

## Shetland NHS Board

### Minutes of the Area Partnership Forum – Wednesday 04 June 2025, via MS Teams

#### Present

Mr Brian Chittick	Chief Executive (in the Chair)
Mr Bruce McCulloch	Employee Director/ Unison Representative
Mrs Lorraine Hall	Director of HR and Support Services
Mr Stuart Falconer	RCN Regional Officer
Mr Karl Williamson	Head of Finance and Procurement ( <i>on behalf of Colin Marsland</i> )
Dr Susan Laidlaw	Director of Public Health
Prof Kathleen Carolan	Director of Nursing and Acute Services
Mr Tom McIntosh	Unison Representative

#### In Attendance

Mrs Marianne Williamson	APF Administrator
Mrs Jenny Coleman	Learning and Organisational Development Officer
Mrs Laura Pottinger	HR Manager- Recruitment, Planning and Systems
Mrs Kirsty Clark	Learning and Development Manager
Mrs Carolyn Hand	Corporate Services Manager
Ms Amy Gallivan	Senior Communications Officer
Mr Colin Campbell	Chair- Staff Governance Committee

#### **APF2526-01 Welcome and Apologies**

Brian Chittick welcomed everyone to the meeting, apologies had been received from Jenny Irvine, Jo Robinson and Dr Kirsty Brightwell.

There were no minutes to approve as the last meeting had been cancelled due to quoracy and minutes approved via email.

#### **APF2526-02 Draft Out-Turn Financial Report 2024/25**

Karl Williamson presented this item on behalf of Colin Marsland. He reported

- A draft outturn position of £16k underspend
- £3.8m in savings achieved, but only £650k (16%) are recurrent
- Main overspend area remains temporary staffing

Bruce McCulloch commended staff across the organisation for their hard work in achieving this financial position. He noted that the infographic that had been circulated about savings etc had been really well received and he hoped that would continue. Mr Williamson said they had had quite a few suggestions for savings and have gone out to meet with folk to chat through savings ideas. Moving into 25/26 we will continue to look at savings schemes and utilising national procurement etc.

**OUTCOME:** Area Partnership Forum noted the update.

### **APF2526-03            Workforce Report 2024/25**

Laura Pottinger presented the Workforce Report:

- The report largely mirrors last year's, with notable reductions in bank hours and locum use, attributed to an increase in headcount (detailed by replacement vs. new posts).
- Apprenticeship opportunities are expanding: one in place, two out to advert, and more under discussion.
- Additional content was included as requested in the previous report.
- Positive impacts highlighted:
  - Reduced reliance on agency and bank staff.
  - NHS Shetland remains the top-performing territorial board for attendance for over two years.
  - Progress in developing the young workforce and succession planning through apprenticeships.
- Next steps: Following discussion at Staff Governance Committee, future reports will include a conclusion/summary section to clearly state overall performance and areas for improvement.

Both Brian Chittick and Lorraine Hall praised the report's depth and the positive workforce trends. Emphasis on continuing to build data-driven insights and maintaining momentum in workforce development.

**OUTCOME:** Area Partnership Forum noted the Workforce Report.

### **APF2526-04            Wellbeing**

Kirsty Clark presented a report seeking Area Partnership Forum approval for the governance structure around the revamped Staff Wellbeing Group. The proposal is that the Wellbeing Group will report into Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee and up to Staff Governance Committee. It will have a dotted line to Area Partnership Forum with an update at each meeting. Lorraine Hall explained that this arrangement had nominally been in place since COVID but this formalises the approach. With Lindsay Anderson (who will chair the group) and Justin Smithson now in post this is an exciting time for wellbeing. There will be staff side representation on the Wellbeing Group. Members discussed how wellbeing was important right from the almost 'pre-induction' phase.

**OUTCOME:** Area Partnership Forum approved the governance arrangements for the Wellbeing Group moving forward.

### **APF2526-05            Agenda for Change Non-Pay Implementation Update**

Lorraine Hall presented the standing update on AfC Non-Pay Implementation.

- **Reduced Working Week:**
  - Initial reduction to 37 hours has gone smoothly with good engagement from staff and managers.
  - Ongoing evaluation to ensure service resilience.
  - Planning underway for the next reduction to 36 hours by April 2026.
  - Draft plan submitted to Scottish Government; final version due by October.
  - Estimated impact: equivalent to 20 WTE posts—significant for a small organisation.

- Further work needed on staffing models and service delivery.
- **Band 5 to 6 Review:**
  - Low uptake so far (two expressions of interest, no applications).
  - RCN visit and planned roadshow in August
  - NHS Shetland's ongoing role reviews may explain low interest.
- **Protected Learning Time:**
  - Staff progressing through reviewing various learning modules.
  - Need to better quantify and code learning time to assess impact and plan support.
- **Next Steps:**
  - More detailed planning and conversations over summer.
  - Executive Management Team to review and align departmental plans.
  - Continued focus on communication and engagement.
  - Final plan will be presented to Area Partnership Forum before final submission

Stuart Falconer reported concern that during recent visit there was a lack of knowledge of the Band5/6 process. Mrs Hall said she would follow up on this as regular communication has been issued in the staff newsletter.

Kathleen Carolan welcomed the upcoming discussion at EMT regarding Reduced Working Week before the final submission as a way of identifying and mitigating risks.

**OUTCOME:** Area Partnership Forum noted the update.

#### **APF2526-06 Update on Culture and Values Survey**

Jenny Coleman delivered a detailed presentation on the recent culture and values engagement work. The aim being to shape the organisation's core values. Part of the work involved a deeper dive into iMatter and the Stress Survey. Brian Chittick praised the work as a strong and meaningful piece of engagement. The next step is to present the findings to a Board Development session on the proposed values. Following that, it will be key to have a focused effort to communicate the agreed values back to staff and embed them across the organisation. Bruce McCulloch felt that this is something that the Wellbeing Group could be engaged with.

