

**NHS GRAMPIAN**  
**Minutes of Meeting of Grampian NHS Board on**  
**Thursday 7 December 2023 at 10:00**  
**virtually by Microsoft Teams**

**Present:****Board Members**

Mrs Alison Evison	Chair/Non-Executive Board Member
Cllr Ann Bell	Non-Executive Board Member
Dr June Brown	Executive Nurse Director
Mr Mark Burrell	Chair of Area Clinical Forum/Non-Executive Board Member
Cllr Tracy Colyer	Non-Executive Board Member
Mr Albert Donald	Non-Executive Board Member/Whistleblowing Champion
Ms Joyce Duncan	Non-Executive Board Member
Professor Nick Fluck	Medical Director
Professor Caroline Hiscox	Chief Executive
Mr Steven Lindsay	Employee Director/Non-Executive Board Member
Mr Derick Murray	Non-Executive Board Member
Mr Hussein Patwa	Non-Executive Board Member
Mr Sandy Riddell	Non-Executive Board Member
Mr Dennis Robertson	Vice-Chair/Non-Executive Board Member
Mr Alex Stephen	Director of Finance
Mrs Susan Webb	Director of Public Health/Portfolio Lead Population Health
Dr John Tomlinson	Non-Executive Board Member
Cllr Ian Yuill	Non-Executive Board Member

**Attendees**

Mr Paul Allen	Director of Infrastructure and Sustainability
Mr Paul Bachoo	Portfolio Lead Integrated Specialist Care
Mr Stephen Baguley	Clinical Director eHealth (Item 10)
Mr Simon Bokor-Ingram	Chief Officer, Moray Integration Joint Board and Portfolio Lead Moray
Mrs Caroline Clark	Chief Nurse (Item 11)
Dr Adam Coldwells	Director of Strategy/Deputy Chief Executive
Ms Sarah Duncan	Board Secretary
Ms Geraldine Fraser	Portfolio Lead Integrated Family Services
Miss Lesley Hall	Assistant Board Secretary
Mr Stuart Humphreys	Director of Marketing and Communication
Mr Garry Kidd	Project Director, Baird and ANCHOR Project (Item 9)
Mrs Sandra MacLeod	Chief Officer, Aberdeen City Integration Joint Board/Portfolio Lead Medicine and Unscheduled Care and Mental Health
Mr Alasdair Pattinson	Armed Forces & Veterans Champion (Item 13)
Mr Gavin Payne	Acting Director of Infrastructure and Sustainability/General Manager, Facilities and Estates
Mr Philip Shipman	Head of People and Change
Mrs Alison Wood	PA/Minute Taker

**Apologies**

Professor Siladitya Bhattacharya	Non-Executive Board Member
Mr Tom Power	Director of People and Culture

Mrs Evison, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was noted that the meeting was being recorded for publication on the NHS Grampian website.

## **1 Apologies**

Apologies were noted as above. The meeting was quorate.

## **2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **3 Chair's Welcome**

The Chair recognised the contribution made by Professor Hiscox, Chief Executive, who was joining NHS Tayside as Interim Chief Executive. Her inclusive management style and patient-centred approach had served NHS Grampian well. This had contributed to the positive culture to create an environment where colleagues felt empowered and supported to enable them to deliver the best care possible for the people of Grampian. Dr Adam Coldwells, Deputy Chief Executive, would be taking on the role of Interim Chief Executive. The Chair also thanked Mr Paul Allen, Director of Infrastructure and Sustainability, for his contribution in a number of roles over 40 years with NHS Grampian, prior to his retirement. She also thanked Ms Sandra MacLeod, Chief Officer, Aberdeen City Integration Joint Board/Portfolio Lead, and Ms Sarah Duncan, Board Secretary, for their service and support as they both moved to NHS Tayside early in 2024.

