



NHS Highland - Lochaber Times column - April 2025

This is the latest update in our series which aims to keep you informed with our progress towards the Lochaber redesign project, and the replacement for Belford Hospital.

On 7 November 2024, NHS Highland and The Highland Council confirmed their intention to work to secure a purchase of Moss Park care home by the Highland Council and a transfer of service provision to NHS Highland. All necessary contracts to enable service continuity in the care home have been completed, and NHS Highland is now operationally responsible for the service.

Since the transfer of service, we have had a period of stabilisation with no new admissions to help us stabilise the transfer process. This is under continual review, and we will provide an update on this as soon as we can. We have met with residents and their families, as well as staff who have transferred to NHS Highland from HC-One. Our Chief Executive, Fiona Davies, has also visited the care home and met with residents and staff. Fiona was delighted to chat with residents in the home and was extremely impressed with the dedication of the staff. They go above and beyond for the residents each and every day, and it was wonderful to see.

We recognise that this has been a stressful time for residents, relatives, and staff, and want to thank everyone who has worked hard to make sure that transfer of service provision has been completed successfully.

The delivery of adult social care is a challenge for Health Boards and Local Authorities across the country. NHS Highland is not unique in facing some of the issues faced by the NHS and councils the length and breadth of the UK, but we do have to be creative in tackling these in remote and rural areas. As part of the wider redesign of services in Lochaber we have to be innovative in designing services which meet the needs of communities both now and in the future. Like other care homes in Lochaber, Moss Park plays a vital role in the local community, and provides security for our residents.

We will continue to work towards more sustainable models of care in Lochaber in the future.

The wider Lochaber redesign project has now re-established governance structures to take forward the work for a new hospital for Lochaber. The Lochaber Redesign Programme Board has now recommenced and is meeting monthly to ensure progress against timelines. It reports into senior

management groups within NHS Highland, including the NHS Highland Board and ultimately the Scottish Government Capital Investment Group.

Stemming from the programme board, two delivery groups have been established to drive the project: the service delivery group (responsible for planning and managing the delivery of services and workforce across both hospital and community settings) and the infrastructure delivery group (responsible for making sure that the new build of the hospital will meet the needs of patients, staff, and the communities that it serves). These two groups are working closely, with shared objectives.

The service delivery group are currently focusing on the service and workforce planning across acute and community settings, to make sure that the right people are in the right place to deliver the right care when it is needed. The integration of acute and community settings is essential, and we will make sure to review these in tandem.

A key element to remobilising the project has been to check our programme of work (what needs done and by when). This has been completed and key pieces of work have been identified and assigned to leads/workstreams. We also needed to check with service and clinical leads that there have been no changes to service delivery or demand from when the project was paused in January 2024. This has been completed, and services will be asked to formally sign off plans over the next few weeks. This will allow the project to move forwards with the 1:50 designs, enable us to look in more detail at our workforce models, contribute towards the outline business case, and highlight changes that we can make now that will lower risk when transitioning into a new hospital building.

We will develop a people and culture plan, to make sure that our workforce feels supported and confident throughout the changes that will come. Across all areas, we will ensure that our plans are financially sustainable and will deliver high quality care.

We are renewing our communications and engagement plans to make sure that we can inform and integrate with the population of Lochaber, stakeholders, partners, 3rd sector organisations, and our workforce. We want to make sure that our engagement involves representatives from all backgrounds and communities across Lochaber, including those protected characteristic groups.

Our Lochaber Health and Social Care Redesign Stakeholders Group continue to meet monthly and we welcome new attendees from interested community groups. There were some specific questions that arose from the previous meeting of this group. Firstly, these centred on the need for clarification that the 'flat roof design' of the new hospital will be fit for purpose in Lochaber given the extreme weather that we experience. We would like to provide assurance that the roof is not flat, but rather has a slight pitch surrounded by a parapet wall. This is to prevent water collecting on the roof and leakage. The materials and design have advanced significantly and are much more reliable and effective than the older flat roofs. It is the same design we have used

successfully for Broadford Hospital. We will provide more detail on the building design as it develops.

There have been some questions about who will own the new hospital when it is completed. NHS Highland will have ownership of the building. Balfour Beatty have been involved from an early stage as contractors only. It will be owned outright by NHS Highland and we will be responsible for its maintenance.

To make sure that we have representation from across Lochaber's communities, we have developed a form to gather contact information and help us to best assess how to engage with vulnerable groups. It can be found [here](#).

As the project progresses there will be specific things we need your help with (for example, what would make public space within the hospital as family friendly as possible). We will continue to work with the population of Lochaber to deliver health and care services that meet your needs.

If you'd like to get in touch with questions or comments, you can contact us via the NHS Highland Feedback team Nhshighland.feedback@nhs.scot or 01463 705997

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