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## SERVICE UPDATE

<b><u>Name of Cluster:</u></b>	Data Insights (HDRCA)
<b><u>Date:</u></b>	29 September 2025
<b><u>Title of Update:</u></b>	NEPHA Year Two Update
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### **UPDATE:**

- 1.1 Public sector leaders in the North East made a collective commitment to focus on population health in a bid to reverse current trends (stalling life expectancy and widening levels of inequality). The North East Population Health Alliance (NEPHA) was formed to facilitate public health learning across existing partnership arrangements to explore shared challenges, test evidence based solutions and implement what works at scale and pace through respective structures and systems.
- 1.2 A strategic partnership agreement was prepared in 2023 to formalise this collaboration, setting out the parameters of engagement between the nine North East partners alongside Public Health Scotland. The Agreement runs until August 2026.
- 1.3 At its meeting of 23 August 2023, the Council agreed that Aberdeen City Council be a signatory to the strategic partnership agreement. On 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 the Council considered a progress report on the first year of operation of the strategic partnership agreement and instructed that this further report on activity during the second year be submitted.
- 1.4 In March 2025, the Alliance agreed its approach for the next 18 months. This followed a review of progress made in the first year since agreeing the Strategic Partnership Agreement. The members agreed a work programme for 2025-26 to focus on two main priorities of i) healthy weight and ii) substance use, whilst maintaining an oversight of areas already commissioned by the Alliance including data sharing and analytics and operating as a shared forum to consider the local response to national developments such as the Population Health Framework. A summary of activity on these priorities and other issues considered by the Alliance is given in Appendix 1.

## 1.5 Assessment

- 1.5.1 As reported to Council in October 2024, reflections on the first year of operation, generally felt that the first 12 months had been a developmental year, and that the potential to deliver real value through the Alliance was still to be fully realised. It was further reported that prioritisation was needed to deliver outcomes. This prioritisation was agreed following a series of individual conversations with NEPHA members and focused group discussions to understand the expectations of working together and steps required to collectively deliver improvements.
- 1.5.2 The prioritisation of healthy weight and substance use was agreed in March 2025 and since then the Alliance has met to consider current and future actions on both. The strategic agreement has a further 10 months to operate and a full review of progress on these priorities is planned by NEPHA members to assess its impact.

## APPENDIX 1

### ACTIVITY AND WORK PROGRAMME MARCH 25 TO AUGUST 26

March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Refreshed Strategic Partnership Agreement Vision, Way of working, System Challenges for Focus in 2025/6</li><li>• Tackling Obesity Whole System Tactical and Coordinated Response: Overview and Approach</li><li>• National Update – CHES / Population Health Framework</li></ul>
May 2025	<p><u>Substance Use: Progress on existing commissioned work by NEPHA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Charter of Rights Substance Use – Progress and Action</li><li>• Drug Related Deaths Data: Joint Work with PHS Scope &amp; Update</li><li>• Improving the health and wellbeing of people living with substance use; Applying A Human Learning System Approach</li><li>• National Update</li></ul> <p>In line with the Alliance's refreshed programme for 25-26, work has been commissioned by NEPHA in relation to substance use. Specifically, action nationally and locally to develop a Charter of Rights to ensure human rights are integrated into drug and alcohol policy / practice. This was shaped locally by people with lived experience in Grampian.</p> <p>A reporting tool that adopts a rights approach has been tested and insights shared with the Alliance demonstrating how this has informed service planning to better reflect service user experiences.</p> <p>In recognition of the charter's wider application to support those who are vulnerable, NEPHA agreed that the charter of rights approach be socialised across key networks and organisations to raise awareness and consider implications / opportunities for its adoption, to ensure local preparedness once all rights are enshrined in law.</p> <p>A focus has also been given to 'Innovations to prevent Drug Related Deaths' which detailed how a whole system collaboration using Human Learning System and Putting People First approaches has led to a better understanding of people's lives and how to effectively reduce drug related</p>

