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8<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Gary

## **NHS SHETLAND: 2019/20 ANNUAL REVIEW**

1. Thank you for attending NHS Shetland Annual Review with your Chief Executive on 9 November via video conference. I am writing to summarise the key discussion points.
2. As you will be aware, the intention was for Ministers to conduct a full round of Annual Reviews during the summer. Whilst that has not proved possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Annual Reviews remain an important part of the accountability process for the NHS and, as such, we have arranged for Ministers to hold appropriate sessions with the Chair and Chief Executive of each Board via video conference. I was supported in the meeting by Christine McLaughlin, Director of Planning.
3. The agenda for this year's round of Reviews has been split into three sections to cover: pre-Covid performance during 2019/20; the initial response to the pandemic from February/March to July 2020; and a forward look, in line with the current Board mobilisation plans (August to end of March 2021) and beyond.

### **Pre-Covid performance during 2019/20**

4. Given the challenges faced as a result of Covid-19, discussion centred on key performance areas. It was noted that throughout 2019/20 the Board experienced capacity issues in various specialities due to consultant vacancies. A reduction in clinical capacity from mainland Boards also contributes to challenges.
5. However despite experiencing historically high attendances during 2019/20, the Board frequently achieved at or around the 95% 4-hour standard.
6. In terms of cancer waiting times Over the last 5 quarters, NHS Shetland met the 62 day

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standard once, and met the 31 day standard in 4 of the previous 5 quarters. It is recognised that the performance of island Boards is impacted by the small numbers involved, and is also linked to the performance of mainland Boards.

7. Turning to performance for Child and Adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and Psychological Therapies (PT) I noted that the Board did not meet the waiting times standards for CAMHS or Psychological Therapies at the end of 2019/20.

### **Initial response to the pandemic from February/March to July 2020**

8. You provided a helpful overview of the Board's initial response to the pandemic from late February. As has been noted, this required an unparalleled, immediate and radical restructure of both services and ways of working in the NHS in Scotland, including in NHS Shetland. All Boards will need to learn from the pandemic experience and adapt; ensuring that the remarkable innovation and new ways of working demonstrated this year underpin the local strategy for a sustainable future. We also asked the local Area Clinical Forum and Area Partnership Forum to provide brief updates ahead of the Review and I would like to take this opportunity to, once again, formally record our sincere thanks to local staff for the incredible effort and unstinting commitment they have consistently shown, in the most testing of conditions. I was pleased to note the Board's ongoing focus on staff well-being: this must be maintained as an already fatigued workforce is faced with a very challenging winter.

### **Forward Look**

9. The Scottish Government has identified three key priorities for the coming months, namely: Minimising the impact of the acute pandemic phase through a more extensive flu vaccination programme and prepare for a potential COVID-19 vaccine; Suppressing the virus through sustainable precision public health measures such as Test and Protect, Surveillance and Response; and Keeping people alive and well through provision of essential health and social care services, including those that promote physical and mental wellbeing.

10. You confirmed that these priorities were shaping your approach and response to competing demands. You noted the importance of people following guidance, and that in Shetland, with a lot of people travelling off island, it is particularly important that they follow quarantine rules, with messaging on this being important.

11. You noted that one of the key limiting factors in recruitment was availability of accommodation, and that although some new housing is due to come online in the near future, this is likely to remain an issue.

12. You described your approach to Test & Protect and confirmed that you are working to Scottish Government requirements, including in relation to contact tracing and regional labs. You confirmed that good progress had been made with flu vaccinations and that you were confident of the ability of NHS Shetland to deliver the Covid vaccine once available.

13. We discussed the way that innovation had been embraced, with technology forming an important part of service delivery in many areas, including Mental Health services where appropriate..

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## Finance

14. The Board achieved its financial targets and delivered a balanced financial outturn in 2019/20. The importance of financial planning was emphasised, and it was noted that the Cabinet Secretary announced additional funding of £1.1 billion on 29 September to support the work of the Health & Social Care sector through the ongoing pandemic, of which £3.934 million has been allocated to NHS Shetland and its IJB partners, which sum includes £447,000 of social care sustainability funding previously agreed. It was noted that NHS Shetland expects to achieve a balanced financial position in 2021/21 in the best case scenario, with discussions ongoing with SG Health Finance on how to cement this position and in relation to any initiatives or innovations which may play a part.

## Conclusion

15. I want to reiterate our thanks to the Board and local staff for their ongoing, incredible efforts, professionalism and commitment, in the facing of unprecedented and unremitting pressures during 2020/21.

16. I know you understand that there is no room for complacency, given the myriad of risks the NHS faces this winter. We will continue to keep local activity under close review and to provide as much support as possible. I am nonetheless confident that NHS Shetland and its staff are well placed to continue to deliver for the benefit of local people.

*Clare Haughey*

**CLARE HAUGHEY**

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