

IJB Joint Staff Forum

Minute | 19 September 2025 | 09:30 | Teams Virtual Space

Present: Stephen Brown (Chair), Thomas Richards, Margaret MacRae, John Daniels, Danny Oliver (Co-Chair), Deborah Langan, Lynda Bradford, Linda Halford and Craig Walker.

Apologies: Ryan McLaughlin, Amanda Manson, Darren Morrow, Fiona MacKellar, Morven Gemmill and Ashley Gormley.

1. Welcome and apologies

Stephen welcomed everyone to the meeting and the apologies were noted.

2. Minutes from Previous Meeting

The minutes were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

3. Matter Arising and Action Log

Danny highlighted actions from the previous meeting which were not covered in the agenda. An update on training numbers and development for Promoting Positive Behaviours, and the need for de-escalation training for community staff. Stephen agreed to ensure these items were included in the agenda for the next meeting.

Action: Darren.

A brief update was provided on the Promoting Positive Behaviours progress, noting there has been progress made, particularly in adult services. A fuller update would be provided at the next meeting. Clarity was provided that certain staff groups, such as residential care home staff and disability day services staff, were included, while others, such as older people's day services, were not. The importance of ensuring Care at Home staff receive appropriate training to manage challenging situations safely was noted.

4. Workforce / Service Pressures / Recruitment Concerns

The ongoing challenges in children and families services, where six managerial posts exist, but only one had been filled substantively for the past 18 months was highlighted. However, progress has been made with the successful recruitment of one Service Manager and three Team Managers. These appointments are expected to improve continuity and reduce costs associated with interim arrangements.

The Band 7 All Age Nurse-Led Psychiatric Liaison Team Lead has been recruited, and the Band 6 posts will go out for advert shortly. In terms of Community Nursing, there is only a 1.5 full time equivalent vacancy, with interviews scheduled for candidates shortly. The team is supported by agency nurses to maintain stability while newly recruited staff are embedded.

Thomas advised of an upcoming change to the Council's recruitment process with a move to change to job profiles and away from weekly Orcadian adverts to rolling adverts on a dedicated website. This aims to streamline recruitment and make the process more attractive to candidates. Significant support has been provided to managers to transition to the new system, including training and guidance. Some concerns were raised regarding the understanding of recruitment processes among managers and the potential for delays. It was highlighted that training and support are available, and efforts are ongoing to automate and streamline processes further.

Danny raised concerns about leadership capacity in adult social care, particularly regarding the unfilled Service Manager post. It was advised that interim arrangements, including the secondment of a Clinical Nurse Manager and plans to create a temporary business support/project management role, to address capacity issues. Work in relation to reviewing staffing levels and dependency in care homes has commenced to address the challenges posed by increasing complexity of needs and care inspectorate requirements.

5. Dental Update

It was advised in Public Dental Services that two qualified dental nurses, two trainee nurses, and 1.5 full time equivalent dental therapists have been recruited. However, challenges remain with other staff due to leave shortly. Recruitment efforts are ongoing to fill these gaps. In General Dental Services, two new dentists have started, with two more expected later in the month. An update on the backlog of NHS dental work was provided.

There are also plans to integrate dental services more closely with primary care as part of a redesign. A workshop is scheduled to map out a provisional plan, which will then be shared with staff representatives for input.

6. Raising a Concern Update

An update on the development of a raising concerns guidance note for staff to members was provided. The guidance is intended to complement existing policies and procedures, such as Dignity at Work, Grievance, and Whistleblowing policies. It aims to clarify how staff can escalate concerns and what they can expect from managers in terms of feedback and action.

It was recapped that it has been drafted and reviewed by the Social Work and Social Care Governance Board. Currently, it is being reviewed by the Head of Patient Safety, Quality and Risk to ensure alignment with NHS policies and the Safe Staffing Act. It was noted the importance of creating a unified guidance note for staff under the Orkney Health and Care banner and will be brought back to the group for further input once reviewed. The importance of aligning the guidance with other related documents, such as the whistleblowing guidance and the escalation of concerns Standard Operating Procedures under the Safe Staffing Act was highlighted. It was also raised that staff often feel their concerns are not addressed adequately, leading to frustration. It was agreed the importance of providing clear feedback to staff and ensuring managers understand their responsibilities.

