



February 2024

## **Lochaber Times column**

Following the launch of the Strategic Plan for Adult Services by the Highland Health and Social Care Partnership, our teams have been focused on reviewing the plan and working to align the aspirations, governance and details of the strategy within our own local planning and proposed changes to our community services.

Indeed, at Highland Council's recent Health, Social Care & Wellbeing Committee, Lochaber was highlighted as the first of the nine different local planning areas where work is already underway.

We are all in agreement that a proactive approach to preventative care, combined with introducing sustainable measures that will enable people to be cared for at home, where possible or locally, is the way forward for the delivery of community healthcare services in Lochaber.

We are also ensuring this is aligned with service redesign within the Hospital to ensure effective pathways of care for people to be treated in the right place and at the right time. This is an essential component of ensuring we are ready to recommence work on the capital project as soon as we have the go ahead to do so.

Careful planning, collaboration, innovative thinking and the use of technology to provide meaningful data, are at the heart of our conversations as our teams meet to drive the change forward and also ensure that there is no duplication of activities, although inevitably there will be occasions of overlap.

Much of our work at the moment is centred on research, examining what's working and what is not and reaching out to partner organisations and third sector groups to listen to their input and valued experiences. Key to this is looking at the barriers to people accessing services as well as how to keep people well.

The five areas of significant change will centre on:

- Living Well/Waiting Well
- Care and Support
- Single Point of Access Service
- Frailty Service
- Intermediate Care Service

Plans are well underway to develop a new Single Point of Access service that will ensure that with one phone call people will be able to access the right service at the right time. Much of this work involves liaising with GPs, the ambulance service and occupational therapists.

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In addition, it has led to a lot of research into the treatment and referral of people when they experience a fall and looking at preventive measures. The Single Point of Access service will ensure people receive the proper signposting to different services tailored to suit their needs.

Like any service change it takes months of work and testing before we can confidently launch the service widely, but we are optimistic that this will happen this year.

We can also confirm that The Highland Council has agreed to hold on to the Blar Mhor site for the new hospital in Fort William. This is positive news and we will continue to develop our plans for the new hospital to a stage where we can be ready when the funding becomes available.

Please continue to [check the NHS Highland website](#) for further updates and information. You can also contact [nhsh.nhshighlandstatesprojects@nhs.scot](mailto:nhsh.nhshighlandstatesprojects@nhs.scot) if you have any queries.