

NHS WESTERN ISLES

AREA PARTNERSHIP FORUM

MINUTES OF MEETING
5TH FEBRUARY 2025
HELD AT 10.00AM
VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS



Members Present:

Jane Bain	Employee Director (Co-Chair)
Diane Macdonald	Director of HR and Workforce Development
Stuart King	Organisational Development and Learning Manager
Lachie MacPherson	Hospitals Manager
Fiona Mackenzie	Nurse/ AHP Director and Chief Operating Officer
Debbie Bozkurt	Director of Finance and Procurement
Lena Morrison	Employee Relations Officer
Anne Maclean	Employee Relations Officer
Colum Durkan	Director of Public Health
Dr Frank McAuley	Medical Director
Frances Robertson	Associate Nurse/ AHP Director and Chief Operating Officer
Shuna Mighton	Society of Radiographers
Cameron Thompson	UNISON
Alana Macphee	Society of Physiotherapists

In Attendance:

Claire Paterson PA to HR Director (Minutes)

1. Welcome / Apologies

Jane Bain welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were noted from Gordon Jamieson, Maggie Jamieson and Nick Fayers.

2. Minutes

2.1 Area Partnership Forum minute 03.12.2024

The Minute of the Area Partnership Forum meeting held on 3rd December 2024 was approved as an accurate note of the discussion.

Decision: The Minutes of 3rd December 2024 was approved.

Action: None.

2.2 Area Partnership Forum minute 31.01.2025

The Minute of the Area Partnership Forum meeting held on 31st January 2025 was approved as an accurate note of the discussion.

Decision: The Minutes of 31st January 2025 was approved.

Action: None.

2.3 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising raised.

2.4 Action Points

In reviewing the action points, the following was noted:

Turas

Stuart King noted that a HR Drop In session ran with a focus on Turas management reporting and compliance data. This session has been recorded to allow managers to revisit the session.

Jane Bain thanked Stuart King for the update noting that this action is now complete.

Staff Travel

Debbie Bozkurt informed the group that the SOP has not yet been created however, it will be circulated at the next meeting.

In addition to the SOP, Debbie Bozkurt stated that she has developed an all-travel user distribution list where she sends emails to staff regarding travel updates, cancellations and weather updates.

Workforce Report

Diane Macdonald stated that after looking into and discussions with Information Governance, we need to be aware that information provided in the report cannot become identifiable with numbers less than five not stated. Nationally and locally, Diane Macdonald added that JobTrain data is being explored and extracted through YellowFin where indepth recruitment data can be gathered, which in time, maybe provide more detailed reports.

Decision: The Area Partnership Forum formally noted the verbal update.

Action: Above updates/outcomes will be reflected in the revised Action Points.

3. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest raised.

4. System Pressures Brief

Diane Macdonald provided an update in the absence of Gordon Jamieson.

The Emergency Department Refurbishment is due to begin on the 13th February and run for 12 weeks, during this time, ED will be relocated to AAU and AAU will be situated in Day Surgery to allow the work to be completed. Diane Macdonald noted that one concern is the parking and accessibility to the area due to the already limited parking at Western Isles Hospital, the patient parking spaces outside AAU will need to be kept clear for the ambulances. Communications have gone out to all staff and the public to be aware of the changes and the parking situation.

Due to the Bristows Search and Rescue Helicopter no longer being able to land at Western Isles Hospital, a new site has been secured, situated behind the Ambulance Station. All work has been finalised for this site and trials have gone ahead with positive feedback. A long term solution is still being looked into to allow the helicopter to land back at the Western Isles Hospital landing site.

A Paediatric Bay has been reinstated outside Medical Ward 1 which now allows for an allocated area for all paediatric patients to be securely housed with Paxton card access. Diane Macdonald noted that a project is underway looking at developing an art project for the bay, communication is ongoing with the art teachers at the Nicolson Institute and progressing well.

