



two regions. However, some of the risks that we carry are magnified by this context, and we have significant challenges around finance, workforce and infrastructure.

Thirdly, w such as our strategic assessment for care homes/care at home; reviewing models of social work and other specialisms to reflect workforce and demographics; we have a significant challenge around finance, which will require some tough decisions through our IJB. These challenges should inform our next Joint Strategic Plan. However, there are also ways in which government can support us with our challenges: for example, recognising the importance of pathways rather than service models, prioritising key strategic issues such as housing and transport, an appreciation of rural context in policymaking and funding, and national training support for generalism across all health and social care professions.

I look forward to coming back to many of these vital issues at future IJBs.

I am also delighted to update on a number of important areas.

Last month teams from the HSCP worked alongside our council colleagues as part of operation Evening Star – a statutory emergency simulation exercise linked to our duties in the unlikely event of a nuclear emergency. I was extremely impressed with how our HSCP teams performed in rehearsing our major incident response for when we need to step up and support our most vulnerable patients and service users. As ever, there is learning for us as we continuously improve the effectiveness

and demonstrated the skills and values we have within our partnership.

Since our last Integration Joint Board meeting in May we officially launched our Carers Strategy for 2024-2027 to coincide with the start of Carers Awareness Week in June. This Strategy is such an important document which has been designed to empower unpaid carers and improve access to a range of support mechanisms.

Carers Centres across Argyll and Bute also hosted a series of events in June to highlight the importance of supporting and promoting the Strategy and I have included information on this further down in my report.

We had an inspection recently by the Care Inspectorate of both of our registered Care at Home services and the reports have just been published and the services I would like to express my thanks to all the staff involved and also acknowledge the great work that they are putting in every day for the people using the services.

I am keen to highlight some of the other good work and positive achievements that have been taking place across the HSCP and I am delighted to announce that the Technology Enabled Care Team received a well-deserved award at this year's Digital Telecare Implementation Awards for their dedication and innovative approach to the key work that they do.

I am also pleased to report that Dr Robbie Coull has taken over the General Medical Services contract for the Furnace and Inveraray Medical Practice and that our report on our recent engagement with the community has been finalised. The report reflects key themes in the sustainability of our rural services and the desire for preventative services and vibrant communities.

We also have an efficiency and productivity project taking place at the moment across certain services within the HSCP. This is being led by Meridian Productivity. They have been commissioned by NHS Highland who have asked us to partner to support consistent approaches across the Highland footprint. They have been working closely with senior managers, team leaders and staff and I would like to thank all colleagues who have been helping with project.

This is a really important piece of work for the HSCP and will hopefully assist us in operating more efficiently as an organisation and help with ongoing workforce recruitment challenges.

Finally, I have included a short summary of some of the recent announcements from the Scottish Government in relation to health and social care. Links are included for each of the subject areas where you can find out more information about each of the announcements.

Thank you once again for reading my report.

## **HSCP Updates**

### **Launch of Carers Strategy for 2024-2027**

The HSCP and Argyll and Bute Carers Centres officially launched the 2024-2027 Argyll and Bute Carers Strategy in June to coincide with the start of Carers Awareness Week which is a national event to recognise and celebrate the six million plus unpaid family and friend carers.

The Week aims to raise awareness of caring, highlighting the challenges family and friend carers face, and acknowledge the huge contribution carers make.

The Carers Strategy is designed to empower unpaid carers, improve access to support, services, respite and short breaks and is centred on the overall health and wellbeing of unpaid carers and those being cared for.

Carers Centres across Argyll and Bute hosted a series of events during Carers Week to highlight the importance of supporting and promoting the new Strategy. These events aimed to bring together carers, community members, and local organisations to share valuable resources, offer support, and celebrate the contributions of unpaid carers. Further information on the Strategy and details of local Carers Centres is available [here](#).

### **Health & Care Staffing Act**

The HSCP has a local implementation group looking at adherence to the [Health and Care Staffing Act](#) across health and council registered services. We have completed our first quarterly report and identified the work required to improve

## **Safe Quality Care Programme**

The Safe Quality Care Programme is an NHS Highland Board wide programme chaired by our Associate AHP Director working across professions to identify and collect quality metrics including an annual audit cycle, regular patient feedback and developing care assurance visits using Excellence in Care guidance. This will also support adherence to the Health & Care Staffing Act.

## **Social Work Review**

The Care Inspectorate is currently carrying out a Social Work review examining the role and governance of social workers in the integrated landscape. This includes information gathering and focus groups at present and we are contributing fully to this work.

## **Releasing Time to Care in Argyll and Bute**

An external consultancy called Meridian Productivity, who have a track record in

countries, including Scotland. You can find out more information online about Planet Youth [here](#).

