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| HIGH LIFE HIGHLAND  REPORT TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS  31 August 2023 | AGENDA ITEM  REPORT No HLH / /23 |

## **HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY UPDATE - Report by Chief Executive**

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| **Summary** The report provides the regular six-monthly progress update on the health and wellbeing activity including the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Plan (2022-2027). Some examples of the work which has taken place to support the health and wellbeing of Highland communities are included within the report.  It is recommended that Directors:   1. note the progress made to date; and 2. comment on the update. |

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| **1.** | **Business Plan Contribution** |
| 1.1 | This report supports the highlighted Business Outcomes from the High Life Highland (HLH) Business Plan:   1. **Seek to continuously improve standards of health and safety.** 2. Commit to the Scottish Government’s zero carbon targets and maintain the highest standards in environmental compliance. 3. **Use research and market analysis to develop and improve services to meet customer needs.** 4. **Increase employee satisfaction, engagement and development to improve staff recruitment and retention.** 5. **Improve the financial sustainability of the company.** 6. **Value and strengthen the relationship with THC.** 7. Develop and deliver the HLH Corporate Programme and seek to attract capital investment. 8. **Use research and market analysis to develop and deliver proactive marketing and promotion of HLH and its services.** 9. Initiate and implement an ICT digital transformation strategy across the charity. 10. **Develop and strengthen relationships with customers, key stakeholders and partners.** 11. **Deliver targeted programmes which support and enhance the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the population and which contribute to the prevention agenda.** |
| **2.** | **Background** |
| 2.1 | Since 2012 the High Life Highland (HLH) Board has received updates twice per annum, on how the organisation is supporting and enhancing the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the Highland population. |
| 2.2 | The HLH Business Plan (2022 – 2027) includes a specific outcome that the organisation will deliver targeted programmes which support and enhance the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the population, and which contribute to the prevention agenda. There is a corresponding Health and Wellbeing Plan (2022 – 2027) and the areas of work listed in the associated action plan have been RAG rated (see **Appendix A**). |
| 2.3 | The focus of the health and wellbeing work in HLH is to embed health improvement and health promotion as fundamental parts of service delivery, through all HLH services, with a commitment to equality. Some examples of the work that has taken place since the last update to the Board (March 2023) are included in this report. |
| **3.** | **Social Prescribing** |
| 3.1 | The term, social prescribing, has been used in different ways. In HLH’s health and wellbeing work with NHSH and others, it is a mechanism to improve health and wellbeing for people who have non-medical, health-related social needs, by connecting them to non-clinical supports and services within the community. A social prescription is a non-medical prescription, usually made by a health or social care professional, to non-medical services that can help people to have a better quality of life and improve their health and wellbeing. |
| 3.2 | There are a wide range of approaches to social prescribing and the models/methodologies, target populations and intended outcomes can differ. Social prescribing often, not always, involves a Link Worker, a person who is employed to help connect people to appropriate activities that meet their needs and interests. Activities that people take part in, following a social prescription, can include things like art sessions, outdoor walks and weight management services, which can benefit people who are socially isolated or have mental health problems. |
| 3.3 | HLH can and does make a vital contribution to social prescribing in Highland and it is pleasing to note that HLH’s contribution is being recognised both locally and nationally including through being invited to deliver activities and provide representation on the steering group and advisory group for the University of the Highlands and Island’s (UHI) research project called Prescribe Heritage Highland. For this project HLH also delivered a programme of cultural and nature-based activities to people referred by health and social care professionals through the archive, museums and countryside ranger services, funded by UHI. |