Following on from the INWO Report, the actions regarding the ligature points in APU have mostly been completed. The main outstanding action is the need for ligature safe doors on the ward, which have been purchased and due to be delivered in the upcoming weeks however, there are issues around the access to complete the work as the ward is running at full capacity.

Diane Macdonald added that the Board have received additional capital money from Scottish Government. Debbie Bozkurt followed on, noting that 1.6 million capital one has been received along with a volunteered refurbishment on an x-ray room, where we nominated the Uist and Barra Hospital for the work. This capital has to be used within a few weeks and can not be put towards any of the refurbishments that are required. Debbie Bozkurt noted that equipment such as a Dexa Scanner and Endoscopy equipment are being purchased.

5. ~~SINGLE ISLAND AUTHORITY~~

6. Finance

6.1 Financial Monitoring Month 9 Summary

6.2 Narrative Month 9

Debbie Bozkurt presented the Financial Narrative for Month 9 which highlights the Board is in a good position and is marked as Level 1 of escalation which is positive. There are some key allocations expected from the Scottish Government, and once received, Debbie Bozkurt noted that the Board will be close to a break even position.

Debbie Bozkurt added that as well as the additional capital, the Board have received a half million capital grant money to support a local charity or voluntary sector within the community. This has been communicated to the public and applications will be reviewed before funding can be allocated.

There are concerns over the National Insurance increase for next year which will affect all staff, suppliers, private care organisations and care facilities with the cost of inflation.

7. Agenda for Change – Non-Pay Elements

Diane Macdonald presented the AfC Non-Pay Elements highlighting that there is little update to report since the last meeting.

The Reduced Working Week has been fully implemented however, there has been no direction on a further reduction this year. Diane Macdonald noted that this is expected to be decided after the budget setting for the financial year is confirmed. There has been a strong message from all Boards to Scottish Government for the reduction to be held off until 2026. In preparation, locally, information has been sourced from all managers regarding a further reduction.

There are a total of 26 applications in process for the Band 5 and 6 Reviews, with three fully submitted. A further two staff side have completed training and have joined the job matching team. Diane Macdonald informed the group that, coming into March 2025, a plan will be set to commence the panels. RCN have a planned visit upcoming to encourage and support staff through the application process.

Protected Learning Time continues to be looked into through national working groups with no confirmation as of yet with how this will look for each job family. In the meantime, Diane Macdonald added that locally a lot of working is going on to encourage compliance with Mandatory and Statutory training on Turas.

Stuart King stated that a Protected Learning Time draft proposal needs to be submitted by the end of February by each national working group, adding that by the next APF, he hopes to have a more detailed update.

Jane Bain thanked Diane Macdonald for the update, adding that RCN Roadshow is on the 17th and 18th of June and is suitable for all staff, not only RCN members.

8. CLINICAL STRATEGY

~~8.1 St. Brendan's Project/OOH and St Brendan's~~

8.2 OOH/Unscheduled Care

8.3 SBAR OOH

Frank McAuley presented the attached SBAR explaining the rationale and future plan for the OOH service.

Over the last three to four years, the Board have worked to provide a secure Urgent and Unscheduled Care service which is not limited to time or postcode, which is almost fully in place and uses the three hospitals as Hubs. Frank McAuley went on to explain that one of the final proposals is to create a Senior Medical Clinical Lead decision maker for Lewis and Harris.

To date, there has been an OOH GP service which is recurrently funded and staffed completely by Locums where the workload is managing phone calls from NHS 111, which range between 1 in 3 between from 10pm and 8pm, with the high acuity situations transferred to ED. This service that is funded provides the adhoc support to ANP's as and when required.

Separately, funding is in place for ANP's who provide a 24/7 service for urgent and unscheduled care along with ED, which is staffed 24/7 with Emergency Medicine Doctors and Hospital at Home which has funding for a GP with special interest to be embedded in the team five days a week with potential overtime. This support allows staff to make decisions and results in admission avoidance.

