

NHS Ayrshire & Arran



Meeting:	Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board
Meeting date:	Monday 31 March 2025
Title:	Health Board Collaboration and Leadership
Responsible Director:	Claire Burden, Chief Executive
Report Author:	Claire Burden, Chief Executive

1. Purpose

This is presented to the Board for

- Discussion

This paper relates to:

- Government policy/directive
- NHS Board/Integration Joint Board Strategy or Direction

This aligns to the following NHSScotland quality ambition(s):

- Effective

2. Report summary

2.1 Situation

Following a NHS Board Chairs and Chief Executives meeting on 18th February a 'Leadership and Collaboration' paper was presented to Executive Group (Appendix 1) The paper:

- sets the context for renewal and reform following the First Minister's statement on 27 January 2025
- briefs NHS Boards on the new governance arrangements with the establishment of the NHS Scotland Executive Group and wider efforts to support a more collaborative ethos in NHS Scotland
- describes the need for all NHS Boards to ensure a systematic approach to balancing local delivery with the need to contribute to meet the needs of larger populations – beyond their geographical boundaries – in the delivery of planned care

Three policy documents that are due to be published in the first half of 2025 are:

- Operational Improvement Plan (by end of March)
- Population Health Framework (Spring)
- Health and Social Care Service reform Framework (pre summer Scottish Parliament recess)

These policy documents will provide the platform for the delivery of the First Minister's commitments. There is significant opportunity for NHS Board Chairs, Chief Executives and teams to contribute to this work, as well as partners, patients and communities themselves. It is important that NHS Boards contribute to the scrutiny of any proposals to ensure that the plans are deliverable.

2.2 Background

The First Minister's statement on Improving Public Services and NHS Renewal on 27 January 2025, emphasised the need for NHS Boards to work collaboratively to achieve the principles and aims that he set out: improved access to services; shifting the balance of care to the community; focus on innovation to improve access to; and delivery of care.

Following the First Minister's keynote speech on improving public services and NHS renewal Caroline Lamb, Director General Health and Social Care and Chief Executive of NHS Scotland, wrote to NHS Board Chairs and Chief Executives seeking support and setting out expectations about collaboration (Appendix 2), affirmed the principals set out in [DL\(2024\) 31](#) and the alignment to the principles of co-operation and assistance as set out in section 12 (J) of the 1978 NHS Scotland Act.

The themes of the NHS Chairs and Chief Executives meetings on 18th March were as follows:

- Agreement for the need for reform and change to support the health of the population in Scotland and to ensure the sustainability of services. There was support for the 3-product approach put forward.
- Opportunity that exists by working differently, for the benefit of the full Scottish population.
- Requirement to set out and understand risks (including at local/HB level) but requirement for collective contribution/leadership to address.
- Respecting roles and accountabilities but focus on outcomes, and what can be achieved.
- Requirement to ensure that all plans are ambitious yet deliverable and then have unrelenting focus on delivery.
- Requirement for BCE to have clearer workplan moving forward that reflects strategic priorities.
- Draft response to Caroline Lamb setting out response to her letter around collaboration.

2.3 Assessment

The request of Caroline Lamb is to secure the support of Board members and Directors for national, regional and local leadership to secure, wherever possible, once for Scotland approaches.

2.3.1 Quality/patient care

Improving the access to treatment

Shifting the balance of care

Improving access to health and social care

Bringing Prevention more into the mainstream

2.3.2 and 2.3.3 Workforce/Financial

Requirement for Boards / Board Chief Executives as group to provide shared national leadership on productivity. Given increased budgets and workforce numbers it is vital to work together on productivity improvement.

2.3.4 Risk assessment/management

Objectives of CMT members include national, regional and local components

2.3.5 Equality and diversity, including health inequalities

This proposal is aligned to Once for Scotland principles.

