



# Fife Health & Social Care Partnership

Supporting the people of Fife together

## CONFIRMED MINUTE OF THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP LOCAL PARTNERSHIP FORUM (LPF) TUESDAY 11 MARCH 2024 AT 9.00 AM VIA TEAMS

**PRESENT:** Vicki Bennett, British Dietetic Association Representative (**Chair**)  
 Kenny McCallum, UNISON (**Co-Chair**)  
 Lynne Garvey, Director of Health & Social Care (**Co-Chair**)  
 Audrey Valente, Chief Finance Officer, H&SC  
 Ben Morrison, Specialist Podiatrist, NHS Fife  
 Chris Conroy, Head of Community Care Services  
 Colin Nicholson, H&S Adviser, Fife Council  
 Dafydd McIntosh, Organisational Development & Culture Specialist  
 Gemma Reid, H&SC Coordinator (**Minutes**)  
 Hazel Williamson, Communications Officer, H&SC  
 Helen Caithness, RCN representative  
 Jillian Torrens, Head of Complex & Critical Care Services  
 Lee-Anne French, HR Business Partner, Fife Council  
 Lisa Cooper, Head of Primary & Preventative Care Services  
 Lynn Barker, Director of Nursing, H&SC  
 Melanie Jorgensen, HR Team Leader, NHS Fife  
 Roy Lawrence, Principal Lead Organisation Development & Culture  
 Sharon Adamson, RCN  
 Vanessa Salmond, Head of Corporate Governance & IJB Secretary  
 William Nixon, H&S, NHS Fife

**APOLOGIES** Elizabeth Crighton, Organisational Development & Culture Specialist  
 Debbie Fyfe, Joint Trade Union Secretary  
 Helen Hellewell, Deputy Medical Director, H&SC  
 Lynne Parsons, Employee Director, NHS Fife  
 Morag Stenhouse, H&S Adviser  
 Steven Portsmouth, Charge Nurse, NHS Fife  
 Wendy McConville, UNISON Fife Health Branch  
 Kirsty Cairns, UNISON, NHS Fife  
 Yvonne Batehup, UNISON Welfare Representative

NO	HEADING	ACTION
1	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	
	Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, confirming that a recording pen would be in use throughout to assist with the minute. Apologies were noted as above.	
2	<b>PREVIOUS MINUTES / ACTION LOG FROM 14 JANUARY 2025</b>	

	<p>Roy Lawrence confirmed his outstanding actions would be covered under the wellbeing update.</p> <p>Billy Nixon confirmed a meeting with Lynn Barker had taken place to discuss the Sharps SBAR with a plan implemented going forward, and therefore this action could be closed.</p> <p>Following these updates, the minute and action log of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 were approved as an accurate record.</p>	
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>JOINT CHAIRS UPDATE</b></p>	
	<p>Vicki advised there was no Joint Chair's Update for this meeting however this would be brought to the next meeting once the Co-Chair's had a chance to meet.</p> <p>Lynne Garvey highlighted that SLT have started a programme of visibility meetings. Lynne provided an update on the structure of SLT which is progressing via HR, noting that Fiona McKay's post will be advertised in the near future and will have a focus on Strategic Planning. Lynne highlighted a successful Extraordinary LPF meeting, in collaboration with all Trade Unions and Staffside, which focused on Finance and the Budget for 2025/26. Lynne noted that this had been well received with emails received from colleagues giving thanks for this approach.</p> <p>Lynne recognised Roy Lawrence's recent achievement in being made a Chartered Fellow, the highest designation you can achieve via the CIPD, which she noted is a fantastic achievement. Vicki extended her congratulations to Roy on behalf of the LPF.</p>	
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>HEALTH AND WELLBEING</b></p>	
	<p><b>4.1 Attendance</b></p> <p><u>Fife Council Update</u></p> <p>Lee-Anne French outlined the salient points from the report noting that a full breakdown is provided within the report.</p> <p>Lee-Anne highlighted that throughout the Partnership the monthly working days lost for December was the lowest over 2024 at 27.42 working days lost. Long term absence decreased in December to 21.92 working days lost with short-term absence reported as 5.50 working days lost.</p> <p>Lee-Anne advised that the top 10 reasons for absence are noted within the report by working days lost per FTE, with the top reason being Mental Health (other Mental Health) followed by Stress (non-work related).</p> <p>The top reason for absence by occasion was colds, coughs and flu followed by diarrhea and vomiting and chest and respiratory problems.</p> <p>Community Care reported the highest level of sickness absence for December 2024 with Lee-Anne noting that this is sitting above the directorate</p>	

average with 32.47 working days lost. The lowest level of absence was reported within Resources at 6.45 working days lost.

