



SPORT AND HEALTH – MOVE MORE WESTERN ISLES PROGRAMME

Report by Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to provide an update to the Comhairle on the circumstances relating to Move More Western Isles in the context of termination of funding for the Programme by NHS Western Isles.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Move More Western Isles was first established in 2017 as a partnership between Macmillan Cancer Support, NHS Western Isles and the Comhairle, with each contributing funding. Macmillan Cancer Support withdrew from the Programme in 2020 and NHS Western Isles agreed to increase their contribution to replace the lost funding in 2020 to retain the Programme. This arrangement remained in place until April 2024, when NHS Western Isles confirmed withdrawal of both funding and support for the Programme in full.
- 2.2 The Move More Programme operated on a system of direct referral from healthcare professionals to the service through the NHS SCI Gateway platform to a supported 12-week Programme and ongoing interventions. An assessment was then carried out with the client and a 12-week Programme of activity was established with the intention that this also then supported the person to continue engagement with physical exercise. The Programme funded three Comhairle staff across Stornoway, Benbecula and Barra, working an equivalent 1.4 FTE.
- 2.3 The service level agreement between NHS Western Isles and the Comhairle stated that the provider will see a minimum of 120 client referrals per year dependent on referrals from health services. In 2023-24, there were 248 referrals received, 196 of whom attended initial consultation and 136 completed the full 12-week Programme and there were over 5000 ongoing interventions over the period.
- 2.4 As the current service level agreement was drawing to a close, discussions were held with NHS Health Promotions staff as the previous point of contact for the Programme and informal indications were given that the funding would be available for another year. It was, however, intimated by e-mail from the Director of Public Health on 12 April 2024 confirming that NHS Western Isles was terminating funding with immediate effect and would not be renewing the service level agreement that expired on 31 March 2024.
- 2.5 Subsequent correspondence and meetings with the Director of Public Health has not resulted in any change of position from NHS Western Isles. The Comhairle has made a commitment to continue negotiations in the interests of reaching a satisfactory solution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle:
 - a) note the current circumstances of the Move More Programme;
 - b) support and endorse the work of officers to attempt to continue negotiations with NHS Western Isles; and

- c) consider the Comhairle's contribution, if possible, to any alternative Programme, should external funding not be reinstated.

Contact Officer: Donald Macleod, COECS and Iain GG Campbell, Sports Development Services Manager
 Appendix: Move More Western Isles Annual Report 2023-24
 Background Papers:

IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	The costs of operating the Move More Programme annually is in the region of £65,000. The Comhairle provided £15,000 of that total annually with the remaining £50,000 coming from NHS Western Isles. Fully funding an equivalent Programme would result in the Comhairle incurring costs in the region of £65,000, if that were possible. Removal of the Programme will potentially lead to cancellation and reduced uptake of new Slainte Mhath memberships affecting service budgets.
Legal	There was a Service Level Agreement in place with NHS Western Isles that expired on 31 March 2024, which has now expired without renewal.
Staffing	The Programme directly employs three staff within the Sport and Health Team, working an equivalent 1.4FTE. Any discussion of matters affecting individual employees must be considered in private.
Assets and Property	None
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	There are no direct impacts on identified strategic risks but the Comhairle continues to hold risk in terms of costs and conditions of service for the staff involved. The circumstances show the risk to the delivery of jointly-funded services where communication and joint planning is not present.
Equalities	No Equality Impact Assessment was shared with the Comhairle by NHS Western Isles prior to terminating the funding arrangement, or since. These documents have been requested from NHS Western Isles. The unexpected end of the Programme afforded the Comhairle no time to undertake its own.
Corporate Strategy	Support Children, Families and Young People: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure schools and lifelong learning are at the heart of our communities, with particular emphasis on Gàidhlig, digital skills and new technologies. Support Caring and Resilient Communities and Quality of Life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nurture the safety and resilience of our communities.
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	Dependent on the outcome of the matter, consultation will be required with affected employees.

BACKGROUND

- 5.1 Move More was first established in the Western Isles in 2017 as a partnership between Macmillan Cancer Support, NHS Western Isles and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar with all three organisations providing funding and the Comhairle acting as the service provider with significant in-kind contribution and risk in terms of costs and conditions of service for the staff involved. The referral process was based on the longstanding GP Referral scheme which had been in place for over 20 years.
- 5.2 The structure of funding changed in 2020, when Macmillan Cancer Support were required to withdraw support for the Programme. At this time, it was agreed that NHS Western Isles would fund the deficit that resulted. This meant that they provided 77% of the funding and the Comhairle provided 23% and delivered the service on behalf of the partnership with a significant in-kind contribution in terms of facilities access. A rolling service level agreement was put in place which was reviewed annually. The model was built on maximising the resources of the two agencies to the benefit of our communities and made possible due to the goodwill and partnership working developed over many years.
- 5.3 The Move More Programme operated on a referral basis, with GPs and other health professionals making client referrals to the Move More team through the NHS SCI Gateway platform. Upon receipt of a referral, the client receives an initial consultation and assessment and a trained instructor then develops a bespoke 12-week physical Programme for them. Move More has been used as both a preventative and rehabilitative scheme for patients.
- 5.4 The 2023-24 Annual Report for the Move More Programme is provided in appendix.
- 5.5 On 12 April 2024, NHS Western Isles confirmed in writing that it was no longer going to renew the service level agreement for Move More and that no funding was going to be provided for the scheme for 2024-25.