The Chair highlighted items on the agenda including the Integration Joint Boards' (IJBs') Annual Performance Report, the Finance Report and the update on the Baird and ANCHOR project. She advised that the size of overspend was a significant concern and welcomed news that urgent recovery actions were underway, together with detailed financial planning for 2024/2025. The scale of the financial challenge could not be overstated and the Scottish Government budget announcement on 19 December 2023 was awaited.

## **4 Minute of Meeting on 5 October 2023**

The minute of the meeting held on 5 October 2023 was approved.

### **4.1 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

## **5 Chief Executive's Report**

The Chief Executive reflected on her three years in post as NHS Grampian's Chief Executive. The foundation of everything had been to work with colleagues and partners to create an environment to empower and support people to deliver the best care possible for the population of Grampian. She highlighted initiatives including We Care, to support the wellbeing of colleagues, the Ask Caroline question and answer sessions on a variety of topics which ensured she was aware of what mattered to people, and visits to services which ensured she was linked into day to day issues. These had all helped to provide insights to aid complex and competing decision-making. She referred to the Best Practice Australia (BPA) Cultural Matters staff survey and the pursuit of Magnet accreditation for nursing and midwifery and the positive impact on the recruitment of international and newly graduated nurses and retention of experienced staff, with the lowest level of nursing vacancies for several years.

She emphasised the power of partnership working and thanked the leaders and colleagues from partner organisations to help build a whole system collaboration to tackle the underlying causes of ill health and to create a sustainable health and care system. The systems leadership approach which focused on outcomes and pathways rather than buildings and structure, as the next step in health and social care integration, was a significant culture change. Without reform and joint partnership effort, particularly to direct more resource to enabling wellness, eventually, the system would not be sustainable.

The Chief Executive emphasised the importance of the Board's strategic plans including Plan for the Future, the Annual Delivery Plan 2023-2026, the Medium Term Finance Framework and Workforce Strategy. to guide the Board and the workforce over the short and medium term. She thanked colleagues for all their efforts and support during her time in the role.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked the Chief Executive for her significant contribution to NHS Grampian.

**The Board noted the Chief Executive report.**

## **6 How Are We Doing Performance Report**

Improvement work had continued on the performance framework including how performance was presented to the Board. Guidance had been issued to executives to consider the so what question in the spotlight section. The report focused on the red areas. However, future reports would consider green and amber rated areas to provide a balance in relation to the performance across the whole organisation.

The following points were discussed:

The importance of the "so what" question was emphasised to highlight the actions being taken and to provide the assurance on the next steps.

To ensure a balanced approach, it would be necessary to focus on areas that were green and amber as well as those that were red and required action. This would provide the overall vision of partnership working. A timetable had been set up to for "spotlight" reports as areas of focus to in the performance report throughout the year. This would commence at the next Board meeting.

Foundations were in place for regional and local partnership working to progress key issues with the combined knowledge and understanding to create sustainable services for the population in the North of Scotland. There was an increased focus on the population health agenda through the North East Alliance and the three Community Planning Partnerships in the region.

There was a need for citizens to be more aware of self-management of their own health. Initiatives included waiting well and pre-operative assessments together with working with communities. There were opportunities to be more transformative with the interface between patients and citizens. Technology would assist with the delivery of services; this would be discussed in more detail under the Digital Strategy (item 10 on the agenda). Tailored approaches for delivery of services to individuals were required e.g. weight management. Regional working allowed work streams to be managed on a greater scale due to workforce potential. The North East Population Health Alliance was a forum where organisations came together to identify areas where working collaboratively would add

value. The alliance's evidence review to consider the cost of living crisis would inform areas of focus. It was noted that the governance sat with the member organisations.

Local and national work was ongoing to address nursing and agency challenges. Transformation was required for workforce models. For example, there was an opportunity to be employed as a Healthcare Support Worker whilst undertaking a pre-registration course with the Open University and to continue in employment as a registered nurse when studies were completed. To achieve a sustainable workforce it was important to employ local people who wished to remain in the area. Discussions continued to take place with Scottish Government.