Lee-Anne reported the number of attendance management cases being supported as at 6 February, noting 98 long term absence cases, 3 frequent absences and 3 cases involving individuals who are currently not absent from work.

Lee-Anne highlighted that the Attendance Support Unit are working closely with Care at Home, noting that a managers' briefing and communication to staff will follow.

Chair opened to questions from members.

Chris Conroy, Head of Community Care Services noted that he welcomes the support of the Attendance Support Unit to improve the absence position.

### NHS Update

Chair introduced Melanie Jorgensen who presented the salient points from the NHS sickness absence report.

Melanie reported that the NHS sickness absence rate had increased in December 2024 to 7.96% however noted that this was lower than the sickness absence percentage in December 2023.

Community Care Services had the highest sickness absence percentage within the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership at 10.33%, followed by Complex and Critical Care Services at 8.17%, and Professional / Business Enabling at 6.9%. The lowest absence level was within Primary Care and Prevention Services at 5.74%

The highest number of hours lost was due to anxiety/stress/depression/other psychiatric illness, followed by cold/cough/flu, whilst the highest number of episodes of absence was due to cold/cough/flu, followed by anxiety/stress/depression/other psychiatric

The highest number of hours lost due to sickness absence was in the nursing and midwifery Band 5+ job family.

Both short-term and long-term sickness absence increased in December 2024.

The highest overall absence rate was in the 60 - 64 age category. The next highest overall absence rate was within the 55 - 59 age group.

There were 29 areas within the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership with over 10% sickness absence in December 2024.

Chair opened to questions from members.

Chris Conroy acknowledged the high absence percentages within Community Care Services however noted that he is comfortable with how sickness absence is managed in support with HR. Chris advised that he is committed to a focused piece of work to improve this position.

Melanie highlighted the Attendance Management Oversight Group and work being done to ensure practices are aligned with the “Once for Scotland” policy. Melanie confirmed that training was being revised around this with bitesize learning to support managers in attendance management.

Lynne Garvey welcomed Melanie’s update. Lynne highlighted that Community Care Services has the highest level of staff which impacts how absence percentages are reflected in comparison to other services.

Lisa referenced the multi-factorial review with recommendations within this report being used to support attendance management, highlighting the oversight group which was well received and will be built into the full implementation plan. Anxiety and stress to be broken down further to target and look at support measures. Lisa advised that this will be brought back to the LPF as work progresses.

**LPF were assured by the current position.**

## **4.2 Recruitment Update**

### Fife Council Update

Lee-Anne French provided a verbal update for Fife Council and an overview of this is provided below.

Looking at recruitment activity over 2024, from 1 January to 31 December 2024, 286 job requisitions were raised to advertise vacancies and 498 applicants were hired.

The top 5 posts advertised were:

- Care Assistant with 35 adverts;
- Home Carer with 22 adverts;
- Social Work Assistant with 15 adverts;
- Social Worker with 13 adverts;
- Social Care Worker with 12 adverts.

5814 applications were received over 2024, with 81.96% of applicants being external and 18.04% of applicants, being existing employees. Of the 498 candidates hired, 66.06% (329) were external applicants and 33.94% (169) were internal applicants. 88.95% (443) of all appointments took up roles in Community Care Services and Complex and Critical Care, with 265 and 178 appointments respectively.

### NHS Update

Melanie Jorgensen provided a summary of the NHS recruitment activity from October - December 2024, noting that December reported the highest level of vacancies with 83 vacancies. The nursing & midwifery job family reported the

highest level of activity with 47% of vacancies, whilst administrative services had 16% vacancies followed by Allied Health Professionals at 9%.

Average time to hire was reported as approximately 206 days from October – December 2024. This was an increase of 62 days in comparison to Quarter 2. The main delay was reported as the time taken from conditional offer to pre-employment which increased by 38 days. Melanie highlighted the main reason for this was due to service disruption in Occupational Health whilst they transitioned to a new system. In order to minimise delays, a process of risk assessing low risk appointees was introduced to reduce time to hire (specifically posts with low levels of manual handling and no patient contact.)

