



Fife Draft BSL Local Plan 2023-2029



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Section 1 - Introduction

National

The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 was given Royal Assent in October 2015. The purpose of the Act is to promote the use of British Sign Language (BSL) as a recognised language in Scotland.

In October 2017 the Scottish Government produced Scotland's first BSL National Plan, which Scottish Ministers were required to do by the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.


The plan sets out Scotland's ambition to be the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work and visit. The plan is framed around 10 long-term goals, which have been broken down to include 45 actions. The Act places a statutory responsibility on local authorities to produce a local BSL plan which details the actions each authority will take to achieve Scotland's long-term goals.


Fife

This plan sets out the goals and actions for Fife Council from 2023 -2029 and is framed around the same goals identified in the BSL National Plan. Our BSL plan aims to ensure equal access and support for services by BSL users. Fife continues to work closely with people who communicate through BSL as their first language and partner agencies to produce Fife's BSL local plan.

Section 2 - Developing the Fife Plan

	Team Name	Description of Service	Contact details
	Fife Health & Social Care Partnership - Deaf Communication Service	Fife Health & Social Care Partnership Deaf Communication Service are dedicated to working with Deaf/Deafblind BSL users as well as partnering with organisations and agencies to promote BSL services in Fife including Language Service Professionals. Deaf Communication Service commits to raising awareness about the Deaf community by offering training to help understand Sign Language, Deaf and BSL culture.	If you would like to know more, please contact: swinfo.deafcommunications@fife.gov.uk
	Fife Council Education Services - Sensory Support (Deaf) Service	The team support young people and their families who are identified as having a permanent or long-term form of deafness. The support offered is from identification through to leaving secondary school.	If you would like to know more, please contact: Sensory.support@fife.gov.uk
	Fife Council Supported Employment	Fife Council's Supported Employment Service aim to support people who experience challenges finding and staying in work due to disability, health conditions, mental health issues or multiple disadvantages and help them to achieve sustainable paid employment in the open labour market.	If you would like to know more, please contact: Sw.ses@fife.gov.uk
	NHS Fife	The NHS Fife Equality and Human Rights team work to ensure NHS Fife meets its legal duty to adhere to the Equality Act and other relevant legislation. This Team is responsible for managing the Interpreting & Translation Services, which is inclusive of NHS Fife BSL Provisions.	If you would like to know more, please contact: Fife.equalityandhumanrights@nhs.scot
	Fife College	Fife College is committed to working with people who are Deaf and Deafblind in order to support their contribution by consulting with BSL users and working towards protecting and supporting BSL including in its tactile form.	If you would like to know more, please contact: learning@fife.ac.uk

	<p>OnFife (Fife Cultural Trust)</p>	<p>Supports culture across Fife and works with a huge range of partners, artists and local communities, both directly in our libraries, museums and theatres services, and by supporting the wider cultural community.</p>	<p>If you would like to know more, please contact: events@onfife.com</p>
	<p>Scottish Fire and Rescue Service</p>	<p>SFRS work in collaboration with the Deaf Communication Service and BSL interpreters to deliver fire safety advice to the Deaf and hard of hearing community through Home Fire Safety Visits. Within Fife, SFRS also install specialist hearing impaired smoke alarm systems that are provided by the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership.</p>	<p>If you would like to know more, please contact: e.fifecse@firescotland.gov.uk</p>
	<p>Fife Adult Support and Protection</p>	<p>Adult Support and Protection assist adults who are being harmed by someone or are harming themselves.</p> <p>The service provides advice and support confidentially.</p>	<p>If you would like to know more, please contact: 01383 602200</p>
	<p>Police Scotland</p>	<p>P Division covers policing in Fife for Police Scotland. Effective policing isn't just about enforcement. It's about working in and with our communities to identify and solve problems. As the EDI team, our aim is to work with communities and those who represent them to solve problems together and aspire to provide advice and guidance in a way that meets your needs.</p>	<p>If you would like to know more, please contact: 101</p>
	<p>Fife Centre for Equalities</p>	<p>Fife Centre for Equalities works with partners to make Fife a fairer place to live, work and study. We support the work of the Deaf Communication Service and share good practice in inclusive communications. We work with diverse communities and organisations to improve services access for BSL users and encourage the BSL community to participate in local decision making.</p> <p>Fife Centre for Equalities provides equality training, policy and practice advice and opportunities for organisations to connect with each other and the people of Fife.</p>	<p>If you would like to know more, please contact: info@centreforequalities.org.uk</p>

