

News release

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Better collaboration needed to deliver health and social care integration

While some improvements have been made to the delivery of health and social care services, Integration Authorities, councils and NHS boards need to show a stronger commitment to collaborative working to achieve the real long term benefits of an integrated system.

A report for the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission notes some progress, but says the remaining challenges are significant. It finds that success will depend on long term integrated financial planning and stable and effective leadership.

The report says all bodies involved need to tackle these issues as a matter of urgency in order to transform the way services are provided for Scotland's ageing population.

Integration Authorities are collectively responsible for almost £9 billion of health and social care spending. The context for integration is increasingly challenging, with rising demand for services and mounting financial pressures on councils and NHS Boards.

Caroline Gardner, Auditor General, said: 'All partners, at a national and local level, need to work together to ensure the successful delivery of integrated health and social care services in Scotland. This will allow people to receive the care they need at the right time and in the right setting, with a focus on community-based, preventative care.'

Graham Sharp, Chair, Accounts Commission said: "There are examples of integrated health and social care services making a positive difference to people's lives, but these tend to be local and small scale. The potential for a profound and long-term shift in the way health and social care services are delivered is clear, but there is still a long way to go.

A collective effort from the Scottish Government, COSLA, NHS Boards, councils and the Integration Authorities is needed for health and social integration to make a more meaningful difference to the people of Scotland."

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Notes to editors

1. The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 sets out a framework for integrating adult health and social care services. The Act created new partnerships, known as Integration Authorities (IAs), with statutory responsibilities to coordinate local health and social care services.
2. The integration of health and social care services is a major programme of reform, affecting most health and care services and nearly £9 billion of public money. The reforms are far reaching and aim to ensure services are well integrated and that people receive the care they need at the right

time and in the right place. Given the scale of the reforms envisaged, we are carrying out three performance audits so that we fully understand, and are able to assess, progress with health and social care integration. [Our first audit report](#) was published in December 2015.

3. The Auditor General [recently published her annual review of the NHS](#). In this report the Auditor General for Scotland found that performance continued to decline in 2017/18 and the NHS is not financially sustainable in its current form. Caroline Gardner reported that pressure is building in several areas, including major workforce challenges, rising drug costs and a significant maintenance backlog.
4. Audit Scotland has prepared this report for the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission for Scotland. All Audit Scotland reports published since 2000 are available at www.audit-scotland.gov.uk
 - The Auditor General appoints auditors to Scotland's central government and NHS bodies; examines how public bodies spend public money; helps them to manage their finances to the highest standards and checks whether they achieve value for money. The Auditor General is independent and is not subject to the control of the Scottish Government or the Scottish Parliament.
 - The Accounts Commission is the public spending watchdog for local government. It holds councils and various joint boards and committees in Scotland to account and help them improve. It operates impartially and independently of councils and of the Scottish Government and meets and reports in public. Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000, under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act, 2000. It provides services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission for Scotland.