Melanie reported on vacancies within the Partnership from October – December 2024, highlighting that Community Care Services had 20 vacant posts, Complex Care had 15 and Primary & Preventative Care had 11 vacancies. 27 of these vacant posts were within the nursing and midwifery job family, with 10 AHP vacancies and 8 vacancies within Medical and Dental.

Chair opened to questions from members.

Chris Conroy acknowledged the issues around recruitment and the pressure on existing teams when managing services with vacant posts. Chris highlighted new starts who had taken up posts elsewhere due to processing delays within recruitment, noting this is affecting our ability to recruit.

Melanie advised that she is happy to pick up additional conversations with managers around particular areas of concern, noting her disappointment as in the previous quarter we had improved. Melanie highlighted that the issues within Occupational Health were not isolated to Fife with Lothian experiencing same issue with technology. Melanie acknowledged the impact on staff and advised that HR are happy to provide support and take any comments on board to improve the current situation.

**LPF were assured by the current position.**

#### **4.3 Staff Health & Wellbeing**

Roy Lawrence presented a verbal update in Elizabeth Crighton's absence.

Roy highlighted the stress survey data which he is working on alongside Rona Waugh, Casey Fitzpatrick and Avril Sweeney. The team are looking at the best way to capture this data and avoid duplication. Roy noted that he is keen to give thanks to the staff for taking part, highlighting some initial actions so staff can see that their input is shaping the response. Roy confirmed that he will return to LPF in May with further information and the results of the survey. Roy welcomed thoughts from LPF around the plan and how to avoid duplication, noting that he will connect with Co-Chairs prior to May LPF to discuss how best to present the information to LPF.

Roy noted that the Wellbeing Oversight Group are meeting on Thursday 13 March.

**RL**

	<p><b>LPF were assured by the current position.</b></p> <p><b>4.4 iMatter Improvement Plan</b></p> <p>This report was presented to LPF by Roy Lawrence for assurance and discussion. Roy noted that the paper outlines the iMatter highlights from 2024 along with improvement actions for 2025.</p> <p>Roy highlighted pages 55-56 which demonstrate positive results compared to the national average in almost every area. Roy noted the need to ensure that staff voices are heard and engage staff in developing action plans.</p> <p>Roy advised that a separate report was created specifically for Council employees within the Partnership, aligning iMatter to the Heartbeat survey, to avoid staff having to complete 2 surveys.</p> <p>Roy noted that the main focus in terms of improvement actions is to target low response areas to ensure managers have the required support to encourage responses from their teams and are supported with work around action plans.</p> <p>Chair opened to questions from members.</p> <p>Lynne Garvey acknowledged an encouraging response rate, noting that collaborative work around improvement plans is vital with feedback provided to LPF in relation to the difference made.</p> <p>There was some ambiguity noted around the future of iMatter. Melanie connected with Jackie during the meeting who confirmed that the iMatter survey will be going ahead as normal.</p> <p><b>LPF noted confidence in the plans in place to support our continuous improvement in connecting with our workforce for iMatter in 2025.</b></p>	
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b></p>	
	<p><b>5.1 HS&amp;W Assurance Group Update (inc. Mandatory Training)</b></p> <p>Jillian Torrens presented the salient points from this report, confirming that the group continues to meet on a quarterly basis and brought LPF attention to the appendices. Jillian noted great attendance at the February meeting with minutes of this meeting included within the LPF papers.</p> <p>Jillian advised that there is a continued focus on lone working, ligature management, improving statistics for the completion of mandatory training and compliance with both Partners' Health and Safety assurance systems. Jillian noted that the Group feeds into Fife Council's Corporate Health and Safety Committee and NHS Fife Health and Safety Sub-Group.</p> <p>Jillian highlighted that they are looking to create a separate sub-group to address staff wellbeing, noting that a survey had been circulated to staff with the group looking to repeat this. A cohort of volunteers have been coordinated to take the survey forward and Jillian welcomed support from LPF in relation to this sub-group.</p>	

Jillian highlighted the Ligature Management Programme Board who meet monthly, noting ongoing issues around collapsible fixtures and fittings, specifically awaiting a date for replacement soap dispensers and bed curtain rails. Jillian advised that this has been escalated at the Board Health and Safety group, with the risks currently being mitigated with additional staffing.

Sharon Adamson queried membership of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Assurance Group, specifically if there was NHS Staffside representation. Jillian confirmed Vicki Bennett is joining this group as the Representative.