	<p>Fife Sports and Leisure Trust</p>	<p>Fife Sports and Leisure Trust was established as a non-profit distributing organisation, limited by guarantee, in April 2008 to operate and manage sport and leisure facilities on behalf of Fife Council. Under the terms of the business transfer agreement with Fife Council, the Company is responsible for the operational management, delivery and development of the local authority's sports and leisure facilities.</p> <p>We are committed to providing exceptional venues, products and services for everyone, along with excellent personalised customer service and value-for-money experiences through high-quality fitness, sports, recreational and health-improving activities.</p>	<p>If you would like to know more, please contact:</p> <p>fslt.hq@fifeleisure.org.uk</p>
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Section 3 - Engagement and Consultation

Fife has a strong history of partnership working and engagement with Deaf and Deafblind people across Fife including open days to raise awareness of services available to BSL users. This is the second Fife BSL local plan which has been developed through involvement and engagement.

During these events BSL interpreters were present to ensure full participation to suit individual communication needs. Feedback from the event has been used to progress the first Fife BSL local plan.

There are two consultation events arranged in March 2024, along with consultation with the Local Deaf Club. Individual Stakeholders will continue to consult within the Deaf Community on specific areas.

Section 4 – Fife's BSL Local Plan

4.1 Our Actions: Delivering the BSL National Plan 2023 - 2029

We share the long-term goals for all Scottish Public Services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

Outcome 1

“To improve outcomes for BSL users by embedding BSL in relevant Scottish Government policies, plans and strategies in order to develop solutions to the barriers faced by BSL users in their daily lives”

By 2029, the actions we will take in Fife are:

- 1.1 Fife College will continue to work with Fife Council BSL Local Plan group to collaborate with other service providers to input on the wider regional BSL plan.
- 1.2 Fife College will work with partner organisations to provide a BSL version and a written update of the Fife College BSL plan, outlining progress made on actions so far.
- 1.3 Guidance from British Deaf Association (BDA) re the Implementation Advisory Group (IAG) to collaborate with the lead of the BSL Local Plan group.
- 1.4 All partnership agencies will engage with the Deaf Community in Fife (twice yearly).
- 1.5 Partner agencies will provide a progress report in 3 years to update each action and the outcomes delivered.

4.2 Our actions: BSL Accessibility

We share the long-term goals for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

Outcome 2

“To remove accessibility as a barrier for BSL users in all aspects of life, recognising the importance of having accessible information in the right format at the right time, utilising technology and increasing people’s awareness of communication tools”

By 2029, the actions we will take in Fife are:

- 2.1 Fife College will improve information and services for students and prospective students who use BSL, including making our website accessible to BSL users. Fife College will continue to add to the library of guidance documents and videos that have been created for BSL students on the application and funding process.
- 2.2 Fife College will request support from BSL users to help us identify any changes that might be required to Fife College’s website to ensure accessibility for the BSL community.
- 2.3 Fife College will continue to promote Contact Scotland BSL by rolling out staff training to all frontline staff. The Contact Scotland BSL app is currently available on all college mobile devices which will allow BSL user to log in and use the service. Training will be provided to allow staff to assist BSL users on campus registering for the service for the first time.
- 2.4 Fife College will take on board guidance/advice produced by the SFC and others to ensure that across the college, staff are aware of their responsibilities towards BSL users, and that students who use BSL know what to expect. In partnership with Deaf Communication Service (DCS), we will aim to offer Deaf Awareness/BSL Cultural Awareness training to all staff, to ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and promote best practice.
- 2.5 NHS Fife will work through a variety of ways to reduce access barriers to healthcare, as outlined further in Outcome 5.
- 2.6 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) will provide fire safety advice and install partner funded sensory impairment smoke detection to the Fife BSL community. SFRS will continue to provide fire safety information to BSL users by working in partnership with Deaf Communication Service and BSL interpreters. This information will be provided by way of Home Fire Safety visits conducted following partner agency referral from DCS. SFRS will continue to install sensory impairment smoke detections on behalf or, and provided by, the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership during Home Fire Safety visits.
- 2.7 SFRS will improve staff awareness of BSL and BSL culture within Fife BSL Community. SFRS Community Action team staff members will attend training and awareness sessions provided by the DCS covering BSL Cultural Awareness and BSL taster sessions.
- 2.8 Adult Support and Protection (ASP) in Fife will continue to work in partnership with Fife’s Deaf Communication Service (DCS) to ensure BSL translations have been completed for different ASPC Easy read documents. Videos of these translations will sit on our ASP Fife Council page.