Frank McAuley stated that the teams are currently working as one with an Operational Lead and Clinical Lead based in the Acute Assessment Unit which is now permanently staffed, which has proven beneficial. This service, as well as being based at Western Isles Hospital, run a 24/7 service which reaches out into the community.

The current plan is for a substantive senior clinical decision maker to be part of the team, with the money that is paying for the small hours OOH GP service. Frank McAuley stated that from discussions with Finance, funding can be in place for 8am-10pm, with possible extension to midnight, seven days a week which will give a robust leave to support the service further.

Frank McAuley informed the committee that once approved at the Corporate Management Team, this plan will be shared with the wider teams before the process of staggered change will roll out.

Shuna Mighton requested clarification around the plan of taking away the small hours medical cover. Frank McAuley noted that yes this is the case for Community, however, the presence will be replicated at Western Isles Hospital. Shuna Mighton followed on to ask if the staff are then expected to cover these OOH calls.

Frank McAuley explained that this is the case as the team would be seeing these patients anyway through OOH and ANP work with all the medical support and advise coming directly from the Emergency Department.

Shuna Mighton asked if the AAU model is to stay as it runs currently. Frank McAuley stated that currently, there is no plan to move to a seven day service. The main function of AAU is to accept GP referrals and if this was to open to a seven day service, there would be support required for the linked areas such as OOH, Hospital at Home and Radiology.

Jane Bain noted that this sounds like positive work. Jane Bain took this time to thank Frank McAuley for his contributions to APF over the years and wishes him well on his upcoming retirement.

9. WORKFORCE REPORT

9.1 Workforce Report Summary November 2024

9.2 Workforce Report November 2024

Diane Macdonald presented the November 2024 Workforce Report.

Overtime hours remain high in Hotel Services due to vacancies, and in Estates who use overtime to manage the completion of projects. Diane Macdonald highlighted that the overtime usage in A&E is being looked into.

Bank usage for the month of November was highest in Domestic Services due to additional cleaning requirements and vacancies. Acute Nursing was recorded with the next highest level of bank usage. Diane Macdonald noted that the bank shift filled rate has increased for Medical 2 this month due to positive recruitment. The main reasons for bank usage are due to vacancies and the use of contingency beds. Diane Macdonald added that this month there has been an increase in the reasoning 'staff training' which is positive and encouraged.

Diane Macdonald referred to agency usage and locum spend for the month of November highlighting the upcoming General Surgeon interviews which is positive and will fill vacancies. In regard to the 2C Practices, due to the taupe, the GP's remain on IR35 direct engagement contracts.

Diane Macdonald stated that the month of November has the lowest recorded sickness rate at 4.57% which is positive. Work on attendance management continues and is taking effect on the numbers.

There has been a positive reduction in the reasons for absence with Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psy Illnesses dropped down to the lowest number recorded. There is continued support for staff wellbeing with signposted services promoted weekly and with the new Mental Health Contacts now available for 1:1 support.

Diane Macdonald stated that, in terms of recruitment, Pharmacy are currently unable to recruit to a Clinical Pharmacist which is currently covered by agency staff. The CAMHs post is under review as this is a difficult to recruit to post which has been out to advert unsuccessfully a number of times. Diane Macdonald added that there has been positive recruitment in Nursing and Midwifery areas, in both OUAB and Western Isles hospital.

Debbie Bozkurt highlighted that, if we exclude Mental Health when looking at the agency usage in Medical Consultants, the Board are within budget due to a good use of contracts and direct engagement.

Diane Macdonald added that Frances Robertson has secured the Nurse/ AHP Director and Chief Operating Officer post. The Medical Director job closing today with interviews expected at the beginning of March.

Jane Bain asked if, the bank shifts for Domestics, are using overtime to fill the non-filled shifts. Diane Macdonald noted that this is not known as the practice, but it can be looked into.

