



**Meeting:** Highland Health & Social Care Committee  
**Meeting date:** 10 JULY 2024  
**Title:** Learning Disability Services  
**Responsible Executive/Non-Executive:** Pamela Cremin, Chief Officer  
**Report Author:** Arlene Johnstone, Head of Mental Health, Learning Disability and DARS

**1 Purpose**

**This is presented to the Board for:**

- Assurance

**This report relates to a:**

- 5 Year Strategy, Together We Care, with you, for you.
- Emerging issue
- Government policy/directive
- Local policy
- NHS Board/Integration Joint Board Strategy or Direction

**This report will align to the following NHS Scotland 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	x	Respond Well		Treat Well	
Journey Well	Age Well		End Well		Value Well	
Perform well	Progress well					

**2 Report summary**

**2.1 Situation**

This paper follows on from previous reports relating to the provision of care and support to individuals with a Learning Disability in Highland. This paper will focus on the delivery of Health Checks, our work with independent sector

support providers to commission support for individuals and to create opportunities to enable ordinary living and the ongoing risks relating to the work to achieve the recommendations of the Coming Home Report.

The committee is asked to:

- To note the progress achieved in delivering Annual Health Checks to people with a Learning Disability.
- Support the actions to enable individuals with a learning disability to lead full and active lives in their own homes in community settings.
- Note the risks associated with the provision of support to individuals with complex needs and the recruitment and retention difficulties being experienced by the support sector.

**2.2 BACKGROUND**

2.2.1 The definition of a Learning Disability is described on the Scottish Consortium of Learning Disabilities website as: *A learning disability is different for everyone. No two people are the same. Challenges faced by people with learning disabilities can vary widely. In all cases a learning disability is lifelong. A learning disability affects the way a person learns new things throughout their life. Many people who have a learning disability can get qualifications, work, have loving relationships, and live independently. Some people with a learning disability might need more support throughout their life. Someone with a learning disability can experience barriers to accessing to their human rights, including education, employment, relationships, and family life.*

2.2.2 Population data relating to prevalence is different depending on the source and methods of gathering this data nationally are currently under Scottish Government review. The national census states that there are approx. 1200 people with a learning disability in Highland (0.5% of the population). Our health and social care services have identified 1034 people, with a learning disability, known or receiving services.

2.2.3 **HEALTH CHECKS:** Directions have been received from the Scottish Government, under sections 2(5) and 105(7) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 requiring Health Boards to commence Annual Health Checks for People with Learning Disabilities:

- Delivery target of everyone who is eligible being offered a health check by 31st March 2024
- Health Checks are offered on an annual basis
- Health Checks are delivered by a Registered Nurse or Registered Medical Practitioner

The Scottish Government has provided NHS Highland £92k per annum to support the delivery of Health checks.

2.2.4 **SUPPORT PROVISION:** NHS Highland currently commission support for individuals with a Learning Disability, in their own homes, from specialist

independent sector providers with the purpose of meeting the needs of individuals and creating opportunities to enable people to lead ordinary lives.

NHS Highland currently provide support to individuals in two cluster housing models on Skye and one shared house in Inverness.

The Assessment and Treatment Unit in New Craigs (Willows) provides care and treatment for 6 individuals with a learning disability and complex needs who require hospital care. 3 of these people are awaiting a suitable adult social care setting to meet their needs.

Day opportunities continue to be offered to people in buildings-based day services across Highland: Isobel Rhind Centre, Corbett Centre, Angus Centre, Thor House.

Previous papers have provided information relating to the detail of the structure of the Adult Social Care budget. The current requirement to achieve significant savings in the Adult Social Care budget will impact on the support provided to adults with a learning disability and complex needs.

2.2.5 **COMPLEX NEEDS:** Work continues to ensure implementation of the recommendations set out by the Scottish Government in the “Coming Home Report” which aims to ensure that people with a Learning Disability and Complex Needs are supported to live in their own homes and lead ordinary lives. Previous reports have provided details of the recommendations of the Coming Home Report.

