



## RISK, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

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| <b>Date of Meeting</b>                  | 17 June 2025   |
| <b>Report Title</b>                     | Health Improvement Fund Annual Report  |
| <b>Report Number</b>                    | HSCP.25.046  |
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| <b>Consultation Checklist Completed</b> | Yes  |
| <b>Directions Required</b>              | No   |
| <b>Exempt</b>                           | No   |
| <b>Appendices</b>                       | 1. Health Improvement Fund Annual Report 2023/24   |
| <b>Terms of Reference</b>               | <p><b>Risk, Audit and Performance Committee</b></p> <p>5. Receive and scrutinise performance reports and receive assurance that actions in respect of emerging trends are proportionate to the IJB's Risk Appetite Statement.</p>  |



## **RISK, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

1.1 To present the Health Improvement fund annual report 2023/24 for approval.

### **2. Recommendations**

2.1. It is recommended that Committee:

- a. Approve the 2023-24 annual report attached as **Appendix 1**;
- b. Instruct the Chief Officer to submit the 2024-25 Locality Planning Annual Reports to this Committee by June 2026;
- c. Note the Committee will continue to receive regular updates through its regular Performance Reports; and
- d. Endorse the continued implementation of the Health Improvement Fund as an effective means of delivering on the Partnership's prevention agenda.

### **3. Strategic Plan Context**

3.1. The Health Improvement Fund (HIF) supports community-led projects that inspire local involvement, address local needs, and promote health and wellbeing, aligning with the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP) Strategic Plan. By integrating strategic priorities, and fostering collaborative decision-making through Locality Empowerment Groups and Priority Neighbourhood Partnership members, the HIF ensures that funded initiatives contribute to the broader goals of the ACHSCP. Thus, aiming to reduce health inequalities and improve access to services for Aberdeen City's residents.



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### 4. Summary of Key Information

4.1 The Health Improvement Fund, offers grants of up to £5,000 to groups living and/or working in Aberdeen City. Applications must support at least one of the Public Health commitments within the ACHSCP strategic plan.

- Improve public health and wellbeing.
- Promote and support people to self-manage their health in a way that is suitable for them.
- Empower people to overcome the wider determinants of health.
- Enable and empower people of all ages with disabilities and/or complex care needs to maintain their health.
- Empower people to remain safely at home.
- Reduce the harmful impact of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, obesity and poor oral health.
- Value and support unpaid carers.

Applicants are also required to highlight how the project links with at least priority within the relevant Locality Plan (locality-based projects) or the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (Citywide projects). The allocation of funding is agreed upon by local decision-making groups within each locality, involving a range of frontline staff and community representatives. Members of the Locality Empowerment groups and the Priority Neighbourhood Partnerships support the local decision making groups. These decisions are guided by a scoring process based on established funding principles.

#### Integration and Collaboration

Over the past three years, the HIF has integrated into Aberdeen City's funding landscape, demonstrating successful collaboration with funders across the Public and Third Sector Interface. This joined-up approach has enhanced the effectiveness and reach of the fund.

#### Risk and Performance Considerations

- **Financial Management:** The annual allocation of £198,000 is managed within the ACHSCP budget, ensuring transparency and accountability in fund distribution.
- **Application Process:** The scoring process for applications ensures that funding is allocated based on clear and objective criteria, minimising the risk of bias or misallocation.



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- **Community Involvement:** The involvement of frontline staff and community representatives in decision-making promotes inclusivity and ensures that funded projects address genuine local need.
- **Collaboration:** The Fund's integration with other Public and Third Sector funding sources enhances resource efficiency and reduces duplication of effort.

### 4.2 Key highlights and updates

The Health Improvement Fund (HIF) Annual Report for 2023-24 highlights several key achievements and developments aimed at improving health and wellbeing in Aberdeen City. The Fund operates on principles that emphasize innovation, community leadership, and addressing local needs. Projects funded by HIF are designed to inspire community involvement, foster connections, and demonstrate tangible improvements in health and wellbeing.

During the 2023-24 funding cycle, HIF supported 75 projects across Aberdeen City. These projects engaged 393 volunteers who contributed a total of 9,295 hours, valued at £146,953.95. Volunteering time is generally valued as the median hourly pay rate in the area, in Aberdeen this was £15.81 (Office of National Statistics, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings).

