

MENTAL WELFARE COMMISSION FOR SCOTLAND

MEETING OF THE BOARD

HELD ON TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER 2024

AT 11.00AM In person

Present:

Sandy Riddell (Chair)

Mary Twaddle

Cindy Mackie

Kathy Henwood

David Hall

Alison White

In attendance:

Julie Paterson, Chief Executive

Julie O'Neill, Business Change and Improvement Manager

Claire Lamza, Executive Director (Nursing)

Suzanne McGuinness, Executive Director (Social Work)

Terry Rodgers, Communications Manager for item 7.3

Secretary:

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Nichola Brown and Ashley Dee, Head of Culture and Corporate Services

2. Board Declarations and Register of Interests

No declarations or register of interests were given.

3. Chair Update and Announcements

The Chair firstly recognised that there are a lot of pressures on the Commission at present and that the Board are very conscious that although there has been fewer staff available, the need to progress key areas of work has been relentless. He wanted to acknowledge this and thank those who have had to go the extra mile to ensure that the Commission continues to fulfil its responsibilities.

He then moved on to consider some governance related issues. Firstly, he advised that as there are a number of key areas that are being managed through that require capacity and continuity from the Board, he has secured the necessary approval to extend Mary and Gordon's appointments for up to 4 months on any tasks specifically related to these areas of work. He is delighted to confirm that they have both agreed to do this if necessary. He added that the new Board members will still take up their roles from April 2025.

In relation to the recruitment of new Board members, he advised that the closing date was last week, there have been around 125 applications, and that the shortlisting process will be underway shortly. It is still planned to hold interviews next month and the Chair will keep the Board advised of any developments in this respect.

4. CEO Update

JP started by thanking the Chair and the Board for their support and confirmed commitment to delivery on the business plan as far as possible.

JP also highlighted that the Scottish Government have requested discussion on additional work and resources related to investigations and in relation to emergency detention certificates (both of which are in keeping with recommendations made by the Scottish Mental Health Law Review). Napier University have also asked to meet to discuss possible joint work. The executive team are looking forward to 2025!

5. (a) Minutes of Board meeting held on (Paper)

The minutes were approved for this meeting.

(b) Action Points (Paper)

Action points updated accordingly.

6. Advisory Committee (verbal update)

MT reported that she had discussed the advisory committee with NB prior to the meeting.

MT informed the group that the originally planned in-person meeting for March would now be in a virtual format. She invited contributions to the agenda for this meeting, with planning scheduled to begin in mid-January.

CM proposed consulting advisory group members on the use of various communication platforms. This approach would ensure that end-user feedback is incorporated into the development of the communications strategy.

SM acknowledged that while previous feedback had focused on the communications themselves, this consultation could be adapted to gather views from group members. SR, MT, NB and JP to organise.

Action: Chair to co-ordinate with MT, NB and JP.

7.1 LD Report: People in hospital over 10 years

JP presented the paper to the Board, highlighting the Scottish Government's original request for this work to be done.

The findings reveal that the Dynamic Support Register (DSR) is not working, with some individuals on the list and some others not with often little or no timeline/detail related to understand the rationale for being included or not. There also remains a lack of a cohesive strategic overview across Scotland as confirmed in our previous Out of NHS placement report led by CL.

It was noted that the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) is preparing a substantial report concerning long-term hospital stays. The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) has resolved to publish the Commission's report prior to the release of the SHRC document, positioning it as a valuable precursor to SHRC's extensive publication. The Board agreed with this position.

Action: JP to inform SHRC of decision to publish early January.

JP confirmed that the draft report had already been shared with the Scottish Government (SG), and they are aware of the intention to publish early in January. The Board was informed that a quote from a forensic psychiatrist would be added prior to publication to add emphasis on individuals with forensic needs who seem to be missed when discussing delayed discharge/dynamic support registers. Numbers will also be suppressed to anonymise further.

JP expressed gratitude to Sheena Jones, Consultant Psychiatrist in Learning Disability and Dr Matthew Beattie, Higher Trainee, for their thorough investigation into the matter. Dr Beattie laid the strong foundations for this work whilst on placement at the Commission.

The Chair welcomed the report and commended its identification of broader areas requiring ongoing monitoring and investigation. DH supported this view, noting that additional individuals with important needs and outcomes to be met may still be unaccounted for.

GJ observed that the report highlighted the concerning shared view that the Coming Home report had not been fully implemented and agreed that this issue requires action at a national level. He noted the inertia and lack of insight against a backdrop of reduced resource.

MT emphasised the importance of follow-up actions, expressing concern that efforts might diminish following the publication of the report. CL reported that the Commission's themed visit recommendations in 2023 align with the findings outlined in this report and actions in response are currently being pursued including those resting with SG.

AW commended the report as well-written and raised a query about the impact of staff turnover on individuals in long-term care. AW highlighted that staff may be aware of individuals but not their length of stay, and that staffing challenges leading to lack of continuity of care to meet individuals' complex needs may create additional challenges.

