



# Western Isles Integration Joint Board

## Internal Audit Report 2022/23

### Workforce Management Information

October 2022



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### Workforce Management Information

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# Executive Summary

## Conclusion

**The Western Isles Integration Joint Board (IJB) regularly reviews integrated workforce information. We found however that the IJB has not articulated or communicated its requirements for workforce reporting to NHS Western Isles or Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and as a result the information provided by both partners is inconsistent.**

**Further, whilst workforce reports contain trend reporting and a robust analysis of demographic data and workforce staffing levels, they do not contain a full suite of workforce metrics or report on progress against workforce plans and targets.**

**We have identified opportunities to improve representation of, and collaboration between HR functions from the partner organisations to progress integrated workforce issues and workplans. Controls around action management could also be strengthened to ensure the IJB is sighted on progress with all relevant actions relating to workforce issues. There is also no formal escalation route for the IJB to follow when workforce information is not forthcoming from the partner organisations.**

## Background and scope

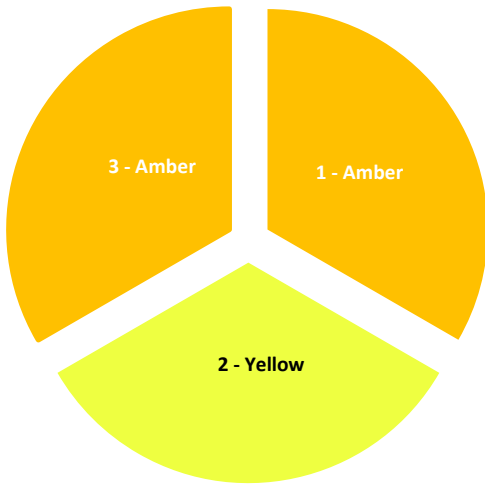
As outlined in the Integration Scheme, the Integration Joint Board has responsibility for the planning and direction of certain services, with Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar and NHS Western Isles responsible for the operational management of those services. Both NHS Western Isles and the Comhairle have a responsibility to provide such information as may be required by the Chief Officer and the IJB or its Committees to enable the planning, monitoring and delivery of integrated services.

Effective workforce planning and management is a fundamental aspect in the delivery of integrated services and crucial to the achievement of the IJB's strategic objectives. As such the Integration Joint Board will require assurance that the partner bodies have robust arrangements in place that ensure they have a sufficient workforce to deliver planned services over the short, medium and long term.

In accordance with the 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan, we reviewed the arrangements in place to ensure the Integration Joint Board (IJB) are receiving sufficient assurances that there are appropriate arrangements in place within Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar and NHS Western Isles to recruit and retain the required workforce to deliver integrated services.

# Control assessment

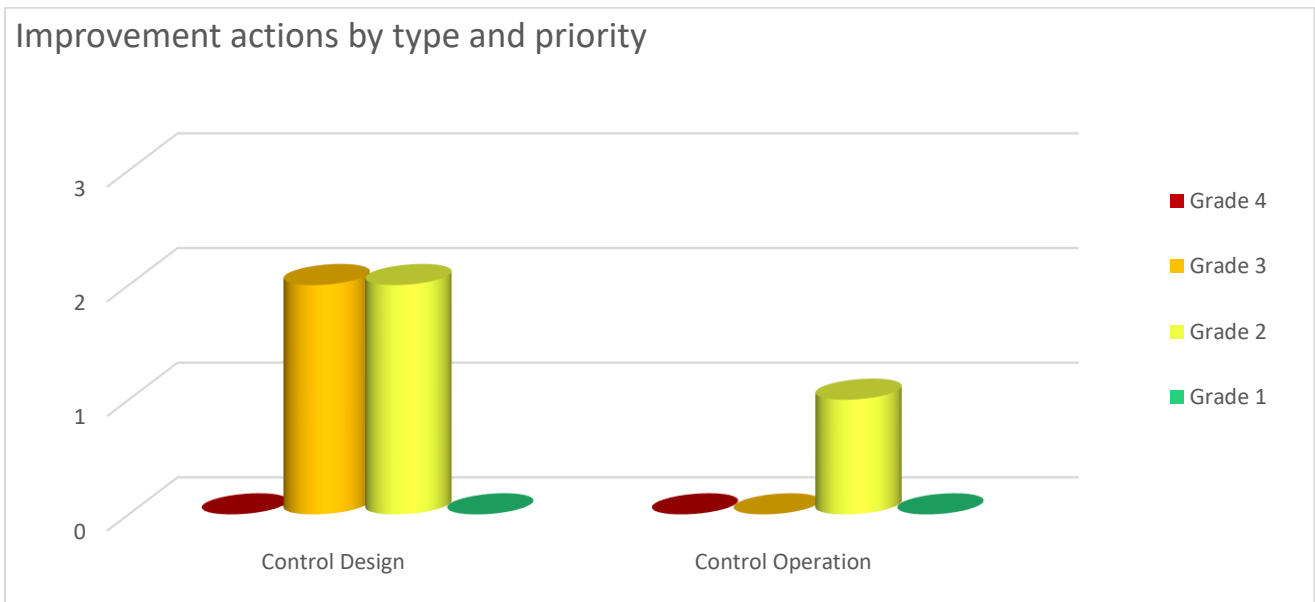
- 1. The IJB has clearly identified and communicated the information required from each partner body on the workforce including for example, vacancies, absence rates, staff turnover and other relevant metrics.



- 2. The IJB is receiving regular reporting to its governance structure that enables a holistic assessment to be made over the current state of both bodies' workforces and any issues relevant to the IJB, along with the actions being taken to manage those.

- 3. There is a clear escalation route between the IJB and the partner bodies if required information is not provided or the IJB is not content with action being taken to manage identified workforce risks.

## Improvement actions by type and priority



Five improvement actions have been identified from this review, four of which relate to the design of controls. See Appendix A for definitions of colour coding.

# Key findings

## Good practice

- An in-depth analysis of Western Isles demographic data and the sustainability of the integrated workforce has been carried out.
- The IJB workforce is under significant pressure due to an ageing population, large numbers of retirements, decreasing birth rate and outwards migration. Depopulation of the Western Isles and the resultant recruitment challenges facing the integrated workforce has been brought to the attention of the Scottish Government. The IJB and the partner bodies are seeking support and looking at new delivery models to mitigate these workforce risks.
- Over and above the demographic workforce reporting, the Integration Joint Board specifically reviews high risk workforce issues such as the Goathill project, mental health, dental and GPs via updates to the Integration Joint Board meetings and the Integration Joint Board Audit Committee.
- The Integration Joint Board has been sighted on the draft 2022-2025 Workforce Plans for NHS Western Isles and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

## Areas for improvement

We have identified a number of areas for improvement which, if addressed, would strengthen NHS Western Isles control framework. These include:

- Agreeing on the workforce information required by the IJB and clearly communicating this to NHS Western Isles and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.
- Ensuring that HR staff and management in both partner bodies come together to collaborate on integrated workforce issues via the HR forum and Integrated Corporate Management Team.
- Ensuring that workforce reports include a comprehensive set of KPIs linked to the workforce plan and other workforce related targets so that performance in relation to all key deliverables is regularly monitored. The IJB should also consider resource capacity for workforce reporting given the scope of the Chief Officer and Chief Financial Officer's roles.
- Ensuring that relevant mitigating actions are included in the body of workforce reports and that all relevant actions are recorded on the Integration Joint Board action log.
- Developing an escalation framework that can be used when information required by the IJB is not forthcoming from partner organisations.

These are further discussed in the Management Action Plan.

## Impact on risk register

The Western Isles Integration Joint Board (IJB) corporate risk register dated August 2022 includes the following risks relevant to this review:

- Risk IJBSR8: Recruitment and retention challenges within the Partnership create service stress.

As a result of the issues identified in this report including a lack of agreement on workforce reporting and a lack of a formal, documented escalation framework being in place management should review the risk score assigned to this risk.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all staff consulted during this review for their assistance and co-operation.

# Management Action Plan

Control Objective 1: The IJB has clearly identified and communicated the information required from each partner body on the workforce including for example, vacancies, absence rates, staff turnover and other relevant metrics.

A yellow circle with the word "Amber" written inside in black text.

## 1.1 Communicating workforce reporting requirements

Section 14.5 of the Standing Orders for the IJB states that "The Integration Joint Board shall approve the content, format and frequency of performance reporting."

However, we found no evidence that the workforce information required by the IJB has been formally agreed or communicated to NHS Western Isles or Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Further, all staff spoken to during fieldwork confirmed they had no knowledge of any agreement or communication of the workforce information required by the IJB.

