



South Lanarkshire Integration Joint Board

Directions Policy

March 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 (thereafter known as the “Act”) requires Health Boards and Local Authorities to work together to plan and deliver adult community health and social care services. This way of working is referred to as health and social care integration.
- 1.2. The Act places a duty on integration authorities to develop a Strategic Commissioning Plan for those integrated functions and associated budgets under their control.
- 1.3. Integration authorities require a mechanism to action their Strategic Commissioning Plans, and this is laid out in sections 26 to 28 of the Act. This mechanism takes the form of binding Directions from the Integration Authority to one or both Health Board and Local Authority. The Scottish Government has provided statutory guidance on Directions¹.
- 1.4. This policy sets out the process for formulating, approving, issuing and reviewing Directions from South Lanarkshire Integration Joint Board (IJB) to South Lanarkshire Council and NHS Lanarkshire as illustrated below.



2. Definition and Purpose of Directions

- 2.1. Directions are a legal mechanism intended to clarify responsibilities between partners. They are how South Lanarkshire IJB directs NHS Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Council as to what services are to be delivered using the integrated budget (i.e. the budget which is allocated to South Lanarkshire IJB and for which it is responsible). They are a necessary and important aspect of governance, providing a means by which responsibilities are made clear and evident.
- 2.2. As a legal requirement, the use of Directions is not optional for IJBs, Health Boards or Local Authorities - it is obligatory. How they are used is subject to internal and external audit and scrutiny.

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/statutory-guidance-directions-integration-authorities-health-boards-local-authorities/documents/>

3. Setting Directions

- 3.1. Directions can be given to NHS Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire Council or both organisations depending on the services to be provided. However, they should not be issued unnecessarily and should be proportionate
- 3.2. A Direction should always be prompted by a decision made by the IJB. Directions will be given within the report formally presented to the IJB, such that the IJB and the Parties understand the full context within which the Direction has been formulated.
- 3.3. Directions must provide sufficient detail to enable NHS Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Council to discharge their statutory duties under the Act and in doing so demonstrate their contribution to the delivery of the Strategic Commissioning Plan. They must identify the integrated health and social care function it relates to, include information on the financial resources that are available for carrying out this function and must also provide information on the delivery requirements. Directions may, if appropriate, specify a particular service or services to be provided.
- 3.4. Directions are the end-point of a process of decision making by the IJB. Directions should not contain surprising or completely unknown information about service change or redesign; and should follow a period of wider engagement on the function(s) that are the subject of the Direction as necessary and appropriate.
- 3.5. If Directions are not being provided or they lack sufficient detail, NHS Lanarkshire and/or South Lanarkshire Council should be actively seeking Directions to properly discharge their statutory duties under the Act.
- 3.6. Any Direction issued by the IJB must meet all clinical and care governance requirements and standards to ensure patient safety and public protection as well as ensure staff and financial governance. It is the role of the Professional Advisors on and to the IJB to scrutinise and to provide assurance on these aspects (as outlined in [South Lanarkshire IJB Integration Scheme](#)). In the unlikely event that the IJB issues a Direction that compromises professional clinical or social work standards, the Chief Officer will be informed, and the Direction will be reviewed in accordance with the process outlined below.
- 3.7. To meet the requirement in the guidance that Directions are proportionate, new or revised Directions will be drawn from the recommendations approved by the IJB at each of its formal meetings with a standard form populated and appended to those report from which a Direction may be issued (noting that the content of the form would be updated to reflect the decision of the IJB as appropriate and required). Appendix 1 provides the template for this form. Once approved, the Chief Officer, on behalf of South Lanarkshire IJB will communicate any new Directions to the Chief Executives of NHS Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Council through a written communication to which the completed Direction form(s) are attached; and then work collaboratively with both organisations to ensure the intentions of the Directions are realised.

4. Monitoring and Review of Directions

- 4.1. An action log will be maintained to record all decisions taken by the IJB that equate to a Direction, and which will be updated in respect of implementation progress.
- 4.2. The Performance and Audit Sub Committee of the IJB (PASC) is responsible for monitoring and review of all Directions including maintaining an overview of progress towards implementation and considering recommendations for retaining, varying, superseding, closing or revoking extant Directions (Appendix 2).
- 4.3. Six-monthly progress reports will also be taken to PASC and annually, a report will be provided to the IJB on all extant Directions confirming the status of each. Furthermore, the IJB Annual Performance Report will explicitly reference progress against strategic intentions, which will have read across to Directions so as to reinforce the role that Directions have in supporting the implementation of the IJB Strategic Commissioning Plan.
- 4.4. Should either NHS Lanarkshire or South Lanarkshire Council experience difficulty in implementing a Direction, or require further detail regarding expectations, this should be brought to the attention of the Chief Officer formally in writing. Initially, the Chief Officer will seek to resolve issues, liaising with and involving the IJB Chair and Vice-Chair accordingly. The Chief Officer, in consultation with the IJB Chair and Vice-Chair, will determine the processes to be put in place to keep both IJB members and partner organisations up-to-date with developments, ensuring that any process introduced meets the governance requirements of partner organisations and the IJB. Should resolution prove complex, a period of negotiation will take place not exceeding six months duration. A formal report to the IJB will be required at the end of any period of negotiation to specify the outcomes of the process. If resolution cannot be reached, a report will be prepared for the IJB by the Chief Officer which could recommend that the Direction be revoked.
- 4.5. A Direction will stand until it is completed, revoked, varied or superseded by a later Direction in respect in the same function.

5. Review of Directions Policy

- 5.1. This Policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner in the event of new guidance or good practice becoming available.

Date of policy approval: 18 March 2025

APPENDIX 1



Direction From The South Lanarkshire Integration Joint Board

Partner agencies are required to carry out this direction in accordance with statutory and regulatory obligations, ensuring adherence to relevant guidance, policies and procedures, in pursuit of the IJB's Strategic Commissioning Plan.

Reference Number	Use format: SLIJB-approval date-sequential number e.g. SLIJB-18/03/2025-xxx
Does this direction supersede or vary an existing direction? If yes, please provide reference number of existing direction	Yes / No (delete as appropriate) If yes, provide details
Approval date	Insert date of IJB meeting (day/month/year format)
Services / functions covered	
Direction	From report recommendations
Direction to	NHS Lanarkshire South Lanarkshire Council <i>Please specify if the direction is for NHS Lanarkshire or South Lanarkshire Council or for both organisations i.e. NHS Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Council</i>
Link to relevant IJB report(s)	Hyperlink to meeting papers
Financial Implications	From report presented
Alignment to Strategic Commissioning Plan	From report presented
Date Direction will be reviewed	April 20xx as part of the next annual review of directions

APPENDIX 2

Annual Review of Directions – Definitions of Direction Status

- Retained – no changes required; the Direction remains relevant and there are no significant developments in respect of timescale for delivery or finance.
- Varied – recommended if the overall strategic intent remains relevant but there is a significant change to timescale/finance/performance measures.
- Superseded – a significant change to wording of Direction required to reflect new or revised strategic intent or a change in focus which has been approved by the IJB.
- Closed – the Direction has been achieved e.g. the relevant performance indicator(s) has been met or the specific programme of work or financial package has come to an end.
- Revoked – the area of work has been halted or cancelled therefore the Direction cannot be achieved OR to reflect that new specific Directions will be developed for this area.