HEALTHCARE IMPROVEMENT SCOTLAND (HIS) ANNUAL REVIEW

Thank you for hosting, what I understand was, a very successful and insightful annual review on the 21st of November 2019. As this was a non-Ministerial review, I asked officials to attend the review in an observing capacity. This letter summarises the main points discussed and actions arising from the review.

As you will be aware, I am keen to ensure the rigorous scrutiny of NHS Boards' performance, whilst encouraging as much direct dialogue and accountability between stakeholders and Boards as possible. For this reason, I was pleased to see that you invited a stakeholder panel to lead the Q&A session, under the chairmanship of Prof. Jason Leitch, Clinical Director for Healthcare Quality and Improvement Directorate, helping to provide both a constructively critical review of HIS’ activities over the past year, and to encourage greater stakeholder involvement in formulating plans for the future.

Partnership Forum

I was glad to see that the Partnership Forum were invited to give feedback ahead of the annual review, and note that they highlighted a number of challenges for HIS to consider – in particular, responding to concerns around the number of vacancies within the organisation and staff on short-term contracts. Along with input about the proposed accommodation move in Glasgow, and the growing shift to cross-organisational working. I was heartened to hear that a culture survey is in place and that these issues are being given serious consideration. I understand that a workforce plan has been developed and that there was some discussion about the need to work with staff to rebalance the

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workforce in line with priorities. I would urge you to also continue to work closely with Scottish Government officials to ensure that core funding is being used in the right places. I would be grateful for further updates on your Workforce Plan, and for regular feedback on progress against the actions outlined in the plan.

Public Partners

I was similarly pleased to hear that the public partners were invited to feed back, and that they highlighted challenges and successes. I understand that they would like more clarity around their purpose and roles, as well as transparency around the matching process for determining the most appropriate people to be involved in particular pieces of work, and that they suggested that more thought should be given to future planning, so that public partners are made aware early of upcoming work and can therefore make more informed decisions about the work that they should be involved in. Further to this, I also understand that they are keen to be more involved, valued and trusted in some of the public interface work, which could be an untapped resource opportunity for HIS. Lastly, they raised concerns about IT issues and technical support. I would be grateful if you could provide feedback on the actions being taken to address these challenges over the coming year.

I have also been made aware that you undertook to respond to a question which was raised around remuneration for those with lived experience who are giving up their time to support some of HIS’ work by carrying out particular roles within groups, in the same way that clinicians who perform a role within these groups are paid to carry out this role.

Clinical and Care Forum

The Clinical and Care Forum highlighted challenges around their varying working arrangements and the difficulties that some clinicians face with undertaking their role on the forum whilst also undertaking clinical practice. They noted that more needs to be done to strengthen visibility of the forum and to make it clear to those involved that their input is having an impact. I look forward to hearing about the work being done by HIS over the coming year to address these concerns.

Quality Management System

I was interested to read about HIS’ Quality Management System and how this is enabling you to ensure the different functions in HIS, including your independent scrutiny function and your improvement function - carried out in partnership with the Scottish Government and the Boards - work effectively together to deliver better quality care across Scotland. As noted during the annual review, you are also supporting application of this approach across health and care services in Scotland with the intention that it enables them to consistently deliver high quality care. I would be grateful if you could provide updates on the actions being taken by HIS to support these aims, and how this is helping to deliver improvements and spread best practice.

I also understand that, during the annual review, there was some discussion around the need, and importance of, celebrating and communicating success and spreading good practice, in the same way that feedback is provided on areas for improvement. I am very much in support of this.

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Adverse events

Although I understand that HIS’ work on adverse events was not discussed in any detail as part of the annual review, I see the eventual outcome of this work as playing a key role in the drive to deliver improvements and spread good practice. I am pleased to note that the notification system is now up and running, and look forward to further updates on progress in due course.

