

NHS Western Isles
AREA PARTNERSHIP FORUM



Minute of Meeting

18th August 2022 11.00-1.00
via MS Teams

Members Present:

Gordon Jamieson	Chief Executive (Co-Chair)
Dana Murray	Employee Director (Co-Chair)
Jane Bain	RCN
Diane Macdonald	HR Manager
Nick Fayers	IJB Chief Officer
Paul O'Keefe	RCN
Fiona MacKenzie	Nurse/AHP Director/COO
Shuna Mighton	Society of Radiographers
Stuart King	Organisational Development and Learning Manager
Debbie Bozkurt	Director of Finance and Procurement
Alana MacPhee	Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Chris Ann Munro	UNISON

In Attendance:

Dianne Weatherston PA to Director of HR and Workforce Development

1. WELCOME/APOLOGIES

Mr Jamieson took the chair and welcomed those present.

Apologies were noted from Wendy Dunsmore and Maggie Jamieson.

2.1 Draft Minute 8th June 2022

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record.

2.2 Action Points 8th June 2022

The Action Points were updated as per the log.

3. MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising were noted.

4. COVID-19 BRIEF

Mr Jamieson advised that the autumn vaccination campaign will start on 5th September and it is requested that this be completed by the beginning of December. Vaccinations administered will predominately be Moderna alongside Pfizer. The Moderna vaccine has been tweaked for variants that have emerged. There is another vaccine coming through that can be used for those who have allergies to Moderna and Pfizer.

It is expected that LFDs will be approved for use in hospitals rather than PCR and point of care testing. This is to improve patient flow, particularly in larger hospitals across the country.

Decision: The update was noted.

5. FINANCE

5.1 Current Update

5.2 Forward Look

Ms Bozkurt presented the quarter 1 financial update paper. The Board is showing a predicted year-end overspend of £1.6 million. Primarily, overspends are due to high cost agency staff, issues with the GP Out of Hours service in Uist and Barra which has resulted in the need to hire GP locums and prescribing.

Looking at the demographics, we are seeing a greater decline in our population, which will increase further. The birth rate has dropped to its lowest rate and there is a decrease in the school role. Across the islands, there is a higher rate of deaths than births. There are high levels of vacancies in band 3 and 4 healthcare assistants, which has an effect on patient and client care, which then has a knock on effect on WIH.

In terms of capital, Scottish Government (SG) have provided the Board with an extra £1.3 million for the replacement of boilers and a further £500,000 for other works and repairs. The MRI scanner will hopefully go out to contract this year for next year, which is good news.

Mr Jamieson noted that the financial position throughout Scotland is a pressing issue. He added that the Workforce Plan is quite neutralised if the declining population issue isn't addressed and he noted the importance of stopping outward migration. There needs to be dialogue with MPs and MSPs to ask what the longer term strategy for island communities is. Our Workforce Plan will only be deliverable if something significant is done to halt population decline across the islands.

Mrs Mighton referred to the Radiology section in the narrative. She noted that Radiology have been highly reliant on agency staff, however we haven't gone out to advert for a Radiographer for a number years. She added that once the MRI scanner has been commissioned here, more staff will be needed over and above. She stated that there are no posts on Job Train for people to apply for, therefore agency staff are being used without exhausting all other avenues. Mrs Macdonald advised that the Radiology Manager has been in discussion with Finance and HR and is making plans to go out to advert, however we need to speed that process up to get adverts out and market them as best we can. Ms MacKenzie, Mrs Macdonald and Ms Bozkurt will look into this as an action.

Mrs Murray asked if RRP can be applied for in difficult to recruit areas, as it would be more cost effective than agency staff. Ms Bozkurt agreed. Mrs Macdonald advised that RRP is being explored for catering. Mr Jamieson fully supports more RRP applications. It was agreed to start with catering. Mrs Macdonald to update on this at the next meeting.

Ms MacKenzie believes it is a whole system approach responsible for the depopulation of the islands, for example, poor housing stock and cultural issues. She stated that we need to do what we can to encourage people to come here, so services can be run across the islands.

Decision: The update was noted.

Action: Ms MacKenzie, Mrs Macdonald and Ms Bozkurt to look at Radiographer recruitment.

Action: Mrs Macdonald to provide an update on progress of the catering RRP application at the next meeting.

6. **WORKFORCE REPORT**

Mrs Macdonald presented the Workforce Report.

Firstly, Mrs Macdonald referred to the age profile, and noted that we want to attract younger people into the workforce. There are a couple of apprenticeships ready to be advertised, and apprenticeships for medical secretaries, IT and catering are being looked into.

