

**Highland Council/NHS Highland  
Joint Monitoring Committee**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Highland Council/NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee held remotely on Wednesday, 21 June 2023 at 10.30am.

**Present:**

**Highland Council**

Mr David Fraser (Chair)  
Ms M Cockburn (for Mr R Bremner)  
Ms Fiona Duncan  
Mr R Gunn (for Mr A Christie)  
Mr Ian Kyle  
Mr Derek Loudon  
Mr Brian Porter

**NHS Highland**

Ms Sarah Compton-Bishop (Vice Chair)  
Dr Tim Allison  
Mr Alex Anderson  
Ms Ann Clark  
Ms Heledd Cooper  
Ms Pamela Cremin  
Ms Pamela Dudek  
Mr Gerry O'Brien

**Staff Representatives**

None present

**Third Sector, Carer and Service User Representatives**

Mr Ian McNamara (Highland Senior Citizen's Network)

**Also Present**

Mr C Munro, Highland Council

**Officers Present**

Mr D Park, Deputy Chief Executive, NHS Highland  
Mr S Steer, Director of Adult Social Care, NHS Highland  
Ms G Grant, Interim Head of Commissioning, NHS Highland  
Ms E Ward, Deputy Director of Finance, NHS Highland  
Ms F MacBain, Senior Committee Officer, Highland Council

**Mr David Fraser in the Chair**

**Preliminaries**

Mr D Fraser thanked the previous Chair, Professor Boyd Robertson, for his work for the Committee and welcomed the new NHS Highland Board Chair, Ms Sarah Compton-Bishop, to the meeting.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

**Highland Council:** Mrs Kate Lackie, Ms Fiona Malcolm, Mr Raymond Bremner, Mr Alasdair Christie

**NHS Highland:** Ms L Bussell

**Third Sector, Carer and Service User Representatives:** Ms Sandra Brown, Mr Campbell Mair, Ms Roisin Connolly

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

**3. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

There had been circulated and were **APPROVED** minutes of the meeting of the Joint Monitoring Committee held on 29 March 2023.

#### 4. **Highland Health & Social Care Partnership Finance Reports**

The Committee **NOTED** that as per normal reporting cycles for this stage of the financial year, there were no Finance reports to this Committee. Finance reports would be provided to the next Committee.

#### 5. **Integrated Children's Services Assurance Report**

There had been circulated Report No. JMC/12/23 by the Highland Council Head of Integrated Children's Services.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- information was sought and provided on the extent to which the ideas in the 2023 – 2026 Integrated Children's Services Plan had been sourced from children and young people, and it was hoped this would be explained when the plan was presented to the Community Planning Partnership Board (CPPB). The input of children young people and their families would be a key focus during the 3-year cycle of the plan, and the Chair thanked the young people who had contributed;
- assurance was provided that the link in the plan to the joint strategic needs assessments had been repaired;
- reference was made to the importance of addressing the specific needs for care experienced children, and those transitioning to adult services, and attention was drawn to the underpinning plans, including the corporate parenting and child protection plans;
- assurance was sought and provided on the involvement of the Committee in monitoring the delivery of the plan once it had been approved by the CPPB;
- assurance was sought and provided that the information requested at the previous meeting on services for children who had been subject to sexual abuse had been circulated;
- with reference to the large number of performance indicators, it was suggested that the plan focus on 15-20 key data sets. Reference was made to the challenges also faced at national level on tackling the large amount of data and indicators, and to the importance of putting the plan into action to improve the lives of children, young people and their families;
- reference was made to a survey undertaken a few years earlier by users of the Neuro Developmental Assessment Service which had indicated poor outcomes and information was sought on performance and engagement in this area. In this regard, attention was drawn to the work of the Integrated Children's Services Planning Board, the need to provide ongoing support post-diagnosis, and joint leadership initiatives that were considering this area; and
- noting that the integrated plan would provide a space for all agencies involved in supporting children to work together, with governance through the CPPB, it was important to consider the role of this Committee and avoid duplication of work. In this regard it was suggested that formalisation of governance routes would be beneficial.

The Committee **NOTED**:

- i. **NOTED** the work undertaken by the children's services planning partnership in delivering the Highland Integrated Children's Services Plan 2023 – 2026;
- ii. **NOTED** the work undertaken in other partnership areas; and
- iii. **AGREED** to aim to focus on 15-20 key data sets in the integrated children's service plan for performance measurement.

