



28 October 2020

Maggie Cunningham  
Independent Facilitator  
Implementation of SLSWR Primary Care Out of Hours Review\*

Dear Maggie

### **Latest Review of Progress of the Skye Lochalsh and South West Ross (SLSWR) Out of Hours Review**

I am most grateful for the time and courtesy of all attendees and yourself who were present and for your facilitation of the latest review of progress for SLSWR Out of Hours Services and related issues, at our virtual meeting on 26 October 2020, with regard to our report and recommendations originally published in May 2018.\*

I and my colleagues will feed back more detailed comments in due course, timescales which may be hampered by other Covid-19 related imperatives.

In order to assist ongoing progress, without further delay, my personal views at this time are as follows:

- I was humbled by the ongoing and steadfast commitment of the community of SLSWR, its public representatives, health and social care professional representatives, NHS Highland and partner agencies. The spirit of pulling together and co-production were both evident and compelling.
- You will recall that we indicated that the building and nurturing of relationships, between all those who receive and deliver services must be shared and clearly communicated. This is an ongoing imperative and momentum must be maintained.
- Progress in all 15 recommendation areas was palpable and very welcome. In our original report we indicated that some of these would be achieved earlier than others and that patience and understanding would be required. Short term frustrations and obstacles must be subservient to the longer term good for the care of the people of SLSWR - both for those who receive and deliver services. Progressing with the community bed options appraisal, delayed by Covid-19, is now crucial and should proceed with dispatch. The acquisition of the Home Form Care Home by NHS Highland in hard times, may add to flexibilities. That and other options must be explored and resolved, to mutual agreement.
- We were at pains to reinforce that our recommendations (in all aspects, including the very encouraging progress for a centre of excellence approach) should not only benefit



the people of SLSWR but also other communities throughout Scotland and beyond – helping others - the golden principle of a good society.

- When we visited at our first review point in December 2018, we suggested that multiple workstreams should be consolidated to fewer cognate workstreams and that systematic programme support, was essential going forward. That advice was heeded and has borne great fruit, with much more to come.
- We noted that digital innovation was a key recommendation and that has been enhanced Scotland wide - perversely but welcome by the national response to Covid-19. There is much more to do. In our original report, we recommended consideration should be given to exploring/exploiting/evaluating novel technologies such as the use of remote at-home monitoring. We did not mention the potential for drones – in the timely delivery of essential and urgent items, including medicines/ prescriptions to the remotest areas in SLSWRs, which should be considered too.
- In my summary closing remarks, I focussed on the final recommendation (15) of our report – Making it Happen. I reinforced my earlier comment *that 'perfect should not be the enemy of the good'*. In the next phase of progress in SLSWR it will be key to establish a clearly understood and robust governance process and quality improvement QI approach, as soon as possible - led, shared and delivered by all partners. As part of that, potentially leaner mechanisms should be pursued, but all must proceed in common endeavour. That may lead to a further reshaping and reformation of existing workstreams as happened following our early review in December 2018. That should be explored as part of the crystallisation of practicable future governance and effective communication mechanisms for the people of SLSWR. While much has been achieved – there is more still to do.
- Progress in all aspects of the 2018 Review of Out of Hours Services has been very heartening, including developments in the local communities of Glenelg & Arnisdale and Raasay.

Maggie, I would be grateful if you could kindly circulate this preliminary and rapid communication to stakeholders as appropriate, following our review meeting on 26 October 2020. I am most grateful to all for their unstinting and courteous input and commitment from the communities across SLSWR, throughout our review process. This has been greatly appreciated.

In closing, I wish to express my warm appreciation to my colleagues: Margaret Anderson, Fergus Millan and Gillian Stocks who were present at the meeting on 26/10 and pivotal throughout. My thanks also extend to valued fellow healthcare professionals who contributed to, and are listed in *Annex 2* of the original Review Report.\*

Kind regards  
Yours sincerely



Lewis D Ritchie

\*<https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/News/PublicConsultation/Skye/Documents/1%20OOHs%202018/Out%20of%20Hours%20-%20Skye%20Report%20May%20250518%20Report.pdf>