

**CARE AND REPAIR SCOTLAND  
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY  
12<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2024 ON ZOOM CALL**

**Present:** Gerry Power, Chair)  
Ian Graham, Region 1  
Andy Douglas Region 2  
Angela Brunton, Region 3  
Jamie Burgess, Region 4  
  
Robert Thomson, National Director

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

Gerry Power welcomed Board members to the meeting.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

The minute of 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024 meeting was approved without amendment.

**4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

Gerry and Robert will meet to discuss how we will procure the digital inclusion pilot.

**Action: Gerry and Robert met and agreed wording for the offer of funding which was then sent to all the offices**

Robert and Gerry will meet to discuss how to present the digital inclusion funding to Care and Repair offices and agree the wording of an invitation for bids.

**Action:**

Robert to speak to Paul McMahon at EVH to discuss the options available to members of EVH and arrange for a tailored training event in early 2024.

**Action:**

**5. Update on National Care Service**

After the January Board meeting, members of The ALLIANCE agreed to write to Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, to ask for a meeting to discuss progress with the National Care Service. The Minister responded and declined the request for a meeting. The Board considered the response. It was noted that the cost of the new service is significant and while it may be a good idea, it is not affordable given the current budget restraints. Andy reported that the local government unions do not support the idea and there are significant implications for staff and services if it was implemented.

## **6. National Director's Report**

### CRS Office Funding

The current financial position is considered under Agenda Item 7. At the time of writing CRS has an email from Scottish Government promising a grant of £130,000 for the financial year 2024-25 but they have not yet issued the funding letter.

SCVO report that over 60% of Scottish Charities did not receive notification of their funding award prior to the financial year end. ROSPA and Home Safety Scotland did not receive funding and have made key staff redundant.

Gerry confirmed that Citizen's Advice offices have also had budget and staffing cuts. The Board noted that there is often no appreciation of how much public money is saved by preventative services.

### Highland Council NHS Funding

In 2015 the offices that were funded 100% by Highland Council entered into a partnership agreement with the Council and NHS Highland. This divided the funding into housing and health services with a 50% budget allocation from NHS Highland to deliver telecare, adaptations and hospital discharge services. The agreement was for the financial years 2015-18, with the understanding that there would be a recommissioning of services against an updated contract.

Since 2018, NHS has asked for the contract to remain 'as is' and provided 50% of the funding. During Covid years, it was intimated that when NHS could come to the table they would renegotiate the contract. In 2022, NHS asked for the contract to remain 'as is' to allow them to write a new contract that would come into place in 23/24. This did not happen and, as a result, Highland Care and Repair services have a shortfall of NHS funding amounting to £500,000. This is largely due to a significant increase in energy, materials and staffing costs. However, NHS expected that Care and Repair would facilitate the switchover from analogue to digital telecare against the 2015 contract.

I have met with Highland Council, written to the Board and senior officers of NHS Highland and attended an emergency meeting with the managers. On Monday 15th April, the offices will send a jointly signed letter to the Council and NHS advising that they will revert to the service level agreement of the 2015 contract. They will continue end of life care facilities and each manager will respond to emergency situations as they may arise but effectively they are taking strike action and withdrawing essential services until NHS are prepared to negotiate.

The offices have asked that we do not approach Ministers or the Press until NHS has had time to respond to their requests. They have the full support of Highland Council in taking this action.

### Digital Inclusion Pilots

Following the request by the Board for further information from East Ayrshire and Lanarkshire, and award of £10,000 was made to EA and £25,000 to Lanark to start up digital inclusion pilots. East Ayrshire has appointed Laura Kerr to the part time post and I have met with her and the line manager to discuss the initial programme. I have also attended Scottish Government digital champion training to broaden my understanding of what support is currently available to older people. I also applied for 10 free laptops, to be distributed to the two pilots but have not heard if the application is successful.

### Energy Action Scotland Conference

I attended the two day event and gave a presentation about the issues faced by older people in the private sector around fuel poverty and the drive towards de-carbonisation of homes. It was a very positive day with good feedback and a number of new contacts made.

## AICO

The Scottish Government fire alarm funding that was given to CRS was used to buy Aico alarms. Aico has developed a new range of units that supplement the alarms that we have installed. They hope to trial these in Highlands because of the involvement of Care and Repair in telecare. They have also expressed an interest in supporting the two digital inclusion pilots.

## Cross Party Working Group on Health Inequalities

The Group has undergone changes since Covid lockdowns but is now meeting as before and the first meeting discussed the availability of data across services and how we might support each other and share information.

## Cross Party Group on Safety

The meeting held in March was the last where ROSPA provided Secretariat support to the Group. CRS wish to acknowledge the outstanding contribution Elizabeth Lumsden has made to the Group and also to championing Care and Repair in her role as Community Safety Manager (Scotland).

## Falls Prevention 4 Nation Group

I attended two further meetings of the group. One was a general update from the 4 nations meeting and the other was to discuss at length looking at existing falls literature available to the public and seeking to find a way to rationalize this information.

## Scottish Quality Mark

The assessment visit for Inverness was made end of January and the QM award given for a further three years. East Lothian has begun the process of reapplying. challenges of retro-fitting existing homes.

The Board noted and approved the Financial Statement.

## **7. Financial Statement**

We paid £25,000 to Lanarkshire Care and Repair and £10,000 to East Ayrshire Care and Repair on 6th February and we therefore will not show a restricted reserve against Digital Inclusion in the 2023/24 accounts.

The accounting information for the financial year was sent to the auditor on 8th April 2024.

Scottish Government wrote on 10th January to invite us to submit a forward plan and funding request for the financial year 2024/25. Angela O'Brien, SG Housing and Independent Living Team, replied as follows:

"The funding awards for 2024-25 have just been approved so I can confirm that Care and Repair Scotland have been awarded £130,000. We will get the offer of grant funding out to you shortly".

The Board approved the financial statement.

## **8. A.O.C.B**

Ian asked about the databases used by Care and Repair offices. Robert outlined the various CRM programs used, including bespoke software, Act and Foundations. It was suggested that Ian visit Inverness Care and Repair to look at how they have customised Act.

Andy asked what grants are available in Scotland for heat pumps. Ian explained what is available and stressed that the pumps are only effective if the building insulation is of a high standard.

#### **9. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held in Edinburgh on 28<sup>th</sup> June.

#### **10. Succession Planning**

A separate confidential note of this discussion was circulated to the Board following the meeting.