

Area Clinical Forum Report to Grampian NHS Board Meeting on the 14th March 2024.

Purpose of Report

This report updates the Grampian NHS Board on key issues arising from the Area Clinical Forum (ACF) meeting on 17th January 2024.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to note the following key points.

New Membership

ACF welcomed a new public representative Mr Richard Caie. Richard has a vast experience of other health and social care committees and is a welcome addition to our forum and his input from a public representative point of view will be invaluable.

NHSG Delivery Plan

Jenna Young, Planning Manager and Pauline Rae, Workforce Service Manager, presented an update to the committee on the 3 year delivery plan underpinned by the actions needed to deliver on the 9 strategic priorities of the Plan for the Future. It was noted that the plan would be submitted with the financial plan to the Scottish Government and it was welcomed that some synergy of these plans was occurring but that the timelines for them are tight.

Planning will be prepared in the context of a tight financial position and will be aligned with workforce, finance, digital and infrastructure plans.

- Enhanced planning and delivery of approach to health inequalities and improved population health.
- Take forward actions in the Women's Health Plan and support good child and maternal health.
- Optimise use of digital technology and innovation.

It was noted by the forum that there are significant financial challenges facing NHSG and the aligned timings of these plans will highlight emerging issues and there will be ongoing discussions between Scottish Government and the Chief Executive Team (CET) if expectations are not met.

The Area Clinical Forum will be happy to work with and advise where necessary to help to deliver this plan working collaboratively and in partnership. There was also an understanding that **all** have a part to play in delivering these objectives but some priorities may emerge given the current financial position.

Staff Breaks, Rest and Recovery

Steven Lindsay, Employee Director, presented that it is intended to re-establish the work of the group looking at staff breaks, rest and recovery.

The forum was updated on the work of this group and the importance of staff taking breaks. It was highlighted that performance and therefore patient care could be enhanced by staff who were refreshed and motivated after short breaks. There was an acknowledgement that different groups of staff may have different engagement and that breaks can look different for different groups.

Some important points were raised including a suggestion that in long meeting (more than 2 hours) a short comfort break around the hour mark may help. The ACF therefore resolved to include a 5 minute break in its meeting and that this culture should be encouraged with all staff groups.

It was agreed that the Grampian Area Partnership Forum (GAPF) and ACF will continue to prioritise this message and encourage conversations at groups across the system

“What Does the Long Term Future of Healthcare Look Like?”

This was a further opportunity to continue discussions across all the representatives on our vision for the future of healthcare delivery. This piece of work will tie in elements of the GP Visionary work, the digital strategy along with sustainability transformation projects. This long term strategic plan will form part of our discussions as an ongoing project. Initial discussions emphasised the need to enhance recruitment and retention with a particular focus around primary care provision as this is where most of the patients’ first interactions with healthcare stem from. There was a broad discussion on promoting Grampian as an attractive place to live and work and ensuring that we do not ‘talk ourselves down’. There was general agreement that we should be encouraging our graduates from all sectors to see the benefits of working in the region and reduce the loss of highly skilled practitioners to other areas.

This will be an underlying theme over the next number of years and we will encourage all committees to have discussions on innovations to their delivery plans whilst always fitting with the Board’s strategic goals.

The discussions moved forward around The Plan for the Future and the current tight financial position across Scotland.

Following on from these discussions it was agreed that ACF would support a new group along with the CET and GAPF to commission a development tool to allow services to review how efficiency can be improved and how that could influence financial planning.

This group has now met and will produce this commission in the coming weeks.

ACF Relationship with Wider System

Continuing with ongoing work it was reflected that it had been challenging to engage with Portfolio Executive Leads across the system, but it was agreed that progress had been made.

There are regular meetings with the Chief Executive, Medical Director and Executive Nurse Director and this has been helpful in providing the opportunity to raise concerns and to be informed of actions taken. It was noted that the Chair of NHSG attended the meeting and this high visibility was welcomed by the group. There is now an established member of the CET/portfolio leads assigned to the individual committees and this again strengthens the closer working relationships with ACF and the clinical groups.

It was highlighted that reports from ACF to the Board can raise concerns and it is important professional groups are reassured that the ACF provides them with a place where their voice is represented and heard by those in the leadership /transformation roles. Acknowledging this upstream and downstream flow of information cements our place as an important partner and advisory group.

Terms of Reference/Constitutions

Progress is being made at pace regarding TOR/committee constitutions and these will be reviewed through our Forum for accuracy and cross referencing with the overarching statutory regulations.

Committee reports.

It was felt that some modification of the reporting from the advisory committees may improve the efficiency of the meeting. Individual committees will fill in a short template with the major areas of concern and the achievements or 'good news' stories being highlighted.

This will allow a more focused discussion on the major themes arising from the committees and allow for better escalation to the board for consideration

Culture

The ACF is committed to promoting a positive culture of working within the Grampian region. It can be all too easy to focus on the challenges within the health and social care sectors but it was discussed that the excellent clinical work that is performed everyday must not be forgotten. Working in partnership and with a progressive mind-set, small steady improvements will improve services and in doing so should increase the overall feeling of positivity within the sector. All Chairs and Vice chairs were encouraged to emphasise the importance of seeing not only the challenges but also the benefits we all bring as healthcare providers.

Board Programme

The Board programme is a standing item on the ACF agenda to allow the forum to fulfil the role of providing clinical and professional advice to the CET and Board on relevant topics.

**Mark Burrell, Chair Area Clinical Forum
February 2024**