### **The Board noted the How Are We Doing Report.**

## **7. Integration Joint Boards (IJBs) - Annual Performance Reports**

A presentation was given on the annual reports by Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray IJBs for 2022/2023. It set the context of performance against a challenging environment and highlighted the themes identified for all Health & Social Care Partnerships (H&SCPs) together with the performance indicators and accountability. The reports reflected the local priorities of each area as well as the collaborations and the sharing of good practices among them. Demand had increased both in volume and complexity and due to factors including demographics, legacy, recovery from the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. The benefits of a whole system approach was emphasised. The partnerships continued to concentrate on programmes of work that created capacity and on community services both to avoid admission to hospital by caring for people in their own homes, when it was safe to do so, and to ensure medically ready patients could be discharged from hospital.

Discussion followed including:

The subjectivity of the national indicator for the percentage of adults supported at home who agreed they felt safe; a number of factors would affect this, not related to their health and wellbeing, e.g. community safety and crime issues. The support network in place, including families or carers living close by, would also have an impact.

The collaborative working between NHS Grampian and the H&SCPs as part of a whole system was noted. It had been helpful to articulate which areas led on pieces of work and where there was joint responsibility. The complex needs and demands, together with the challenging financial position, emphasised the requirement for partnership working.

The importance of the GP Vision Strategy was discussed, including the relationship with the public and preventative work. The strategy considered how to link into other parts of the system and communities to support citizens on a place based approach. Engagement with communities continued.

Concern was expressed about the potential for silo thinking rather than whole system leadership approach when the system was under severe pressure. The framework of people, places and pathways was used across the planning strategies. Community planning and the strengthening of networks highlighted that the organisations required to work together to be successful. The portfolio approach had removed historical boundaries and allowed teams to understand the potential unintended consequences of actions. There were strong links between NHS Grampian and the three local authorities which facilitated the ability of the IJBs to operate in a complex environment.

**The Board agreed the following recommendations:**

- **Assurance - reviewed and scrutinised the information provided in the report, in the three Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) Annual Performance Reports and in the presentation to the Board at the meeting and confirmed that collectively this provided assurance that the three HSCPs were performing in a way that contributed to the strategic priorities of NHS Grampian.**
- **Future reporting - The HSCP Performance Reports were published annually and it would be the intention to bring future years' reports to the NHS Grampian Board for awareness and assurance that performance was continuing in line with expectations.**

## **8. Update on NHS Grampian Financial Position**

The Director of Finance provided an update on the challenging financial position as a result of continued operational pressures and high levels of inflation which had impacted on costs. As a result, at the half way point in the financial year, the size of the over-spend had increased to £49.9 million. This was above the target set by Scottish Government of £42.9 million and remained a significant concern. Urgent actions had been implemented to recover the finance position to the agreed target. These measures required a careful assessment of the implications on service delivery, staffing and performance. Detailed financial planning for 2024/2025 was underway with cost reductions in savings required on a recurring basis. The budget strategy would build on the medium term financial framework for the current year. It was noted that the savings target would be in excess of previously achieved savings. Savings plans would be requested from service directors and portfolio leads together with corporate savings for the whole organisation. The strategic nature of the work was emphasised to ensure that decisions made allowed NHS Grampian to develop appropriately to meet future needs. This work required to progress at pace. The Scottish Government budget announcement on 19 December 2023 would inform the ongoing work.

The following points were discussed:

Meetings had taken place with service and portfolio leads to consider potential savings targets. However, the amount required would not be known until the Scottish Government budget announcement on the level of funding on 19 December 2023.

Elements out with the control of NHS Grampian included the cost of prescribing across acute and primary care. National dialogue was ongoing for territorial and special Health Boards.