10. WELLBEING

10.1 Approved Wellbeing Minutes 20.11.2024

Stuart King presented the most recent approved Wellbeing Minutes and highlighted to the group the main updates since the last meeting.

The Mental Health Contacts have been launched after attending a refresher workshop. The contacts are similar to the Confidential Contacts however, they have a mental health focus providing a listening and signposting service for staff. Continual Comm's will be circulated weekly to remind staff of the service available. Stuart King noted that data from the contacts will be gathered anonymously to allow reports to be created to inform the Board of the topics, length and frequency of the conversations needed.

Stuart King stated that a series of Wellbeing Focus Groups are being scheduled in March, with some in person and some online. These sessions are to gather information from staff on what is going well and what isn't going well which will allow the group to look at what improvements and supports are needed. Stuart King asked all members to encourage staff in their departments to attend these groups.

Shuna Mighton suggested having an MSK Focus Group created, with the involvement of Physio, which would be beneficial and educational to staff. Stuart King agreed. Alana MacPhee agreed, adding that this needs to be looked into and taken forward.

11. TURAS LEARN

Stuart King informed the group that a Turas Reporting themed HR Drop-In session went ahead to inform managers that the Line Manager Reporting system is up and running which will allow managers to view staff training compliance.

A course booking feature is being looked into and hopes to be in place by the end of the summer, Stuart King added that this feature on Turas will allow staff to have easy access to book on training courses and hopefully will encourage staff to attend.

Stuart King stated that a quarterly report will be developed, focusing on organisation development and learning which will be presented to APF, Staff Governance Committee and the Corporate Management Team.

Frances Robertson took this time to thank Stuart King and his team for their work and support. Frances Robertson added that being able to view and have access to the team reports on compliance has made an overall improvement to the compliance figures.

Jane Bain asked if email notifications go to staff and managers when a training module has expired. Stuart King stated that both the manager and individual staff member get an email from Turas informing of the upcoming expiration and the detail of the module.

12. LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Stuart King presented the draft Learning and Development Policy to the group for approval.

Stuart King stated that after a positive Policy Review Group, the policy was amended to reflect comments and suggestions from Staff Side.

Once approved, Stuart King highlighted that himself and Hannah Maclean will provide support to all managers to assist in the roll out of the policy.

Jane Bain thanked Stuart King and asked the committee if they approve the policy.

Policy approved.

13. WORKFORCE POLICIES

13.1 Workforce Policy Summary

13.2 Appendix 1 – HR Policies

Diane Macdonald presented the attached to provide assurance to the group. Following on from a meeting with Staff Side, the document was created to highlight the upcoming policies that need to be reviewed and the policies that will be covered by Ones for Scotland.

There are a number of policies due to be launched this month with a communications plan drafted for the soft launch to inform all staff. The remaining Ones for Scotland policies are expected later in the year.

The remaining local policies will be updated in due course before taken through Policy Review and APF for approval.

14. DISCLOSURE SCOTLAND UPDATE

Diane Macdonald informed the committee that from 1st of April, Disclosure Scotland are implementing changes to their process, further information on the implementation of these changes is expected.

Diane Macdonald noted that one of the changes allows the records to be sent to the applicant first who then must agree release to the employers. This results in a longer waiting and processing time.

From April 2026, a five-year renewal period for all PVG's which results in an increase in costs and administrative time.

The most significant change is the requirement of the PVG, Diane Macdonald informed the committee that currently, a PVG is only required for staff who are involved in patient care however, expected from April 1st all staff who may come in contact with a patient for example Domestic, Reception, Catering and Maintenance staff are expected to have a PVG. Diane Macdonald noted that a staff list is currently being collated, and HR will begin contact with managers of the areas that this will affect.

From these changes, the legal liability moves to the employee themselves rather than the employer, to which it is currently and it will now be a criminal offense for them to be employed in a regulated post.

