

## **NHS Grampian**

### **Agile Governance**

#### **During COVID-19 response (Level 4: Contingency Plan)**

##### **1. Recommendation**

In light of the emergency response that continues to be place across NHS Scotland, the Grampian NHS Board is asked to approve the following recommendations in relation to the governance arrangements that will be implemented for the period to 30 June 2021, at which point a further review will be undertaken:

##### **Board meetings and seminars**

- continue to hold Board meetings virtually while NHS Grampian and the country is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, for the 'special reason' of protecting public health, and the health and wellbeing of anyone who would have otherwise attended the meeting. We will continue to extend invites to the media, which were recommenced at the December 2020 Board meeting. A proposal to re-introduce public attendance at Board meetings will be developed for implementation post 31 March 2021;
- continue with a monthly meeting of the Board, alternating between a formal Board meeting and a Board seminar. The agendas for these meetings will be focused solely on the immediate emergency response unless there are any other significant decisions requiring Board approval; and
- once a month between Board meetings and Board seminars an informal question and answer session will be arranged for non-executive Board members to update them on the latest position regarding the COVID-19 and winter (surge) response (as defined by Operation Snowdrop).

##### **Board sub-committees**

- the core governance committees – staff, clinical, audit and performance governance - will meet once in the period to 31 March 2021, with the executive leads and committee chairs agreeing agendas which reflect key priorities and essential business only. This pattern of meetings will be repeated during the period to 30 June 2021. Where possible, papers should only be necessary to support and record key decisions or assurances. Minutes and assurance reports to the Board will continue to be maintained.

##### **Stakeholder engagement**

- approve the schedule of meetings or briefings which will be held with key stakeholders, as set out in Appendix 1, to ensure a regular flow of information to enable these stakeholders to support the NHS Grampian response.

## **2. Strategic Context**

The NHS and social care services face unprecedented demand as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Scotland, the wider UK and most international communities are facing prolonged changes to normal systems of work, socialisation and a potential adverse impact to economic wellbeing.

The challenges faced by the NHS, social care and the wider partnership systems require the Board to establish temporary and appropriate governance arrangements that respond to support the organisation during the pandemic and in coming months.

The primary aim of the Board during the period of the COVID-19 response is to ensure all resources are deployed in an effective manner to respond to the current situation and to support the Chief Executive and the wider organisation.

Board Chairs have been encouraged to implement appropriate and proportionate governance arrangements, as described in the Scottish Government's Interim Director of Health Finance and Governance letter of 18 November 2020. Boards are requested to take all reasonable steps to minimise meetings requiring attendance of executive team members such that senior clinical and non-clinical management can concentrate on the immediate service pressures. From the perspective of Scottish Government they will also seek to limit any requests to Boards that are not essential in the immediate future.

## **3 Key Matters relevant to the recommendation**

### **3.1 Continuation of Revised Governance Arrangements – Board Meetings**

A summary of the Board governance arrangements that have been implemented since April 2020, together with the current proposal, is set out in Appendix 1. The Board last reviewed the governance arrangements in August 2020 and, given the guidance to Board Chairs in the letter dated 18 November 2020, this paper sets out the proposals for the immediate period to 31 March 2021.

Since October 2020, NHS Grampian has returned to having virtual Board meetings and seminars on alternative months, on the first Thursday of the month. It is proposed that the Board continues to meet on this basis at least until June 2021 with attendance by Microsoft Teams. The Board will continue to publish its minutes and meeting papers on its website and that the press continue to be invited.

Board meetings will focus on response to the priorities for Operation Snowdrop – Test and Protect, Vaccinations, Critical and Protected Services, Staff Health and Wellbeing and Surge and Flow. Board Sub-Committees will continue to provide assurance reports following any meetings that are held.

Any other business will be restricted only to essential decisions that the Board requires to make under the scheme of delegation.

The Board and the relevant committees will continue to be involved at key points in NHS Grampian's decision-making, in particular agreeing key plans, such as the Remobilisation Plan and the Winter (Surge) Plan.