There was a need to balance quality of care with financial costs, ensuring patients and staff safety. The importance of collective transformational work to ensure sustainability of services was emphasised. The Plan for the Future set out the need to create sustainability. Difficult decisions would require to be made to ensure transformational change. Digital improvements would assist with the transformation of services and the innovative work and digital advancement would continue.

Regarding the establishment numbers for nurses, the use of agency and locums was discussed. It was highlighted that there were more patients being cared for and in non-standard beds than when the establishment numbers had been agreed. Safe and appropriate staffing was used to achieve levels of care and there was increased use of Healthcare Support Workers. Services held regular discussions throughout the day to

ensure appropriate staffing levels, including medical staffing. Tighter processes had been put in place for approval of locum recruitment.

Further work was required to achieve a sustainable system. Short-term measures were discussed at the Chief Executive Team level weekly, to ensure the appropriate spending and information was cascaded to teams.

Discussions were also taking place nationally on the balance of service delivery, staff, clinical and fiscal governance.

A board session would take place in January 2024 to provide more information and assurance on the budget strategy.

#### **The Board:**

- **Were assured that steps were being taken to manage NHS Grampian's financial position in 2023/24 to deliver a level of overspend in line with the Board's financial plan submission to the Scottish Government.**
- **Noted that a range of recovery actions had been agreed with the Chief Executive Team and were now being implemented to reduce the level of overspending in the second half of the financial year and enable the revenue target to be achieved.**
- **Noted that detailed financial planning was underway to set the revenue budget for 2024/25 and refresh the Medium Term Financial Framework, noted the potential scale of the financial challenge faced by the Board in 2024/25 and beyond. This planning would be informed by the Scottish Government budget announcement on 19 December 2023.**

#### **9. Baird Family Hospital and ANCHOR Centre Project Update**

An update was provided on the Baird Family Hospital and ANCHOR Centre project on the progress of the technical and specialist teams. A revised project forecast would inform further dialogue with Scottish Government and the Chief Executive Team on the potential implications of the planned changes on the budget and programme.

Lessons had been learned from the lack of national guidance at the commencement of the project and the changing guidance following the experience of other recent NHS builds in Scotland. The project had followed the available guidance and processes in a complex and changing environment. Lessons learned would aid future builds, locally in NHS Grampian and nationally. NHS Assure had been created in June 2021, after the construction phase of the project had commenced. It was a new way of working for both NHS Grampian and NHS Assure. Changes were also required because of changes to the available evidence base. Regular fortnightly meetings continued to be held with NHS Assure, who provided support and guidance. The Project Director was to present at the Framework Scotland Project Board early in 2024, to share the learning from the project.

Ongoing dialogue continued with other areas of NHS Grampian impacted by the delays in the completion of the project to ensure the Facilities team were aware of any required work, in particular within Aberdeen Maternity Hospital (AMH).

#### **The Board:**

- **Noted the progress with the Baird Family Hospital and ANCHOR Centre project.**
- **Noted the intention to prepare a revised project forecast to inform further dialogue with the Scottish Government and the Board Executive team on the potential implications of the planned changes on budget and programme.**

- **Noted that recommendations on the way forward would be brought formally for approval to the Board at its next meeting**

## 10. **Digital Strategy Revision 2023-2027**

The Director of Infrastructure and Sustainability and the Clinical Lead for eHealth gave a presentation on the revision of the Digital Strategy, for the service transformation through digital. The refresh took account of the changing landscape including NHS Grampian's Plan for the Future 2022-28, Scotland's Digital Health and Care Strategy – Delivery Plan 2023-24, Scotland's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy 2021, Data Strategy for Health and Social Care in Scotland 2023 and North of Scotland AI Strategy 2023. The guidance from Scottish Government for the Delivery Plan was to optimise the use of digital and data technology in the design and delivery of health and care services for improved patient access.