| 3.4 | Prescribe Heritage Highland is investigating the factors that make social prescribing sustainable and scalable in a rural context. As described by the Lead Researcher for the project from UHI, Dr Sara Bradley, the project aims to understand how social prescriptions can tackle health inequalities and be integrated into mainstream healthcare. HLH is supporting UHI to look at how the wealth of natural and cultural assets across Highland can be used in social prescriptions to benefit the health and wellbeing of rural residents. This work has been supported by the University of Edinburgh who run a successful programme, called Prescribe Culture, on campus aimed primarily at students. Following an initial implementation phase of Prescribe Heritage Highland, UHI has submitted a funding application to extend the research and learning in a further study. Subject to UHI securing funding HLH will support the study through having a colleague representative(s) to co-investigate as part of the research project as well as offering steering group and advisory group member(s) in addition to providing activities and interventions as part of the study. |
| 3.5 | One further example of how HLH is supporting social prescribing in Highland is the Green Health Link Worker programme being delivered in Badenoch & Strathspey. Funded by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), HLH has employed a fixed term Green Health Link Worker to facilitate links between various clinicians, General Practitioners (GPs) and green health activities in the community. Following the initial success of project implementation, CNPA extended funding to HLH to deliver the programme for an additional 4-month period. This contract is due to end on 1 September 2023 and, in light of the short-term nature of the funding secured, it is unlikely any further extension will be made. |
| 3.6 | The final example of how HLH is delivering social prescribing in Highland is the pilot GP Movement and Activity Programme (GP MAP). GP MAP provides GPs the option to signpost patients to HLH leisure facilities to access everything the centres have to offer that can support their health and wellbeing. The programme started in Dingwall and Tain, six people have attended Tain Royal Academy Community Complex and Dingwall Leisure Centre since being connected to HLH from their GPs. Following discussion between GPs within their own networks HLH has been approached by Ullapool and Gairloch GP Practices with a request to extend the pilot to include their practices and steps have been taken by the HLH team to enable this extension to the pilot. Furthermore, HLH is also in discussion with Change Mental Health to potentially extend the pilot to include an option for their Community Link Workers (that are based in 29 GP Practices across Highland) to also be able to connect their patients to HLH facilities in their localities – careful scoping and analysis will be undertaken in order to fully consider this request with a view to potentially extending the programme accordingly. |
| 3.7 | HLH was invited to be part of a knowledge exchange and networking event organised by NHS Highland and UHI in June 2023 which was focussed on social prescribing in Highland. The event was aimed at individuals and organisations who are already social prescribing or have an interest in social prescribing approaches and research and considered the principles of social prescribing and was seeking to develop the direction of social prescribing in Highland and its role in reducing health inequalities. Various presentations were given at the event including one about the Prescribe Heritage Highland programme detailed above and HLH were featured in the presentation including in this short film: [https://vimeo.com/837944811/bb53a3c9af?share=copy](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fvimeo.com%2F837944811%2Fbb53a3c9af%3Fshare%3Dcopy&data=05%7C01%7CLynn.Bauermeister%40highlifehighland.com%7Cd45bed94c5f14921abf908db719c7539%7C89f0b56e6d164fe89dba176fa940f7c9%7C0%7C0%7C638228689020471784%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=dxLp3SyJHL5arez5buw1wY%2BqHljK3fc2n4YAJsqIIJk%3D&reserved=0)  HLH also hosted a stand in the ‘marketplace’ at the event, where colleagues from museums and countryside rangers shared information about the work they are doing in the social prescribing space. |
| 3.8 | The opportunities linked to social prescribing not only support HLH’s social aims and health and wellbeing outcomes, but they also enable HLH to improve the financial sustainability of the organisation through securing external funding and new participants. Securing external funding and successfully delivering on agreed outcomes from organisations which are growing their portfolios in the health and wellbeing space creates good working relationships and potential for future investment. |
| 3.9 | These work streams have also provided an opportunity to increase employee satisfaction, engagement and development to improve staff recruitment and retention by providing internal development opportunities for existing employees to deliver new, innovative and interesting programmes which benefit the wellbeing of people in the communities we serve. |
| **4.** | **ESCAPE-Pain, roll out** |
| 4.1 | ESCAPE-pain a national programme developed by Osteoarthritis UK, it is an innovative and evidence-based, cost effective, group rehabilitation programme for people with chronic joint pain, which integrates educational self-management and coping strategies with an exercise regimen individualised for each participant which increases physical function and improves quality of life.[[1]](#footnote-2) |
| 4.2 | The ESCAPE-pain programme is innovative because it helps people to: understand their condition better; recognise exercise is safe and effective and can help reduce pain; improve physical function, self-confidence, sense of being in control of problems; and reduce the depression and frustration that is often felt with pain. |
| 4.3 | HLH classes were initially delivered in Inverness in 2021 as a test of change, planned in consultation with colleagues from NHS Highland and Versus Arthritis, to meet an identified need in the community that people experiencing pain and those affected by osteoarthritis required additional support to function well in the community. HLH secured funding which covered the cost of Tutor Coaches completing the required training to deliver the programme. Following a thorough review of the initial pilot, which highlighted the numerous benefits to customers as well as to HLH and the colleagues delivering the programme, in 2023 the programme has been rolled out to Tain Royal Academy Community Complex and the Fingal Centre in Portree. There are plans to extend the roll out to Lochaber and Kinlochleven in the coming months (following the successful completion of HLH Tutor Coach training). |
| 4.4 | By delivering ESCAPE- pain HLH has developed and strengthened relationships with customers, key stakeholders and partners by enhancing its trusted partner status with external stakeholders including NHS Highland, Versus Arthritis and Orthopaedic Research UK who recently awarded HLH as “venue of the month” (selected from hundreds of venues across the UK) for delivering ESCAPE- pain. |
| 4.5 | Since HLH began delivering ESCAPE-pain in 2021 it has attracted a raft of new customers that experience pain who can now use leisure facilities. To date one hundred and fifty-four people have participated in HLH’s ESCAPE-pain programme and it is hoped that many more people can be helped to reduce and better manage pain as the organisation continues to deliver and grow the programme. Participants in the ESCAPE-pain classes have reported significant improvements to their health and wellbeing as a consequence of taking part. The image below is a sample of the impact that ESCAPE-pain has for participants, it highlights that since taking part in the programme people are reporting that they are experiencing less pain and better able to manage pain and to function well and that their overall quality of life has greatly improved. |
| 4.6 | ESCAPE-pain has not only supported HLH to deliver targeted programmes which support and enhance the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the population and which contribute to the prevention agenda it has also enabled HLH to use research and market analysis to develop and improve services to meet customer needs by delivering an innovative programme which targets members of the community who would otherwise be unlikely to engage with leisure services. |
| **5.** | **Cardiac Rehabilitation Developments** |
| 5.1 | The rate of coronary heart disease in Highland is higher than the Scottish average, which is why, since 2012, HLH has worked in partnership with the specialist Cardiac Rehabilitation teams in Raigmore Hospital, Ross Memorial Hospital and also in the Lochaber and Caithness Districts, to deliver a range of offerings for people that have had a cardiac event. |
| 5.2 | A number of HLH Tutor Coach colleagues have been upskilled and trained to become specialist exercise Level 4 Cardiac Rehabilitation coaches to support people into exercise following a cardiac event. |
| 5.3 | Since 2012 HLH has supported people who have cardiovascular disease or have had a cardiac event through cardiac rehabilitation. The aims of cardiac rehabilitation and prevention is to provide patients and families with the skills and knowledge to self-manage, facilitate recovery both physically and psychologically and educate to reduce the risk of further cardiac events, as well as achieving an absolute risk reduction in cardiovascular mortality. There is a significant body of evidence that supports the efficacy of cardiac rehabilitation and in summary, cardiac rehabilitation reduces both cardiovascular mortality and episodes of acute hospitalisation whilst also improving functional capacity and perceived quality of life.[[2]](#footnote-3) |
| 5.4 | In collaboration with NHS Highland, HLH developed a referral pathway to enable clinicians to refer any suitable patients to the cardiac rehabilitation programme offered by HLH in leisure centres. In recent months, improvements have been made to the referral process to enable even more clinicians to refer patients to the programme following feedback from specialist nurses that the existing referral for was prohibitive and a barrier them being able to refer patients. |
| 5.5 | Following a detailed consultation process with the Consultant Cardiologist at Raigmore Hospital, Specialist Nurses, HLH specialist Tutor Coaches and HLH’s health and safety lead officer, in partnership with NHS Highland, HLH has adapted the referral pathway to enable specialist nurses to refer suitable patients to the programme using their patient discharge letters. The nurses letter template has been adapted to incorporate all the information the HLH specialist coaches require in order to risk stratify each individual and bring them into the HLH programme. |
| 5.6 | This improvement to the referral process has been in place for a few weeks (at the time of writing this report) and an average of one new referral per week has been received which is a positive indication that the new process is enabling more people to access HLH services. The new process has not only enabled more referrals to the programme, therefore more people who are supported to enhance their physical and mental health and wellbeing, it has also demonstrated how HLH can and does to continuously improve standards of health and safety to enable people to engage in our programmes safely. |
| **6.** | **Employee Health and Wellbeing** |
| 6.1 | Health and wellbeing in the workplace has never been more important than in recent times.[[3]](#footnote-4) The benefits of investing in employee wellbeing are well evidenced and understood, they include increased resilience; better employee engagement; reduced sickness absence; and higher performance and productivity. [[4]](#footnote-5) |
| 6.2 | Both the Chartered Institute for Professional Development (CIPD: the professional body for HR and people development) and the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS: the Government funded organisation that works with employers and employees to improve workplace relationships) highlight that employers have a duty of care and must do all they reasonably can to support their employees’ health, safety, and wellbeing.[[5]](#footnote-6) |
| 6.3 | The CIPD and ACAS also explain that employee health and wellbeing shouldn't be treated as an ‘add-on’ or ‘nice-to-have’ activity by organisations, rather they suggest that if employers place employee wellbeing at the centre of their business model and view it as the vital source of value creation, the returns for organisational health can be significant. |
| 6.4 | During the Covid-19 pandemic HLH created an employee health and wellbeing plan which outlined the activities, tasks, milestones, progress indicators and responsible persons for implementation to ensure that HLH colleague health and wellbeing was facilitated, supported and enabled during that time. Since then, HLH has continued to offer support to employees, aligned to the themes and some of the actions within the employee health and wellbeing plan created during the Covid-19 pandemic. |
| 6.5 | A group of HLH Mental Health Representatives (Reps) have continued to offer support to any colleagues who want assistance. Mental Health Reps provide a source of support in the work place, offer sign posting and interventions and to champion creating mentally health workplaces and promote mental health issues in all services. Mental Health Reps are on hand to respond to alerts on mental health issues raised by colleagues and are available to all HLH colleagues. All HLH employees can “self-refer” to a Mental Health Rep confidentially. Reps are brought together quarterly to share best practice and to act as a form of support to each other, it is recognised that supporting others can be mentally and physically challenging therefore creating a supportive network for Mental Health Reps is a vital part of the overall programme. Some Mental Health Reps recently received training in Scottish Mental Health First Aid to augment the training previously undertaken. |
| 6.6 | Each month a “Colleague Health and Wellbeing Bulletin” is issued to all HLH employees. The bulletin contains information and resources to support colleague health and wellbeing – recent content has included articles on: how to balance negative thoughts; tips for managing symptoms of anxiety; various sources of mental health support; HLH Mental Health Reps; cycle and e-bike schemes; home energy advice from Home Energy Scotland to name a few. |
| 6.7 | An employee assistance scheme called Togetherall has been adopted by HLH to support colleague mental health and wellbeing. Togetherall offers a vibrant online community where colleagues can: find useful information, resources and courses about mental health and wellbeing; review information, resources and courses at their own pace; use the resources independently or interact with and support others; access support and information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year; complete self-assessments with recommended resources; use creative tools to help express how they are feeling. |
| 6.8 | Continuing to deliver opportunities for employees to sustain and improve their health and wellbeing is vital as, with the appropriate focus it can assist HLH to not only increase resilience; have better employee engagement; reduce sickness absence; and engender higher performance and productivity it can also support the HLH business outcome to increase employee satisfaction, engagement and development to improve staff recruitment and retention. |
| **7.** | **Implications** |
| 7.1 | Resource Implications – there are no additional resource implications arising from this report. |
| 7.2 | Legal Implications - there are no new legal implications arising from this report. |
| 7.3 | Equality Implications – there are no new equality implications arising from this report. |
| 7.4 | Risk Implications – there are no new risk implications arising from this report. |