Fiona Mackenzie asked if a staff member refuses to have their information released, would this be a condition of employment. Diane Macdonald stated that this will have to be stated to people who are applying however, if this is someone who is currently already an employee then this needs to be discussed and clarified.

Lachlan Macpherson asked for clarification for the need of a PVG for our Catering staff as the Porters deliver meals to the wards. Diane Macdonald agreed, that it has been looked into and our Catering staff do not need the PVG.

Frances Robertson highlighted concerns over the expected timescales, noting that this is already an issue and will cause further delay awaiting staff to agree and release the information.

Shuna Mighton agreed, stating that she shares the concerns as this adds time onto recruitment and getting posts filled. There will also be further impact on short term employment posts and the increased workload for the five-year PVG checks that are needed for both Disclosure Scotland staff and HR which may cause backlogs. Diane Macdonald noted that there is no confirmation as of yet if Disclosure Scotland plan to increase their workload.

Frances Robertson asked if there has been clarification around staff from other health boards, who have been PVG checked, who move to NHS Western Isles needing a full PVG check completed by us. Diane

Macdonald stated that, yes it is clear that it is a requirement for all staff, regardless of where they are coming from, need a PVG check from our Board.

Lachlan Macpherson stated that for the ED refurbishment, there are going to be volunteers in the car park, do they need PVG checks. Diane Macdonald stated that from April 1st, yes they will however, as the refurbishment is due to be completed by then, this is not needed.

15. SPECIAL LEAVE GUIDANCE

15.1 Special Leave Executive Summary

15.2 Special Leave Guidance

15.3 NHS Scotland

Lena Morrison presented the updated Special Leave Guidance as some additional information has been added following on from requests from category 1 responders and volunteers and the lack of clarity in the current guidance.

By making this change and extending special leave provisions to Category 1 responders and other lifeline agency volunteers, creates equality and allows five days unpaid leave within a 12 month period. Lena Morrison added that as a small island, we are reliant on these volunteers and responders, and with ad hoc processes currently in place, it would be beneficial to have the guidance finalised.

Colum Durkan thanked Lena Morrison and suggested that when communicating this change, can this be joint with a refresher and assurance on Study and Carers Leave to remind staff how this should be used. Lena Morrison noted that this can be revisited, however, the Employee Relations Officers are there to support any queries staff and managers have on leave.

The Special Leave Guidance was approved.

16. FOR INFORMATION

16.1 NHS Circular - PCS(DD)2024-01 Medical Dental Pay 2024-25 corrigendum

16.2 NHS Circular - PCS(DD)2024-01- SAS Addendum

The attached circulars were noted for information.

17. AOCB

There was no other concerning business raised.

18. Evaluation

	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Was there was sufficient time to review the papers between receipt and the meeting?	✓		
Were you satisfied with the content of the agenda?	✓		
Were the agenda items were placed in the correct order / prioritization?	✓		
Was there was enough time allocated to all items?	✓		

Were the executive summaries appropriate for the papers?	✓		
Was the purpose of each paper was clear?	✓		
Was there were sufficient refreshment breaks?	✓		
Are there any significant issues which should be raised to the Board?		✓	
Do you have any suggestions for improvement or additional comments about this meeting?			Please send any suggestions to Claire Paterson

19. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Time: 10:00am

Dates: 2nd April 2025

Month / 2025	Paper deadline / 2025	Meeting Date / 2025
February 2025	29 th January 2025	12 th February 2025
April 2025	19 th March 2025	2 nd April 2025
May 2025	30 th March 2025	7 th May 2025
June 2025	11 th June 2025	25 th June 2025
August 2025	30 th July 2025	13 th August 2025
October 2025	15 th October 2025	29 th October 2025
December 2025	19 th November 2025	3 rd December 2025

The Chair thanked members for their input into the discussion and brought the meeting to an end.

END.