- 2.9 Adult Support and Protection in Fife Post Intervention Questionnaire will be translated into BSL and uploaded to our ASP Fife Council page. This is for Fife citizens who have been subject to intervention under ASP legislation.
- 2.10 Interagency Adult Protection training will be BSL inclusive, both online teams and in-person training.
- 2.11 The ASPC Staying Safe and Keeping Well yearly booklet has been translated into BSL. This was published at the same time as the Easy Read and the digital version of the booklet in December 2023 to ensure the ASPC is being as inclusive as it can be in terms of best practice.
- 2.12 ASPC will continue to translate Easy Reads into BSL and publish at the same time as updated guidance and policy.
- 2.13 OnFife are committed to include BSL on website and social media channels where appropriate with support from the Deaf Communication Service.
- 2.14 All partner agencies will continue to promote the use of the Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services called 'Contact SCOTLAND BSL'.
- 2.15 Information on Council services will be provided in BSL on request.
- 2.16 Provide training to staff in Fife Council and external agencies who work with BSL users around Deaf Awareness, Cultural Awareness sessions and BSL Taster sessions.
- 2.17 Deaf Communication Service (DCS) will provide free places to British Sign Language Level 1 and 2 certificated courses to families to enhance communication between parents, siblings, and wider family members.
- 2.18 DCS will work with BSL users to improve web-based access to a wide range of services ie Fife Health and Social Care Partnership and Fife Council by creating information in BSL.
- 2.19 DCS will provide and promote communication support for all Fife Council services and external agencies who require BSL interpreters, Tactile BSL interpreters, Deafblind manual interpreters, Lip speakers with signed input.
- 2.20 DCS will provide support to Deaf refugees to develop their BSL skills to enable them to live, learn and work in Scotland.
- 2.21 DCS will work in partnership with Fife Centre for Equalities to promote accessible information in BSL.
- 2.22 Fife Centre for Equalities will continue to promote services provided by the Deaf Communication Services with partners and local communities and share good practice in inclusive communications.
- 2.23 Fife Centre for Equalities will continue to promote Contact Scotland BSL by providing training for our team which will allow our staff to support BSL users in registering and using the service.

4.3 Our actions: Children, Young People and their Families

We share the long-term goals for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

Outcome 3

“The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with a deaf or deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL. We will strengthen partnerships between relevant organisations to overcome barriers for BSL users and deaf/deafblind children to ensure they have the support they need at all stages of their learning, so they can reach their full potential”

By 2029, the actions we will take in Fife are:

- 3.1 Sensory Support (Deaf) Service will provide BSL tuition to families of pre-school children to enhance communication between parents, siblings and wider family members.
- 3.2 Sensory Support (Deaf) Service will work in partnership with early years and colleges around making information accessible to BSL users.
- 3.3 Sensory Support (Deaf) Services will work with others (Alliance, NDCS, WSDCS) to look at key terminology in documents such as GIRFEC and assess how it translates into BSL and where necessary develop new signs (akin to the BSL glossary project).
- 3.4 Sensory Support (Deaf) Services will provide early years staff with BSL training and information on Deaf Culture.
- 3.5 Sensory Support (Deaf) Services will establish a Pupil Council and will develop this to allow users of BSL to meet and participate in their learning.
- 3.6 Sensory Support (Deaf) Services will establish a Parents Council and will develop this to allow users of BSL to meet and participate in their child's learning.
- 3.7 Sensory Support (Deaf) Services will develop a BSL curriculum for primary schools.
- 3.8 Fife College will continue to provide support to BSL users under the Education (Additional Support for Learning)(Scotland) Act 2004 by supporting the BSL student journey including completing students application forms, interviews, applying for Disabled Student Allowance etc and access to information within the college campus.
- 3.9 Fife College will ensure that all BSL users are provided with the support and advice required to ensure positive transition to Further/Higher Education. Providing accessible information about what BSL users can expect from college. Full access to open days for prospective students who use BSL.
- 3.10 In conjunction with Fife College Developing Young Workforce (DYW) Partnership team we will ensure a tighter transition process for young BSL users leaving school. This will include an