Sickness absence reduced slightly in July. However, in the months to come this may increase due to the cease of COVID special leave on 1st September, which may result in more staff going onto sick leave. Mrs Macdonald assured that absence is being managed by the HR department.

In terms of recruitment, there has been a slight decrease in applications. More local advertising has commenced by going through We Love Stornoway and Stornoway Gazette. Mrs Macdonald stated that the NHS has some very good terms and conditions which we don't sell enough, including annual leave provisions, access to an excellent pension scheme, work life balance and job security. The HR team are working on highlighting those positive points in adverts.

Mr O'Keefe referred to sickness absence by reason and highlighted the number of unspecified causes. Mrs Macdonald advised that there has been an ongoing issue with this and there have been many communications out to managers. HR will continue to remind managers. SSTS training has also been carried out which will hopefully help improve on this.

Mr O'Keefe asked if there are any plans to drive down the mental health absences. Mrs Macdonald advised that the Wellbeing Group meet on a bi-monthly basis, and mental health is featuring high on that agenda. An external Employee Assistance Programme has been introduced, which can be accessed by staff and their families and suicide prevention training is being arranged. Mental Health first aiders are also being explored. Mr O'Keefe noted his support, in particular regarding Mental Health first aiders. He has seen those introduced in many industries and they have been hugely beneficial.

Mrs Mighton referred to musculoskeletal (MSK) issues. She asked if there is something that could be done to target MSK problems in older members of staff to help them stay in employment longer e.g. MSK health assessments and flexible working arrangements for end of career. Mrs MacPhee agreed and noted that more work could be done with physio. Mrs Macdonald supports Mrs Mighton's points, and noted that support measures for MSK will be explored at the next Wellbeing Group. Mrs Weatherston will put this on the next Wellbeing Group Agenda.

Decision: The update was noted. Support measures for MSK will be explored at the next Wellbeing Group.

7. **CLINICAL STRATEGY**

7.1 **St. Brendan's Project/OOH and St Brendan's**

Mr Jamieson advised that work on the revised Outline Business Case is ongoing. The estimate for St Brendan's was £83 million and was then reduced to £67 million, however the latest cost appraisal is back to approximately £80 million. The war in Ukraine has resulted in a price increase of materials.

The project continues to move ahead with a lot of work going into it both on and off island.

Decision: The update was noted.

7.2 OOH/Unscheduled Care

Dr McAuley submitted an update paper however, he wasn't in attendance at the meeting. Mr Jamieson advised that GP OOH is an ongoing evolving agenda. It involves a lot of locum workforce, and there has been a lot of change. Ms Bozkurt stated that it is costing the Board a lot of money, in particular the OOH service on Uist.

Mr Jamieson advised that we are seeing an increase in ANPs and he would encourage this in other areas.

Decision: The update was noted.

7.3 New GP Contract

Mr Fayers advised that the allocation letter for primary care improvement funds for this year was received on 11th August. There is an uplift in the funding across Scotland, and locally that means a share of £1.1 million. The funding will be awarded in two tranches. Mr Fayers has a meeting with finance colleagues next week to understand this further.

Decision: The update was noted.

8. TERMS OF REFERENCE (MEMBERSHIP REVIEW)

Mr Jamieson presented the Terms of Reference. This is being tabled today as it was highlighted at the last APF meeting that some members rarely attend. Mr Jamieson asked for any comments to be sent to Mrs Weatherston and these will be collated for discussion at the next meeting.

Action: Comments on APF membership to be sent to Mrs Weatherston for discussion at the next meeting.

9. WELLBEING

Mrs Macdonald advised that the Wellbeing Group met directly before the APF meeting today. In-depth discussions took place, in particular around mental health and menopause/women's health. Women's health is high on the agenda nationally, and a Once for Scotland Policy is expected.

Mr Jamieson noted that the importance of the Wellbeing Group and the work they are taking forward can't be underestimated. There are so many pressures in and out of work and never before has there been greater pressure than now. We need to put our full support behind the work that the Wellbeing Group are undertaking.

It was highlighted to Mr Jamieson this week that as an organisation we are behind considerably in providing free sanitary products throughout NHSWI buildings. He added that this needs to be resolved properly and effectively. Mrs Macdonald advised that this was discussed at the Wellbeing Group today and Ms Frances Robertson has an action to contact Mr MacPherson for an update. Mr Jamieson requested that the Wellbeing Group lead on this. Mrs Murray agreed.

Decision: The update was noted. It was agreed that the Wellbeing Group will take ownership of ensuring sanitary products are available throughout NHSWI buildings.

10. WORKFORCE PLAN

Mrs Macdonald presented the Workforce Plan for noting. She added that this is not a static document and an action plan will be developed from it. SG are providing feedback tomorrow and Mrs Macdonald will keep the APF up to date with progress.

