

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee** held **remotely** on Thursday 10 February 2022 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mrs J Barclay
Mr B Boyd
Mrs M Cockburn
Mrs M Davidson
Mr J Finlayson
Mr D Fraser
Mr A Jarvie

Mr D Louden
Mr W Mackay
Mrs I MacKenzie
Mrs L Munro
Mrs M Paterson
Mr D Rixson
Mr K Rosie

Non Members also present:

Mrs M Davidson
Ms S Fanet
Mr A Henderson
Mrs E McAllister

Mr D Mackay
Mr D Macpherson
Mrs T Robertson

Participating Officials:

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
Ms D Munro, Lead Officer, Child Protection
Mr I Kyle, Head of Improvement and Performance, Health and Social Care
Ms J Park, Interim Head of Health, Health and Social Care
Mr B Porter, Head of Support Services, Health and Social Care
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance
Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator, Performance and Governance

Also in Attendance:

Mr S Steer, Director of Adult Social Care, NHS Highland
Ms A Johnstone, Interim Head of Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Drug & Alcohol Recovery Services, NHS Highland
Ms R Connolly, Connecting Carers
Ms G Newman, Highland Children's Forum
Ms J Douglas, Care and Learning Alliance

**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, except for Items 7 and 12, when Mr D Fraser was in the Chair.

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Mrs D Mackay, Ms E Roddick and Mr C Smith.

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

Mrs L Munro – Items 7 and 12.

**3. Good News
Deagh Naidheachdan**

The Committee **NOTED** the Good News on the following topics:

- the Lead Nurse for Care Experienced Children and Young People, Helen Gilpin, had been presented with the Queen’s Nurse award;
- Financial Inclusion Project - One of the Associate Lead Nurses, Toni Barker and her health visiting improvement project team had been successful in gaining two national improvement awards through the Children’s Young People Improvement collaborative; and
- to help drive forward the Promise within Highlands, Carrie McLaughlan had been recruited to the post of Promise Programme Manager.

The Committee thanked Mrs Munro for her excellent leadership, noting that she was not standing in the forthcoming election. Officers were also thanked for their exemplary work dealing with the many challenges that had been faced during this Council’s term. The importance of future training for Committee Members was emphasised.

**4. Mental Health and Wellbeing Presentation
Taisbeanadh air Slàinte Inntinn agus Soirbheas**

A presentation was provided by Arlene Johnstone, Interim Head of Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Drug & Alcohol Recovery Services, NHS Highland on the following topics:

- Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Drug & Alcohol Services
- Mental health and Mental Illness
- Mental Wellbeing
- Secondary Mental Health Services
- Distress and Suicide
- Mental Health Services – what is being done

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- the aim for early intervention and partnership working was welcomed, and the definitions of mental health and mental illness were useful;
- information was sought and provided on the referral and triage processes for mental health assessments;

- the Highland geography was especially challenging for delivering mental health services, and the use of Near Me, while not ideal, was helpful for some remote and rural areas where a timely personal interaction was not possible;
- the presentation would be emailed to Members;
- it was important to publicise the information provided in the presentation and this would be taken forward outwith the meeting;
- information was sought and provided on four key issues, as follows:
 - community contacts for drug and alcohol issues - it was suggested the manager of the Drug and Alcohol team be contacted to provide information on their services, with a possible future submission to the Committee;
 - Children's Services issues were dealt with by the CAMHs Service and was also covered later on the agenda;
 - skill shortages and upskilling progress – this was an ongoing concern, with particular issues recruiting mental health nurses and consultant psychiatrists; and
 - coordination of work with the third sector – a summary was provided of ongoing partnership work and the mental health strategy that was due to be ready in September 2022;
- cuts to universal credit, and increases to national insurance, fuel and food prices were likely to impact people's mental health and would require additional resources;
- community centres and the groups using them could be a useful route to engaging with the community on mental health issues, and tied in with the place-based approach to service delivery. More thought was required on how to reach people in remote and rural locations; and
- the problems of social media mis-use were highlighted, especially for young people.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation and **AGREED** the ECO, Health and Social Care, would discuss with the Chair and the Interim Head of Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Drug & Alcohol Recovery Services, NHS Highland, how best to publicise the issues raised.