We also noted the IJB Performance Management Framework document (dated 2016) includes four KPI's related to workforce, however these are not currently being reported on. Further the Performance Management Framework document does not include a review date and as such is potentially out of date.

We also identified that the level of detail provided on workforce varies between partner bodies. Clarity around the workforce information required and roles and responsibilities for providing the information will help ensure a level of parity is achieved in relation to the information provided from the partner bodies.

### Risk

The IJB is not fully aware of issues related to workforce recruitment and retention due to a lack of management information, leading to issues not being identified and addressed and objectives not being achieved.

### Recommendation

The IJB should formally agree, document and communicate the workforce performance information required to provide assurance that there are appropriate arrangements in place within the partner bodies to recruit and retain the required workforce to deliver integrated services. In line with good practice, it is suggested that the request should cover the following:

- Content and format of reporting - the metrics and information required i.e. quantitative or qualitative. These should provide coverage of all key workforce areas for example recruitment/vacancies, staff turnover levels, shift fill rates, sickness and other absence rates, staff survey/satisfaction outcomes and training.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- Frequency of reporting to the IJB and a timetable for the production of data.
- The process for senior managers to quality assure the data before it is reported to the IJB.

The IJB should review the workforce KPIs in the current Performance Management Framework document and confirm whether these remain relevant and should be included in any future reporting.

Management should also ensure that the sharing of any raw data from the partner body HR systems is proportionate in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

**Management Action**

Grade 3  
(Design)

Chief Officer to arrange meeting with HR leads in both organisations to specify content of reporting and determine what is achievable within current systems, recognising that both organisations data will be different and separate.

**Action owner:** Chief Officer

**Due date:** December 2023



## 1.2 Identified reporting gaps

Workforce reporting to the IJB is not an HR led process. The IJB workforce reports are prepared by the IJB Chief Officer and Chief Financial Officer from data provided by the partner bodies HR departments. Given the remit of both these roles, capacity for collating and reporting on workforce information reporting is a challenge with the Chief Financial Officer advised us that due to workload demands, it is not always possible for a workforce report to be provided to the IJB.

Our sample testing of meeting minutes and papers confirmed the workforce reports prepared by the IJB Chief Financial Officer are strategic in nature and provide an analysis of the demographic challenges facing the IJB workforce. The report is an in-depth analysis and examines vacancies, available workforce, age, retirements and sickness. However, we identified that the workforce report does not contain information relating to staff turnover/attrition rates to provide assurance to the IJB that issues with workforce retention are suitably identified and addressed.

In addition, management advised that the 2022-2025 workforce plans for the two partner bodies are currently in draft format and are to be reviewed by the IJB. The IJB Performance Management Framework document (dated 2016) contains information on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relating to the previous IJB workforce plan. We would expect workforce performance reports to provide information on the key deliverables in the workforce plan, however we reviewed the KPIs for the previous IJB workforce plan and confirmed that not all of the workforce plan KPIs have been included in workforce reporting to the IJB.

### Risk

There is a risk the IJB is not fully aware of issues with workforce recruitment and retention due to a lack of management information, leading to issues not being identified and addressed and objectives not being achieved.

### Recommendations

The IJB should ensure that workforce reports include data on staff turnover and the KPIs linked to the workforce plan and other workforce related targets. This recommendation is linked to MAP 1.1.

Management should reflect on the reporting capacity of the IJB and consider whether the Chief Financial Officer is the most appropriate person to produce regular IJB workforce reports.

#### Management Action

Grade 2  
(Design)

Chief Officer to arrange meeting with HR leads in both organisations to specify content of reporting and determine what is achievable within current systems, recognising that both organisations data will be different and separate.

**Action owner:** Chief Officer

**Due date:** December 2023

### 1.3 HR Forum and Integrated Corporate Management Team

Management advised that there was previously an IJB HR Forum in place that consisted of representatives from both partner bodies, however this forum no longer meets. During the audit, we noted feedback from HR staff from both partner bodies who agreed that it would be useful to reinvigorate this forum to allow HR staff from both bodies to come together to address IJB workforce related issues and plans.

Management advised us that operational workforce information is discussed at the Integrated Corporate Management Team (iCMT) which sits below the IJB, however as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic attendance at the iCMT is not as good as it was previously. Management also noted that due to staffing changes, there has been no representation at iCMT from HR within the partner body organisations.

