

APPROVED

NHS GRAMPIAN

Board Meeting - Thursday 14 January 2021 at 09:30am

The following were in attendance at a virtual meeting held using Microsoft Teams

Board Members

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| Professor Lynda Lynch | Chair, Non-Executive Board Member |
| Mrs Amy Anderson | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Mrs Rhona Atkinson | Vice-Chair, Non-Executive Board Member |
| Professor Siladitya Bhattacharya | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Mrs Kim Cruttenden | Chair of Area Clinical Forum/Non-Executive Board Member |
| Mr Albert Donald | Non-Executive Whistleblowing Champion |
| Ms Joyce Duncan | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Professor Nick Fluck | Medical Director |
| Mr Alan Gray | Director of Finance |
| Mrs Luan Grugeon | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Professor Caroline Hiscox | Chief Executive |
| Miss Rachael Little | Employee Director/Non-Executive Board Member |
| Mr Jonathan Passmore | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Mr Sandy Riddell | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Mr Dennis Robertson | Non-Executive Board Member (until 10.10am) |
| Dr John Tomlinson | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Mrs Susan Webb | Director of Public Health |

Attendees

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| Mr Paul Allen | Director of Facilities and eHealth |
| Mr Paul Bachoo | Medical Director - Acute |
| Dr June Brown | Interim Executive Nurse Director |
| Dr Adam Coldwells | Director of Strategy/Deputy Chief Executive |
| Mrs Fiona Francey | Chief Officer, Acute Service |
| Miss Lesley Hall | Assistant Board Secretary |
| Ms Susan Harrold | Planning Manager, Winter/Surge Plan |
| Mr Stuart Humphreys | Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications |
| Mr Tom Power | Director of People and Culture |
| Mrs Alison Wood | PA |

Apologies

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| Mr Simon Bokor-Ingram | Interim Chief Officer, Moray |
| Cllr Isobel Davidson | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Cllr Douglas Lumsden | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Ms Sandra Macleod | Chief Officer, Aberdeen City |
| Cllr Shona Morrison | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Mr Gary Mortimer | Director of Operational Delivery |
| Ms Lorraine Scott | Acting Director of Modernisation |
| Ms Angie Wood | Interim Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire |

1 Welcome and Apologies

Professor Lynch welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all staff for their dedication and hard work under extreme pressure. She acknowledged the particular challenges for redeployed staff. She asked the Board to reflect on the challenges faced by the public too, many of whom were experiencing loss or separation.

Professor Hiscox also acknowledged the challenging times and recognised the collective efforts across the Health and Social Care system. NHS Grampian had moved to Level 4 of Operation Snowdrop on 5 January 2021. The excellent modelling data ensured plans were agile and responsive.

The five priority areas were:

- Staff health and wellbeing
- Flu and COVID-19 vaccinations
- Test and Protect
- Managing surge and flow
- Maintaining critical and protected services

Extreme pressures had been experienced across health and social care because of sustained community transmission and critical care services had exceeded wave 1. On a positive note, over 23,000 COVID-19 vaccinations had been delivered and the vaccination plan had been signed off by Gold Command on 13 January 2021. Communication would be issued on 15 January with a detailed programme for roll out of vaccinations, which was dependent on a number of variables.

Mr Robertson requested to know that senior management were receiving appropriate support during these challenging times. Professor Hiscox thanked him for his concern and assured him that there were support mechanisms in place for the senior team as well as for staff across the organisation. She acknowledged the support and offers to assist from Non Executives. Mr Power advised that, although it could be challenging, colleagues were encouraged to take leave and national coaching resources were available.

Apologies were noted as above.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Current position – COVID and Non COVID

Mr Gray gave a PowerPoint presentation on the current position. He highlighted the significant increase in new cases and community transmission during December 2020 which had led to the Board moving to Level 4 Contingency Plan, the highest level of escalation, on 5 January 2021. On average there had been 167 positive cases each day the previous week, with a high of 216 on 7 January.

The 7 day positive COVID rates had increased from 5.3% at the beginning of December to 10.4% now and almost all areas in Grampian were seeing the increase

in community transmission. There was increased capacity in Test and Protect. The importance of following the national guidance (FACTS) was emphasised.

There had been a significant increase in patients in hospital which had risen to 113 from 61 at 10 December. The peak in the first wave had been 89 patients in hospital. This required the implementation of the stages of Tactical Operating Model to optimise cross system capacity. Additional bed capacity had been put in place increasing from 647 to 669 beds.

The occupancy overview showed the pressures on ARI, care homes and community hospitals, with levels in care homes near to or at optimum capacity with restricted or closed admission in some.

Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and High Dependency Unit (HCU) at ARI were under pressure with the hospital trends showing higher levels than during the first wave. There were huge challenges across the whole system and community to ensure a balance and keep people out of hospitals where possible.

The COVID vaccination programme had commenced in December 2020 in line with the priority groups determined by the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation. Over 23,000 vaccines had been administered to date. This included 3,000 to Care Home residents which was approximately 90%.