5. Performance and Quality Assurance Review Sgrùdadh Coileanaidh is Barantais Chàileachd

There had been circulated Report No HCW/01/22 dated 27 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- the increased move towards community-based services and the positive outlook in the report were welcomed, particularly the changed language use, such as supporting families rather than discussing troubled young people;
- it was disappointing that Highland had nearly double the national average number of Looked After Children, and information was sought on the possible timescales for rectifying this. It was hoped that reducing the number of Looked After Children would free up resources to invest in early intervention measures to support families, teachers and school nurses. In response, reference was made to the work of the Resource Placement Group, which could consider complex cases and timescales for change, and which was also part of the service redesign work and the focus on family hubs and child protection;

- the ability to identify families that would benefit from early support was key, with the aim of keeping children in their families as long as it was safe for them to do so;
- the importance of kinship care was emphasised and should be encouraged;
- the challenges of modern parenting were highlighted, and how the wider community could be encouraged to help;
- it was queried whether the high turnover of social services staff was related to the high number of Looked After Children; and
- contract services with third party organisations could help to support keeping children within their families.

The Committee **NOTED** the:

- i. review process that had concluded and those that were ongoing;
- ii. findings and analysis; and
- iii. planned use of these findings to inform practice, service delivery and re-design of services.

6. Adult Social Care – Winter Update Report Barantas Cùram Sòisealta Inbheach – Aithisg Geamhraidh

There had been circulated Report No HCW/02/22 dated 14 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- reference was made to the work of the Carers Improvement Group and the need to provide support and recognition to unpaid carers;
- attention was drawn to the additional impact of the omicron variant on an Adult Social Care system that was already under significant pressure. The staff working at the front end were commended and the long term pressure being placed on them was acknowledged;
- prompt hospital discharge and system flow were key issues;
- innovative solutions to recruitment and retention, especially in remote and rural areas, were required, and an outline was provided of various flexible-working options and new models being considered;
- housing for key workers, and for people requiring care, especially in remote and rural areas, remained a significant challenge for which work was underway with the Housing service to try to find solutions;
- the benefits of a sheltered housing model of care home were highlighted; and
- an asset based approach, building on what was available, was important, as was encouraging young people into a career in care.

The Committee **NOTED** the:

- i. contents of the report; and
- ii. continued commitment and collaborative actions to sustain service provision, whilst responding to the ongoing pandemic and associated operational pressures.

7. Revenue Budget Monitoring – Quarter 3 of 2021/22
Sgrùdadh Buidseat Teachd-a-steach – Cairteal 3 airson 2021/22

Declaration of Interest: Mrs L Munro declared an interest in this item as a Specialist SDS Advisor with Carr Gomm Community Contacts Team and left the meeting for the duration of the Item. Mr D Fraser took the Chair for this Item.

There had been circulated Report No HCW/03/22 dated 4 February 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- Mr Louden expressed concern at the £0.459k underspend in SDS and sought more detailed information and timescales outwith the meeting on SDS payments being made to young carers.. A meeting would be held to discuss this;
- additional Covid funding had impacted positively on the budget and some current underspends related to accounting issues that would be resolved in the year-end figures. Members emphasised the importance of ensuring all funding was fully and appropriately utilised;
- there had been a significant increase in the school immunisation programme; and
- a summary was provided of the situation with regard to pre-school developmental visits with these having been increased in 2015 from five to eleven and, although visit numbers had been reduced during the Covid crisis, the team was now fully mobilised again.

The Committee:

- NOTED** the forecast revenue position as at Quarter 3 of the 2021/22 financial year, including the management action being taken and the risks and uncertainties set out within the report;
- NOTED** the progress update provided in relation to budget savings delivery; and
- AGREED**, in relation to Young Carers SDS, that more detailed information be provided to Mr D Louden outwith the meeting, and that a meeting be held to discuss the issues raised with the ECO, Health and Social Care, the Chair and Vice Chair, and Mr D Louden.

8. Children and Young Persons Champions Update
Fios às Ùr mu Ghaisgich Chloinne is nan Daoine Òga

There had been circulated Report No HCW/04/22 dated 14 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

Mrs Paterson, Mrs Cockburn and Mrs MacKenzie were thanked for taking on the role, and ongoing support for the role was urged, with particular reference to the unprecedented rise in living costs that were facing families. The role could provide a valuable bridge between families, public services, communities and the third sector.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** the future development planned to develop the role of the Champions.