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| **Recommendation** It is recommended that Directors:   1. note the progress made to date; and 2. comment on the update. |

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 31 August 2023

Author: Lynn Bauermeister, Head of Health and Wellbeing

**Appendix A: Health and Wellbeing Action Plan RAG Ratings**

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| Scotland’s Public Health Priorities | Action | Date | RAG |
| Healthy places and community | * Deliver new and improved activities in HLH facilities including targeting older people and people with health conditions * Provide trusted health and wellbeing information, in digital and other media through libraries and other services * Continue to support the Highland Green Health Partnership through representation at partnership meetings and taking forward priority actions identified where possible * Work with 3rd sector partners to facilitate, enable and attract voluntary groups such as walking groups to utilise HLH facilities and encourage engagement in HLH activities * Deliver Prescribe Highland Heritage activities through museums and countryside rangers * Deliver a range of programmes and activities through HLH Adult Learning and Youth Work teams * Provide safe and inclusive spaces for people to meet in HLH café’s and catering services, maximising outdoor spaces for catering where possible | Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24 | G  G  G  G  G  G  G |
| Early Years | * Provide facilitated reading and storytelling for personal growth and therapeutic support in libraries including Book Bug sessions * Develop provision of holiday activity programmes such as ‘Schools Out’ in summer * Augment parent and toddler swim sessions to be programmed in all facilities * Deliver the Youth Music Initiative Programme through KODALY music education including targeting the most vulnerable as part of inclusive delivery practices * Provide family learning and literacy opportunities through Adult Learning and Youth Work team in targeted communities to improve educational outcomes * Facilitate visits for childcare and school groups to cultural facilities including Highland Folk Museum outdoor classroom and at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery | Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24 | G  G  G  G  G  G |
| Mental Wellbeing | * Continue to be a proactive partner in the CPP Mental Health Delivery Group to support the implementation of its action plan * Deliver wellbeing initiatives for young people through the Youth and Sport Services * Deliver and grow the HLH “You Time” programme in libraries and leisure centres with a focus on targeting older adults to enable reduced social isolation and loneliness * Enable access to music instrumental tuition (which facilitates good mental wellbeing and personal development for participants) * Provide short walks into nature and other wellbeing focussed walks/activities through countryside rangers * Deliver targeted projects – using nature to improve mental health outcomes * Help reduce social isolation and loneliness in vulnerable adults through Adult Learning team by providing accessible group work, digital skills and removing barriers to digital connectivity * Deliver Learn with Lorna sessions through the archive service which support participants social connectedness and help to reduce loneliness * Offer high quality volunteering opportunities through the archive and museums services * Deliver initiatives through museums, art galleries and archives that support mental wellbeing through engagement with cultural opportunities. * Support and assist people affected by dementia and their carers via a range of activities and programmes, including archives providing care homes with reminiscence resource packs and museums developing and delivering the House of and Shinty Memories projects * Delivery Green Health Link Worker pilot for Cairngorms National Park Authority in Badenoch and Strathspey | Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Sep 23 | G  G  G  G  G  G  G  G  G  G  G  G |
| Harmful Substances | * Update internal policies and arrange training to reflect the ‘People First - Language Matters’ approach * Deliver HLH's commitments to the Planet Youth programme a collaboration between NHSH and HLH Youth and Sport Services * Work closely with a range of referring partners to ensure that learning is available through the Adult Learning Service which is accessible for those living with the impact of harmful substances * Programme learning opportunities for young people to enable them to make informed choices about substance us and work closely with Highland Drug and Alcohol Partnership on joint initiatives through Youth Services. | Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24 | A  G  G  G |
| Poverty and Inequality | * Provide training opportunities for the workforce in topics related to poverty and inequality * Develop an approach to augmenting trauma informed practice across the workforce * Promote and preserve the Budget offering for *highlife* membership * Facilitate social interaction and empathic help and support – (face-to-face and digital) through libraries * Offer free to access and targeted programmes (towards communities which have locality plans as part of the work of Community Planning partners) to reduce inequalities through Adult Learning Service * Provide free accessible youth work provision and focus the work at those at risk of poorer outcomes. | Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 23  Mar 24 | G  G  G  G  G  G |
| Healthy Weight and Physical Activity | * Develop the Active Health programme targeting people with a range of health conditions including:   + cancer; chronic pain; Parkinson’s disease; type 2 diabetes; cardiovascular disease; people a at risk of falling; neurological conditions. * Deliver commissioned services for NHSH such as:   + Live It healthy weight programme   + Digital Inclusion programme for people with Type 2 Diabetes   + Physiotherapy in leisure centres * Support the development and implementation of the Active Highland Strategy and Disability Sport Strategy * Embed physical activity and nutrition into existing Youth and Adult Learning programmes and activities wherever relevant, inc. healthy snacks at youth club settings, after school food provision to reduce food insecurity, health walks, bushcraft, and outdoor activities (with HLH Rangers and Outdoor Activities colleagues). * Collaborate with UHI on research studies relating to healthy weight and/or physical activity * Maximise opportunities to provide healthy freshly made food for consumption in all HLH catering outlets | Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24  Mar 24 | G  G  G  G  G  G |

1. [ESCAPE-Pain website](https://escape-pain.org/) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [Cardiovascular Disease Prevention and Rehabilitation](https://www.bacpr.org/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/39437/BACPR_Standards_and_Core_Components_2017.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [Local Government Association – Tips for Embedding a Wellbeing Culture](https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/partners-care-and-health/adult-social-care-workforce/top-tips-embedding-wellbeing) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [CIPD – Employee Wellbeing](https://www.cipd.org/en/knowledge/factsheets/well-being-factsheet/#:~:text=Investing%20in%20employee%20wellbeing%20can,isolated%20from%20the%20everyday%20business.) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. [ACAS – Health and Wellbeing](https://www.acas.org.uk/supporting-mental-health-workplace/looking-after-your-mental-health) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)