extended transition, awareness sessions for new staff and facilitation of interpreting services as and when required in partnership with the Deaf Communication Service.

- 3.11 Fife College will continue to support BSL users and their families to take part fully in the college experience. Take action to ensure that extracurricular/recreational activities offered within the college/university are accessible to students who use BSL. Ensuring that Fife College continue to promote their culture of inclusivity and ensuring that all activities are accessible to all.
- 3.12 OnFife will identify and implement opportunities to include BSL in programming for children, young people and families where possible and with support from Deaf Communication Service.
- 3.13 Deaf Communication Services continues to partnership work with Sensory Support (Deaf) Services in relations to resources in BSL.

4.4 Our actions: Access to Employment

We share the long-term goals for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

Outcome 4

“BSL users will receive person-centred support to develop their skills, consider what route to employment is right for them and enter into the workforce so that they can fulfil their potential, and improve Scotland’s economic performance. They will be provided with support to enable them to progress in their chosen career”

By 2029, the actions we will take in Fife are:

- 4.1 Fife Council Supported Employment will work in partnership with Deaf Communication Service (DCS) to ensure their website and referral form is accessible to BSL users.
- 4.2 Fife Council Supported Employment staff will attend BSL Cultural Awareness and Deaf Awareness Sessions provided by DCS.
- 4.3 Fife Council Supported Employment will set up information session with DCS and partnership agencies regarding Access to Work, world of work and how to work with BSL/English interpreter.
- 4.4 Sensory Support (Deaf) services will develop the employment packs for posts in Education (PSA, teacher, BSL tutor) and these will be made accessible in BSL.
- 4.5 University of Edinburgh are developing an MA in Primary Education with BSL. This degree offers applicants who are fluent in British Sign Language the opportunity to qualify as primary school teacher. This is a 4 year degree course, Sensory Support (Deaf) Services will work with the induction team for student/probationary teachers to ensure that all materials are accessible to Deaf BSL users.
- 4.6 Raise awareness of the UK Government’s ‘Access to Work’ scheme for students who use BSL towards the end of their course, so that they can benefit from the support it provides when they enter the world of work. Fife College will work in partnership with Fife College Employability Team to signpost students to a range of information, advice and guidance in BSL. A BSL interpreter will also be provided, if requested, for exit interview. Fife College will also work with employers to provide advice on the needs of BSL users
- 4.7 Increase awareness of creative job roles in OnFife and across Creative sector where possible and with support from Deaf Communication Service.
- 4.8 NHS Fife will improve staff access to BSL interpretation support during employment through the trial of the in-house BSL interpreter model. The interpreter will be accessible for Deaf BSL-using staff members (or prospective staff) for 1:1’s, appraisals, work reviews and interviews, along with a range of other possibilities.

- 4.9 Fife Council Human Resources. Corporate Communication Team and the Accessibility Working Group work in partnership with the Deaf Communication Service in relation to accessibility for Fife Council employees who use BSL.

4.5 Our actions: Health and Wellbeing

We share the long-term goals for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

Outcome 5

“BSL users will have access to the information and services they need to live active, healthy lives, and to make informed choices at every stage of their lives”.