Jillian noted that the Mandatory Training figures are noted within the report and requested support to ensure that mandatory training is prioritised, with staff given ring fenced time and highlighting that a month-on-month focus is required.

**LPF took assurance from the paper and noted the progress to date.**

## **5.2 H&S Updates – NHS & Fife Council (incl. Violence & Aggression)**

### NHS Update

Billy Nixon presented the key points from the NHS Health and Safety report, highlighting 6 sharps incidents, 3 slips, trips and falls, 207 violence and aggression, 2 musculoskeletal, 8 self-harm, and 2 RIDDOR. Billy noted that a total of 330 incidents had been reported from January – February 2025, with 1900 incidents reported since April 2024.

Billy noted that he had met with Lynn Barker to discuss sharps, confirming that the Sharps Policy advises that a specific SBAR is required for all sharps and near misses, which may have previously been miscommunicated.

Billy noted the 2 RIDDOR incidents, advising that one had a major outcome resulting in an over 7-day absence.

Chair opened to questions from members.

Sharon Adamson noted the increase in violence and aggression against staff, querying if this was perhaps a new patient or group and questioned how this was being managed. Billy confirmed that he doesn't drill down to this level of detail, however advised that there may be variances in reporting amongst different cohorts of staff.

Lynn Barker assured members that we monitor data around violence and aggression on a weekly basis, with a live reflection on the day when the Datix is submitted. Lynn noted significant acuity within mental health wards, specifically Lomond Ward, which has an impact on the prevalence of violence and aggression incidents.

Jillian Torrens confirmed particular acuity within mental health wards, advising that some of these incidents may be related to individual patients with significant and repeated aggressive behaviours. Jillian assured members that we are looking at how to manage this within wards, noting that we continue to operate surge beds which may contribute to the escalation of incidents due to

	<p>environmental factors. Jillian highlighted that we are looking to remove surge beds at the earliest opportunity and reassured members that there is an immediate review following any incidents.</p> <p><u>Fife Council Update</u></p> <p>Colin Nicholson presented the salient points from the Fife Council Health and Safety report, noting a total of 318 incidents, broken down into 114 injury and harm, 180 violence and aggression and 24 near miss.</p> <p>Colin addressed the increase in violence and aggression incidents, highlighting that there has been a recent focus on encouraging accurate reporting due to the awareness of chronic under reporting in this area.</p> <p>Colin reported 4 RIDDOR cases, highlighting that one was injured using a calm restraint on a service user which resulted in over 7 days absence.</p> <p>Chair opened to questions from members.</p> <p>Lynne Garvey queried the calm restraint, with Jillian Torrens confirming that staff were appropriately trained and using a recognised technique.</p> <p><b>LPF were assured by the current position.</b></p>	
6	<b>FINANCE</b>	
	<p><b>6.1 Finance Update</b></p> <p>Audrey Valente, Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the budget and medium-term financial strategy papers were distributed late on Monday evening (10 March 2025), advising that they will be shared with LPF following the meeting on a confidential basis. Audrey confirmed that she would be happy to address any questions directly following receipt and review of these papers.</p> <p>Audrey Valente then provided an update on the financial position based on information to January 2025, confirming a current projected overspend of £36.990m, which is a worsening position of just over £2.0m since the last reported position. Audrey noted the main reasons for this adverse movement as being a more accurate indication of delivery of savings and the cost of additional packages and surge beds.</p> <p>Audrey referenced the escalation tool, which is included within the papers for information, noting a plan to use this more frequently for the remainder of this year and into the next financial year. Audrey highlighted that the focus will be on the volatile areas of spend and the impact any changes in the volatile areas is likely to have on the projected outturn. Audrey advised that regular dialogue and early discussion with partners is essential for any increased spend throughout year due to risk share.</p> <p>Audrey reported that 56% delivery of savings is projected (£22m of £39m) which is important to acknowledge and celebrate, noting that the £17m under delivery will be carried forward into next year.</p> <p>Audrey confirmed a challenging financial year with continual scrutiny of spend to minimise the overspend.</p>	AV