	harm. A gap analysis using touchpoint data from 251 drug related deaths in Grampian has also informed action.
	<p><u>Models of Practice</u></p> <p>Three areas are now being taken forward: a Community Appointment Day to engage and support vulnerable community members; testing the 'Liberated Method' with a small number of high-risk individuals; exploration of different professional hub models to support professionals to collaborate and work differently together. NEPHA asked that consideration is given to how these approaches can be applied with different geographical communities and / or other areas of practise.</p>
	<p><u>Scotland's Population Health Framework</u></p> <p>NEPHA have also given consideration to the recently published national Public Health Framework and NEPHA members are reflecting on the implications. It was agreed that this should be brought back to NEPHA as a future agenda item to consider from an Alliance perspective how the framework may be reflected in terms of approach and prioritisation.</p>
July 2025	<p><u>Tackling Obesity</u></p> <p>In October 2023 the North East Population Health Alliance endorsed a Grampian wide whole systems approach to promoting healthy weight and active living. Public health capacity is supporting this shared approach.</p> <p>NEPHA has held the first in a series of "deep dives" focussed on prevention activity in relation to obesity. It had been previously agreed to draw on the evidence base and focus attention on specific local levers that have been shown to have impact. The topic explored at this meeting was local advertising of High Fat, Sugar and Salt food and drinks. This deep dive highlighted experiences from across the UK on the development of healthier food advertising policies and actions were agreed to further explore the local advertising landscape and national engagement with large national retailers to inform any local response.</p> <p>Consideration was also given to public sector food procurement and provision standards. In discussion with providers a number of improvement areas are emerging. Public Health Scotland have also progressed several associated pieces of work including a report for NHS Board Chief Executives on people's perceptions of hospital food</p>

	<p>and joint work with NESTA (National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) to consider how existing legislation can be used to improve the 'out of home' food environment. These areas will be considered in detail at the next scheduled NEPHA Deep Dive into prevention of obesity.</p>
September 2025	<p><u>Data / Data Sharing:</u></p> <p><b>Updates provided on:</b></p> <p><b>Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT)</b> by Aberdeen City which has been used to identify and prioritise resource and support to households in financial hardship.</p> <p><b>Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA)</b> by NHS Grampian including work to develop a minimum reporting dataset.</p> <p><b>Locality profiling</b> by Aberdeenshire Council which has been developed through integrated data building a data platform in Microsoft Fabric.</p> <p><b>Housing and Health</b> data integration by NHS Grampian and the Health Determinants Research Collaboration which is matching local authority data with health records to provide insights into the impact of housing on health and wellbeing.</p> <p><b>North-East Health Inequalities Atlas:</b> Building knowledge and evidence to inform collective action is central to NEPHA's aims. This requires an in-depth understanding of our communities and the needs of disadvantaged groups including how inequalities have emerged and anticipation of future trends. Whilst there is a range of ongoing work to improve data sharing, this could be better coordinated and resourced. Getting 'smarter' around data is fundamental to achieving improvements across the North East. A detailed 'atlas of health inequalities' drawing on the collective data assets of partners is being developed. A North East Portal has been created with regional geographical reporting system using PowerBi to give access to datazone and Intermediate datazone data for all 3 local authority areas.</p> <p>Officers from each of the NE local authorities and NHS Grampian have established a permanent local data analytics community. The development of a Health Inequalities Atlas is part of their planned work programme and further work will be undertaken to set out timelines for delivery.</p>

	<u>Community Wealth Building / Anchor Organisation:</u> A presentation by colleagues from NHS Grampian and each local authority was given on maximising outcomes through collaboration on a community wealth building approach.
November 2025	Focus - Substance Use
February 2026	Focus - Tackling Obesity
April 2026	<u>Focus - Collaboration for Health Equity in Scotland</u>  NEPHA has been provided with updates on the Collaboration for Health Equity in Scotland programme and the progress made by Aberdeen City Council and NHS Grampian, who are working in partnership with Public Health Scotland and the Institute of Health Equity at University College London. It is intended that learning from this collaborative be shared with all regional partners.
June 2026	Focus to be confirmed
August 2026	NEPHA 18 Month Reporting and Review (25-26 / 26-27) NEPHA 3 Year Review