

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee** held in the **Council Chamber, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness** on Wednesday 9 November 2022 at 10.30am.

Present:

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| Mr C Aitken (remote) | Ms L Kraft |
| Dr C Birt | Mrs I Mackenzie |
| Mrs M Cockburn | Mrs A MacLean |
| Mr D Fraser | Ms K MacLean |
| Mr R Gunn | Mr T MacLennan (remote) |
| Mrs B Jarvie (remote) | Ms J McEwan |
| Ms L Johnston | Ms M Reid |
| Ms S Kennedy (substitute) | Mrs T Robertson |
| Ms E Knox (remote) | Mrs L Siggers |

Non Members also present:

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mr B Boyd | Mr R Gale (remote) |
| Mr A Christie (remote) | Mr R MacKintosh |
| Ms T Collier (remote) | Mrs B McAllister |
| Ms S Fanet (remote) | Mr J McGillivray (remote) |

Also in Attendance (non-voting members):

Dr T Allison, Director of Public Health, NHS Highland
Mr S Steer, Director of Adult Social Care, NHS Highland
Ms J Douglas, Care and Learning Alliance
Mr K Walker, Samaritans, Befrienders Highland, and Creativity in Care CIC

Participating Officials:

Ms F Duncan, Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care and Chief Social Work Officer
Ms F Malcolm, Head of Integration Adult Social Care, Health and Social Care
Mr I Kyle, Lead for Improvement and Performance, Health and Social Care
Ms J Park, Strategic Lead Child's Health
Ms M McIntyre, Head of Social Work
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

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

Mr D Fraser in the Chair

Preliminaries

The Chair explained that two significant items, the Chief Social Work Officer's Report and the Children's Services Improvement Plan, had been intended for consideration at this meeting, but due to unavoidable delays had been postponed to the next meeting. As the agenda for the next meeting was likely to be longer than usual, the Committee **AGREED** that for the next meeting of the Committee, reports would be circulated to Members as soon as they were ready.

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mrs M Paterson.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were no Declarations of Interest and the Committee **NOTED** the following Transparency Statements:

Item 5 - Ms L Johnston and Ms L Kraft

3. Good News Deagh Naidheachdan

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

- the Trainee Mental Health Officer Scheme, in partnership with Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, had resulted in 3 trainee Mental Health Officers who had commenced their formal academic training in September 2022; and
- the attendance of an official at the Icelandic Model of Intervention Conference, as the model was rolled out across Highland, noting that in 1998, Iceland had the biggest alcohol and drug problem in Europe and now had the lowest, through use of this model.

4. Whole Family Support Strategic Report Aithisg Ro-innleachdail Taic Teaghlaich Iomlain

There had been circulated Report No HCW/15/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- the word '*this*' was missing from the end of the first sentence in paragraph 5.1 of the report;
- the approach taken by Highland Community Planning Partnership to develop a whole system approach to family support was welcomed;
- information was sought and provided on the timescales for rolling out the pilot to other areas, and for how long the project manager funding would last;

- consideration was given to the delivery of the project, in particular its position in relation to children's plan meetings and their follow up, and to the monitoring and measuring of the project's outcomes, which would include reporting to the Scottish Government and to the Committee. A summary of the next steps was provided, and the importance of good governance was emphasised;
- the importance of keeping families together and reducing the stigmatisation of people facing life challenges was emphasised, as was the need for a holistic approach;
- information was sought and provided on the involvement of the local community, local Members, and the local Community Planning Partnerships;
- it was important that support for unpaid carers was taken into consideration;
- a workshop on the approach would be useful in due course;
- this approach built on the leading work undertaken in Highland to put children at the centre of services;
- the third sector voiced their support for the approach and pointed out that third sector agencies could be considered as the host employer for the project manager;
- it was important to have clear indicators of good practice to ensure appropriate evaluation was undertaken;
- the two year funding was insufficient to facilitate adequate training for a new role, and the current recruitment challenges in Highland were highlighted. It was queried whether there was adequate staff resource to measure the projects' outcomes;
- attention was drawn to the important role of the Citizen's Advice Bureau for people to obtain advice and support, especially for people with no or limited internet access. Drop-in centres for advice would also be helpful; and
- examples of good collaborative working with the Community Planning Partnership in Lochaber were provided.