	<p><b>LPF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Were assured by</b> the content of the report including the overall projected financial position for delegated services for 2024-25 financial year as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 as outlined in Appendices 1-4 of the report; and</li> <li>• <b>Noted</b> that steps continue to be taken by Officers to consider options and opportunities to improve the financial position during the remainder of 2024-25 as part of the Financial Recovery Plan process, as outlined in section 8 of the Finance Update Appendix 1.</li> <li>• <b>Approved</b> the onward submission to the IJB of the financial monitoring position as at January 2025.</li> </ul>	
7	<p><b>SERVICE PRESSURES &amp; WORKFORCE UPDATE</b></p>	
	<p><b>7.1 Workforce Mobilisation Update</b></p> <p>Lynn Barker presented this report to assure members of the current position around mobilisation, supplementary staffing and the Workforce Hub.</p> <p>Following direction from Scottish Government in October 2024 instructing agency usage only in exceptional circumstances, agency use has reduced from approximately 70 WTE on a weekly basis, with a downward trend observed in May/June continuing until it ceased in November 2024. Lynn noted a requirement to utilise agency staff throughout December 2024, January 2025 and February 2025, amounting to approximately 5 WTE each week. Bank usage has decreased from approximately 250 WTE each week, to around 180 WTE each week, with a significant reduction in November 2024.</p> <p>Lynn highlighted that in November 2024, the Workforce Hub was established to support clinical teams in reducing the reliance on supplementary staffing. A key focus of the hub was to support the voluntary mobilisation of staff, with 6.5WTE volunteering to mobilise to support critical services such as mental health, children services and community care in-patient services. Staff were mobilised from the care home assurance team, Podiatry and other children’s services. Lynn expressed her thanks to those who volunteered, highlighting positive feedback and noting that this is celebrated in some of our stories.</p> <p>Lynn confirmed that weekly monitoring of supplementary staffing remains a high priority, with oversight provided by the mobilisation meeting, NHS Fife Nurse Bank, the Reform, Transform and Perform Group, SLT and the FHSCP Sustainable Workforce Group. Actions to reduce nursing supplementary staffing continue to be monitored via workforce groups.</p> <p>Lynn highlighted successful interviews that had taken place with Newly Qualified Practitioners last week, with posts being taken up later this year.</p> <p>Chair opened to questions from members.</p> <p>Sharon Adamson questioned the future of the workforce hub. Lynn confirmed that the workforce hub in its current format will no longer be functioning after</p>	

	<p>31 March but will be continuing in a virtual hub format going forward in order to support requests for supplementary staffing. Lynn will report back to the next LPF on what this looks like.</p> <p>Sharon Adamson queried the Glenmar Review, highlighting that they have reduced to only one trained member of staff and expressing her concerns around resilience. Lynn will pick up detail from the meeting and will provide feedback.</p> <p>Lisa Cooper offered to discuss the concerns with Sharon offline, however highlighted robust business continuity plans and risk assessments in place around the staffing models at Glenmar which was discussed at the meeting, noting that we are currently moving forward with recommendations from this review to ensure the correct skill mix within Glenmar.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>LB</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>LC/LB/SA</b></p>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>REPORTS</b></p>	
	<p><b>8.1 LPF Annual Report 2024-25: Progress Update</b></p> <p>Roy Lawrence provided a verbal update on the progress of the LPF annual report 2024-25.</p> <p>Roy advised that Vicki and Kenny are working with Louise and Hazel to progress the annual report, with a meeting and proposed design in place. Roy gave his thanks to the LPF Co-Chairs for leading on this piece of work and noted a plan to bring a draft report to the May LPF. Roy welcomed thoughts from members on what should be highlighted within the annual report.</p> <p>Hazel Williamson confirmed she had met with Chairs, has drafted the content and is hopeful that an early draft for feedback will be ready this week.</p> <p><u>Annex A</u></p> <p>Roy provided a verbal update on the above which was circulated via email yesterday, advising that he was keen for feedback on the report. Roy confirmed that this doesn't supersede the year 3 workforce plan, and he will bring a 6-month update on this to the next LPF. Roy thanked all involved for their support with this to ensure that accurate information is provided to Scottish Government, confirming that feedback will come from Scottish Government by May 2025. Roy requested any feedback from members by the end of Thursday due to the imminent submission deadline. Roy expressed his thanks to Dafydd for the vast amount of work involved in pulling this together.</p> <p>Vicki Bennett confirmed that the report looks robust and in depth. Lynn Barker noted the great work by Dafydd and advised that she was supportive of the work.</p>	
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>ITEMS FOR BRIEFING STAFF</b></p> <p>No items identified.</p>	

<b>10</b>	<b>AOCB</b>	
	No other business identified therefore Chair closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance and collaboration.	
<b>11</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Tuesday 14 May 2025 – 14:00-16:00 hours</b>	