Mrs Macdonald reiterated the earlier discussion regarding population decrease and fragility within the Western Isles. As part of this, we must make SG aware of the situation here and the infrastructure needed in terms of the rebuilding of our islands.

Mrs Munro queried why Patient Services haven't been included in the Workforce Plan. Mr King apologised for the oversight. He will pick this up with Mrs Munro out-with the meeting. Mrs Munro added that she would like to see training for admin staff in the Workforce Plan.

Decision: The Workforce Plan was noted for information.

11. EXTENSION TO SICK PAY POLICY

The Extension to Sick Pay Policy was presented for approval. No comments were noted.

Decision: The Extension to Sick Pay Policy was approved.

12. DISCLOSURE SCOTLAND POLICY

The Disclosure Scotland Policy was presented for approval. No comments were noted.

Decision: The Disclosure Scotland Policy was approved.

13. WHISTLEBLOWING GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURE FLOWCHART

The Whistleblowing Guidance and Procedure Flowchart were presented for approval. No comments were noted.

Decision: The Whistleblowing Guidance and Procedure Flowchart were approved.

14. iMATTER

Mr King presented the iMatter papers. This year there was a response rate of 62%, which is the highest since 2015. Mr King highlighted some of the key areas to celebrate and also areas which require some improvement. Mr Jamieson noted the importance of iMatter and the creation of action plans across the organisation.

Mr King noted that staff need to feel they are interacting with the right people at the right time. At next week's Staff Governance Committee he is going to suggest formulating an action plan on the back of the Board report at an organisational so that staff can see their views have been listened to and actioned.

Ms MacKenzie referred to the visibility of execs and noted that this has been raised previously. She is open to ideas as to how to make staff aware that they are around and asked for suggestions i.e. open meetings. Mrs Mighton suggested that exec directors could be invited to participate in a departmental meeting. Ms MacKenzie thanked Mrs Mighton for the suggestion. She will have a chat with people in her areas of responsibility to get their views.

Decision: The update was noted.

15. CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS EMPLOYEE GLASSES (DSE)

Mrs Macdonald presented the briefing paper. She stated that NHSWI as an employer have a legal duty to ensure the safe use of DSE for employees and the cost of DSE glasses needs to be reimbursed to the employee if applied for. Mrs Macdonald recommends that a price cap is agreed and set through the APF.

Mrs Mighton asked if the contribution could be applied to the DSE filter coating on prescription glasses if that was required by an employee. Mrs Macdonald is unsure if that comes under the legal requirements, however as long as its related to the DSE requirement and the cost is reasonable then that would be accepted.

Following discussion, the APF agreed that the reimbursement to employees will be set at £50 maximum.

Decision: The APF agreed that the reimbursement cost will be set at £50 maximum.

16. FOR INFORMATION

- 16.1 DL(2022)17 – Closure of NHS Scotland Health and Social Care Coronavirus Life Assurance Scheme 2020
- 16.2 DL(2022)21 - Removal of Temporary Covid Policies (w FAQ)
- 16.3 DL(2022)24 - Temporary Increase to NHS Scotland Mileage Rates – Extension
- 16.4 Pay Circulars – Medical and Dental
- 16.5 Briefing Note - 'Once for Scotland' Workforce Policies - August 2022 V1.0

Decision: The circulars were noted for information.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Free Staff Meal – Late Working

Mrs Mighton noted that in the terms and conditions, it specifies that staff are entitled to one free meal when they are required to work late into the evening, beyond the end of their shift. She stated that radiographers have got out of the habit of claiming their free meal. She added that there is no policy around this. Mrs Mighton suggested that Radiology get an indent book to claim a free meal from the dining room, in line with Theatre staff. Mrs Macdonald agreed that a consistent approach should be applied across the organisation. Mrs Macdonald and Mr King will look into this as an action.

Action: Mrs Macdonald and Mr King to look into a consistent approach for staff working late into the evening, beyond the end of their shift, to enable them to claim a free meal from the dining room.

Castlebay Medical Practice, Barra

Mr Jamieson advised that the GP in Castlebay has left the practice at short notice (from 30th August 2022). The practice will now become a Health Board practice, and staff will be tuped over and become NHSWI employees. The practice staff will be reassured and supported accordingly during this transfer.

Industrial Action

Mr Jamieson referred to the national position and recent ballot. There may be impending industrial action and thought is being given to this in terms of service delivery. As an APF, we will be keeping a close eye on this and how we manage any situation that arises.

Mr Jamieson closed the meeting and thanked all for their attendance.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Date: 30th September 2022

Time: 10.00-12.30 via Teams

END