The Committee:

- NOTED** the content of the report and the decision taken by the Community Planning Partnership Board to agree that the additional resource provided through the whole family wellbeing fund be utilised to drive forward the proposed programme as previously agreed by the CPP Board;
- NOTED** the decision taken by the CPP Board to identify and fund a project manager post to plan and implement the Lochaber programme as a pilot, prior to rolling this out across Highland;
- NOTED** the decision taken by the CPP Board to establish a project and delivery team and plan to develop this partnership approach using the national principles for holistic whole family support that would report on progress to the Integrated Children's Service Board and ultimately to the CPP Board; and
- AGREED** a workshop be held for Members on the Whole Family Support approach at an appropriate time.

5. **Adult Social Care Assurance Report** **Aithisg Bharantachaidh Cùram Sòisealta Inbheach**

Transparency Statements: the undernoted Members declared connections to this item but, having applied the objective test, did not consider that they had an interest to declare:-

Ms L Johnston – on the basis of her employment in giving support to unpaid carers

Ms L Kraft – on the basis that she managed Self-Directed Support payments on behalf of a close family member

There had been circulated Report No HCW/16/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- concern was expressed at the staffing problems detailed in the report and Members did not feel assured that services were being delivered adequately, with particular reference to care home closures, ongoing covid issues, and information on how to tackle the number of empty beds in care homes. The challenges were acknowledged and attention was drawn to the Highland Council/NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee Workshop that was due to take place on 21 November 2022 to consider these issues. The NHS Highland Director of Adult Social Care gave a summary of the complex causes and implications of delayed discharges from hospitals and work being undertaken to tackle this, as well as the staffing crisis facing the NHS and the work that was required to increase the pool of available staff, to avoid the Council, the NHS, the third sector and the independent sector recruiting staff from one another;
- information was sought and provided on the role of the Joint Monitoring Committee, which was a function of the integration model and considered both adult and children's services;
- attention was drawn by Members to the importance of keeping people in care homes in their communities and assurance was sought that large care homes were not going to be built to replace smaller homes in rural areas. The staffing problems, safety concerns, and higher costs of running smaller homes in remote areas were highlighted and would be further discussed by the Joint Monitoring Committee;
- an explanation was sought and provided for the rates paid to commercial care home operators, and their conditions of operation;
- the value of lunch clubs and similar for older people was highlighted;
- in response to a query about unmet need, this related mostly to care at home, and self-directed support could be used where appropriate;
- a summary was provided of the work of the covid response team during the pandemic, and plans to move towards a geographically flexible community response team;
- Mrs A MacLean requested the briefing notes from the Adult Social Care workshop held on 28 October 2022;
- attention was drawn to the number of unpaid carers who were struggling, and the value of the forthcoming Carers' Rights Day on 24 November 2022 was highlighted. Issues of key importance included the need for support and respite, including day services, the use of self-directed support, and the importance of including carers in the discharge process. It was thought that not all carers were aware of their need to self-identify as a carer;
- attention was drawn to the new model of 'age friendly' communities and the aspiration for Highland to have the first one in Scotland. Other key issues raised by the Older People's champion included the work of third sector and other partner organisations, the need to identify and prevent malnutrition in older people, and the value of encouraging people to arrange power of attorney;
- the value of care homes to communities and to the economy was highlighted;

