

## Finance Committee

### Prevention

#### Submission from NHS National Services Scotland

NHS National Services Scotland (“NSS”) is pleased to respond to the Call for Evidence on Prevention being undertaken by the Finance Committee in assessing radical change as suggested by the Christie Commission. This response will consider the connected pillars of reform proposed by the Christie Commission as these cannot be considered in isolation. Consideration has also been given to the Scottish Government’s response to the Report. This response seeks to answer the question of “how do we get better at this to make prevention work”. In this case, not only does “this” refer to business as usual but also looks to reducing inequality, and minimising variation while noting the Scottish demographic and benefits of economy of scale across national, local, sector or other levels.

The Finance Committee posed several questions relating to pace of, and the barriers to, reform, developing innovation and digital transformation amongst others. Our thoughts on these and possible approach to solutions are outlined in the narrative below.

**Prevention** requires: an understanding of the upstream determinants that are likely to result in people requiring services; potential solutions to tackle these determinants; and, an ability to deliver these solutions. A partnership approach with shared perspective across the public sector would allow evidence based solutions to be developed, assure consistency of action between different public sector bodies and lead to further joint action to deliver such solutions.

As an innovator in this area, NSS is an enabler across the public sector in identifying the solutions through unique expertises in data linkage leading to local, timely intelligence of health and care needs, and can provide assistance in creating a cohesive approach to these through services such as national procurement, logistics and advanced programme management. Through the deployment of data analytics teams throughout Scotland, NSS are sharing information between organisations (including the third sector) and joining together organisations for a more cohesive view of the demographic and their needs. With further support from Scottish Government, NSS can do more in this sphere. This work has identified other areas for improvement. For example, it has become apparent that an improved IT infrastructure will allow organisations to link to each other more effectively and efficiently. NSS is already delivering solutions to this problem, such as the introduction of the Scotland Wide Area Network. In summary:-

- Seek to identify the determinants and the solutions to these through linking more information to gain sector wide perspective and from this, engage in joint action to

deliver the solution permitting a refocus in approach and resources to achieve parity in provision.

Around **partnership**, the Commission agreed that integrated service provision delivered under local partnership arrangements is central to the reform process. It is recognised that organisations working together in collaboration to plan budgets provide better, and more effective, services to the local populace. In this regard, listening and learning from the public is essential. To meet this challenge, organisations with differing cultures and governance models require to consider exactly what it is that they do well and focus on it. There needs to be a shift away from the thinking that to be a fully functioning organisation, you must have all established business areas such as payroll, HR, facilities etc. Looking towards the corporate sector matrix model of thinking, if organisations focussed on what they do best, their core competencies, and put resource into shared services they would make more effective use of budgets. This would provide an opportunity to deliver more on a “once for Scotland” basis to improve efficiency, effectiveness, standardisation and sustainability of services. Assigning accountability and responsibility for delivery to a lead organisation will enable financial benefits to be realised more quickly. NSS has vast experience in devising sourcing strategies and can do more within the shared services agenda. In summary:-

- Identify strengths and play to these while engaging in shared services.

Fundamental to all of this are **people**. Staff, the public and communities are best placed to identify how public service delivery can be improved. Reshaping public services allows the re-focussing of resources to meet the needs and demands of the local population while taking best advantage of the benefits of economy of scale on whatever level they present, be it national, local or sector based.

Customer engagement and management is key to working in partnership. In this area, the public sector can learn from the private sector. It is recognised that this is not without its challenges due to levels of interest; however the current approach to engagement does not facilitate effective feedback. The public sector also needs to understand how to use the feedback received to sustainably shape service improvement and provision. A system of solution based measures to assess the public sector against would help in this area.

The people element in the delivery of a solution cannot be underestimated. It is acknowledged that, given the percentage of the workforce in the public sector in Scotland, there is the expectation that quality jobs will continue to come from this sector, including for those already employed. Recent pension reform may negate some of the advantages of working within the public sector although the satisfying nature of the work and conviction of public service should not be underestimated. But this too will have its limits. It is recognised that expectations from different senior roles will vary but to ensure that key leadership positions are filled by the right people, then there must be a realistic view of the level of remuneration for these positions. Connected to this, organisations should seek to succession plan better to prevent talent drain to the private sector. At NSS, we are a great

place to work due to our values, created by the staff, underpinning everything we do. Consideration should be given to introducing a similar approach in other areas of the public sector. In summary:-

- Suitable remuneration levels and succession planning can attract and retain the best people to lead the public sector in challenging times.

The fourth pillar, **performance**, relates to ensuring that maximum value is wrought from every pound of public money spent and further, that the public is assured that that is the case. Open and rigorous performance measures, clear and accessible objectives, playing to the core competencies of organisations, coupled with a transparent system of accountability will bolster standards and improve outcomes. There are elements of the other pillars involved in this approach: the customer engagement model, an engaged workforce and the delivery of a solution at the early intervention stage with set performance measures. The focus of the Scottish Government on outcomes is welcomed but these are a long term solution and are not articulated cohesively enough at present to be a good measure of success. Neither are current targets which look to process rather than results, an example of this being A&E waiting times. Customers, the public, would relate to this better if the measures were on a more personal level based on outcomes they understand. In summary:-

- Develop clear outcomes with transparent performance measurements.

The importance of digital transformation in the public sector cannot be underestimated. Simply put, we have got to get better at this. Too often there is reliance on old fashioned process. A fresh look at our current technology and how we can deliver services differently while using it more efficiently would be of benefit. To do this, the public sector should seek to be more enterprising with existing digital technology. An example of this can be seen around NSS's programme of screening and recall which utilises a single system to pull in data from different sources and issue the recalls. It is fully automated, and people aren't missed out. It has minimum cost but increased benefits, including freeing up primary care providers. NSS can assist further in this and other spheres relating to digital transformation.

The Call for Evidence asks specifically if there are other countries that can be looked to as good examples in this sphere. There are many to choose from, but one example would be the Finnish KELLA system, a preventative system in dentistry. Essentially regular check ups are reimbursed in their entirety becoming free of cost, but should treatment be required if check ups are missed, the cost of such treatment is not fully reimbursed, thus providing incentives to attend creating public buy in.

In conclusion, a different approach in Scotland and across the UK is required in relation to public services due to the scale of financial and demographic challenges. The final question asked relates to the implications for the provision of public services if the decisive shift to prevention does not take place. There are several options. If the status quo continues, a

significant cut back in public services will be required to live within the financial envelope of public services. Alternatively, the current service levels could be maintained and paid for through a fiscal mechanism. The third option, which encompasses the pillars of Christie is to transform how services are delivered so these can be improved while delivering significant savings. And in delivering this transformation, NSS can be, and is already demonstrating that we are, a key partner.