

## **Case Study: Shared Development Officer Model**

### Supporting the Skye and Lochalsh Health, Wellbeing, Welfare and Social Care Collaboration

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The Skye and Lochalsh Health, Wellbeing, Welfare and Social Care (HWWS) Collaboration brings together community groups, public services and local people to improve how community-led social care, wellbeing, health and welfare support is shaped and delivered across the area. It helps partners connect, share ideas and work together so services are easier to access and more joined-up.

In a rural region like Skye and Lochalsh, community-led organisations face persistent and interconnected challenges: rising demand for support, limited and unstable funding, staff and volunteer shortages, and very limited access to sustained development capacity. These pressures make collaboration essential, but without dedicated resource, meaningful co-production is difficult to sustain.

The HWWS Collaboration addressed this challenge by investing in shared, dedicated development capacity that could be used collectively by third sector partners. Rather than placing the burden of partnership working on already-stretched organisations, this approach provided the time, coordination and facilitation needed to enable genuine collaboration and co-production.

By having dedicated resource working across partners, the collaboration was able to move beyond informal networking and towards structured, purposeful joint working, rooted in local priorities and lived experience. This resource created the space for organisations to work together on developing shared solutions, rather than competing for limited capacity or funding.

#### **What the Collaboration Does — Enabled by Dedicated Shared Capacity**

With dedicated resource in place, the HWWS Collaboration has been able to:

- Bring together third sector organisations and public bodies around shared priorities and collective goals
- Enable co-production of services that improve health, wellbeing and social care outcomes
- Provide coordination and facilitation that supports smaller organisations to participate meaningfully
- Embed third sector-led, community-informed solutions into wider health and social care planning
- Support innovation, shared learning and inclusive decision-making across sectors

The dedicated resource acts as a neutral convenor and connector, ensuring collaboration is consistent, inclusive and productive over time.

## **Year 1: Building Foundations Through Shared Resource (August 2024– July 2025)**

In Year 1, the focus was on creating the conditions for effective collaboration and co-production. Investment from the Community Regeneration Fund, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and SLCVO's own reserves enabled dedicated development resource to be put in place to work across the collaboration.

This shared capacity allowed partners to take a collective approach to understanding need, mapping existing provision and identifying opportunities for joint action — work that individual organisations would have struggled to undertake alone.

### **Year 1 Highlights**

- Established the HWWWS Collaboration Steering Group, supported by dedicated facilitation, giving the third sector a stronger and more coordinated voice in local health and social care planning
- Mapped all third sector health, wellbeing and social care activity across Skye and Lochalsh, creating a shared evidence base for collaboration
- Updated the Third Sector Area Profile and introduced regular information-sharing mechanisms for funding, policy and learning
- Produced the first draft of the Skye & Lochalsh Caring Communities Plan 2025–2030, co-produced with partners
- Delivered community research and local needs assessments, ensuring lived experience and community voice shaped priorities
- Built stronger, more consistent relationships with NHS Highland and Highland Council, aligning third sector priorities with statutory planning processes

This shared development work created trust, clarity and a common direction across partners.

## **Year 2: From Collaboration to Co-Produced Delivery (April 2025 – March 2026)**

With strong foundations in place, the dedicated shared resource in Year 2 focused on turning collaboration into action. The emphasis shifted to developing joint initiatives, strengthening community capacity and taking forward co-produced projects at scale.

### **Year 2 Highlights**

#### **Collaboration and Community Resilience**

- Established the Skye and Lochalsh Community Social Care and Wellbeing Forum as a monthly, facilitated space where community groups, local people and public sector partners could jointly develop ideas and shape priorities

## **Public Sector Integration**

- Enabled consistent third sector participation in statutory planning groups
- Worked closely with NHS Highland to ensure co-produced projects aligned with commissioning priorities, increasing funding readiness

## **Capacity Building**

- Delivered a coordinated Spring training programme covering governance, funding applications and cyber resilience
- Provided targeted one-to-one development support, ensuring organisations were better equipped to participate in collaborative projects

## **Co-Produced Project Development**

- Facilitated joint engagement and needs-led service design across communities
- Supported feasibility work, collective project development and joint funding bids
- Brought partners together around shared outcomes rather than organisational boundaries

## **Monitoring and Learning**

- Introduced shared monitoring and evaluation frameworks, strengthening collective accountability and learning

## **Impact: Skye and Lochalsh Community Hubs – Turning Collaboration into Funded, Place-Based Delivery**

Building on the foundations established in Years 1 and 2, dedicated development resource enabled partners to move from strategic collaboration into genuine co-production, resulting in the successful development and funding of the Skye and Lochalsh Community Hubs programme.

The presence of shared, dedicated development capacity meant partners could invest time in working well together. This supported trust-building, alignment around shared outcomes, and the development of coherent, place-based proposals rooted in local need.

This approach directly underpinned the successful Community Hubs funding bids:

- Partners co-designed a shared model grounded in local priorities and lived experience
- Smaller organisations were able to engage on an equitable footing, supported by facilitation and coordination
- Evidence, engagement and outcomes were aligned across partners
- The proposals demonstrated partnership maturity, collaboration and value for money

Through coordinated development work and collaborative bidding, the Community Hubs secured a total of £224,000 from three funders, reflecting strong confidence in the partnership approach, the shared evidence base and the proposed impact.

# Skye and Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations

This funding supports:

- Dedicated hub coordination and management resource
- Delivery activity across multiple communities
- Partnership working between third sector, public sector and community organisations

Without dedicated shared resource, this depth of collaboration, and the resulting successful funding outcome, would not have been achievable.

## The Need for Dedicated Development Resource

At present, there is no secured funding for a dedicated resource to coordinate the HWWWS Collaboration or to work alongside local groups to develop new services and initiatives.

In recognition of the importance of maintaining momentum, the SLCVO Board has agreed to allocate a proportion of the Chief Officer's time to continue this work. This will ensure that core collaboration activity, relationship-building and strategic development can be sustained in the short term. However, this arrangement represents a constrained and reduced level of capacity and cannot replace the impact of a dedicated development role.

Without specific funding to support shared coordination and feasibility work, progress will necessarily slow and opportunities to respond proactively to emerging changes in health, wellbeing, welfare and social care will be limited. Securing investment in a dedicated resource remains essential to enable service development, support system change, and ensure the Collaboration can continue to drive meaningful, community-led solutions during a period of significant transformation.

## Further information

- [Skye and Lochalsh Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Collaboration](#)
- [Skye and Lochalsh Community Wellbeing and Support Forum](#)
- [Skye and Lochalsh Caring Communities Plan 2025-2030](#)
- [Skye & Lochalsh Community Hubs](#)



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