2.3.6 Other impacts

This report relates to the following Best Value themes

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| • Vision and Leadership | X |
| • Effective Partnerships | X |
| • Governance and accountability | X |
| • Equality | X |

2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

There have been discussions nationally with Board Chief Executives and Board Chairs groups. In producing the paper there is no need for formal engagement.

- Letter from Director General Health and Social Care to CEs and Chairs (7th February)

2.3.8 Route to the meeting

This has been previously considered by the following groups as part of its development. The groups have either supported the content, or their feedback has informed the development of the content presented in this report.

- Board Chief Executives, Executive Leads and Scottish Government, 18 February 2025, COSLA
- Health Board Collaboration and Leadership NHS Scotland Executive Group, 05 March 2025
- Corporate Management Team, 11 March 2025

2.4 Recommendation

Board members are asked to acknowledge and endorse the collaboration and leadership approach that will be progressed across health boards to deliver the First Minister's commitments to improve public services and NHS renewal.

3. List of appendices (where required)

The following appendices are included with this report:

- Appendix 1 - Health Board Collaboration and Leadership paper
- Appendix 2 – Caroline Lamb letter to All NHS Chairs and NHS Chief Executives

Health Board Collaboration and Leadership

NHS Scotland Executive Group

Purpose

1. This paper:
 - sets the context for renewal and reform following the First Minister's statement on 27 January 2025
 - briefs NHS Boards on the new governance arrangements with the establishment of the NHS Scotland Executive Group and wider efforts to support a more collaborative ethos in NHS Scotland
 - describes the need for all NHS Boards to ensure a systematic approach to balancing local delivery with the need to contribute to meet the needs of larger populations – beyond their geographical boundaries – in the delivery of planned care

Background

2. The First Minister's statement on Improving Public Services and NHS Renewal on 27 January 2025, emphasised the need for NHS Boards to work collaboratively to achieve the principles and aims that he set out: improved access to services; shifting the balance of care to the community; focus on innovation to improve access to; and delivery of care.

3. The First Minister's statement reflected the shift sought in DL(2024)31: A renewed approach to population-based planning across NHS Scotland, which was published on 28 November 2024. The DL emphasises the need for service planning to align with the population size and be collaborative. It highlights a significant shift in planning, organising, delivering, and potentially funding services to meet Scotland's changing needs and ensure high-quality, sustainable services. NHS Boards will be required to collaborate across NHS Board boundaries – and with Scottish Government – to implement these principles, particularly through the annual delivery plan process.

4. NHS Board Chairs and Chief Executives received a letter on 7 February 2025 from the Director General Health and Social Care and Chief Executive of NHS Scotland (DGNHS) setting out expectations about collaboration. This letter reaffirmed the principles set out in DL(2024)31 with an expectation for increased collaboration between NHS Boards for to help improve the health and wellbeing of the citizens and communities of Scotland and is aligned to the principles of co-operation and assistance as set out in section 12 (J) of the 1978 NHS Scotland Act.

5. This letter also aligns with the key priority deliverables set out in the First Minister's speech on 27 January 2025 which aims to improve access, reform and equity for the people of Scotland.

Governance Arrangements

6. Over the past year, steps have been taken to revise national governance arrangements. This is intended enhance collaborative working in recognition that the challenges facing the NHS and social care require a system-level leadership and corporate working across NHS Board boundaries.

7. In October 2024, the NHS Scotland Executive Group was established. It is co-chaired by the Director General Health and Social Care and Chief Executive of NHS Scotland and the Chair of Board Chief Executives Group. This newly formed group provides collective leadership in addressing key issues which require a national perspective. NHS Chairs received a briefing on the role of the Group on 5 November 2024.

8. NHS Boards are working to advance practical examples of building a more cohesive approach to the design and delivery of services on behalf of NHS Scotland. NHS Board Chief Executives undertook a successful two-day session on group development and digital innovation in September 2024 at the National Robotarium in Edinburgh. In relation to adoption of new digital developments and products it was agreed that the default position should be national development approach and local adoption. It was also recognised that this principle may well apply in a range of other planning matters.

