Response by the ALLIANCE and the Scottish Health Council on behalf of service user and carer Integration Joint Board representatives

Background
This response to the Health and Sport Committee is the result of an engagement event that took place on 20th February 2017. The event was jointly facilitated by the Health and Social Care Alliance (the ALLIANCE) and the Scottish Health Council under the Our Voice framework, working in collaboration with the Coalition of Carers in Scotland. (The Our Voice framework, initiated by the Scottish Government, aims to enable people who use health and social care services, carers and the public to engage purposefully with health and social care providers in order to continuously improve services.)

The engagement event, from which this response is drawn, was designed to allow the carer, service user and third sector representatives who sit on Integration Joint Boards (IJBs) to discuss the progress of integration within their areas and voice their views on their levels of engagement with IJBs with the view of developing a peer network to facilitate sharing of good practice and improvement. Consequently, this contribution reflects the views of the people at the event and those that responded to us through a follow up survey. The feedback outlined below is based on responses of the 33 service user and carer representatives on IJBs who attended the event and 14 replies to the follow up survey.

Both the ALLIANCE and the Scottish Health Council have submitted their own separate responses that reflect their respective organisational views.

Do you know how and when you can get involved with the Integration Authorities to influence decision making?
As would be expected with IJB representatives, in general there is awareness of how to get involved with the Integration Authorities with some respondents detailing the channels which can be used to raise an issue. Several respondents highlighted that this awareness is solely due to their IJB role and that the wider public would not share the same understanding. In addition, a small number of IJB representatives indicated that they were not sure how they could get involved with the Integration Authorities.

Were you consulted in the preparation of the strategic plans or involved with the work of the strategic planning group?
A number of respondents indicated that they are also members of the Strategic Planning Group and have therefore been involved in this work. While some respondents felt informed and able to feed in to these groups through various mechanisms (local forums and working groups), other respondents highlighted dissatisfaction in this area e.g. the Strategic Planning Group had not met for 12 months, perception that decisions were already made by the managers of the Integration Authority prior to meetings.
Have you been involved with the work of the Integration Authority following the publication of the strategic plan?
The majority of respondents indicated involvement in this area, again through service user or carer representative roles on the IJBs or Strategic Planning Groups. Responses also mentioned involvement in specific activities related to these roles, including development days, strategy groups, equalities impact assessment and visits to services.

Have you been involved with the work of the localities/what involvement would you like to have?
Many IJB representatives indicated that they would like to be more involved in the work of localities in order to develop greater local insight, but as the work of many localities has been slow to form there has been limited involvement to date. However several respondents suggested that this activity is now emerging and they are hopeful this will present an opportunity for involvement. It was also noted that as locality engagement and participation plans develop this should lead to further opportunity. Capacity was mentioned as a barrier to being involved with localities as many representatives already sit on several groups which requires a significant amount of time.

Do you think that your involvement with the IAs has had an impact on decision making?
Respondents had a wide range of views on the impact their involvement had, from no or minimal impact, to feeling listened to and their views acted upon. Not having voting rights was mentioned several times as a barrier to being equal to other members and having an impact on the IJB, and it was noted that it felt easier to have an impact on other groups e.g. Strategic Planning Groups. Examples of where an impact had been made included that board members are more aware of carer issues and unpaid carers are now seen as a focus of the Strategic Planning Group, and documents have been changed to take account of comments.

What could be done to improve the communication from the IAs?
The following suggestions were made by respondents on improving communication from integration authorities:

- For each IA to have a dedicated website which includes clear and updated information on the IJB members and their roles. The IAs need to raise awareness of integration as the majority of the public are not aware of this development.
- Methods of communication; IAs need to go where people are to engage with communities and should offer a range of mechanisms for communication including face-to-face meetings and online tools.
- The language used to communicate with the public and representatives should be accessible and contain less jargon. It was also noted that representatives receive a significant number of documents prior to each IJB meeting which need to be navigated with little support.
• To include more service user and carer representatives on IJBs to ensure that each locality is represented and their voice heard. Representatives would then have greater capacity to engage with their communities and ensure that information is both fed in and fed back from the IJB.

What could be done to ensure greater collaboration and engagement in the decision making process of Integration Authorities?

The following suggestions were made by respondents:

• To support IJB representatives, a clear role description for service users and carer representatives should be developed and shared with all members. A clear induction process should also be implemented, which includes the role of the group and each of its members, and who and where decisions are to be made. Representatives should also have access to continued training to further build their capacity to be efficient in their positions. [This suggestion is in line with guidance produced by the Scottish Government.]

• Continued development of the Our Voice peer network to support service user, carer and third sector representatives. Priorities identified include sharing of good practice, providing opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding, and supporting representatives to make a more effective contribution to their IJB.

• Development of local mechanisms for engaging with IJB representatives to enable them to better connect with people and communities. The provision of a professional email address would be a small step in addressing this.

• Recruitment and support of a wider and more diverse network of service user and carer representatives to be members across the different groups e.g. IJBs, Strategic Planning Groups, Locality Groups. To encourage meaningful engagement at IJB level, there should be an increase in number of service user and carer representatives to ensure that each locality is represented.

• Introduction of legislation for public engagement which could include national standards for IAs to ensure accountability. This could include a commitment to resourcing engagement with a dedicated staff member in post with responsibility for ensuring meaningful engagement at all levels across localities and communities.

The ALLIANCE and the Scottish Health Council are committed to supporting the existing IJB representatives to be as effective as they can be in their roles and also to encouraging a more diverse range of people expressing potential interest in this role in any further recruitment. We will also work together to help each area build contacts with local people, service users and their families to better represent the range of views at IJBs. This report has been collated from the views of IJB representatives by staff working in Our Voice roles within both the Scottish Health Council and the ALLIANCE.

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More about the ALLIANCE
The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) vision is for a Scotland where people of all ages who are disabled or living with long term conditions, and unpaid carers, have a strong voice and enjoy their right to live well, as equal and active citizens, free from discrimination, with support and services that put them at the centre.

The ALLIANCE is the national third sector intermediary for a range of health and social care organisations. It brings together over 1,700 members, including a large network of national and local third sector organisations, associates in the statutory and private sectors and individuals.

The ALLIANCE has three core aims; we seek to:

- Ensure people are at the centre, that their voices, expertise and rights drive policy and sit at the heart of design, delivery and improvement of support and services.
- Support transformational change, towards approaches that work with individual and community assets, helping people to stay well, supporting human rights, self management, co-production and independent living.
- Champion and support the third sector as a vital strategic and delivery partner and foster better cross-sector understanding and partnership.

More about the Scottish Health Council
The Scottish Health Council was established in April 2005 to promote improvements in the quality and extent of public involvement in the NHS in Scotland. It supports and monitors work carried out by NHS Boards to involve patients and the public in the planning and development of health services and in decisions that affect the operation of those services. The Scottish Health Council has a network of 14 local offices across Scotland (one in each NHS Board area) and a National Office in Glasgow. The Scottish Health Council is part of Healthcare Improvement Scotland.