DETAIL

- 6.1 The Move More Programme has had a significant positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our community since its inception and it was greatly welcomed by the Comhairle when NHS Western Isles agreed to continue funding the Programme in 2020 when Macmillan Cancer Support had to withdraw from it.
- 6.2 Since 2020, the Programme has operated under a service level agreement where NHS Western Isles provided £50,000 (77%) funding and the Comhairle provided £15,000 (23%) to fund the total operating cost of £65,000. NHS acted as the primary referral agency and the Comhairle acted as the service delivery partner.
- 6.3 The in-kind costs to the Comhairle in hosting the Programme included the following: - staff management, admin support, 12-week free membership of facilities, HR services, IT services, access to facilities and equipment. As an extension to the Programme Lewis Sports Centre hosted Cardiac Re-Hab and Orthopaedic Pre-Hab sessions run by NHS Allied Health Professionals and supported by Sport and Health fitness professionals. The indicative in-kind costs involved an estimated amount of well over £50,000 per annum.
- 6.4 The user pathway for the Programme involved a referral from an NHS health professional that was then picked up by a Move More Activity Officer who conducted an initial consultation and then developed a bespoke 12-week physical activity diary. Initial measures were taken at the beginning of their diary period and re-run at the end to provide measurable data about the impact of participation. Many users went on to maintain physical activity after conclusion of the Programme and take out a Slàinte Mhath membership.
- 6.5 In the reporting period for 2023-24, the service received 248 referrals and 196 (79%) of these attended the initial consultation session. 136 clients completed the full 12-week Programme, representing 69%

of those that engaged with the Programme. There were over 5000 interventions over the same period and the on-going engagement with physical exercise is significant. For those that are unable to complete the full 12-week Programme, there are notable reasons stated that include deteriorating health, relocation, accident or injury, transport issues and return to work. Such issues do not reflect on the quality or potential impact of the Programme itself.

- 6.6 As the service level agreement approached its review date, Comhairle officers engaged with NHS colleagues to discuss the annual report and the continuation of both the agreement and funding for another year. Initial indications were that funding would continue and the Comhairle took steps to continue Programme arrangements accordingly. It was subsequently notified to the Comhairle in an e-mail on 12 April 2024 from the Director of Public Health that the agreement would not be renewed resulting in funding, and, therefore, the Programme itself ceasing as of 31 March 2024.
- 6.7 Upon receipt of notification of termination, officers engaged in correspondence seeking reconsideration of the decision and to discuss options to continue the Programme. A meeting was held between the Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services, the Sports Development Service Manager and the NHS Director of Public Health where Comhairle officers sought a continuation of the Programme whilst engaging in discussion about how it could be amended or further developed for the following year but this was consistently refused.
- 6.8 The NHS has stated a willingness to engage in assessment and design of a future physical activity Programme and it has been stated during discussions that their preference is for a self-referral scheme that clients pay to access and could be of varying length and content depending on need. NHS refused to consider continuation of the existing scheme whilst any such alternative approach was designed and agreed.
- 6.9 Comhairle officers have expressed concerns about such proposals for reasons including those stated below.
- Termination of the existing Programme with no agreed replacement creates a significant gap in service for clients with health needs and risks loss of skilled and trained staff experienced in delivery of such Programmes.
 - Moving to a self-referral scheme disconnects the Programme from the clinical identification and referral route and relies on self-motivation of clients to seek such support.
 - Applying charges at the point of delivery, even with a stated small degree of subsidy, creates a financial divide between those that are able and unable to pay for such provision
 - The core responsibility for funding employee costs would fall solely upon the Comhairle and income would be subject to degrees of market forces and potential losses requiring subsidy in terms of income from self-referral clients.
- 6.10 Since the meeting with the Director of Public Health, communications with NHS officers have continued and further requests have been made to reconsider the decision. Information has been provided in support of Move More, including testimonials received from clients. The Comhairle has also requested sight of any Equality Impact Assessments undertaken by NHS Western Isles before deciding to withdraw from the funding arrangement and, at the time of writing, no such assessment has been provided. Concern has been noted about decision-making not being in the spirit of effective and coordinated community planning and partnership.
- 6.11 The Comhairle has committed to continue negotiations with NHS Western Isles in the interests of reaching a satisfactory resolution and has extended existing arrangements for a month to provide time for options to be further considered. If agreement to continue the Programme is not reached, the Comhairle will need to consider either pursuit of a different model of funding and delivery of a Move More type scheme or to formally conclude it. It should be noted that the Programme was dependent on referrals from NHS and that, for any future scheme, it is therefore difficult to assess the client base and demand. Other considerations may include application of charges to NHS for access to Sport and

Health facilities and resources for other NHSWI services hosted at Lewis Sports Centre supplemented currently by good-will arrangements, including orthopaedic pre-hab, cardiac re-hab and healthy weight Programmes.

CONCLUSION

- 7.1 After a number of years of successful and impactful delivery of the Move More Programme, the removal of external funding from NHS Western Isles has effectively caused it to cease. Work continues to try to secure the future of the Programme but it appears increasingly unlikely that this will be possible.