Renewal and Reform

9. Since the end of 2024, a small cohort of Board Chief Executives, on behalf of the wider NHS Board Chief Executives Group, have contributed to a weekly reform coordination group. This group also includes senior Scottish Government officials and was set-up to create early dialogue on the phasing of reform and renewal plans due to be published this year. NHS Board Chief Executives have welcomed this approach as it has enabled NHS representatives to meaningfully contribute to and influence the early approach on reform and renewal.

10. Representatives of the reform coordination group led on delivery of a joint Chief Executives/Executive Leads and Scottish Government session on NHS Renewal, held at COSLA on 18 February. This session explored the current position of the 3 'products' that are due to be published in the first half of 2025:

- Operational Improvement Plan (by the end March)
- Population Health Framework (Spring)
- Health and Social Care Service Reform Framework (pre summer Scottish Parliament recess)

11. These policy documents will provide the platform for the delivery of the First Minister's commitments. There is significant opportunity for NHS Board Chairs, Chief Executives and teams to contribute to this work, as well as partners, patients and communities themselves. It is important that NHS Boards contribute to the scrutiny of any proposals to ensure that the plans are deliverable.

12. In parallel to reform, there is renewed focus on wider public sector reform and efficiency and productivity with an onus on Chief Executives and NHS Boards to ensure that all opportunities for service efficiency and improvement are explored and delivered, whilst simultaneously progressing longer term reform. A paper will be presented to the NHS Scotland Executive Group on 6 March on Business Services which will demonstrate opportunities available to NHS Boards to deliver transformation of business services and supporting systems.

Improvements in Planned Care

13. NHS Board Chief Executive representatives updated colleagues on weekly meetings they had contributed to which were convened and chaired by the First Minister, including the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care and Scottish Government officials. This has resulted in the development of a National Planned Care Framework, which sets out a number of principles for achieving the necessary improvements in planned care.

14. The Framework seeks to create a balanced planned care system, ensuring all patients in Scotland have equal and timely access to care. It aims to maintain or improve care standards while balancing short-term and long-term actions on waiting lists. This draft framework was discussed and approved by the NHS Board Chief Executives Group on 19 February. It will now be subject to engagement with NHS Boards.

15. The National Planned Care Framework exemplifies new working methods, adhering to the principles of cooperation and assistance outlined in section 12(J) of the 1978 NHS Scotland Act. As we advance in planning, organising, delivering, and potentially funding services to meet Scotland's evolving needs and lay the groundwork for service transformation, the Director General Health and Social Care and Chief Executive of NHS Scotland is committed to reviewing and modifying the performance governance of individual Boards to reflect this new approach, emphasising collective accountability. This will be important as there will likely be a requirement to adopt a collaborative approach to delivery across other key areas of healthcare policy.

Recommendations

16. NHS Ayrshire and Arran Board is asked to note:

- the commitment set out by the First Minister to progress the renewal and reform of the NHS in Scotland, and associated requirement for the Board to seek assurance on delivery of these commitments.
- the evolution of the new governance arrangements which are intended to enable and foster stronger collective accountability whilst underpinning the strength of local accountability mechanisms.

17. NHS Ayrshire and Arran Board is asked to acknowledge and endorse:

- the duality of their role for the population/Board they serve as well as their contribution to population planning that will cross traditional Board

- boundaries and approves local implementation of this approach, consistent with DL(2024)31 and 12 (J) of the 1978 NHS Scotland Act
- the anticipated increased pace of change and requirement for regional and national collaboration in coming weeks and months as there is requirement to deliver the principles set out by the First Minister in his speech on 27 January, to deliver efficiencies and savings and to put into action the commitments set out in the three reform documents.

18. NHS Ayrshire and Arran Board to note that in response to these changes, it is recognised that there is requirement to refresh the traditional approach to Board performance framework and indeed Executive personal objectives, which was referenced in Caroline Lamb's letter of 7 February.