9. Appointment of Older People's Champions Cur an Dreuchd Ghaisgich do Dhaoine nas Sine

There had been circulated Report No HCW/05/22 dated 28 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- the recommendation should state 'up to three' rather than three Council appointments;
- these appointments would provide an opportunity to raise awareness of the diversity of older adult community;
- it was hoped the champions would work with the Highland Senior Citizen Network, with examples provided of the benefits of their community activities;
- training would be important for the champions, and for the Committee;
- housing needs changed over time and it was important to facilitate people staying in their homes and communities as long as possible, through initiatives such as handyman services. Older people's views should be sought when designing new services or housing where possible;
- an effective interface with the third sector was vital, as was looking at intergenerational initiatives to facilitate interaction between younger and older people; and
- it was hoped the champions would take into account the importance of Gaelic, and other languages for Highland's communities.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the report and **APPROVED** the proposed role and remit of a pilot establishing Older People's Champions for Highland Council; and
- ii. **RESOLVED** that up to three Councillors be appointed as champions once the forthcoming local elections had taken place.

10. Programme Update Report Aithisg às Ùr mun Phrògram

There had been circulated Report No HCW/06/22 dated 27 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- it was clarified that the transitions project referred to a young person transitioning into adult social care. A document detailing the complex transitions pathways was being reviewed and it was hoped that training on this would be provided to Members in due course. In relation to assessments, young people's needs and circumstances changed often and were subject to ongoing review and assessment. However, this should be tailored to the individual's circumstances and not universally undertaken;

- in relation to the community-led support project, concerns were expressed about volunteer fatigue in communities. It was important that learning from the three pilot areas was rolled out to other areas as early as possible and that a ragging system or similar for aspects of the project would be helpful to understand what stage each one was at; and
- the IT transformation project was important and should be escalated. It was suggested Near Me would be useful for delivery of multi-disciplinary services.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

11. Integrated Children's Services Update Report Aithisg às Ùr air Seirbheisean Amalaichte Chloinne

There had been circulated Report No HCW/07/22 dated 6 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised;

- it was important to continue to engage at community level to support families;
- synergy between all organisations involved in providing services was important to avoid duplication;
- information was sought and provided on the Highland Practice Model;
- concern was expressed about child poverty and discussion took place on what action could be taken, nationally and locally; and
- an update was sought and provided on the issue of child exploitation which had previously been reported to the Committee and was subject to a detailed plan of ongoing work, with proposals due to be presented to the Child Protection Committee. It was suggested that any action be publicised to discourage further activity, and assurance was provided that raising awareness was a key aspect of the work.

The Committee **NOTED** the:

- i. work undertaken by the children's services planning partnership in delivering the Highland Integrated Children's Services Plan 2021 – 2023; and
- ii. work undertaken in other partnership areas.

12. Young Carers Statements Aithrisean Luchd-cùraim Òga

Declaration of Interest: Mrs L Munro declared an interest in this item as a Specialist SDS Advisor with Carr Gomm Community Contacts Team and left the meeting for the duration of the Item. Mr D Fraser took the Chair for this Item.

There had been circulated Report No HCW/08/22 dated 14 January 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- attention as drawn to the work of Young Carers Lochaber;

- it was vital that engagement was undertaken with Connecting Carers and Young Carer groups to ensure they received the services they required and deserved;
- it was essential the Council delivered on its promise to provide SDS to young carers;
- benchmarking and timeframes for the statements were important, as was a system to ensure all young carers were captured, even those who did not self-identify as such, something which could be especially challenging in rural areas; and
- assurance was sought and provided that this area was a high priority for the service.

The Committee **NOTED**:

- i. the content of the background information in relation to the statutory duties for The Highland Council in relation to Young Carers statements; and
- ii. the progress being made in ensuring that all Young Carers received the offer of a Young Carers Statement.

13. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The following Minutes were **NOTED**:-

- i. Highland Child Protection Committee held on 7 July, 24 September and 24 November 2021; and
- ii. Highland Violence Against Women Partnership Group held on 10 August 2021.

Closing Remarks

Mrs L Munro thanked partners in the third sector, the Committee, Council officers and members of the Press for their work and support during her time as Chair.

The meeting ended at 3.50pm.