The initiatives collectively supported 8,884 people and generated an estimated £2.7 million return to the wider health and social care economy through prevention activities. This was calculated based on research by Public Health Wales (PHW) which estimates the rate of return (ROI) to be £14 per £1 invested. This research represents an average return across diverse prevention programs, a conservative yet credible benchmark for evaluating the Health Improvement Funded projects. PHW's pioneering work in applying a Social Value approach to public health interventions provides a robust framework for assessing the economic and social return of preventative health programs. The significant economic impact underscores the value of investing in community health initiatives. Particularly, the substantial long-term savings and health benefits of preventative investments and also strengthens the case for sustainable funding and resource allocation in Aberdeen.

In response to the cost-of-living crisis and the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, HIF expanded its support to include the continuation



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of existing projects, not just new initiatives. This change was made to ensure that vital community services could continue to operate. Additionally, all funded projects were required to align with the priorities outlined in the Aberdeen City Locality Plans and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). The screening process for project applications was also updated to improve accessibility and attract new panel members.

The funded projects can be themed into the following categories; self-help and self-management (23% of applications), children and young people (21%), older adults (16%), inclusion and social isolation (15%), food and food growing (11%), environmental improvements (8%), and physical activity (7%).

An example of a funded project is "Stand Up to Falls" which aimed to raise awareness about falls prevention, while "Ladies Swimming" provided women-only swimming lessons to boost confidence and physical activity. Other notable projects include, Festive Celebrations to reduce social isolation, the creation of a community garden at Rosemount Community Centre and Coping Skills sessions to help individuals manage anxiety and depression.

Sustainability is a key consideration for HIF, and the year-end evaluation revealed that 64% of projects from the 2023-24 funding cycle are continuing with or without changes. This indicates that many initiatives have successfully integrated into the community and continue to provide valuable services beyond the initial funding period. Some projects, such as Young Carer residential, are intentionally time-limited, designed to address specific short-term needs or complement other approaches. These projects aim to achieve their objectives within a defined period and may not require ongoing funding once their goals are met.

Looking ahead to 2024-25, HIF has already identified several new projects that will receive support. These include "Nature Prescriptions" by RSPB, which aims to train Link Practitioners in nature prescribing. As well as, "Youth Wellness Project" by Touch of Love, which focuses on physical activity, mental and emotional wellbeing, and community engagement for young people. Another notable project is "Pillow Talk" by The Period Place, which offers community-based workshops on menopause and fibroids, particularly targeting minority ethnic women.

Overall, the HIF Annual Report for 2023-24 showcases the Fund's commitment to enhancing community health and wellbeing through diverse and impactful projects. The report highlights the importance of community involvement, the economic value of prevention activities, and the ongoing need for innovative health initiatives in Aberdeen City.



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### **NEXT STEPS**

#### **5. Implications for IJB**

##### **5.1. Equalities, Fairer Scotland and Health Inequality**

This report will have a positive impact on people with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act (2010), and those affected by socio-economic disadvantage.

HIF is committed to promoting inclusivity and accessibility in its funded projects. This commitment is reflected in the community-led nature of the initiatives, which encourage local involvement and leadership to address specific needs within diverse communities. For example, projects like women-only swimming lessons provide a safe and supportive environment for women who may struggle to find such opportunities. Additionally, support groups for neurodiverse individuals and those with complex needs ensure that vulnerable groups receive the necessary assistance and resources.

The Fund aligns its projects with the priorities of the Aberdeen City Locality Plans and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP), which aim to create a fairer society by addressing socio-economic disparities. One of the key actions taken by HIF is generating significant returns to the wider health and social care economy through prevention activities. This approach helps reduce long-term health costs and improves overall community wellbeing. Furthermore, in response to the cost-of-living crisis, HIF has expanded its support to ensure that ongoing projects can continue to operate, providing stability and continuity for essential community services.

HIF addresses health inequalities by funding projects that improve access to health services and promote healthy lifestyles. Initiatives such as health and wellbeing checks provide essential health assessments and training for staff to better support community health needs. Physical activity and nutrition projects, like Cook and Create, teach children about healthy eating and encourage fitness. Mental health support is also a significant focus, with projects like Coping Skills sessions helping individuals manage anxiety and depression, and trauma-informed support groups providing specialised assistance.

##### **5.2. Financial**



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The financial implications on the Health Improvement Fund (HIF) Annual Report highlight the effective use of funds to support diverse community projects, generating a £2.7 million return to the wider health and social care economy through prevention activities. This financial insight underscores the importance of investing in community health initiatives.