#### Risk

Due to a lack of representation, information sharing and collaboration between the HR departments in the partner bodies, IJB workforce issues may not be identified and addressed, and workforce plan objectives may not be achieved.

#### Recommendation

The IJB should ensure, where possible, that there is HR representation from both partner bodies at the Integrated Corporate Management Team meeting (iCMT).

Consideration should also be given to reinvigorating the HR forum to allow HR colleagues from both partner bodies to come together to discuss, collaborate and progress issues affecting the IJB workforce and to report directly in to the IJB.

#### Management Action

Grade 2  
(Operation)

HR Representatives from both organisations are invited to ICMT. Workforce issues can be discussed in the forum. A HR sub group/forum will be considered if required.

**Action owner:** Chief Officer

**Due date:** August 2023

Control Objective 2: The IJB is receiving regular reporting to its governance structure that enables a holistic assessment to be made over the current state of both bodies' workforces and any issues relevant to the IJB, along with the actions being taken to manage those.



## 2.1 Action management

From our review of workforce reports, we found no specific documentation of action being taken to address the issues raised therein. We also reviewed meeting minutes and confirmed that there was in-depth discussion at the IJB meeting around the issues raised in the reports and during the discussion there was mention of actions that were already being carried out. It is unclear however how those actions are being managed and monitored by the IJB due to the lack of documentation.

For example, it was discussed that the issue of island depopulation and recruitment challenges was being raised with the Scottish Government, however this action has not been captured in the IJB action log for subsequent updates, as such it is unclear how the outcome of this has been fed back to the Board.

More robust controls are required to ensure that actions relating to the issues raised in workforce reports are recorded and tracked for progress.

### Risk

There is a risk that action is not taken to address emerging issues relating to the workforce, due to a lack of accountability for mitigating actions, resulting in an inability to deliver the strategic objectives of the IJB effectively and efficiently.

### Recommendation

Management should include details of relevant mitigating actions within the body of the workforce reports. The IJB should ensure that all relevant actions are recorded on the IJB action log with clear owners and due dates so that progress can be monitored and the IJB can be assured that appropriate action is being taken.

#### Management Action

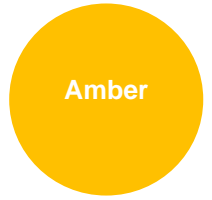
Grade 2  
(Design)

Future workforce reports will include mitigating actions and action logs will be kept up to date.

**Action owner:** Chief Officer

**Due date:** August 2023

**Control Objective 3: There is a clear escalation route between the IJB and the partner bodies if required information is not provided or the IJB is not content with action being taken to manage identified workforce risks.**



### **3.1 Escalation process**

We found no evidence of a formal escalation process for the IJB. We met with staff from the two partner bodies and IJB and none were aware of a formally agreed and documented escalation route, however it was noted said that they would escalate matters via the Chief Officer of the IJB if required.

The IJB Chief Officer advised that they would escalate issues to the Chief Executives of the partner bodies and/or seek advice and support externally from Audit Scotland, the Scottish Government, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, and the Care Inspectorate. The escalation route followed would ultimately depend on the nature of the issue.

Management identified a few instances where further escalation may be required such as the workforce information provided by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar not being as comprehensive as that provided by NHS Western Isles and recent challenges with the IJB accessing qualitative data relating to Comhairle staff surveys. However, it is unclear if or how these issues were escalated.

#### **Risk**

There is a risk that action is not taken to address challenges with the provision of workforce information from the partner bodies, due to the lack of a clear escalation route, resulting in a lack of accountability and an inability to deliver the operational and strategic objectives of the organisation.

#### **Recommendation**

The IJB should develop a formal escalation framework and ensure that there is a clear process to escalate matters when the performance information required by the IJB is not forthcoming from the partner body organisations.