- it was acknowledged that challenging decisions were required around the delivery of care home services, noting that the current model was not sustainable, with particular reference to delayed discharges and staffing problems. Attention was drawn to the value of sheltered or clustered housing as part of a housing strategy for social care clients, although issues such as the need for wardens, and the need for residents to have sufficient space for visitors, had to be considered;
- a workshop was planned for Committee Members on 14 December 2022;
- discussions should focus on the hours of care required rather than on numbers of beds, as beds could only be operational if adequately staffed;
- many of the issues in the report required crossover with other services;
- high turnover of social care staff could result in additional pressure, and the lack of accommodation, especially in remote and rural areas, was a concern for care workers; and
- day clubs and respite care were helpful but often required transportation arrangements.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- NOTED** the contents of the report;
- NOTED** the continued commitment and collaborative actions to sustain service provision, whilst responding to the ongoing operational pressures arising as a result of the ongoing covid response and winter pressures; and
- AGREED** the notes from the ASC partnership briefing on 28 October 2022 be provided to Mrs A MacLean.

6. Revenue Budget Monitoring – November 2022 Sgrùdadh Buidseat Teachd-a-steach – Samhain 2022

There had been circulated Report No HCW/17/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- attention was drawn to the pressures faced by Social Work services, and it was queried whether social worker assistants would be helpful;
- more information on the risks and the implications of actions was required to facilitate proper scrutiny;
- in response to queries about the reported £900k underspend and staffing shortages, a summary was provided of the importance of service redesign to ensure staff were employed in the most appropriate positions and undertaking appropriate work. Budget realignment was also required; and
- the impact on service delivery of inappropriate or under-staffing was highlighted, including the increase in workload for other staff.

The Committee **NOTED** the:

- forecast revenue position as at Quarter 2 of the 2022/23 financial year; and
- progress update provided in relation to budget savings delivery.

7. Champions Report – Update Aithisg nan Curaidhean – Fios às Ùr

There had been circulated Report No HCW/18/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the value of the positions was acknowledged. The Champions gave updates on their work to date, including the following:

- two of the Champions for Older People had attended the Scottish Older People's Assembly in September 2022 where a variety of agencies had provided information including on the impact of loneliness, the work of Connecting Carers, age-friendly communities, the Highland Senior Citizen's Network Board and the Old People's Charter;
- it was hoped to set up a support network across Highland, which would include digital connectivity and link to formal and informal lunch clubs and events;
- linkage with related themed third sector forums was suggested;
- the Committee and NHS Highland were thanked for the vaccination work undertaken;
- some issues disproportionately affected older people, such as rurality, isolation, lack of public transport;
- it was important to ensure good conditions and recognition for all carers and to represent their views, and those of older people in general, to the Council;
- in relation to Children's Champions, engagement with young voices, community councils and the youth convener were important. Many challenges affecting young people were being taken on board including education, transport, and nutrition;
- in relation to trauma, it was requested that the 3-hour online webinar on Scottish Trauma in Leadership training be emailed to all Members. Work would be undertaken with partner organisations and local businesses; and
- other suggestions included seeking out good practice elsewhere to emulate, and to examine the planning and delivery of services to identify areas for improvement, with local solutions likely to be required in certain areas.

The Committee thanked the champions for their ongoing work, **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** the link to the 3-hour online webinar on Scottish Trauma in Leadership training be emailed to all Members.

8. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

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

- i. Highland Child Protection Committee held on 25 May 2022; and
- ii. Highland Council/NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee held on 3 August and 22 August.

During discussion, reference was made to the significant issues being considered by the Child Protection Committee and it was explained that for confidentiality, only redacted minutes were publicly available. There was Member representation on the Committee and issues could be discussed outwith the meeting.

Closing Remarks

Prior to closing the meeting, the Chair thanked the Council, third sector and NHS Highland staff for their work, as well as all carers, paid and unpaid.

In response to a suggestion that some reports (such as the Highland Youth Work Strategy) that were considered by the Education Committee were also relevant to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee, it was pointed out that all Members were able to attend any Committee meeting, but that it was not possible to bring the same report to two different Committees.

The meeting ended at 2.55pm.