Director-General Health & Social Care and
Chief Executive NHS Scotland
Caroline Lamb



E: dghsc@gov.scot

All NHS Chairs and NHS Chief Executives

7 February 2025

Dear Colleagues

Following the First Minister's recent keynote speech on improving public services, I am writing to seek your support in taking forward the programme of reform and renewal for our NHS. The NHS Chairs meetings and the advent of the NHS Scotland Executive Group has meant a fundamental shift in the way we come together and lead the NHS, but we need to increase the pace at which we are implementing the range of improvements across our system, in order to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of services.

In taking forward the range of system reform and improvement work, it is important that we fully utilise the opportunities provided by working across boundaries – giving life to the statutory duties placed upon all NHS Boards to work collaboratively in delivering healthcare services. This duty is set out in Section 12J of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 and provides the foundation for ensuring equitable and effective healthcare delivery across Scotland.

As system leaders, you are required to ensure that your Boards actively engage in collaborative arrangements with other Health Boards. This includes sharing resources, expertise and services, where appropriate, to optimise patient outcomes and improve efficiency across the system. Such co-operation is critical to achieving the best possible care for our population, especially given the complex challenges we face in addressing health inequalities and meeting the demands on services.

Over the last year we have strengthened our approach to collaboration and co-operation with you, beginning with the publication of the Model Framework Document for NHS Boards in April 2024. This document outlines how we collaborate and co-operate and provides a structured approach for Boards, detailing our respective roles, responsibilities, and the nature of how Boards interact with the Scottish Government. It aimed to provide greater clarity on governance and accountability and sets out our commitment to fostering effective partnerships to deliver high-quality healthcare services across Scotland.

Our commitment to working together has been further strengthened with the establishment of the NHS Scotland Executive Group, which first met in October 2024. Its primary aim is to support the effective governance, planning and delivery of healthcare services across Scotland. The NHS Scotland Executive Group plays a central role in supporting national and



regional planning initiatives, such as those outlined in the NHS Scotland Planning Framework.

The recent publication of the NHS Scotland Planning Director's Letter, in November 2024, provides additional guidance on population-based planning, once again highlighting the need for strengthened national and regional coordination. The DL emphasised the establishment of a Single Planning Framework to ensure coherence and alignment in service delivery, infrastructure investment, and workforce planning at national level. The NHS Scotland Planning and Delivery Board (NHSSPDB) will oversee and govern these efforts, ensuring that resources are deployed efficiently and equitably across all Health Boards.

At the regional level, the letter outlines the importance of collaboration between neighbouring Health Boards to develop strategies that address the specific needs of local populations. Regional planning groups are expected to drive innovation and adaptability, responding to the unique health dynamics within their areas whilst aligning with the broader NHS Scotland priorities. These planning efforts are integral to achieving the vision set out in the 2016 National Clinical Strategy and the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act, which prioritise integration and partnership working across sectors.

I believe we have all of the foundations now in place to allow you to fulfil your roles, as NHS leaders, but also in how we come together as an NHS Scotland to meet the needs of patients and the expectations of our communities.

Moving forward, I intend to work with employers to enhance the Executive Management Appraisal System so that we can properly assess and record the impact of working across board and wider system boundaries. This will be incorporated into the guidance for the 2024/25 performance review and 2025/26 objective setting process, which the Chief People Officer will issue in late February / early March. Similarly, the appraisals of NHS Chairs will encompass how they are facilitating and supporting the level of cross boundary working that we all see as essential.

For now, I encourage you all to review your current arrangements for cross-boundary collaboration and identify any areas requiring improvement. Please also ensure that staff within your Boards are familiar with the statutory requirements of the Model Framework.

In the meantime, should you require clarification or support, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Thank you for your continued leadership and dedication to delivering high-quality, patient-centred care for the people of Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Lamb



Director General Health and Social Care and Chief Executive NHS Scotland