

**REPORT TO ABERDEENSHIRE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD  
23 AUGUST 2023**

**PUBLIC HEALTH SCOTLAND / NORTH EAST POPULATION HEALTH  
ALLIANCE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

**1 Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board (IJB):**

- 1.1** Approve the Chief Officer to, in principle and subject to IJB comment and a completed Integrated Impact Assessment, sign the strategic partnership agreement with Public Health Scotland (PHS) on behalf of the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership, as one of nine organisations comprising the North East Population Health Alliance (NEPHA).
- 1.2** Request the Chief Officer to provide the Aberdeenshire IJB with a progress report on the strategic partnership agreement in 12 months' time.

**2 Directions**

- 2.1** No direction requires to be issued to Aberdeenshire Council or NHS Grampian as a result of this report.

**3 Risk**

- 3.1** IJB Risk 8 – Risk of failure to deliver standards of care expected by the people of Aberdeenshire. The aim of this agreement is to share expertise and collaborate where there is added value to doing so, for the benefit of the people of the North East of Scotland.

**4 Background**

- 4.1** The aim and purpose of the strategic partnership agreement is to develop a learning system to improve population health and reduce health inequalities across the North East of Scotland.
- 4.2** The draft agreement (Appendix 1) outlines a shared vision, value of the partnership, how the organisations will work together within the remit of the agreement, and high-level objectives which give an indication of areas the agreement will focus on.
- 4.3** Scotland continues to face significant population health challenges: stalling (and in some groups falling) health life expectancy, and pre-pandemic widening levels of inequality, further exacerbated by Covid-19. Additionally, the pandemic has further increased demand on health and care services.



Improving health requires improved system sustainability and, even more critically, improved outcomes in the wider factors that create health – good early years, learning, jobs, income and supportive communities. The recent Health Foundation report ‘Leave no one behind’<sup>1</sup> emphasises the need for collective action. Specifically, to effect impactful change to tackle inequalities will require practical up and downstream collaboration and action across all parts of the delivery system, and from the public.

- 4.4 We are fortunate to have strong partnerships across public agencies, private and third sectors and communities in the North East. However, as set out above, some of the population health challenges we are grappling with are significant and worsening. The Director of Public Health (DPH) Annual Report 2022<sup>2</sup> sets out four key threats to population health and action we can collectively take together to break the cycle of widening health inequalities. The report recognises the strength of our partnerships and highlights where we are already working well together to tackle these challenges. However, greater action is required.
- 4.5 In response to these significant population health challenges and to reverse current trends, public sector leaders from across the North East have considered how we can create a system of public health learning to reverse current trends. This is referred to as the North East Population Health Alliance (NEPHA). Recognising that systems of governance are firmly embedded within and across our organisations already, the NEPHA is instead intended as an action learning forum for exploring challenges together, testing solutions, and bringing together our collective knowledge with data and evidence to enable more powerful conversations and effective action. The NEPHA currently comprises nine partners; NHS Grampian, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership, Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership, Moray Council, Health & Social Care Moray, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, and Police Scotland.
- 4.6 Public Health Scotland (PHS) has a leadership role in, and contributes to, all of Scotland’s public health priorities and will focus on three areas: preventing disease, prolonging healthy life, and promoting health and wellbeing. Public Health Scotland’s Strategic Plan sets out a clear commitment to collaborative working in recognition that no one organisation or profession can address Scotland’s public health challenge.
- 4.7 The aim of this agreement is to share expertise and collaborate where there is added value to doing so, for the benefit of the people of the North East of Scotland. The agreement provides an opportunity to align the collective ambition of the NEPHA with the strategic aims of Public Health Scotland (PHS).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/leave-no-one-behind>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nhsgrampian.org/siteassets/your-health/temp-docs/dph-report-final.pdf>



- 4.8 The agreement aims to facilitate collaboration between PHS and the NEPHA (comprising the nine respective organisations) to share and learn about key issues to build on our collective knowledge, share insights and use our collective capacity to improve population health outcomes. Specifically, the shared objective of the agreement is to *improve population health and reduce inequalities across the North East of Scotland*.
- 4.9 As the partnership matures, our work together will inevitably change. Following assessment of need, PHS and NEPHA (comprising the respective nine organisations) will agree shared priorities. In year one, six high-level themes will be explored with a view to developing more detailed objectives over the life of the strategic agreement. These are:
1. Develop a learning system that explores the challenges faced by the North East of Scotland, tests solutions, and implements what works at scale and pace.
  2. Form collective knowledge, data, and evidence to shape more powerful collective conversations and action to achieve the vision of thriving communities living fulfilled lives.
  3. Developing common data governance and system models to enable findable, accessible, interoperability and reusable data to support research, policy development and operational delivery.
  4. Collaboration on the commissioning and conduct of research on the wider determinants of health across the North East and the application of knowledge to practice locally and nationally.
  5. Development of a baseline of prevention activity within the region with a view to establishing some targets for growth in activity.
  6. Child poverty, the Drugs Mission and the eradication of homelessness will appear in detailed work plan because the commitment is established at a national and local level, and therefore we can maximise the tripartite collaboration on the achievement of these commitments.

## 5 Summary

- 5.1 The agreement is currently out for review and sign off by late summer 2023 across the respective governance structures of the organisations comprising the NEPHA. During this time the agreement will be subject to minor amendments as it moves through organisational approval processes. A final version comprising all feedback will be shared with all organisations once the process of signing off has concluded.
- 5.2 The Chief Officer, along with the Chief Finance Officer and the Legal Monitoring Officer within Business Services of the Council have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments have been incorporated within the report.

## 6 Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications



- 6.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been commenced. There will be expected positive impacts for communities across Aberdeenshire, including people with protected characteristics and facing socio economic disadvantage. It is proposed that these will be further identified and assessed through IIAs for specific activities/initiatives as implementation progresses
- 6.2 There are no specific staffing or financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

**Pamela Milliken**  
**Chief Officer**  
**Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership**

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Draft strategic partnership agreement - Public Health Scotland and the North East Population Health Alliance