**Update for key stakeholders  
3 February 2023**



**Self-Directed Support Improvement**

A new strategic plan is being developed to improve the implementation of Self-Directed Support in Scotland.

Since the passing of the Self-Directed Support (Scotland) Act in 2013 and the accompanying strategy, several multi-year Implementation Plans have been in place to drive forward SDS implementation. As the last plan expired in 2021, there have been calls for a new plan that will set out the course of SDS improvement over the coming years.

With the development of the National Care Service on the horizon, the intention is that actions included in this plan, and learning from them, will influence its development. The draft plan is being co-developed by a working group including representatives from Scottish Government, COSLA, Social Work Scotland, Self Directed Support Scotland, and others.

The working group is keen to hear the views of a wide range of stakeholders involved in delivering SDS, and representing people who access – or could access – Self-Directed Support. An open engagement process will take place from 18 January – 13 February 2023, to enable as many stakeholders as possible to contribute their views on the draft actions. The Improvement Plan Working Group will also be facilitating online ‘roadshow’ sessions to enable stakeholders to find out more about the Plan and contribute their feedback.

These will be held on:

* Thursday 2 February, 2.00 – 3.30pm
* Monday 6 February, 2.00 – 3.30pm
* Tuesday 7 February, 10.30am – 12.00 noon

You can [sign up to attend a roadshow via Eventbrite.](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sds-improvement-plan-roadshows-tickets-518551811427)

You can [download the SDS Improvement Plan Consultation Document here.](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.sdsscotland.org.uk%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2023%2F01%2FSDS-Improvement-Plan-2023-2027-consultation-document-FINAL.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

Organisations and individuals are invited to give their views on the draft actions that will inform the final plan using an online [feedback form, which you can access here](https://formtitan.com/s/wau). The closing date for submissions is Monday 13 February 2023.

If you’d like to find out more please contact SDSImprovementPlan@sdsscotland.org.uk

**Caithness women’s services**

We have had a number of queries recently about women’s services in Caithness. NHS Highland have formal meetings with the North Highland Women’s Wellness Hub and are in regular contact giving them updates on services and what is available in the Caithness area. We adopt a life course approach as part of the national Woman's Health Plan with the aim to deliver a full service at Caithness.

Caithness General Hospital has provision for patients in general gynaecology including menopause, endometriosis, pelvic floor, postmenopausal bleeding, colposcopy and day gynaecology surgery.

We have a full-time consultant based in Caithness to deliver gynaecology services and they are supported by three clinicians visiting on a rotational basis. We have also recently commissioned an additional two visiting consultants, one from Orkney and another from Tayside, to support gynaecology sessions in Caithness. Gynaecology patients who have been seen at a Caithness General Hospital outpatient clinic have in general shorter waiting times compared to those waiting to access Raigmore Hospital. Patients local to Caithness who are seen at an outpatient clinic in Raigmore may be listed for their procedure in Caithness General Hospital where appropriate.

A Gynaecology Specialist Nurse is employed to run Colposcopy clinics in Golspie, this service has been located in Golspie to allow for a wider geographical catchment area. For Caithness women this is a more locally based service that travelling the full return journey from Caithness to Inverness.

All gynaecology cancer cases in NHS Highland are managed by the North of Scotland Cancer Network which includes Caithness. All subfertility cases needing tertiary care input are affiliated to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary as part of a service level agreement with NHS Highland and this is not any different for the Caithness population. Tests and work up are done locally as much as is practical and feasible.

Our specialist menopause clinics are done by telephone ensuring equitable access to all patients across Highland. We also provide eight face to face sexual health clinics a month in Caithness as well as providing self-sampling kits (home testing for STIs) via post, routine telephone consultations and daily telephone rapid access clinics which is open to all patients across Highland as well as a daily teen live (web) chat service.

While we no longer have Caithness based sexual health clinicians, with the exception of 1 GP doing a monthly coil clinic, all our sexual health clinical staff travel to Caithness from Raigmore. This is likely to continue to maintain clinical support and competency for clinicians.

Health awareness sessions on Endometriosis and Menopause have been conducted in 2022 by gynaecologists from within the team and information and support group signposting made available to all participants.

Women's lived experience and feedback is constantly shared to our teams to ensure levels of good practice are adhered to with peer support where required.

**Feedback**

If you have comments or queries please contact [nhshighland.feedback@nhs.scot](mailto:nhshighland.feedback@nhs.scot)