Public Engagement

I was pleased to hear about the progress being made in the Quality of Care approach, in terms of ensuring that the patient voice is front and centre of this work. I welcome HIS’ commitment to support and strengthen the engagement of people and communities across its work programmes, including taking a more targeted and consistent approach to public engagement in health and care services led by the Scottish Health Council. I look forward to receiving an update on how this work is progressing.

I also note the discussion that took place at the annual review about the need to tackle health inequalities in Scotland, and the examples of work undertaken by HIS, including in relation to prisoner healthcare, which contribute to that. Health inequalities are one of the biggest challenges we, as a country, face and I was interested to hear about the work done by HIS in Midlothian around Children and Young People’s Mental Health. I would be keen to hear more about how this type of user-led approach is being spread to other areas.

Integration

I understand that there was some discussion around HIS’ role in community based health and social care services. It was positive to hear that HIS is working closely with Integration Joint Boards (IJBs) and that your work includes the delivery of a number of collaborative improvement programmes and learning networks, as well as producing Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) and Scottish Health Technologies Group (SHTG) guidelines for use in community settings. As you will be aware, I view the integration of health and social care services as a priority, and look forward to hearing what more HIS can do to support this - in particular, looking at outcome-focussed early intervention activity, working with the Care Inspectorate and other partners, and how this might address health inequalities.

Further to this, I also understand that there was discussion around the need to ensure that members of the Integration Joint Boards (IJBs), and not just board members from healthcare settings, have a greater understanding of HIS’ role. I wholeheartedly support this and am keen to hear from HIS what actions you intend to take to raise your profile with them.

Financial position

I would like to reiterate Prof. Jason Leitch’s thanks for your support in achieving a balanced budget over previous years, and to request your continued support in this area.
Conclusion

I would like to thank you and your Board, the staff of HIS, and Public Partners for their continued commitment and hard work over the last year. I hope that you find this letter helpful in setting out the actions to be taken forward from the 18/19 annual review, and look forward to continuing to work together to ensure the provision of high quality health and social care services for the people of Scotland.

Kriet regards

[Signature]

JEANE FREEMAN
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<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Work closely with HIS staff and Scottish Government officials to ensure core funding is being used in the right places and supports a rebalancing of the workforce in line with priorities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Provide further updates on the Workforce Plan, and give regular feedback on progress against the actions outlined within the plan.</td>
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<td>A3</td>
<td>Provide feedback on the actions being taken to address the challenges raised by the public partners around clarity of their purpose and roles; transparency of the matching process for determining the most appropriate people to be involved in particular pieces of work; giving thought to future planning, so that partners are aware of upcoming work; involvement in public interface work; and IT and technical support issues.</td>
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<td>A4</td>
<td>Provide a response on remuneration for those with lived experience who are carrying out particular roles to support HIS’ work.</td>
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<td>A5</td>
<td>Provide feedback on the actions being taken to address the issues raised by the Clinical and Care Forum around varying working arrangements; strengthening visibility of the forum; and making those involved aware of the impact that their work is having.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A6</td>
<td>Provide regular updates on the actions being taken to support and embed the Quality Management System, and on how this is helping to deliver improvements and spread good practice.</td>
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<td>A7</td>
<td>Provide regular updates on HIS’ work around adverse events.</td>
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<td>A8</td>
<td>Provide an update on the work being done around public engagement.</td>
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<td>A9</td>
<td>Provide feedback on how HIS is spreading the user-led approach, which has been successful in projects such as the one taken forward in Midlothian around Children and Young People’s Mental Health, to other areas.</td>
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<td>A10</td>
<td>Provide feedback on the actions that HIS plans to take to support the integration of health and social care services, looking at outcome-focussed early intervention activity, working with the Care Inspectorate and other partners, and how this might address health inequalities.</td>
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<td>A11</td>
<td>Provide feedback on the actions being taken by HIS to ensure those within Integration Joint Boards (IJBs) from outwith healthcare settings have an understanding of HIS’ role.</td>
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<td>A12</td>
<td>Continue to achieve efficiency savings and remain within budget.</td>
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