#### **Management Action**

**Grade 3  
(Design)**

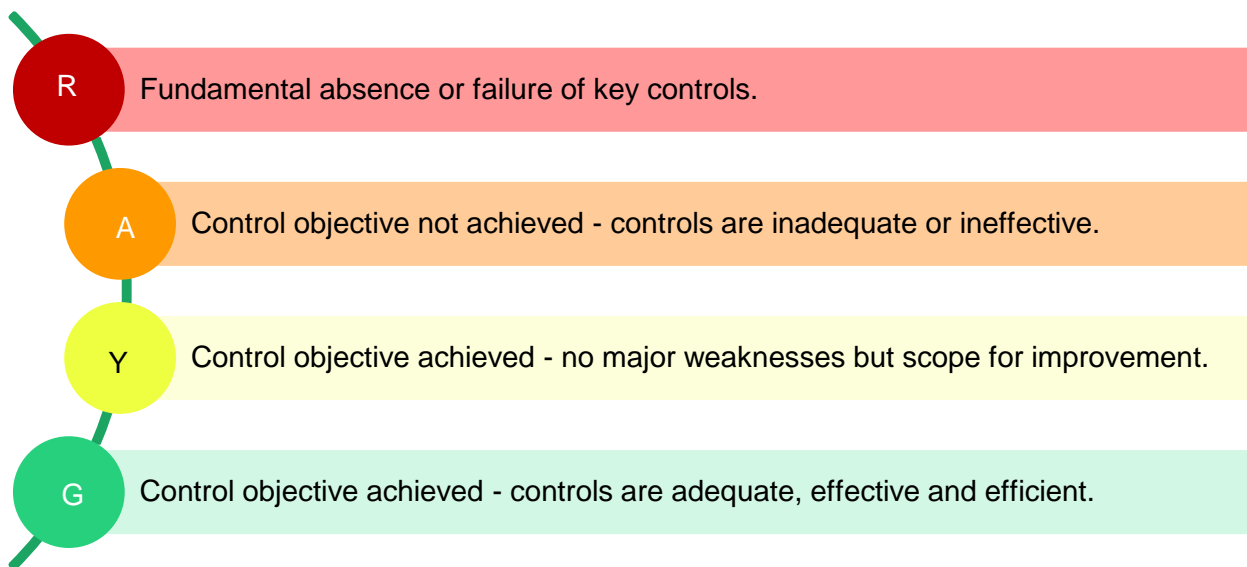
The Chief Officer in conjunction with the two Partners HR Leads will consider a formal escalation process but informal methods are currently up to the Chief Executives.

**Action owner:** Chief Officer

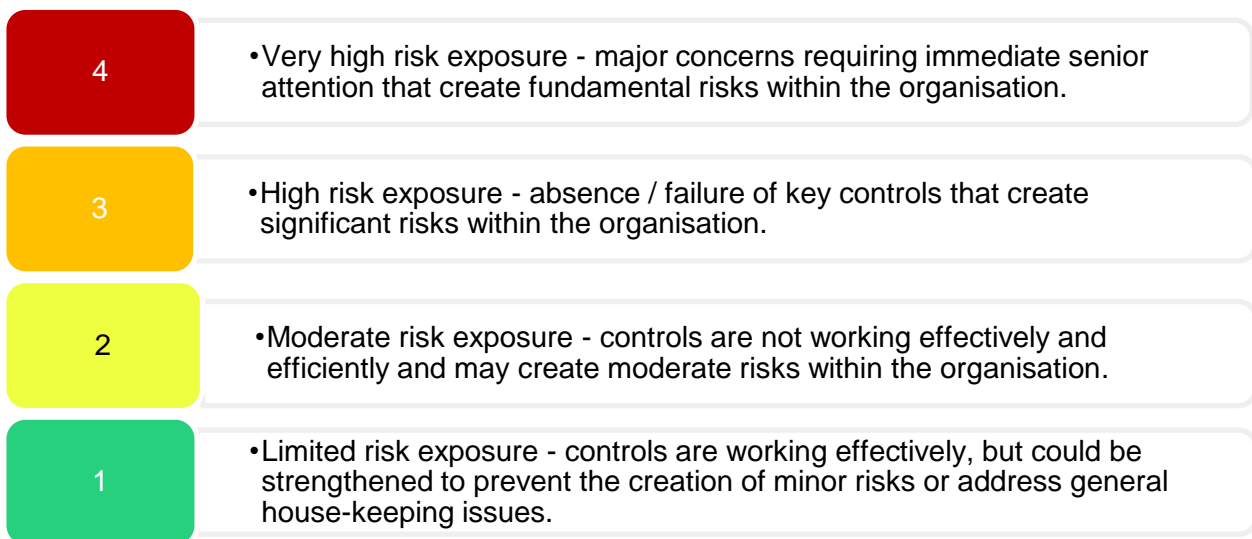
**Due date:** December 2023

# Appendix A – Definitions

## Control assessments



## Management action grades



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