

NHS Grampian
Revision to Board Governance Arrangements
COVID-19

1. Actions Recommended

The Grampian NHS Board is asked to agree:

- to continue with the arrangements to not convene Board meetings in public while the organisation 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;
- to continue the revised governance arrangements for clinical, staff and performance & financial governance approved at the Board meeting on 2 April 2020 during June and August, thereafter reverting to frequencies of committee meetings in line with the individual Committee terms of reference; and
- that following the October Board meeting, the Board reverts to bi-monthly meetings in line with the previous programme, with Board seminars occurring in alternate months.

2. Strategic Context

The NHS and Social Care services face unprecedented demand as it responds to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Scotland, the wider UK and most international communities are facing prolonged stress to normal systems of work, socialisation and a major threat to economic wellbeing.

The challenges faced by the NHS, Social care and the wider partnership systems required 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.

3 Key Matters relevant to the recommendation

3.1 Continuation of Revised Governance Arrangements – Board Meetings

Since April 2020, virtual Board meetings have been held monthly, on the first Thursday of the month. It is proposed that the Board continues to meet on this basis at least until September 2020 with attendance by Microsoft Teams. The Board continues to publish its minutes and meeting papers on its website.

At each meeting the Board has focused on the following key aspects of business:

1. The response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
2. Staff Governance – assurance report in relation to COVID-19 response
3. Clinical Governance – assurance report in relation to COVID-19 response
4. Performance Governance – assurance report in relation to COVID-19 response

The Board and the relevant Committees have been involved at key points in NHS Grampian's decision making, in particular agreeing the Tactical Operating Model (to direct the COVID-19 response), being assured as to the responses in relation to Scottish Government directions regarding service provision and receiving regular briefings and updates.

Between Board meetings, a weekly high level status report and update on any guidance received from Government is circulated to Board members every Monday.

3.2 Governance Committee Meetings

Since April 2020, the core Governance Committees i.e. Staff, Clinical and Performance (incorporating Patient and Public Involvement and Spiritual Care) have been meeting monthly on a rotating basis. This is more frequent than pre-COVID-19 but reflects the dynamic and changing environment in which NHS Grampian works.

Each Committee meeting has been held virtually with formal agenda and papers and is providing a written report to monthly Board meetings. This has allowed the Committees to undertake their business on a revised basis during this period of response to COVID-19.

In addition to the Committees agreed at the Board meeting in April, the Remuneration Committee meets once a month on the same day as the Staff Governance Committee and an Ethics Committee has been established with an independent clinical chair.

It is proposed that the Committee cycle of rotational weekly meetings continues during June and August. From August, the committee meetings would revert back to their normal meeting frequencies in line with the Committee terms of reference.

3.3 Audit Committee

The Audit Committee last met on 17 March 2020, immediately before lockdown. There have been no scheduled meetings of the Audit Committee since then. It was due to meet at the end of June 2020. However, as the timetable for submission of year-end financial statements has been extended by the Scottish Government, arrangements have now been made for these to be approved by the Audit Committee, provisionally on 1 September and by the Board on 3 September 2020.

3.4 Endowment Trustees

The Endowment Committee continue to oversee decisions regarding the significant support received in terms of community donations. A meeting of all the Endowment Trustees has been set for 5 June 2020.

3.5 Board Short Life Working Group

COVID-19 **response** has defined the recent majority of NHS Grampian Board business, that of our Partners and indeed the daily life of our population. Day to day life has been a state of flux driven by rapid changes required to minimise the impact of COVID-19.

We are potentially now planning to enter a new phase alongside response to COVID-19, considering both **recovery and renewal**. Structuring our transition and developing a new focus and strategic intent for a longer period; we will require to adapt to live in an environment in which COVID-19 co-exists. In this respect we have a clear set of strategic objectives for the organisation during COVID-19 response¹.

Executive led leadership structures are in place at NHSG, and with our partners, to evaluate the requirements for the immediate recovery of Non-COVID-19 services; evaluating the health deficit from a ground up approach and prioritising standing up services to deliver against these pressing patient and population needs utilising both novel and traditional approaches.

To complement this in terms of future planning, the Board, with the input of strategic partners, has an opportunity to reflect on the legacy of this acute COVID-19 period, evaluate if and how it impacts our long term vision for Health and Social Care (H&SC) in Grampian, understand the opportunities and threats that this legacy may create in delivering necessary large scale transformation of H&SC and to define the big questions on which we need to seek broader stakeholder input and to set in place a process for doing this.

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

The Short Life Working Group (SLWG) met for the first time on 21 May and agreed its terms of reference. It was a good opening session and the group have an agreed schedule of meetings which concludes at the end of July with the aim of presenting its findings to the August Board meeting.

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.

¹ In terms of COVID-19 response, the immediate strategic objectives to direct the organisation at this time will remain: SO1: Maintain public confidence, SO2: Ensure effective liaison with Partners through LRP to safeguard communities; SO3: Safeguard health, safety and wellbeing; and SO4: Ensure the renewal of the system & create the new future

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

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Contact for further information

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26 May 2020

Appendix 1: Proposed schedule of meeting June – September

| | June | July | August | September |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|------------------|
| Board | 4 June | 2 July | 6 Aug | 3 Sep |
| Staff Governance | 11 June | - | 13 Aug | |
| Remuneration Committee ² | 11 June | - | 13 Aug | |
| Clinical Governance | 18 June | - | 20 Aug | |
| Performance Governance | 25 June | - | 27 Aug | |
| Audit Committee | - | - | - | 1 Sept |

² If required