Between Board and seminar meetings, a monthly informal non-executive briefing session will be provided by the Chief Executive, supported by members of the Chief Executive Team.

### **3.2 Governance Committee Meetings**

Since October 2020, the governance committees have returned to their pre-COVID meeting cycle.

Each committee meeting has been held virtually with formal agenda and papers and a written assurance report to each Board meeting.

As stated above, it is proposed that the core governance committees – staff, clinical, audit and performance governance meet once in the period to 31 March 2021 (and once again in the period to 30 June 2021) and that the executive leads and Committee chairs agree agendas that reflect key priorities and essential business only. Where possible, supporting papers should only be necessary to support and record key decisions or assurances. Minutes and assurance reports to the Board will continue to be maintained.

### **3.3 Endowment Trustees**

The Endowment Committee continues to oversee decisions regarding the significant support received in terms of community donations. It is proposed that the committee continues to meet as required to determine the use of donations and grants that have been made in support of the immediate COVID response.

### **3.5 Board Short Life Working Group**

To support this work, the Board established a Short Life Working Group in the first wave to provide reflection, insight and expert advice for the development of Health and Social Care strategy for the medium to longer term.

It is not proposed to re-establish a similar short life working group in the next phase of our response but to review this in April 2021 when there may be the opportunity to commence the process of updating the Board's Clinical Strategy.

Non-executive Board members have offered assistance to support the wider response and consideration will be given to how best to utilise their skills and expertise. Particular areas of interest that have been indicated include the Board remobilisation plan, addressing and reducing health inequalities, patient experience and outcomes (given the impact of the pandemic on access) and staff health and wellbeing.

### **3.6 Risks**

Risks are recorded and mitigated at the most appropriate level within the organisation. There has also been a comprehensive risk assessment of all protected / critical and paused services across NHS Grampian which has been used to inform decisions around our re-mobilisation plan.

All decisions taken at each level in the organisation are logged in accordance with the arrangements that are required during major incidents.

#### **4. Responsible Executive Director and contact for further information**

If you require any further information in advance of the Board meeting please contact:

**Responsible Executive Director**

Alan Gray  
Director of Finance  
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**Contact for further information**

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25 January 2021

## Appendix 1: Actual and Proposed Governance arrangements

	<b>April to October</b>	<b>October to December</b>	<b>Jan to March</b>
Board meeting	Met monthly	Alternate months	Alternate months
Board seminar	-	Alternate months	Alternate months
Staff Governance	Once per month	Pre-COVID cycle	One meeting
Remuneration Committee	As required	Pre-COVID cycle	As required
Clinical Governance	Once per month	Pre-COVID cycle	One meeting
Performance Governance	Once per month	Pre-COVID cycle	One meeting
Audit Committee	As required	Pre-COVID cycle	One meeting
Engagement and Participation Committee	-	Pre-COVID cycle	-
Spiritual Care	-	Pre-COVID cycle	-
<b>Stakeholders engagement</b>			
MSP/MP	Twice monthly meetings	Monthly meetings	Monthly meetings
Local Elected Members	Periodic briefings	Periodic briefings	Monthly briefings
Integration Joint Boards	Periodic briefings	Periodic briefings	Monthly briefings
Staff briefings	Daily briefings	Daily briefings	Daily briefings
System Leadership (wider)	Periodic meetings	Monthly meetings	Monthly meetings
NE System Transformation Group (with Local Authority CEs)	Monthly meetings and regular discussions	Monthly meetings and regular discussions	Monthly meetings and regular discussions
Grampian Area Clinical Forum (GAPF)	Monthly meetings	Monthly meetings	Monthly meetings
Clinical Board	Weekly meetings	Monthly meetings	Weekly meetings
Area Clinical Forum (AC)F	Monthly meetings	Monthly meetings	Monthly meetings
Board briefings	Weekly briefings (first 3 months)	As required	Monthly briefings (mid-Month)