## 6. Adult Social Care Assurance Report

There had been circulated Report No. JMC/13/23 by the Chief Officer, Highland Health and Social Care Partnership.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- concern was expressed at the significant challenges detailed in the report and on the risk register. Efforts to mitigate risks and spread the burden across both organisations were highlighted;
- it would be helpful to have timelines for resolution to the IT issues detailed in the report, which had been ongoing for several years;
- it was important to support staff in relation to obtaining SVQ qualifications, noting, however, that some older, experienced staff could be less keen on obtaining qualifications. Further consideration should be given to accreditation for prior experience and a summary of efforts in this regard was provided, as well as efforts to increase workforce diversification through flexibility and agility, linked with NHS National Education Scotland;
- attention was drawn to the conflicting aims being promoted by the Scottish Government for 20 minute neighbourhoods and for care homes with a minimum of 50 beds to aid economic viability. The challenges this presented in remote and rural areas in particular should be communicated to the Scottish Government. It was explained that Highland had been invited to be part of a national viability group and that this was often a workforce availability issue rather than a financial challenge;
- in response to concerns at the high reported percentage (60-70%) of police time spent dealing with people with mental health concerns, information was provided on multi-agency partnership work that was ongoing with public protection agencies and the work that went on after initial Police call-outs by the NHS, third sector, Council and voluntary organisations. This area might benefit from a future partnership report;
- further areas for consideration for the risk register included the following:
  - staff wellbeing, given the significance of the risks being managed across the system, and the stress and distress that was experienced by front line staff as a result. A summary was provided of the culture programme and issues being taking forward following the NHS Highland iMatter staff survey;
  - the fragility of GP services, though this was a national problem and not directly within the control of the partnership. A summary was provided of efforts being undertaken to address this; and
  - the national care home contract;
- assurance was sought and provided that appropriate reporting to both organisations was taking place in relation to the care home situation in Highland, with further reports planned for the Committee in due course; and
- the Chair thanked NHS Highland and Council staff and carers, as well as third sector workers and volunteers, for their hard work during challenging times.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the contents of this report;
- ii. **NOTED** the continued commitment and collaborative actions to sustain service provision, whilst responding to the ongoing operational pressures arising from independent care home sector instability, workforce challenges, and the absence of an agreed national care home contract for 2023-2024;
- iii. **NOTED** the associated risk to delivery of statutory duties and functions; and
- iv. **AGREED** to aim to provide timelines for the planned improvements to IT provision.

## 7. Strategic Plan Update

There had been circulated Report No. JMC/14/23 by the Chief Officer, NHS Highland, Highland Health and Social Care Partnership.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- the plan would be finalised in October 2023, after a period of engagement over the summer, then presented to the Committee again;
- assurance was sought that continued funding for community hubs in Sutherland and Caithness was being sought. It was explained that engagement events would be held to understand the needs of the communities, including concerns about sustainability;
- some of the diagrams in the plan should be enlarged to be more legible and disability compliant. Any grammatical errors should be forwarded to officers outwith the meeting for correction;
- assurance was provided that engagement with young carers would be undertaken;
- the emphasis on engagement and co-design was welcomed, and attention was drawn to National Care Service co-design sessions that were planned for the summer, information for which would be circulated after the meeting;
- similar prominence should be given to workforce challenges as to the financial challenges in the plan;
- it would be useful to have a document summarising the relevance of the plan to staff for internal engagement purposes;
- it was important the workforce plan was referenced in the strategic plan;
- with reference to challenges faced in some areas by the community planning partnerships to develop locality plans, information was sought and provided on provision and capacity to ensure place-based and locality issues were covered by the plan, including appendices with district profiles. Engagement on the strategic plan would also provide opportunities to discuss local needs with communities and, following engagement, joint decisions would be required, with appropriate knowledge of constraints by all parties. It was pointed out that community councils did not always represent the views of an entire community and it was important to seek the views of people who did not attend engagement events, including the use, where appropriate, of data from elected Members, schools, the Police, and the Scottish Ambulance Service; and
- explicit reference should be made to island communities in the plan.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the content of the draft Joint Strategic Plan;
- ii. **NOTED** the approach to engagement; and
- iii. **AGREED** to support progression of the draft Joint Strategic Plan to wider engagement

- iv. **NOTED** Mr D Loudon would provide details of typos to be corrected in the Plan outwith the meeting;
- v. **AGREED** to circulate details of the Summer 2023 National Care Service Co-Design Events
- vi. **AGREED** to give similar prominence to workforce challenges as to the financial challenges in the Plan;
- vii. **AGREED** it would be useful to have a document summarising what the Plan meant for staff for internal engagement; and
- viii. **AGREED** to make explicit reference to island communities in the Plan.

The Committee **NOTED** that the date of the next meeting was Wednesday 27 September 2023 at 10.30am.

The meeting ended at 12.40pm.