### **5.3. Workforce**

#### **Impact of Health Improvement Projects on ACHSCP Workforce**

Health Improvement Fund (HIF) projects positively impact the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP) workforce by improving health outcomes and reducing the burden on staff. These projects focus on preventive measures, which decrease the incidence of chronic conditions and other health issues, allowing staff to manage their workload more effectively. Community-led initiatives empower local residents to take charge of their health, leading to sustainable health improvements and reduced dependency on ACHSCP services.

With 9295 volunteers hours delivered in community-led projects funded by the Health Improvement Fund, they are providing valuable support to the Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership workforce. Their involvement enhances the reach and effectiveness of health initiatives, allowing ACHSCP staff to focus on their core responsibilities. By fostering community connections and optimising resources, volunteers help maintain and contribute to better health outcomes, ultimately helping support the work of ACHSCP staff.

### **5.4. Legal**

The Health Improvement Fund (HIF) supports the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP) in fulfilling its statutory duty under Section 29(3) of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Scotland Act 2014. This duty requires the establishment of localities to integrate health and social care services. HIF provides funding to community-led projects that address local needs and improve health and wellbeing, aligning with the priorities of the Aberdeen City Locality Plans and Local Outcome Improvement Plan. ACHSCP has three locality areas—Central, North, and South—ensuring tailored services for each community. This approach meets statutory



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obligations and enhances community engagement and equitable access to services..

### **5.5. Unpaid Carers**

The Health Improvement Fund (HIF) Annual Report for 2023-24 includes several initiatives that support unpaid carers. These initiatives demonstrate HIF's commitment to supporting unpaid carers by addressing their health, wellbeing, and mental health needs, and providing essential support networks and training.

### **5.6. Information Governance**

There are no direct information governance implications arising from the recommendations.

### **5.7. Environmental Impacts**

ACHSCP's Health Improvement Fund has supported several community-led initiatives which will have a positive impact on the environment across all three locality areas.

### **5.8. Sustainability**

The Health Improvement Fund (HIF) currently operates on a year-to-year funding basis, providing grants of up to £5,000.00 for community-led projects. This approach allows HIF to support a wide range of innovative and creative initiatives that address local needs and improve health and wellbeing. The report shows that 64% of projects from the previous year's funding cycle are continuing, demonstrating the sustainability and long-term impact of HIF's investments.

However, the reliance on annual funding can pose sustainability challenges for projects that require longer-term support to achieve their goals and maintain their impact.

## **6. Management of Risk**

### **6.1. Identified risks**



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- 6.1.1 The range of projects funded through Health Improvement Fund vary and are delivered by a range of organisations and community groups. In a financial year, it is inevitable, that there will be a project that cannot meet their objectives.

**Likelihood of occurrence – High**

**Impact if the risk does occur - Medium**

- 6.1.2 The Health Improvement Fund (HIF) team has established strong, positive relationships with communities across Aberdeen City, which is essential for effectively managing risks associated with funded projects. These connections foster trust and collaboration, enabling the team to swiftly address any issues or challenges that may arise. By actively engaging with community members, listening to their needs, and involving them in the decision-making process, the HIF team ensures that projects are relevant and impactful. This proactive approach not only enhances community support but also allows for quick resolution of problems, mitigating potential risks and ensuring that initiatives continue to improve health and wellbeing.

### 6.2. Link to risks on strategic or operational risk register:

- 6.2.1 This links to Risk 6 on the **Strategic Risk Register**:

**Cause:** Need to involve lived experience in service delivery and design as per Integration Principles

**Event:** IJB fails to maximise the opportunities created for engaging with our communities

**Consequences:** Services are not tailored to individual needs; reputational damage; and IJB does not meet strategic aims

- 6.2.2 The Health Improvement Fund (HIF) supports the need to involve lived experience in service delivery and design, as outlined in the Integration Principles, by actively engaging community members in the planning and implementation of projects. This approach ensures that the services provided are relevant, effective, and tailored to the actual needs of the community. By incorporating the insights and experiences of those who directly benefit from these services, HIF fosters a more inclusive and empathetic design process. Community-led projects are a cornerstone of this approach, empowering local residents to take the lead in identifying needs and developing solutions. This not only enhances the quality and impact of the projects but also values



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the contributions and perspectives of individuals with lived experience. The involvement of lived experience helps to identify real-world challenges and develop practical solutions, leading to more sustainable and responsive health and social care services