

Scottish Health Council Minutes – 1.0

Meeting of the Scottish Health Council

10.00am -12.30pm 12th February 2026

Attendance

Present

Suzanne Dawson, HIS Non-Executive Director, Chair (SD)

Dave Bertin, Member (DB)

Emma Cooper, Member (EC)

Nicola Hanssen, HIS Non-Executive Director, Vice Chair (NH)

Jamie Mallan, Member (JM)

Michelle Rogers, HIS Non-Executive Director (MR)

In Attendance

Clare Morrison, Director of Engagement & Change (CM)

Derek Blues, Head of Engagement Practice - Assurance (DBL)

Evelyn McPhail Chair of Healthcare Improvement Scotland (EMcP)

Rosie Tyler Greig, Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Manager (RTG)

Tony McGowan, Associate Director Community Engagement (TMG)

Apologies

Christine Johnstone, Head of Engagement Practice -Evidence (CJ)

Diane Graham, Head of Engagement Practice – Improvement (DG)

Duncan Service, Employee Director (DS)

Gina Alexander, Member (GA)

Richard Kennedy McCrea, Operations Manager (RKM)

Robbie Pearson, Chief Executive (RP)

Meeting Support

Susan Ferguson, Committee Support

1. Opening Business

1.1 Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies were noted as above.

1.2 Declaration of Interests

The Chair invited the Scottish Health Council (SHC) to note the Register of Interests and declare any conflicts.

A change was noted to remove EC's employment with the Land Commission from the Register of Interests with immediate effect.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

Decision: SHC noted the Declaration of interests.

Action: SF to update the Register of Interests to reflect the removal of EC's Land Commission employment.

1.3 Minutes of previous Meeting

The draft minutes from previous meeting of 13 November 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

Decision: The SHC approved the minutes from the SHC meeting held on 13 November 2025

Action: None

1.4 Review of Action Register

The SHC reviewed the Action Register and were advised that all Public Partners were now in receipt of IT equipment and noted all other relevant actions would be covered off in the agenda.

Decision: The SHC noted the Action Register, after raising a query on SHC members IT equipment, it was agreed that this would be added as an action to the register with an update provided at next meeting.

Action(s):

1. SF to check with IT to establish if any progress has been made with SHC Members' IT equipment.
2. TMG to circulate an update on the Volunteering Management System when available to the SHC.

2. HIS Strategic Business

2.1 Statutory duties of Engagement

The SHC received an update on the draft interim guidance for sub-national planning, noting its importance to address the lack of clarity regarding whether engagement responsibilities sit with sub-national units or NHS Boards, which risks engagement being missed or duplicated. They welcomed the early positive engagement with sub-national groups and confirmed that Scottish Government was supportive of the interim guidance. Also discussed, was the progress on nationally determined service changes, and the forthcoming launch of the MyCare app noting that digital exclusion must be considered. It was also noted that work continues on guidance to support joint engagement within emerging single authority models. Following a discussion on the assurance level

for the paper, the SHC agreed that, while the external environment remains uncertain, all reasonable actions are being undertaken by HIS and therefore moderate assurance should be recorded.

Decision: The SHC approved the Interim Guidance on engagement for sub-national planning units and acknowledged thanks to all who were involved in this piece of work.

The SHC agreed that a **Moderate** level of assurance would be recorded, recognising that while external risks remain, the organisation is taking all reasonable steps within its remit.

Action: None

2.2 Governance for Engagement (GfE)

TMG provided an update on progress with Cycle 3 of Governance for Engagement, noting that the final review stage is approaching and that directorates are preparing evidence-based updates against the improvements they previously committed to. It was noted that preparations for Cycle 4 are underway, which will include a refresh of the self-assessment tool which is outcome-focused and informed by learning from this cycle. He highlighted that work continues to align the process with the emerging Clinical and Care Governance framework to reduce duplication and support more regular, streamlined assurance.

Decision: The SHC noted the ongoing development of alignment with Clinical Care Governance to ensure the new governance arrangements are workable avoid duplication and accepted **Moderate** level of assurance for this paper.

Action: None

2.3 Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

RTG provided the SHC with an update confirming that of the 75 HIS external facing work programmes, 73 had a full equality impact assessment in place, one had completed the screening for an equality impact assessment and one was being followed up. It was noted work was underway to gather and share good-practice examples with Scottish Government.

She noted the progress on the Anti-Racism Plan, with staff engagement for minority ethnic colleagues scheduled and delivery group meetings resuming in March.

The SHC were advised that an internal audit of HIS's equalities functions was progressing, with findings due in March with a report to the Audit and Risk Committee. It was noted that the team is preparing to complete a self-assessment using the new national Equality and Human Rights mainstreaming toolkit.

Decision: The SHC noted the ongoing liaison with internal auditors and the crossover with Staff Governance and Audit and Risk. A **Moderate** level of assurance was accepted for this paper.

Action: None.

2.4 HIS annual delivery planning for 2026-27

CM provided an update on the new HIS Annual Delivery Plan, which sets out the organisation's priorities for the year ahead and noted that SG had agreed with the proposed approach. She provided an overview of the plan which groups HIS's work under two main aims, improving the quality of care and supporting changes across health and social care, each with clear priorities.