**OUTCOME:** Area Partnership Forum noted the update.

#### **APF2526-07 Equality and Diversity Publications**

**OUTCOME:** Lorraine Allinson was unable to attend to present, an additional update had been posted in the meeting chat, and the four reports were taken as read. Any comments or questions should be submitted to Ms Allinson.

#### **APF2526-08 Health and Safety Annual Report 2024/25**

Lorraine Hall presented the report in Lawrence Green's absence. It has previously been presented to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee and Staff Governance Committee. The report was viewed positively, highlighting progress in risk mitigation and policy updates. Key points included:

- Graham Lang is now full-time for NHS Shetland, enhancing capacity and succession planning.

- Strong work on policy compliance and learning from national HSE interventions.
- Training improvements, including the rollout of the moving and handling passport and more workplace training.
- Ongoing work on violence and aggression training, especially in high-risk areas.
- Introduction of lone worker systems in community nursing as a pilot.
- Managers are actively maintaining control books to monitor and manage risks.

Mr McCulloch noted that the low training compliance figures for Violence and Aggression had been discussed at length by Staff Governance Committee.

**OUTCOME:** Area Partnership Forum noted the Health and Safety Annual Report 2024/25.

### **APF2526-09            Update on Communications Survey**

Amy Gallivan, supported by Carolyn Hand, presented an update on the recently undertaken Internal Communications Survey. Following a February 2024 internal audit, NHS Shetland identified key areas to improve internal communications, including clearer objectives, better feedback loops, and enhanced methods of engagement. A 12-month improvement plan was launched, and a staff survey was run in March to gather feedback. The survey received 116 responses, with 73% of staff feeling well-informed and 62% noting improved communication since July 2023. Preferred methods included email and newsletters, with the new Sway format proving more accessible. Staff requested more concise updates, positive stories, and better intranet navigation. Next steps include refining bulletins, increasing engagement through organisational briefings, and developing a new intranet platform to improve communication accessibility and efficiency. The survey will be repeated to ascertain progress.

Both Brian Chittick and Bruce McCulloch thanked the Communications Team for their hard work. Mr McCulloch also suggested the use of QR codes for collecting views on specific projects. Mrs Hand confirmed that is something they are planning for projects such as the GBH works.

**OUTCOME:** Area Partnership Forum noted the update.

### **APF2526-10            Fraud Policy**

Karl Williamson presented on behalf of Colin Marsland. The policy was last formally reviewed in 2018 and has been updated to reflect:

- The new NHS Scotland Counter Fraud Strategy (2023–2026)
- Updates to the Counter Fraud Services Partnership Agreement
- Enhanced guidance on cyber fraud and whistleblowing

Key improvements include reaffirming a zero-tolerance stance on fraud and corruption, clarifying organisational roles and responsibilities, strengthening reporting and investigation procedures, and supporting staff through education and protection for whistleblowers. The policy is aligned with the Scottish Public Finance Manual and relevant NHS Scotland circulars, and now explicitly covers all forms of fraud, including cyber threats.

The document has already been reviewed by EMT and the Finance and Performance Committee. Input from APF is now sought before submission to the Audit and Risk Committee for final approval.

There were no questions.

**OUTCOME:** Area Partnership Forum approved the policy to move forward to Audit and Risk Committee for final approval.

#### **APF2526-11            Staff Governance Action Plan 2025/26**

The Staff Governance Action Plan had been approved by Staff Governance Committee the previous week and was being shared with Area Partnership Forum for information. It is a moving document and can be added to/amended as the year progresses.

#### **APF2526-13            List of relevant circulars/letters published since last meeting**

The following were noted by Area Partnership Forum:

SPPA 2025/04 Employee contribution tier bandings from 1 April 2025	Letter- Confirmation of Annex 21 for Agenda for Change Staff
PCS (AFC) 2025/4 UPDATE TO THE AGENDA FOR CHANGE HANDBOOK: NEONATAL CARE (LEAVE AND PAY) ACT	PCS (AFC) 2025/5 Pay and Conditions of NHS Staff covered by the Agenda for Change Agreement
DL (2025) 07 SUSPENSION OF MEDICAL AND DENTAL STAFF	SPPA 2025/06 NHS Circular Practitioner Contributions Project Guidance
SPPA 2025/05 McCloud Remedy administration – Remediable Service Statements	DL (2025) 10 UPDATE TO THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PERSONNEL IN SCOTLAND
Letter- Once for Scotland Workforce Policies - Phase 2.2	PCS (AFC) 2025/6 NHS SCOTLAND ANNUAL LEAVE POLICY FOR AGENDA FOR CHANGE STAFF

#### **APF2526-14            AOCB**

**Annual Review-** Brian Chittick updated members that the Ministerial Annual Review has been confirmed for 18 August. APF members were advised to note this date in their diaries. As this is a ministerial review, there will be an expectation for APF engagement in a conversation with the Minister prior to the public session. Further guidance on this engagement will be communicated in due course. The team is working to finalise arrangements early, given the timing during the summer leave period.

**iMatter-** Kirsty Clark provided a short verbal update. The questionnaire had closed that week with team reports published a day later. We are still in the process of reviewing results but for some teams there has been a strong increase in employee engagement scores. Some teams have seen a drop and that is possibly reflective of some of the challenges teams have faced this year. The iMatter Team is available to support managers read their reports and developing their Action Plans.

The next meeting of Area Partnership Forum will take place on Wednesday 27 August 2025.

[MFGW, June 25]