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**REPORT TO: MORAY INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD CLINICAL AND CARE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ON 28 MARCH 2024**

**SUBJECT: PRESSURES ON GENERAL PRACTICE**

**BY: CLINICAL LEAD FOR PRIMARY CARE IN MORAY**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

1.1 To inform the Committee of the ongoing pressures affecting General Practices in Moray and posing a threat to their sustainability.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:**

- i) consider and note the pressures affecting Moray Practices; and**
- ii) support the operational delivery of the NHS Grampian General Practice Vision project.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 A report was submitted to the Moray Integration Joint Board on 25 May 2023 (para 11 of the minutes refers) informing the Board of sustainability issues affecting General Practices across Moray.

3.2 The Chair of the Moray Integration Joint Board wrote to Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health & social Care on 13 June 2023 highlighting the issues disproportionately affecting Moray. The Cabinet Secretary replied on 13 July 2023.

3.3 On 9 June 2023, the Grampian GP Leadership Team presented these challenges to the NHS Grampian Chief Executive Team, receiving a supportive commitment to collaboratively address and develop a more sustainable vision for General Practice. After petitioning of Scottish Government this developed into the Grampian General Practice Vision Programme.

3.4 This series of work consisted of 4 workshops with wide ranging representation and stakeholder engagement. The output from this process was developed into a Vision Statement (A sustainable General Practice across Grampian

which enables people in their communities to stay well through the prevention and treatment of ill health) & a series of Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-Bound (SMART) objectives. This was the subject of a report to the Moray Integration Board at their meeting on the morning of 28 March 2024.

- 3.5 Throughout the development and progression of this Program, the sustainability challenges faced by Moray's General Practices have persisted. These ongoing issues encompass heightened clinical demands for GP services, persistent challenges in recruiting General Practice staff, a diminishing share of the overall health budget allocated to General Practice, limitations in space for expanding multi-disciplinary teams, and a notable decline in staff morale. Practices find themselves grappling with the task of adequately supporting patients awaiting procedures or diagnostic tests, and there is a growing apprehension that the accumulating strain may lead to Practices relinquishing their contracts.
- 3.6 These issues were discussed at the Health and Social Care Moray (HSCM) Clinical and Care Governance Group at their meeting on 7 December 2023 (see **Appendix 1**) and it was agreed that the report should be escalated to this Committee.
- 3.7 On the 19 February 2024 the General Medical Services contract holder for the Aberlour Practice ended the contract with Moray Health and Social Care Partnership. The partnership are currently running the Practice to ensure continued access to primary care services for the community

#### **4. KEY MATTERS RELEVANT TO RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 General Practice, responsible for 90% of all patient health contacts and seeing approximately 10% of the population each week, plays a pivotal role. If there were a widespread breakdown of General Practice locally, the broader health service would be unable to sustain its current function. Additionally, the costs linked to Health and Social Care Partnership run Practices far exceed those of Partnership ones.
- 4.2 The count of GP Practices in Moray has decreased by 25% since 2007, placing added strain on the remaining practices and their staff. This situation poses challenges for communities and poses a threat to future delivery of coordinated General Practice.
- 4.3 A pivotal component of Moray Integration Board's Strategic Plan for Health and Social Care in Moray & NHS Grampian's Plan for the Future involves transitioning to a proactive healthcare system that keeps individuals well within the proximity of their homes. Achieving this vision relies heavily on the effective operation and support of General Practice.

#### **5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)) and Moray Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan "Partners in Care 2022 – 2032"**

Functional General Practice serves as a linchpin in the broader Moray health system, with any challenges within it reverberating across all sectors and hindering the achievement of strategic

delivery goals. Furthermore, the Moray Portfolio holds operational responsibility for Primary Care in Grampian. Consequently, sustainability issues affecting the wider Grampian region will inevitably impact the operational efficiency of the Moray Portfolio.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

None.

**(c) Financial implications**

Additional backfill and support costs for Practices needing help, and the risk of increased costs if we have Health and Social Care run Practices. In the current financial environment these increase costs could hamper attempts to save money overall.

**(d) Risk Implications and Mitigation**

The precarious state of Moray's General Practices poses a substantial threat to the Moray Population, giving rise to issues such as unequal access to General Practice, deterioration in population health, suboptimal patient outcomes, and heightened strain on Secondary Care services. Additionally, there is a risk of a notable surge in complaints and adverse media coverage. Furthermore, the potential departure of GP staff poses an additional challenge, intensifying the pressure on Practices and exacerbating recruitment difficulties. These risks can be effectively mitigated by acknowledging and supporting the indispensable role that General Practice plays in our broader health system. The operational implementation of the NHS Grampian GP Vision project presents an opportune moment to bolster a more sustainable General Practice, aligning with the strategic intent of NHS Grampian.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

Recruitment opportunities exist, but a well-supported General Practice is vital to attracting GPs and Practice staff to the area.

**(f) Property**

None from this report.

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

Lowest Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintile areas have decreased access to General Practice across Scotland, and sustainability issues in General Practice would exacerbate this.

**(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

None.

**(i) Directions**

None.

**(j) Consultations**

The Deputy Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Moray; GP Clinical Leads, Primary Care Development Manager and HSCM Clinical and Care Governance Group.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 General Practice in both Grampian and Moray is experiencing an unprecedented period of sustainability pressure that is impacting on operational delivery.**
- 6.2 The impact of this instability in General Practice continues to be felt across the entire Moray Health and Social Care system.**
- 6.3 The NHS Grampian GP Vision Project offers an opportunity to support sustainable future delivery of General Practice.**

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Background Papers: 3 Minute Brief, General Practice for 7 December 2023 meeting  
of the Moray Clinical and Care Governance Group

Ref: