

SUMMARY REPORT OF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Name of Committee	Highland Health and Social Care
Date of Meeting	05 November
Committee Chair	Gerry O'Brien

KEY POINTS FROM DISCUSSION AND ESCALATION

ALERT

- Workforce shortages in children's social work, though improving, remain a concern for service delivery.
- Committee to defer recruitment of lay members until a decision is made on the transition to a body corporate, but to revisit if the process is delayed.

ASSURE

Assurances taken on:

- Finance Report – Month 5 2025/2026 (Limited)
- IPQR (Limited)
- HHSCP Urgent & Unscheduled Care – Winter Pressures (Moderate)
- Mental Health Service Assurance Report (Moderate)
- Inspection Results (Moderate)

ADVISE

- At month 5, overspend forecasted to increase by the end of the financial year but remains in line with the revised financial plan submitted to Scottish Government in June 2025.
- Communication strategy required to better inform public and stakeholders about care home quality and improvements.
- Need for formal evaluation of pilots (e.g., hospital at home, discharge to assess) before scaling up, and to ensure local data supports national models.

RISKS

- Financial pressures and risks in adult social care, with significant overspend forecast and challenges in delivering planned savings.
- Ongoing concerns about sustainability and transformation of services, especially the need for major transformation to achieve further efficiencies.

ACTIONS

- Schedule a future agenda item, possibly jointly with Clinical Governance Committee, to review and improve the integration of social care with NHS quality and patient safety systems.

- Chief Officer to provide a briefing before the next meeting detailing Scottish Government funding allocation, geographic coverage, and implementation of the Hospital at Home model.
- Dr. Claire Copeland to prepare a briefing on the current use and accessibility of anticipatory care plans and emergency care records across North Highland.
- Committee to withhold assurance on the IPQR at this meeting, submit questions for follow-up, and plan a more detailed review at the January session.

LEARNING

- A presentation was received on the Mental Health Services highlighting progress on the Together We Care strategy, ADHD and Autism pathways, bed reconfiguration, and digital transformation.
- An update was provided on urgent and unscheduled care initiatives, including the expansion of Hospital at Home and Discharge to Assess.
- The Committee were presented with the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report, outlining statutory duties, developments in children's and adult services, workforce challenges, and the impact of the National Care Home Contract