7. Facility Update

Danny raised the issue of trade union facility time for Integration Joint Board staff representatives, noting the additional demands of this role compared to general trade union work. It was highlighting the need for dedicated facility time to support these responsibilities. It was agreed that with the unique nature of the IJB staff representative role that half a day per week would be a reasonable allocation. Stephen agreed to review the implications of this arrangement, including financial considerations and its application to the other staff representatives. **Action:** Stephen.

It was highlighted the importance of aligning any arrangements with the Council's facility time procedures and ensuring consistency across different roles. It was advised that this issue had been raised during a previous review of facility time and would likely need to be revisited corporately once an agreement is reached. Margaret raised concerns around the overall inadequacy of facility time available to trade unions, particularly in the NHS. Challenges such as lack of protected time and backfill, which discourage staff from requesting 'release' for trade union activities. It was suggested that this issue should be addressed as part of ongoing discussions about the new One for Scotland facility time policy at the Area Partnership Forum.

8. Financial Recovery Plan

Deborah provided an overview of the Financial Recovery Plan, which is designed to address a projected funding gap of £11.3 million over the next three years in a phased approach. The Plan focuses on four key objectives: financial sustainability, resource alignment, operational efficiency, and government engagement. The Plan consolidates ongoing and planned initiatives rather than introducing entirely new measures. Deborah provided a recap of the challenges facing services and public bodies as well as a brief overview of specific actions.

Concerns were raised in relation to the ambitious scope of the Plan, questioning whether it is realistic to achieve the goals within three years. Some of the longstanding challenges in areas such as Care at Home staffing and direct payments, suggests that these issues require significant resources and time to address. There was also scepticism about the potential for cost savings, with many services already under resourced and may require additional investment. In respect of the timeline for service redesign and recruitment it was advised that the Plan aligns with the Council's strategic workforce priorities and the importance of addressing the complexities of working across two separate employers was highlighted.

It was noted that while some initiatives may not lead to immediate or significant cost savings, they are necessary to ensure the long term sustainability and effectiveness of services. There is need for honest communication with the public and stakeholders about the financial pressures and the potential impact on services. It was agreed to refine the Plan further to ensure it sets realistic expectations and provides a clear framework for achieving its objectives. **Action:** Deborah.

9. AOCB

None.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Friday, 12 December 2025: 0900-1100.

Stephen Brown (Chief Officer)

Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership

01856873535 extension: 2601

OHACfeedback@orkney.gov.uk



Chair's Assurance Report to the Integration Joint Board

Title of Report:	Joint Staff Forum.	Date of Meeting:	19 September 2025.
Prepared By:	Stephen Brown.	Presented By:	Stephen Brown.
Purpose:	To present the unapproved minutes from the Joint Staff Forum meeting on 19 September 2025.		

Positive Assurances:	Decisions Made:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruitment: Positive recruitment in Children and Families, the All Age Nurse Led Psychiatric Liaison Team, Public Dental Services and General Dental Services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting Positive Behaviours: It was agreed an update on training and development will be provided at the next meeting.• Raising a Care Concern: Will be presented back to the Group for further comment following review by NHS Orkney.
Areas of Concern or Key Risks to Escalate:	Major Actions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership Capacity: Concerns for lack of leadership in adult social care. Interim arrangements in place but risks remain.• Staff Concerns: Concerns were raised that staff raising issues are not always adequately addressed. Managers to close loop on feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IJB Facility Time: Agreement of an additional half day facility time for Council representative and discussion with NHS representative for parity.• Financial Recovery Plan: It was agreed to refine the Plan to set realistic expectations and provide a clear framework.
Comments on Effectiveness of the Meeting:	
Limited availability of staff representatives within the meeting. Consideration on dates for 2026/27 is underway to try to maximise staff representative availability.	