**2.3 Assessment**

2.3.1 **HEALTH CHECKS:** The service model for Health Checks is now agreed and the Learning Disability Nursing Service will lead on the delivery. An Advanced Nurse Practitioner has been employed since early 2024 to lead on and complete Annual Health Checks. It is recognised that the resource available will not meet the demand and the service are therefore prioritising individuals who are known to the Learning Disability Nursing service.

2.3.2 **SUPPORT PROVISION:** The supported living sector in North Highland continues to experience staff recruitment and retention challenges. Whilst there has been some improvements in recruitment this is not consistent across all providers and areas. For example there is a continued and ongoing challenge to recruit staff in Mid Ross, East Ross and particularly Lochaber where established services continue to find it difficult to attract and retain staff.

Difficulties in attracting and retaining staff impact the ability of providers to increase the number of individuals supported. Service for individuals who require

extensive support are also impacted by the this and the lead time for new service provision is impacted by the ability of providers to recruit.

Communications and relationships with supported living providers remain good and work is on going to meet with providers on a regular basis and to provide a forum for improvements through the Support Provider Business Meeting which is jointly chaired by NHS Highland and a provider representative.

The Support Provider Business Meeting will be looking at various challenges faced by both NHS Highland and providers such increased use of technology and addressing overnight care costs and solutions.

The total projected expenditure for 2024/2025 is £33,947,948 and distributed amongst 12 main providers (Table 1).

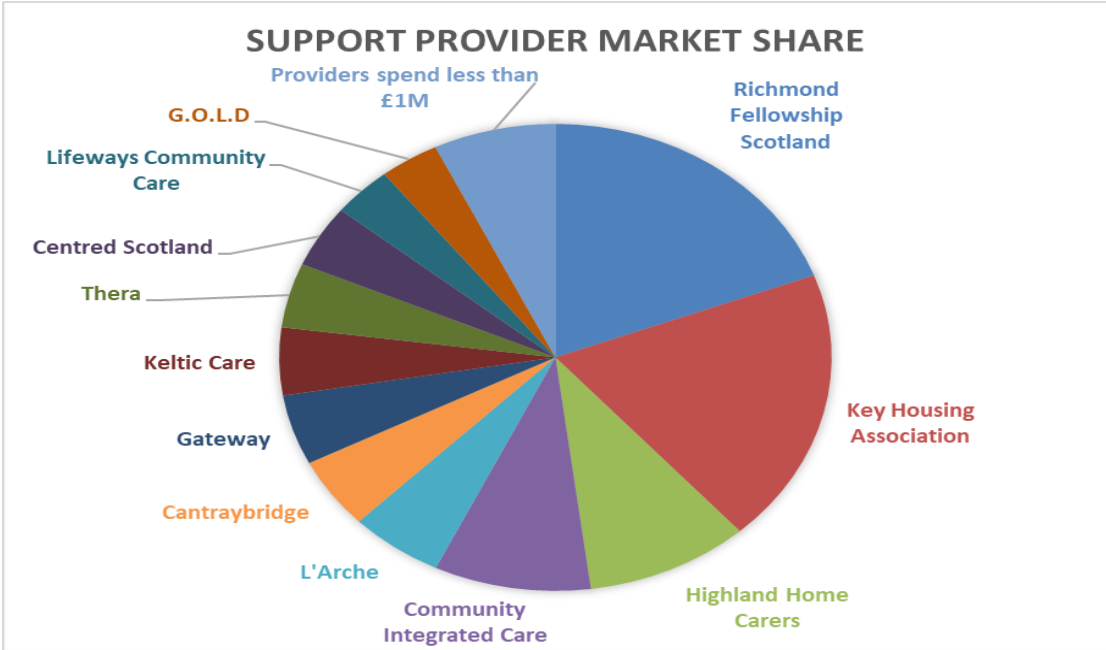


TABLE 1: Support Provider Market Share

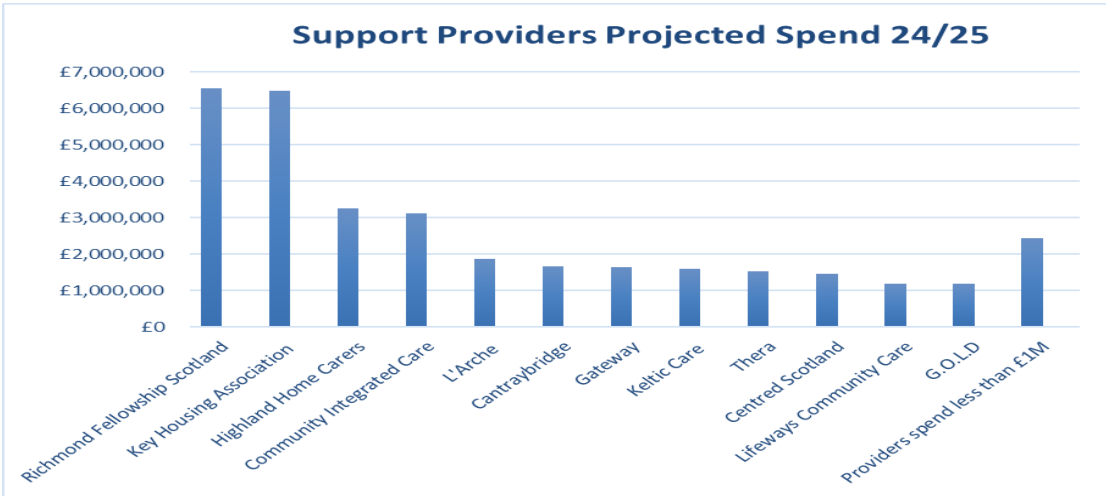


TABLE 2: Support Providers Projected Spend 24/25

To address the challenges experienced by the support sector and to achieve the savings targets, workstreams will be established in the forthcoming weeks:

- Enable collaboration and efficiencies within independent support sector
- Reform commissioning approaches
- Create new models of support provision
- Develop Community assets

Day Services continue to evolve to offer employment-based opportunities and to enable people to gain employability skills.

- The Isobel Rhind Centre in Invergordon has opened a new shop on the High Street in Invergordon and sells craft items made by the people attending the Isobel Rhind Centre.
- The Montrose Centre in Fort William continues to operate a successful Vintage Café in the High Street in Fort William.

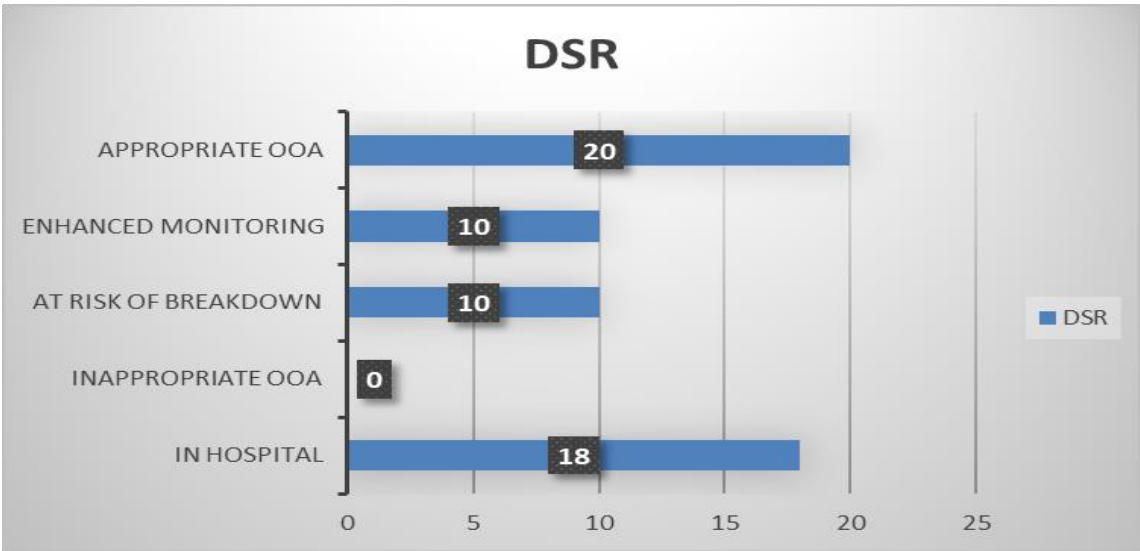
Collaborative working with partners is encouraged and enabled at every opportunity: a recent example is the partnership between the Grow Project in the Inverness Botanic Gardens and the Cooking Club to ensure food that is grown can be turned into a meal.

