

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

Minutes of the Meeting of the Highland Council/NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee held in the offices of Highland Home Carers Ltd, 1 Highlander Way Inverness Retail and Business Park, Inverness, IV2 7GE, on 13 March 2025 at 10.30am.

Present:

Highland Council

Mr David Fraser (Vice Chair)
Mr Raymond Bremner (remote)
Ms Fiona Duncan (remote)
Mr Ian Kyle
Ms Fiona Malcolm
Mr Brian Porter
Mrs Kate Lackie (from item 3) (remote)

NHS Highland

Ms Sarah Compton-Bishop (Chair)
Dr Tim Allison
Mr Graham Bell (sub for Mr A Anderson) (remote)
Ms Ann Clark (remote)
Ms Heledd Cooper
Mrs Pamela Stott
Ms Fiona Davies
Mr Gerry O'Brien (remote)
Dr Paul Treon (from item 3)

Staff Representatives

Mr John Gibson (Highland Council) (remote) (item 1 only)

Third Sector, Carer and Service User Representatives

Mr Christopher Allan (Scottish Care Highland Branch Chair – Care Homes) (remote)
Ms Roisin Connolly, (Connecting Carers) (remote)
Mr Campbell Mair (Scottish Care - Care at Home)
Ms Joan Philip (Highland Senior Citizen's Network) (sub for Ian McNamara) (remote)
Dr Gaener Rodger (Inspiring Young Voices)
Ms Mhairi Wylie (Highland Third Sector Interface) (remote)

Officers Present

Mr D Park, Deputy Chief Executive, NHS Highland
Mr S Steer, Director of Adult Social Care, NHS Highland
Mrs L Dunn, Joint Democratic Services Manager, Highland Council
Ms F MacBain, Senior Committee Officer, Highland Council

Ms S Compton-Bishop in the Chair

**1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence
Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan**

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Ms Louise Bussell, Mr Derek Brown, Mr Alasdair Christie, Mr Derek Loudon, Mr Alex Anderson, Mr Ian McNamara and Ms Elspeth Caithness.

**2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt/Aithris Fhollaiseachd**

There were none.

3. Appointments Cur an Dreuchd

The Committee **AGREED** to make the following appointments to the Committee:

- NHS Highland: Dr Paul Treon, Clinical Director (Primary Care)
- Highland Council: Mrs Kate Lackie, Assistant Chief Executive - People

4. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated and were **APPROVED** minutes of the meetings of the Joint Monitoring Committee held on 13 December 2024.

5. JMC Action Log Loga Gnìomha

There had been circulated the Committee's Actions Log.

During discussion it was pointed out that work was ongoing on the creation of a steering group for the new delivery model and that the Committee would be kept updated on progress. Following further discussion on the issues detailed below, the Committee **NOTED** the Action Log and **AGREED**:

- i. that the workplan showing the intention to report on Risk 15 (the need for clear governance structures, as referenced in the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report 2023-24) be presented to the next meeting; and
- ii. that the presentation of a report to a future meeting on the types of support people were receiving from SDS Option 1, including the national context of the issue (as agreed by the JMC in December 2024) be added to the Action Log.

6. Chief Officer's Report Adult Services Aithisg Àrd-Oifigeir mu Sheirbheisean Inbheach

There had been circulated Report No JMC/01/25 by the Chief Officer, Highland Health and Social Care Partnership.

The Chief Officer gave a presentation on the Adult Services Strategy and the work underpinning the performance detailed in the report.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- it was requested that the results of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), and how it would be used to steer forthcoming plans, should be provided to a future meeting or development session. Information was provided on the data sets being developed to articulate the JSNA, its relationship to the Strategic Plan, and the commissioning strategy that was being worked on. The JSNA was being used to assist with a pilot project in Lochaber;
- information was requested on the data/numbers on increased recruitment in Skye. It was reported that the first birth had recently taken place in the new hospital on Skye, and it was suggested the excellent place-based partnership recruitment work that had taken place on Skye be rolled out to other areas of the Highlands. Attention was drawn to useful community communication

methods that were being used in Ardnamurchan, and to the wider implementation of community-led support initiatives;

- the benefits of the Step Up, Step Down approach were highlighted, although this approach could introduce procurement challenges for third sector organisations. The need for flexibility and reduced bureaucracy was referenced, and a pilot around this would be useful. The advantages of planning of procurement and commissioning on outcomes were summarised, and attention was drawn to the importance of using a variety of procurement tools and methods, tailored in a nuanced manner to individual situations;
- concern was expressed at the potential for inequality and imbalance with regard to recruitment and retention, noting, however, that this could be influenced by ring-fenced funding for particular projects. It was suggested that care at home should be prioritised and supported as much as care homes, though also acknowledged that both sectors were often recruiting from the same pool of staff, and that it was important to grow the whole workforce without detrimental impact to any sector;
- it was urged that in relation to technology enabled care supporting people in their homes, feedback should be sought from young people using those technologies, particularly young carers;
- the rapid digitisation of key or core services was welcomed but risked disengaging certain groups of population, and this should be taken into consideration when new technologies were introduced; and
- timelines for the new management of Moss Park care home in Fort William were sought and provided, and an update on Moss Park and Mains House was requested for the next meeting.

The Committee **NOTED** the work undertaken in implementing the Highland Health and Social Care Partnership Joint Strategic Plan and assurance performance information as supplied, and **AGREED**:

- i. any data / numbers on increased recruitment on Skye be shared with the Committee outwith the meeting;
- ii. that progress with Moss Park and Mains House care homes be reported to the Committee in June 2025; and
- iii. the results of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, and how it would be used to steer forthcoming plans, be presented to the Committee after it had been considered by the Strategic Planning Group.

