credit for their commitment, particularly in the early stages when there were PPE shortages;
- it was emphasised that planning partnerships were built into the whole system and it was important to pay attention to this;
- regarding community payback orders, many of the statistics showed great success though the only outlier was the acquisition of new skills. It was queried and further information was provided on the feasibility of building the acquisition of new skills into the system as a whole;
- the recruitment of three new Mental Health Officer posts was welcomed but further information was sought and provided on whether this would be sufficient to allow the significant backlog to be managed;
- it was highlighted that with respect to the fragmentation cause by homeworking, face to face contact was invaluable;

- the increase in fees for foster carers, which allowed better use of resources and increased ability to meet the needs of the child, was welcomed and it was confirmed that this applied to the review that had been undertaken in 2020;
- There would be additional financial pressures on budgets particularly arising from lockdown and it was queried whether there were similar levels of discussion of the commissioned children's services to that undertaken in respect of the Adult Social Care commissioned services;
- it was suggested by the Leader of the Council that a Member Briefing take place on the Independent Review of Adult Social Care report;
- in response to a statement about the potential for £68,000 additional funding, it was agreed that the Head of Service (Children, Young People and Families) would follow up to determine if Highland would be receiving additional funding for alcohol and drug rehabilitation treatment;
- a request was made for updated statistical data be brought back to the Committee in the future; and
- in response to a statement, it was highlighted that in order to address the financial pressure on the Service and to better address the needs of children and families as a whole it was necessary to shift the focus towards redelivery, redesign and restructuring of services. This would bring a focus towards early intervention for the most vulnerable in hopes to increase quality of life and provide services that had wider reach and were more productive.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the issues raised in the annual report;
- NOTED** the impact that COVID-19 had on the population and the ability of services to adapt to the challenges that this had brought in relation to the delivery of statutory social work services;
- AGREED** a meeting take place with the Leader of the Council, Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, Head of Revenues and Customer Services, Executive Chief Officer (Health, Social Care and Wellbeing) and Member representatives from each political party to discuss writing a letter for the continued support of the £20 Universal Credit uplift; and
- AGREED** further information be provided to Mrs I Mackenzie on the additional funding (£68,000) for alcohol and drug rehabilitation treatment.

## 10. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The following Minutes were circulated and **NOTED**:-

- Highland Child Protection Committee held on 3 September 2020;
- Highland Violence Against Women Partnership Group held on 19 October 2020; and
- Highland Community Justice Partnership held on 4 November 2020.

The meeting ended at 1.00pm.