The Mental Welfare Commission visited the Assessment and Treatment Unit in New Craigs in May 24. In the positive report, due for publication next month, the commission were impressed with the efficacy of maintaining documentation and key forms relating to Mental Health Act and Adults with Incapacity legislation. They also commented on the effective use of seclusion guidance and the plans to ensure that the least restrictive option is maintained. The MWC also noted the difficulties experienced recruiting Learning Disability Nurses: only 5 of the 11 nurses employed in the specialist unit are trained in Learning Disability Nursing.

**2.3.3 COMPLEX NEEDS**

NHS Highland has now fully implemented the Dynamic Support Register (DSR), a mandatory monitoring structure introduced by Scottish Government. The DSR tracks individuals with a learning disability that are in hospital, in inappropriate out of area placements, at risk of support breakdown or require enhanced monitoring to prevent support breakdown.

Highland currently has 58 people recorded on the Dynamic Support Register.



\*note that individuals in OOA hospitals are included in the hospital category.

The cluster housing development in Muir of Ord continues to experience significant difficulties in relation to recruitment and continues to utilise agency staff. No new people have been able to move in since the last report. There is ongoing monthly meetings with the Executive team in Key, in attempts to move forward. This remains an area of concern.

A review of people living in “isolated tenancies” (individuals receiving 24hr support in their own home but not in a cluster housing model) has identified that there is potential benefit of establishing new cluster housing and enabling people to move home. The service are working with Highland Council housing teams to identify land for potential housing developments.

**2.4 Proposed level of Assurance**

This report proposes the following level of assurance:

Substantial	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Limited	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Comment on the level of assurance**

The lack of assurance from the support sector that they can recruit staff to provide care and support to individuals with complex needs impacts NHSH’s ability to return people from out of area placements and therefore meet the recommendations of the Coming Home report.

The ongoing and planned work with partners to enable people to lead full and ordinary lives leads to a moderate level of assurance.

### 3 Impact Analysis

#### 3.1 Quality/ Patient Care

- ✓ NHS Highland Learning Disability services are committed to enabling individuals to live purposeful and meaningful lives in their own homes in community settings.
- ✓ Actions are ongoing to liaise with housing providers to create housing opportunities.
- ✓ The quality of support provision remains high. NHS Highland and the Care Inspectorate respond quickly, and in partnership, when concerns are highlighted.
- ✓ The recent MWC inspection and report in New Craigs is positive and commends areas of good practice.
- ✗ Support providers continue to experience challenges in relation to recruiting and retaining staff resulting in individuals with complex needs remaining in inappropriate hospital and residential homes, far from their families and in restrictive settings.

#### 3.2 Workforce

- ✗ Access to Learning Disability Nurses continues to be challenging
- ✗ Support providers are reporting inability to recruit and retain staff with appropriate skills and experience.

#### 3.3 Financial

- ✓ Increasing requests for financial support to support providers to pay for additional staffing costs including agency or supplementary staffing

#### 3.4 Risk Assessment/Management

Risk of increased number of people placed out of area or inappropriately admitted to hospital due to lack of support available in local areas.

#### 3.6 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities

People with a Learning Disability are at a significantly higher risk of health inequalities than the general population.

#### 3.7 Other impacts

The inability for individuals to live in their own home can lead to increased stress and distress for families. The distance from families may breach an individual's right to a family life.

#### 3.8 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

Every person with a learning disability receiving support has a regular review (at least annually, often 6 monthly).  
Feedback is received from Advocacy organisations – People First and TAG

### 4 Recommendation

- To note the progress achieved in delivering Annual Health Checks to people with a Learning Disability.
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