The overall goal was to reshape and transform services by improving outcomes, improving citizen experience, improving staff experience and to be financially sustainable. Key enablers to achieve this were electronic records, better use of data, infrastructure and information governance. Examples were provided of the progress made since 2020 and the revised 5 Year Roadmap was explained with the relevant timelines.

The risks to the success of the strategy, including lack of funding and dependencies on national programmes. were explained. It was necessary to be realistic about what priorities could be delivered.

Board members discussed the following points:

It was important to ensure that necessary support was available for citizens to access new technology in the community. Third sector and local authority partners had been involved in developing the strategy and discussions held on the different systems that organisations used. Many people preferred digital technology as it provided better access for information and services rather than in person appointments; however, different options required to be available to allow choice and to avoid digital exclusion.

National work was ongoing which should improve the main communication systems.

The Population Health Committee would review elements of the strategy over the next year.

The team were thanked for their work on the digital strategy.

### **The Board**

- **Noted the progress implementing the Digital Strategy since 2020.**
- **Endorsed the strategic objectives and priorities as laid out in sections 2.3 and 2.3.2 of the paper.**

## 11. **Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2022-2023**

The Integrated Families Portfolio Executive Lead and the Chief Nurse presented the Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2022-23. This set out NHS Grampian's progress to meet corporate parenting responsibilities across Grampian. The report detailed the strategic framework, the current statistics for care experienced children and young people, what had been achieved and the priorities for 2023/24. The NHS Grampian Corporate Parenting action plan 2023-2026 was in draft format and would be presented at a future Board meeting.

It was highlighted that 50% of the adult prison population had care experience, 30% of care experienced children became homeless and 50% had mental health issues.

The changes to the reporting structures were explained following the implementation of the Children's Board and the Integrated Family Portfolio. There was a focus on children's rights and the importance of ensuring that the voice of the child was heard across services. Initiatives within health and social care were in place to ensure that this did happen.

Within Scotland, there had been there a continuing decline in the number of looked after children, with 1,023 in Grampian in 2022. Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) were carried out by the school nurses and health visitors closest to the child and coordinated by the looked after children team. In 2022 there were 22 IHAs for unaccompanied asylum seekers who automatically became looked after by the local authorities. It was noted that year to date there had been requests for 66 IHAs. This had been challenging to meet the children's need in a timely way.

Corporate parenting responsibilities continued until a child reached 26. However, it was the young person's decision once they left care if they wished to be known as looked after. More work was required to understand whether the children's needs were being met and where the gaps were. This would be a priority for the 2023 Report.

It was noted that this topic had been discussed at Performance Assurance Infrastructure and Finance Committee (PAFIC) and at a Board Seminar.

The importance of getting the voices of children and young people who had care experience heard in a meaningful way was emphasised.

Access information was now available on the NHS Grampian website.

NHS Grampian had a duty as an anchor organisation and corporate parent to support young people with care experience into employment. Examples of ongoing work was provided including the Royal College of Nursing cadet scheme.

As part of the preparation for the Annual Delivery Plan, there would be an anchor baseline to set out the current position. NHS Grampian's Health Inequalities Action Plan would include how to improve this in the future and would be considered by the Population Health Committee.

**The Board reviewed and scrutinised the information provided and confirmed that it provided assurance that NHS Grampian was meeting its corporate parenting legal responsibilities as set out by Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and progression with the Scottish Government's aspirations set out in The Promise 2020.**

## **12 System-wide Approach to Winter Planning**

The Portfolio Executive Lead, Medicine and Unscheduled Care, highlighted the draft winter plan would be shared with stakeholders prior to the approval and explained the governance process.

Work had been undertaken at a system level in addition to the winter planning activity routinely carried out by individual partners, to create further linkages between plans. This work complimented the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary (ARI) Bed Base Review. The winter plan had been structured following the Scottish Government guidance and priorities. Actions had been identified to manage expected activities.