## Service Updates

### Care at Home Services Inspection

We would like to pass on our enormous gratitude to all the HSCP staff who were involved in the recent inspection by the Care Inspectorate of both of our registered Care at Home services ([Mid-Argyll, Kintyre, Islay and Jura](#) / [Mull & Iona, Coll & Tiree and Colonsay](#)).

Our staff spoke with candour, openness during conversations and fully supported the inspectors in the course of their duties and are a real credit to their profession. Both reports have now been published by the Care Inspectorate and the services were each across the areas inspected. We would like to thank the staff for the great work that they are putting in every day for the people using the service.

We also recognise that it has been a challenging time for the service as a whole and will continue to be so while we work together on the future sustainability of the service in Argyll and Bute.

### Neurodevelopmental Paediatric Service

As with many services, the lockdown period had a significant impact on the delivery of support services for children with additional needs particularly neurodevelopmental assessments and services. This meant that early in the pandemic the service was paused for a period which had a major impact on the waiting lists in terms of the number waiting and the lengths of waits experienced.

There also continues to be a high demand in this area and senior managers from across the multi-



This award highlights the good work they do in the area for the Armed Forces and Veteran communities and they are one of only two primary care facilities in the UK to ever receive such an award. This is a fabulous achievement and my thanks go to all the staff at the Practice.

### **Technology Enabled Care Team awarded Bronze Digital Award**

The Argyll and Bute Telecare Team has been awarded Bronze at this year's Digital Telecare Implementation Awards. This prestigious recognition highlights the team's dedication and innovative approach to integrating digital solutions into the telecare services provided and acknowledges their efforts to enhance the quality of care and support for individuals in the community through the use of advanced technology.

In addition to the award, the team is continuously working on new projects to further improve digital telecare services. Their plans include expanding the range of digital devices available to service users, improving the integration of telecare with other health and social care services, and providing ongoing training and support to staff to ensure they are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills.

### **Furnace and Inveraray Medical Practice**

Following a competitive recruitment process Dr Robert Coull was successful in his application to take over the General Medical Services (GMS) contract for the Furnace and Inveraray Medical Practice. He took over the contract on 1 August 2024.

We would like to thank Lochgilphead Medical Practice, who held the previous GMS contract, for their work caring for the patients at Furnace and Inveraray as well as their assistance during the transition process.

We would also like to thank the local community for their ongoing engagement with the HSCP and also those community representatives who helped with the recruitment process and interviews. Further information is available [here](#).

*Please note that Dr Coull also holds the GMS contract for Strachur Medical Practice and will continue to provide services from Strachur as well.*

### **Health and Care Experience Survey**

Public Health Scotland recently published the results from this Health and Care Experience Survey which asked a random sample of people from across Scotland of their experiences of using various services.

One of the key services assessed was General Practice and the main results from this survey for services across the HSCP are detailed below (national figures for comparison in brackets):

- 93% (76%) of respondents had a positive experience in relation to how easy it was to contact their General Practice in the way that they wanted

- 87% (71%) of respondents had a positive experience in relation to the quality of information provided by the receptionist at their General Practice
- 81% (63%) positively rated the arrangements for getting to speak to a doctor at the General Practice
- 84% (69%) of respondents positively rated the care provided by their General Practice
- 91% (84%) of respondents had a positive experience of being treated with compassion and understanding
- 93% (88%) had a positive experience of being treated with dignity and respect

I would like to thank our GPs and their teams of health and social care professionals, ably assisted by their support staff, for the amazing job they do for the people of Argyll and Bute. Further information is available [here](#).

### **Three Month Drone Trial**

In July the HSCP launched a new three-month trial using a drone to travel between the Isle of Islay and the Isle of Jura. This trial is a partnership between the HSCP, Skyports, Argyll and Bute Council and Royal Mail, and builds on the success of previous HSCP drone trials completed in 2022.

The study will test whether drones can maintain the correct temperature range for a specific number of medications. This is a fundamental step in evaluating the feasibility of transporting potential medications and medical supplies between islands.

If successful the use of drones ~~HSCP~~



## **Senior Manager Strategic Estates Development & Sustainability**

We are delighted to welcome Malcolm McMillan to the organisation as Senior Manager for Strategic Estates Development & Sustainability. Malcolm, who commenced in his new role in July, has worked in a range of project and economic development roles throughout his career.

For the last 10 years he was responsible for the management and development of a former RAF Airbase turned business park in Argyll and Bute. The site incorporated over 200 commercial properties, extensive private utilities and an active airport. Highlights of that time include building a ground mounted solar energy farm and the establishment of a charitable giving fund that has awarded over £100k to local good causes including to help with the creation of the Campbeltown Hospital Kidney Dialysis suite.