

NHS Highland



Meeting: Highland Health and Social Care Committee
Meeting date: 4th March 2026
Title: Highland Care Model
Responsible Executive/Non-Executive: Arlene Johnstone, Chief Officer HHSCP
Report Author: Ian Thomson; Adult Social Care Leadership Team

Report Recommendation:

The Committee is asked to **consider** the content of the report and take **Moderate Assurance**.

1 Purpose

This is presented to the Committee for:

- Assurance

This report relates to a:

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

This report will align to the following NHSScotland quality ambition(s):

Safe, Effective and Person Centred

This report relates to the following Strategic Outcome(s)

Start Well	Thrive Well	Stay Well	Anchor Well
Grow Well	Listen Well	Nurture Well	Plan Well
Care Well	Live Well	Respond Well	Treat Well
Journey Well	Age Well	End Well	Value Well
Perform well	Progress well	All Well Themes	x

2 Report summary

2.1 Situation

A programme of work is now well underway to transform our model of adult social care in Highland. The overarching approach is to develop a “Highland Care Model” through fundamental shifts to the way we practice and to the shape of services people can access.

The aim will be for our practice to conform to a Community Led Support ethos which places good conversations and creative care planning at the heart of our relationships with people who need support. And we aim to create a profile of services which fully reflects the 4 SDS Options to ensure supported people have greater choice flexibility and control over the care available to them.

Taken together this new Highland Care Model will aim to deliver social care that is:

- Person-centred and rights-based
- Locality-led and place-based
- Integrated and multidisciplinary
- Preventative and proactive
- Digitally enabled and data-informed
- Co-produced with communities

2.2 Background

The Partnership – alongside its partners In Control Scotland, Community Contacts, Social Work Scotland and Healthcare Improvement Scotland - have been working with representatives of a number of local Highland communities to explore how fully adopting an ethos of Self-directed Support might be used to transform Adult Social Care in their local area.

The aim of the work across different geographies has been to develop a functioning “Local Care model” – one which pulls the different parts of the system together behind a common purpose, so that:

- Local people feel more confident and resilient on facing the future;
- They are able to stay in their own home rather than move away into residential care;
- Different conversations are had and different supports are available to reduce unmet needs across the area; and
- People feel they are listened to and understood in the context of their lives.

To do this these Local Care models, then, have sought to

- Rebalance our existing Option 3 provision with greater levels of Options 1, 2 and 4 - thereby increasing flexibility and choice for people at reduced cost.

- Incorporate greater levels of community support into the whole system of social care
- Establish locally based care co-ordination to ensure the demand for care can be met by all the different strands of available local supports
- Establish a reciprocal relationship between investment in statutory provision and the development of community fabric.

The main aim of creating Local Care Models is to help those people who need support to receive a constructive, realistic and co-ordinated response to meeting their needs. It is a way of working that focuses on early intervention, maximising access to information, informal support, natural relationships, and community activities. Where formal support is needed, it envisages our community partners working hand-in-hand with professionals from Integrated District Team to identify which of the four Self-directed Support options will offer the most realistic, tangible and timely help.

2.3 Assessment

Consistent with the approach describes above we have set up a number of initiatives to overcome the barriers and improve people's experience of – and access to – the 4 Self-directed support options.

To complement this, the Highland Partnership is working on a dedicated project - as part of its ASC Transformation Programme - to create a new Highland Care Model. This initiative comprises a small set of key elements:

Community Led Support (CLS) Programme

To work with the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTI) in partnership with local partners Community Contacts and Community Brokerage Scotland to implement a coordinated CLS support programme providing up to 150 days of expert input to scale transformation to the way practice social work and social care in Highland.

The focus will here be on utilising strengthened community assets, developing relational practice, and implementing outcomes-based commissioning. We believe this profound change to practice will result in shorting waiting times for assessment and service; and more time to explore person-centred and innovative solutions.

Community Brokerage and Independent Support (SIRD)

The work in this category will be to expand capacity within Highland’s primary Support in the Right Direction (SIRD) organisation (Community Contacts) to: meet growing demand to access personal assistance under SDS Options 1 and 2; to develop a CLS “community of practice” across the social care network; and to ensure that the principles of Community Brokerage are realised in our local communities,

“The community brokerage model promotes that the best outcomes for people are achieved when they benefit from positive relationships, natural support including family and community support with the least intervention possible by services and paid social care support”¹.

A Highland Care Model Transformation Fund

To resource locally co-designed initiatives which support our transformation to a co-produced Highland Care Model. The fund (£500k) will be administered by the Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) on behalf of the Partnership, with the Partnership retaining overall governance and decision-making oversight.

This approach mirrors the successful model used for the Highland Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, ensuring:

- transparent and equitable local processes
- active involvement of communities in co-design and delivery
- systematic evaluation and feedback to inform future mainstreaming and commissioning.

We believe that co-producing a new model of care with our communities will ensure the changes we make are ones which reflect the real lives experience of those who need our supports, and will be shaped by and to local circumstances. Our aim will be to put learning at the heart of these initiatives: sharing good practice where it occurs and learning from the pitfalls we encounter.

Community Hub Development Support

Finally, we are excited by the potential that Community Hubs appear to have to help us transition to new ways of working. However we are acutely aware of the financial challenges they face. We are using some of the project’s transformational resource to seek to support their sustainability as we move forward. We hope that these Hubs will help ensure we see the Highland Care Model identifiable taken shape across our localities.

2.4 Proposed level of Assurance

Substantial	☐	Moderate	☒
Limited	☐	None	☐

Comment on the level of assurance

¹ [A-Brokerage-Framework-for-Scotland-2024-27.pdf](#)

Delivery of Adult Social Care in Highland continues to be challenging and pressured, however it is anticipated that the range of improvement efforts will ensure fair and equitable service delivery.

3 Impact Analysis

3.1 Quality/ Patient Care

Not applicable

3.2 Workforce

Part of the aim of this work is to support the Option 3 workforce with a broader variety of community and independent and third sector inputs.

3.3 Financial

As above; included in the aim of this work is to support ASC to explore/realise the most personalised and cost effective care arrangements for Adults in Need

3.4 Risk Assessment/Management

Not Applicable

3.5 Data Protection

Not Applicable

3.6 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities

The development of SDS in Highland forms a component part of the Highland Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan for Adult Services 2024-2027. An impact assessment has been completed for this and is available.

3.7 Other impacts

3.8 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

3.9 Route to the Meeting

4 Recommendation

The Report is provided to the Committee for:

- **Assurance** – the Committee should be confident that purposeful work is being undertaken to ensure compliance with Self-Directed Support legislation and policy.

