The Healthcare Improvement Scotland (Delegation of Functions) Order 2016
(SSI 2016/86)

NHS Shetland

I would like to make the following points in relation to the proposed Order which are important in the context of providing Healthcare in the Island context. Therefore while we understand the logic behind the order and are supportive in general, it is important that the following points are taken into account in the execution of the proposed powers by HIS.

In Shetland the local Acute hospital is relatively small and only consists of 4 wards comprising 22, 24 (both acute wards), 6 (rehabilitation) & 5 Obstetric (maternity) beds respectively. In this context the decision to close a ward, while obviously only being taken for serious safety reasons, would, in itself have significant safety issues in relation to overall bed capacity and the need to transfer a significant number of additional patients from Shetland to Aberdeen or other mainland hospitals. In addition to safety issues this would also have financial implications for both the local health board, the Scottish Ambulance service and patients and their families.

Therefore, while acknowledging the appropriateness of a facility that was providing unsafe care needing to be closed to protect patients, it is important that this decision would only be taken having taken into consideration the overall impact for the service in the context in which care is being provided.

I hope these comments are helpful and will ensure that in the event such an order was needed this would be done in an appropriate and effective manner.

NHS Shetland