The Board approved the paper

7.2 SBAR Budget Update

JP presented the paper to the Board and expressed her gratitude to Elizabeth Halliday, Finance Manager, for her significant contributions in AD's absence. This paper had already been presented to the AP&R committee.

It was noted that the planned increase in National Insurance contributions from employers would require further investigation however the indicative additional cost has been shared with SG. DH requested clarification on whether discretionary points and the fees paid to DMPs would both be impacted by the 10.5% reported increase. JP will aim to seek confirmation from EH.

JP confirmed that the Commission has received a letter of comfort from the Scottish Government regarding the AWI project. The Chair highlighted the importance of this development, noting the significant and positive impact of this collaboration with NES.

The Board approved the paper

7.3 Communications Analysis

The Chair invited TR to present a summary of recent developments in the Commission's social media strategy.

TR reported several significant changes over the past year, with the most notable being a marked reduction in engagement on the platform 'X' (formerly known as Twitter). TR explained that social media platforms do not equally promote posts, that posts which hold links to external sites are not shown as much as this lowers the site's own engagement.

To diversify its outreach, the Commission has started posting on LinkedIn. Although LinkedIn has a smaller audience, it has been noted for higher engagement levels, particularly among mental health professionals.

TR mentioned other potential platforms, including Instagram, which could be explored further. However, there are limitations to Instagram's capacity for sharing links directly.

Additionally, TR highlighted the emergence of the social media platform 'BlueSky.' The communications team has researched the usage of BlueSky by other mental health organisations, such as the Scottish Government, the Coalition of Carers and the Scottish Youth Parliament, all of which maintain active accounts. TR proposed maintaining the Commission's presence on 'X' while also cross-posting the same content on BlueSky. This approach would maximise exposure and allow comparison of engagement metrics across platforms.

MT thanked TR for the report and noted that Instagram appeared to be the most suitable platform for reaching younger audiences, while BlueSky remains relatively new and untested. MT also mentioned that another platform, 'Threads,' supports embedding links, and Instagram provides the option to use a Linktree for sharing multiple links. TR confirmed that the communications team is working in collaboration with the Engagement and Participation Team to explore different methods of presenting information, including the use of carousels for pictorial content.

DH expressed gratitude to TR for the explanation and raised concern over the implications of 'X' no longer effectively supporting posts with links.

GJ agreed on the importance of maintaining the current 'X' account and endorsed TR's proposal to cross-post content on both BlueSky and 'X' to maximise reach and engagement.

CM thanked TR and agreed with the plan to post on both Blue Sky. She also reminded of the importance of reaching young people as this had been identified by the Commission as a goal.

The Board approved the creation of a BlueSky account.

The Board approved the paper.

7.4 Staff Survey Report

JON presented the paper to the board.

It was noted that the response rate to the survey had decreased compared to the previous year, with nine fewer individuals responding. Four focus group sessions have been scheduled for January 2025 to collectively agree an action plan.

CM raised a query regarding the delay in implementing Item 1.3 of the report, which states that "supervision is to be minuted, and the document signed by both parties." CM acknowledged the pressures caused by staff absences but suggested that implementation might still be feasible. JP agreed to escalate this matter to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) for review and action.

GJ commented on what he described as positive survey results. Discussion then centred on the additional two questions discussed previously and whether they should be separated off

or simply included as part of the whole staff survey. It was agreed that the staff focus groups will help to identify how best to include going forward.

Action: Item 1.3 to be reviewed by ELT

The Board noted the paper.

7.5 Strategic Risk Register

JON updated the board including in relation to DMP work as raised by the Board previously.

JP confirmed that CL is executive lead for DMP work pending recruitment to the current executive director (medical) vacancy.

Action: Report on possible different models of DMP service provision to be brought to the Board in summer 2025.

The Board noted the paper

7.6 IMS Project Update

SM presented the report to the Board, noting that it had been previously shared with AP&R for review.

SM highlighted that the absence of a detailed project plan remains a challenge; however, progress on the project continues.

The Board welcomed the action to seek a 'health check'.

CM inquired whether resource constraints have impacted the delivery of the IMS. SM acknowledged that earlier agreements between the supplier and the Commission could have facilitated smoother progress. It was further noted that the IMS project has now been included in the Strategic Risk Register, with the objective of delivering a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) by March 2025.

Action: SM to bring full report to the board in February 2025

7.7 Audit Performance and Risk Committee Minutes held on 17 June 2024

The minutes were approved as a correct record with no amendments.

8 For Information

No items for information

9. Board Agenda Planning

Budget Updates

Business Plan 2024 -2025 progress reports

Out of Scotland provided placement areas Closure Report

Mr AB Report

Mr D Closure Report

Mrs F Closure Report

Equalities Plan: to publish new equalities outcomes for the next four years

Equalities Plan: to complete outstanding actions per current plan

Annual Staff Survey Report

Policy Update: Standing Orders

Policy Update: Standing Financial Instructions

AP& R minutes 25 November 2024

AP& R Self Assessment

Organisational Development Plan

10. Date for next Board meeting Tuesday 25th February 2025