A broader range of services were being managed than in the first wave. The Winter Surge Plan was to be discussed later in the meeting and details of Operation Snowdrop would come to the February Board meeting. The plan spanned the whole system and aimed to keep as many services going as was possible.

Mrs Cruttenden noted that there appeared to be more cases in the suburbs of Aberdeen City compared to areas deprivation, as seen in the first wave. Mrs Webb advised that data analysis was challenging. She advised that the location of high risk settings could skew the geographic data. Inequalities had an impact on the number of cases and the effects of the illness in deprived areas. She agreed to circulate slides with further information.

Mr Passmore acknowledged that there had been a reduction in hospital acquired infections from first wave and he congratulated staff and the processes that had been put in place to achieve this.

The agility of planning was acknowledged. Professor Hiscox advised the decisions had been taken with the best available information, working under pressure and taking the whole system into account. The Chief Officers from the Health and Social Care Partnerships represented the Local Authorities in Silver Command and, together with a Clinical Director, ensured best judgements were taken at appropriate times, ensuring a balance of risk.

Public Health and the Nursing and Medical Directorates were providing support to Care Homes. Daily huddles allowed the opportunity to escalate any concerns around staffing issues. NHS Grampian was taking action when there were any early signs of difficulty to undertake assurance visits in Care Homes, working with Health

and Social Care Partnerships. Assistance was provided to ensure staffing levels including domestic staff.

In response to a query about the number of patients presenting during the first wave of the pandemic compared to more recently, Professor Fluck stated that the first wave had been very unusual. There had been a substantial decrease in presentations to both general practice and Emergency Departments. This could have been as result of a reduction in individuals undertaking activities during lockdown which might have led to a visit to an ED or being reluctant to use the NHS, for fear of COVID or overwhelming the NHS, and therefore putting up with symptoms they would otherwise have been contacting the NHS. He explained that critical and emergency pathways were continuing and the message was that NHS Grampian was open for business.

The Board noted the current position as presented.

4. Winter/Surge Plan – for approval

Professor Fluck presented the Winter/Surge Plan and stated that the discussions in this previous item had been useful for background to the plan. Fiona Francey and Susan Harrold were attending to provide any additional information of answer questions.

The plan was the overarching document for the Acute Sector and the three Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray and set out the key actions required across the system, timescales and planning processes which had enabled the system to be as prepared as possible to effectively manage the significant challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic, in addition to Test and Protect, mass vaccination, care home support and the normal seasonal winter pressures. The ongoing emergency response to the pandemic in addition to other winter pressures meant that the plan would remain a live document as it acknowledged some aspects would evolve in line with the emergency response.

Data planning showed the pattern of curve of and a tentative plateauing of the number of positive cases. The health intelligence data looked at the local community transmission data to see what this would mean for hospitals. Professor Fluck advised that the plan had been amended due to the recent surge and the maximum capacity in ARI was now higher, including provision of additional COVID patient beds with further escalation decision points laid out. It was anticipated that hospital peak would occur in the next 10 days to 3 weeks.

Mrs Webb advised that there had been some issues around data which may be due to a backlog. However, it was believed that the current restrictive measures had blunted the rise in cases.

Professor Fluck reassured Board members that clinicians were being supported to have individual conversations on care plans. However, there were difficult decisions to be made around visiting, movement of patients and access to services. He advised that the support of the Ethical Decision Making Group was hugely valuable.

Professor Bhattacharya queried the anticipated impact of the vaccination programme and of the recent change in extending the period for delivery of the second dose to within 12 weeks. Mrs Webb responded that the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) had recommended that more individuals should receive the first dose as soon as possible. Evidence based information was available and Mrs Webb agreed to share with Board members. The vaccine programme was being delivered to save lives rather than have an impact on service provision. She advised that since the vaccination of over 3,000 Care Home residents, there had been a reduction in severity of impact.

Dr Fluck advised that there was limited data around the impact on transmission following COVID vaccination. The vaccination programme would not alter the current protective measures and would sit alongside PPE, segregation and other public health measures.

The Board was advised that up to date information was continually passed to staff in the daily staff brief.

Concerns were raised that the role of unpaid carers was not fully reflected in plan. Ms Francey advised that each of the HSCPs had their own Homefirst work streams who worked with carers at a local level. She assured the Board that systems were in place to support them as they were a key part of the system. It was recommended that more specific reference be included in the Winter Plan for 2021/22.

Board members acknowledged the excellent plan and agreed it provided assurance to them.

Professor Lynch also acknowledged the huge improvements in the Winter Plan, year on year, including improvements to accessibility of the plan for the public. It was noted that the plan was also evaluated each year.

Fiona Francey, Susan Harrold and Iain Ramsay, together with the rest of the team, were thanked for their hard work in preparing this year's Winter Plan.

The Board approved the Grampian Health and Social Care COVID-19 and Winter (Surge) Plan 2020/21 which had been prepared with the involvement of key partners in the North East of Scotland.

5 Any Other Competent Business

There was no other business.

Dates of Next Meetings

Board Meeting – Thursday 4 February, 10am by MS Teams.