By 2029, the actions we will take in Fife are:

- 5.1 NHS Fife will develop as a priority theme within the plans implementation advisory group, to explore barriers around access and develop solutions to address them. Access barriers will be tackled by utilising the in-house BSL interpreter. The post holder will have a smart phone that allows Deaf BSL users to video-call the BSL interpreter and discuss simple, non-clinical information about their appointments. For example, the date, time, location of appointments, to reschedule appointments, any additional needs they would like the services to be aware of, to check if an interpreter has been booked for an upcoming appointment, or to provide feedback or make a complaint. This means that for any instance where a hearing patients would ordinarily call NHS Fife, the BSL interpreter will be able to take the call in video form (Facetime or alternative) and contact the service on behalf of Deaf patient.
- 5.2 NHS Fife will develop a plan with Mental Health services to have material translated into BSL videos and shared on our media platforms such as our website, or social media, and also internally with online Deaf networks and groups.
- 5.3 NHS Fife will work with DCS to understand barriers Deaf patients are having in accessing Mental Health services and support. NHS Fife will seek to record the number of Deaf patients accessing Mental Health services over time with the aim of seeing improved access and reduced barriers.
- 5.4 NHS Fife will work with DCS to raise awareness with Mental Health teams as to the variable ways that Mental Health and psychological conditions can present in Deaf patients and how this may differ from hearing patients.
- 5.5 NHS Fife BSL in-house interpreter will undergo a regular series of ‘beginners BSL’ sessions made available to all staff. The post holder will also aid with raising awareness about Deaf Culture to empower staff further.
- 5.6 NHS Fife BSL in-house interpreter will be made available for Deaf staff members when undertaking meetings ie interviews, managerial reviews, important team meetings, and appraisals, as described in Outcome 4.9.
- 5.7 NHS Fife will ensure awareness of BSL courses as second language will be raised within specific services that manage the care of patients losing their hearing, or are suspected of having changes to their hearing, as well as patients with secondary sensory loss. Staff will be able to share resources with relevant patients and their families to improve their overall wellbeing.

- 5.8 NHS Fife will collaborate with DCS to raise awareness with Deaf patients of their drop-in and support sessions and of local Deaf Club.
- 5.9 Fife College will take steps to ensure that health/mental health services (including advice and counselling services) within the college/university are fully accessible to students who use BSL. Fife College will work in partnership with Deaf Communication Service to ensure that interpreters are available at all appointments with the Health and Wellbeing team for BSL Users.
- 5.10 Fife College will ensure that Fife College's Health and Wellbeing team have access to information and priority for future training sessions. Fife College will continue to share data and information interdepartmentally to ensure that all students are given the most appropriate support. Appropriate staff training will be arranged and refreshed as required.
- 5.11 Deaf Communication Service will work in partnership with Fife Sports and Leisure Trust to provide BSL taster and BSL Cultural Awareness Session to staff and to make their website accessible for Deaf BSL users.
- 5.12 Deaf Communication Service will promote BSL Taster sessions along with BSL Level 1 and Level 2 as a formal qualification.
- 5.13 Fife Centre of Equalities will work in collaboration with Fife Health and Social Care Partnership and support engagement with BSL users and the local Deaf Club in connection to the redesign of Mental Health and wellbeing services in Fife.
- 5.14 Fife Council Human Resources Health Safety and Wellbeing team will work with the Deaf Communication Service in relation to mental health and well-being within the workplace to make information accessible for BSL users.
- 5.15 Fife Council Human Resources Workforce Strategy and Organisational Development Service will work with the Deaf Communication Service to promote BSL Taster/BSL Cultural sessions and certificated BSL level 1 and BSL Level 2 for council employees.

4.6 Our actions: Celebrating BSL Culture

We share the long-term goals for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

Outcome 6

“BSL users will have full access to the cultural life of Scotland, and equal opportunities to enjoy and contribute to culture and the arts, and are encouraged to share BSL and deaf culture with the people of Scotland ”

By 2029, the actions we will take in Fife are:

- 6.1 OnFife will establish a partnership with Deaf Communication Service (DCS) in BSL services who can provide them with guidance on how to improve services, and support more inclusive service delivery.
- 6.2 OnFife have spaces groups can access for free or low cost for specific focussed activities, to connect or raise awareness. Consider BSL volunteering opportunities – creating posts, training for volunteer leaders in the organisation and work with partners to promote.
- 6.3 Deaf Communication Service will develop and manage a memory box in relation to BSL Culture and history with the Deaf Community.
- 6.4 Deaf Communication Service will deliver BSL Cultural Awareness Sessions.