The SHC sought assurance that reductions in the overall number of work programmes across HIS will not diminish engagement activity. It was noted that engagement with people and communities will continue to be built into all areas of the plan.

Decision: The SHC were reassured that reducing the number of work programmes would not reduce the amount of engagement work carried out. The SHC accepted a **Moderate** level of assurance for this paper.

Actions: None.

3. Community Engagement Business

3.1 Operational Progress Report

TMG provided an update on the previous quarter Q3's activity, highlighting steady engagement activity across NHS boards, ongoing advice on national and local service changes, and the continued gathering of local insight to support wider improvement work. He noted that the Responsive Support Service is receiving around two requests per month and have received very positive feedback from this. Also noted, recent Citizens Panel work continues to influence national policy. TMG highlighted, for awareness, that due to the CE website transition there may be fluctuation in number of visits recorded and noted the recent successful recruitment for two SHC members which attracted 103 applicants, demonstrating strong interest in community engagement.

The SHC noted the paper and discussed the website usage during the current transition and asked for further exploration of return-visitor patterns. The SHC also noted the importance of continued monitoring of team capacity.

Decision: The SHC accepted a **Moderate** level of assurance for this paper.

Action: RMK to revisit website return visits and feedback to SHC.

4. SHC Governance

4.1 Draft Annual Report 2025/26 and Terms of Reference

The SHC reviewed the draft Annual Report, which provides assurance to the HIS Board that the SHC has fulfilled its remit over the reporting year. The SHC noted that contributions to the Governance and Service Change Subcommittees are not currently captured in the attendance record and agreed this should be considered for inclusion. Further amendments were requested, including completion of the strategic priority column, minor corrections within the risks section, and ensuring accurate representation of ongoing work on subnational planning and single-authority models.

Decision: The SHC agreed to provide any additional comments, including reflections on areas of good performance and areas for improvement, within one week to support finalisation of the report for submission to the May Board meeting. Once updated a revised version will be recirculated to the SHC.

Action(S):

1. SF to correct minor corrections in section 3 of Annual report.
2. SF to include SHC attendance at subcommittee meetings into Annual report.
3. SHC members to provide any additional comments to CM.

4.2 KPIs

The SHC received an update on current KPIs, in discussing the proposals, they considered the possibility of expanding the KPI set from two to eight, the need for clearer context on how each KPI aligns with planned work, and clarification of which KPIs fall under the SHC and other governance committees. The SHC also discussed the volunteering KPI, seeking a clearer explanation of its phased approach and the longer-term intention to measure the quality and impact of volunteering.

CM noted the points discussed, advising that the team will revise the draft KPIs to reflect these

points and provide a clearer rationale.

Decision: The SHC accepted a **Moderate** level of assurance for this paper.

Action: CM to revise paper to incorporate the points discussed by the SHC for submission of KPIs to the HIS Performance and Delivery Board.

4.3 Risk Register

CM presented the Risk Register to the SHC who discussed the current wording of the service change engagement risk. While the paper did not propose any changes, the SHC agreed that the risk description no longer reflects the realities of the external environment. After further discussion it was agreed that CM would re look at the risk description, amend the wording to reflect the points made, and bring back to the next SHC meeting.

Decision: The SHC accepted **Moderate** level of assurance for this paper.

Action: CM would re look at the risk description, amend the wording to reflect the points made, and bring back to the next SHC meeting in May 2026.

4.4 Proposed Business Planning Schedule 2026/27

The SHC were asked to comment and approve the contents of the Business Planning Schedule for 2026/27.

Decision: The SHC approved the Business Planning Schedule for 2026/27 with no further comments

Action: None

4.5 Corporate Parenting Action Plan

The SHC received a verbal update on the draft Corporate Parenting Report and Plan due for publication in April. RTG noted that documents had been developed with support from Who Cares? Scotland to ensure they are accessible and suitable for young people, with Communications assisting on design and clarity. The SHC were advised that the report summarises achievements from the previous period, notes where staffing changes have affected progress, and outlines actions to strengthen engagement with care-experienced young people and improve delivery arrangements. RTG noted that final version will be prepared for the Board meeting on 25 March and requested that any further comments on the current draft to be submitted by 28 February 2026.

Decision: The SHC welcomed the clearer, more accessible approach in the plan and accepted a **Moderate** level of assurance.

Action: Any further comments on the draft are to be submitted by 28 February 2026 to RTG

5. Reserved Business

5.1 Service Change Sub-Committee Draft Minutes of Meeting

The draft minutes from the Service Change sub-committee meeting held on 22nd January 2026 were shared with the SHC for information.

Decision: The SHC noted the Service Change Sub Committee draft meeting notes from 22nd January 2026.

Action: None

6. Additional Items of Governance

6.1 Key Points for HIS Board

The SHC agreed on the following 3 Key points for the HIS Board;

1. Draft Interim guidance for Sub national planning units.
2. Alignment with GfE and CCG.
3. Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights.

6. Any Other Business

No other business was noted

7. Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting will be held on

14th May 2026

10.00-12.30

Via MS Teams