**The Board endorsed the developing approach outlined in the paper and noted the progress made.**

### **13 Armed Forces Covenant Duty**

The Armed Forces and Veterans Champion summarised the key points of the new Armed Forces Covenant Duty, which was introduced on 22 November 2022. This placed a legal responsibility on organisations to pay 'due regard' to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant to consciously consider the unique responsibilities and sacrifices made by members of the Armed Forces. An action plan had been developed which set out an assessment of ongoing and planned Board level activity for assurance over the next 12-18 months. This would raise the profile and awareness of the armed forces community and their needs, to negate potential disadvantages faced. It would also promote the advantages of being an armed forces friendly organisation with mutual benefits by working with the armed forces community. There were already good connections and relationships with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) bases across the region and collaboration with Local Authorities, Moray Chamber of Commerce and third sector partners. The Aberdeenshire Council Veterans' Group and Robert Gordon University were undertaking research to understand specific challenges of accessing care services for female veterans. Forthcoming planned actions were highlighted in Table 2 of the paper presented, including the employee recognition scheme with the aim to achieve gold award status. The Equalities Impact Assessment of the action plan would be presented to the Population Health Committee. National discussions on the implementation of recommendations in the Veterans' Mental Health and Well-being action plan were taking place.

Board members discussed the following points:

A support network for the families of those serving who had required to move location e.g. education, childcare issues, access of medical records. NHS Grampian were working with partners to understand and put measures in place to help navigate healthcare systems. Digital solutions would help reduce some of the challenges.

Whilst the focus on armed forces was mainly in the Moray area it was recognised that there were veterans in other areas of Grampian requiring support. An Army engagement event had taken place in Aberdeen in November 2023 to help develop connections and understand support needs. Employment opportunities were considered, particular in the health and social care sector.

**The Board agreed the following recommendations:**

- **Assurance – noted the information provided in the paper and Appendix and confirmed that it provided assurance that NHS Grampian had appropriate actions in place to show due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant.**
- **Agreement on future reporting – agreed that future reports would be made to the Staff Governance Committee, with the frequency to be agreed with the Committee and that the Equalities Impact Assessment of the action plan and updates on the equalities issues would be reported to the Population Health Committee when it was completed.**

## **14 Forum and Integration Joint Board (IJB) Reports**

The following reports were noted:

### **14.1 Area Clinical Forum (ACF)**

The Chair of ACF highlighted the presentation of the NHS Grampian Strategic Approach to Colleague and Citizen Engagement which set out the vision for delivery in the future.

### **14.2 Grampian Area Partnership Forum (GAPF)**

### **14.3 Integration Joint Boards (IJBs)**

The report mirrored the discussion held on the IJB Performance Reports with common themes and local variations reflecting the different strands of work for local circumstances.

## **15. Approved Committee, Forum and IJB Minutes**

The minute of the joint Staff Governance and Clinical Governance Committees held on 21 September 2023 would be circulated and included on the NHS Grampian website.

The following approved minutes were noted:

### **Committees**

- 15.1 Audit and Risk Committee – 5 September 2023.
- 15.2 Performance Assurance, Finance & Infrastructure Committee – 30 August 2023.
- 15.3 Staff Governance Committee – 22 August 2023.
- 15.4 Clinical Governance Committee – 29 August 2023.
- 15.5 Grampian Charities Committee – 2 June and 29 September 2023.
- 15.6 Population Health Committee – 7 July 2023.

### **Forums**

- 15.7 Area Clinical Forum – 6 September 2023.
- 15.8 Grampian Area Partnership Forum – 17 August and 19 October 2023.

### **Integration Joint Boards (IJBs)**

- 15.9 Aberdeen City IJB – 22 August 2023.
- 15.10 Aberdeenshire IJB – 23 August 2023.
- 15.11 Moray IJB – 29 June 2023.

## **14 Any Other Business**

There was no other business discussed.

## **15 Date of next meeting**

- Thursday 14 March 2024