4.7 Our actions: BSL Data

We share the long-term goals for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

Outcome 7

“To strengthen the evidence and data on the BSL community in Scotland to better inform decision making in public policy and service design”

By 2029, the actions we will take in Fife are:

- 7.1 Fife College will analyse existing evidence we have about students and prospective students who use BSL in Fife College; identify and fill key information gaps so that we can establish baselines and measure our progress.
- 7.2 Fife Centre for Equalities will work collaboratively with partner organisations and share where appropriate anonymised local data to create a more accurate picture of people with protected characteristics living in Fife and its localities.
- 7.3 Fife Centre for Equalities will support the Deaf Communication Service in identifying gaps in support and barriers for BSL users in Fife.

4.8 Our actions: Transport

We share the long-term goals for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

Outcome 8

“BSL users will have safe, fair and inclusive access to public transport and the systems that support all transport use in Scotland”

By 2029, the actions we will take in Fife are:

- 8.1 Deaf Communication Service will translate Concessionary Travel applications for Fife citizens with the explanation in BSL of the application process.
- 8.2 Deaf Communication Service will translate Fife Blue Badge Applications for Fife citizens with the explanation in BSL of the application process.
- 8.3 Deaf Communication Service will provide qualified British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters for face-to-face appointments within the Local Offices to enable citizens of Fife to apply for Concessionary Travel and Blue Badge Concession.
- 8.4 Deaf Communication Service will provide face to face support to Fife citizens to apply for Disabled Persons Railcard in Fife.

4.9 Our actions: Access to Justice

We share the long-term goals for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

Outcome 9

“BSL users will have fair and equal access to the civil, criminal and juvenile justice systems in Scotland”.

By 2029, the actions we will take in Fife are:

- 9.1 Police Scotland (Fife) will work in partnership with the Deaf Communication Service (DCS) to hold local information sessions.
- 9.2 DCS will provide awareness sessions to Fife Police Scotland Youth Volunteer (PSYV).
- 9.3 DCS will provide BSL interpreters to people subject to supervision or for Court Report requests.
- 9.4 DCS will work alongside the Procurator Fiscal Service in Fife to ensure appropriate communication is used as a person-centred approach.
- 9.5 DCS will provide BSL Cultural Awareness session and BSL Taster sessions for justice staff.

4.10 Our actions: Democratic Participation

We share the long-term goals for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

Outcome 10

“BSL users will be fully involved in democratic and public life in Scotland, as active and informed citizens, as voters, as elected politicians and as board members of our public bodies”.

By 2029, the actions we will take in Fife are:

- 10.1 Fife College will ensure that all BSL users are able to participate in the college democratic process by ensuring that BSL Users can make informed decisions with access to all relevant information. Work in partnership with Fife College Student Association (FCSA) to ensure that all inter-college elections are accessible to BSL users, having interpreters for commencement speeches and/or election campaigns. Encourage BSL users to be involved with Fife College Culture including class representatives and FCSA volunteers.
- 10.2 Deaf Communication Service will share resources for BSL users to participate in democratic life in Fife.
- 10.3 Deaf Communication Service will work alongside Local Councillors and/or MSPs to reduce barriers to communications within local surgeries in Fife.

Section 5: What happens next?

Fife's second BSL Plan will be made available on Fife Direct in English and BSL format. Stakeholders will share on their individual online platforms.

Stakeholders Local Plan meetings will continue to progress in implementing Fife's BSL Plan for 2023 - 2029.

Accessible meetings will be setup twice yearly to enable people who are users of BSL to give feedback on how the implementation of the plan is impacting on their lives and discuss areas where further improvement is required in Fife.

Progression reports will be produced and presented to relevant governance groups of all Stakeholders, including the Health and Social Care Partnership's Clinical and Care Governance Committee.

The Scottish Government will require a progress report after three years.