

# **Savings on health and social care budget fall short**

**The Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB) which delivers the council's health and social care will meet on Tuesday to hear details of the possible savings which have been identified in this financial year.**

The board has a combined budget of £809.4 million provided by The City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian.

After the Scottish budget last month the share provided by the council is now £295 million, and that to be provided by NHS Lothian is £514.4million.

This means that the EIJB's funding is £47 million short on their projected costs for the year.

This is not an uncommon financial position for the board. It is one of longstanding, and is almost universal in all Scottish local authorities. The board is proposing a longer term approach to its finances than just one year, hoping that this will make more meaningful savings easier to achieve.

One of the suggestions is that by a greater use of self-directed support to claimants rather than providing services the board would achieve better control of its budget. It is also recommended that the board resorts to digital care where possible – so telephone calls might be used rather than visits

in certain cases. It also recommends early intervention and prevention which in the long term saves money on healthcare.

Savings of £11.45 million have been identified in a report which will be discussed by members of the EIJB today, including measures such as taking firmer control of spending on purchases and the prescribing of drugs. These two measures alone might save around £3 million.

And there is a potential further saving of £150,000 in moving towards community transport rather than individual taxi journeys for those people who need transport.

There is still a huge gap in funding however, and how to resolve that remains under discussion, though the EIJB warns that with regard to short term cuts the “opportunities to deliver further efficiencies in the timescale required and, at the same time as maintain performance and improve outcomes for people, have now been exhausted”.

Top executives in the Integrated Joint Board continue their discussions with the council’s Head of Finance and the Director of Finance at NHS Lothian to find a solution.

Meantime the board will be asked to approve the general direction of travel towards a medium term financial strategy, even though there is such a gap in funding. It is proposed that the board will convene a special meeting in May 2023 to discuss the effect of this strategy again.

The EIJB meets on Tuesday 21 March 2023. [You can watch the meeting online from 10am here](#) (or as a recording afterwards).



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