7. Integrated Children's Services Update **Cunntas às Ùr mu Sheirbheisean Chloinne**

There had been circulated Report No JMC/02/25 by the Chair of the Integrated Children's Services Planning Board.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- the update on the Promise Plan and good news about Whole Family Wellbeing Programme funding were welcomed;
- the further development of the use of data to help target funding would be beneficial, for example using socio-economic profiling to promote and support breastfeeding;
- information was sought and provided on Highland's relatively high rate of referral per 1000 children to the Reporter, including thresholds and links with the Reporter's office. Ms Wylie made reference to a 2021 health check commissioned by the Community Justice Partnership, which had included the

number of children being referred to the Reporter, benchmarked against other Local Authorities, with Highland being relatively high. The number of children being admitted to hospital under the influence of alcohol had also been relatively high;

- the level of engagement undertaken with children and young people on the Promise Plan was welcomed, as was the partnership working with the third sector on some of the projects. It was hoped the Whole Family Wellbeing Funding would be able to provide support for third sector organisations, including those working in partnership with statutory organisations;
- longer term procurement contracts could be helpful to third sector and other organisations to facilitate longer term planning;
- it was welcomed that opinions in addition to data had been captured and would enable the improved interpretation of the data;
- it was suggested that good practice from implementation of the Children's Plan could be used to inform the Adult's Strategic Plan;
- while acknowledging the positive outcomes reported, it was queried whether the achievements related to the goals, including timescales and measurable impacts from actions. Reference was made to the annual report which would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee;
- it was suggested that closer scrutiny and a strategic, targeted approach was required for transitions from Children's to Adult Services, with particular reference to the increasing numbers of those with high levels of dependency and disability, and those affected by poverty and low employment. The focus on the development of life-long approaches, and to have synergy between the plans, was highlighted. In this regard, the increasing levels of partnership and integration work was welcomed, and the forthcoming audit would be useful to identify areas of good practice and gaps in services; and
- the impact of rurality on poverty data was highlighted as an area of concern, particularly as it was challenging to quantify. With child poverty being high on the list of priorities for the Scottish Government, it was important to advocate for rural elements to be properly taken into consideration. This had formed part of the work on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and could be circulated to the Committee.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- 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 of the delivery groups; and
- iii. **AGREED** to circulate outwith the Committee information on rurality which had been collated for the Whole Family Wellbeing initiative, as part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

8. Highland Health & Social Care Partnership Finance Report Aithisgean Ionmhais Com-pàirteachas Slàinte & Cùraim Shòisealta na Gàidhealtachd

a. Highland Health & Social Care Partnership Finance Report Aithisg Ionmhais Com-pàirteachas Slàinte & Cùraim Shòisealta na Gàidhealtachd

There had been circulated Report No JMC/03/25 by the Director of Finance, NHS Highland.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- further information was requested on the link between expenditure and activities, with concern being expressed at the reported rising costs for care at home, despite activity appearing to decline. In this regard, reference was made to the planned commissioning strategy which it was intended would provide more of this type of information including, for example, the percentage of population that might be expected to be in a care home versus receiving care at home. However, it was also pointed out that the situation was often too complex to breakdown to such a granular level, with complicating issues including the difference in costs for the NHS versus independent care providers, and the need for a suitable system to analyse the necessary data. In addition, costs could be spread across integrated services, further complicating the ability to break them down to a cost per patient, and noting that the NHS had many other factors to take into consideration over and above care. The importance of data to help understand what was being achieved for the expenditure was reiterated, as was the need to aim for patient-level costing information;
- attention was drawn to the £6m overspend (on top of £10m the previous year) on caring for people with a learning disability, and the need to work together to manage this; and
- the additional funding for short breaks for carers was welcomed and further information on this was sought.

The Committee **NOTED** the financial position at Month 9 (December) 2024/2025 and **AGREED** to report back on Scottish Government funding for the provision of respite to unpaid carers.

b. Highland Council Finance Report **Aithisg Ionmhais Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd**

There had been circulated Report No JMC/04/25 by the Chief Officer – Corporate Finance.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- it was queried why, in the Adult Social Care workstream, one of the measures of success detailed in the report was the ‘reduced cost of adult social care’ when, in order to shift the balance of care to the community, more investment was required. It was clarified that the context of this should be taken into account and that shifting the balance of care to the community would reduce costs. Attention was drawn to the £20m of additional ASC funding that had been received to produce a recurring cost reduction, noting that the current cost levels were not sustainable. The role of the Delivery Plan in this was referenced, and attention would be given to whether the wording of this could be improved;
- the challenging position in relation to costs rising faster than investment uplifts, was highlighted. Making better use of the resources available was key, and would be further considered in relation to the commissioning strategy that was being developed. The £20m of additional ASC funding was welcomed but was still not enough to meet the challenges being faced;

- the need to link cost data with activity was emphasised, and the importance of finding improved ways of working was reiterated, with the Home to Highland project being cited as an example of an improved service which also saved money; and
- it was suggested that the Children's and Adults' Strategic Plans did not yet dovetail as effectively as had been hoped in relation to the transition process from Children's to Adult services and this was an area that would benefit from further consideration at a future committee. It was clarified that work on the transitions process was ongoing and could be further considered outwith the meeting.

The Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the report and update provided;
- ii. **NOTED** the forecast out-turn position for Council and Integrated Children's Services;
- iii. **NOTED** the update provided regarding the Council's Delivery Plan; and
- iv. **AGREED** to consider the issue of transitions from Children's to Adult Services at a future committee.

Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked Ann Clark for her time on the Committee and her work for the Highland Health and Social Care Partnership, and wished her well for the future.

The meeting ended at 12.50pm.