

Daily Brief...



Wednesday 29 April 2026

Substantive Director of People & Culture appointed We are pleased to confirm Jay O'Brien will join us as Director of People & Culture following a competitive recruitment exercise. Jay has more than 25 years of experience working in healthcare and government across Australia, New Zealand, and the UK. He is currently the Executive Director of Strategy, Governance and Partnerships at the Women and Children's Health Network in South Australia. Prior to this he was Director of People & Culture at NHS Orkney and is delighted to be returning to Scotland. Jay will officially join the organisation on 3 August. Melanie Saunders will continue in post as an interim director and will support a full handover to Jay in the coming months.

Managers – don't forget iMatter team confirmation! The iMatter team confirmation period is now open and will close on Friday 15 May, with the survey going live on Monday 18 May. Managers are asked to review and confirm their team membership to ensure all staff receive an invitation to take part in the iMatter staff experience survey. Taking a few minutes to complete this step helps make sure the process is inclusive and sets the foundation for meaningful conversations at team level. iMatter gives you the chance to reflect on your experience of work and to help shape conversations about what would make the biggest positive difference within your team. [Further guidance and support are available on the iMatter intranet page, simply follow this link.](#)

World Cup public holiday As shared via the Daily Brief in March, NHS boards will observe the public holiday on Monday 15 June. A Q&A providing [further detail can be read via this link](#). Remember, this coming Monday (4 May) is also a recognised public holiday for NHS Grampian.

Update from Executive Team Here is the summary of this week's meeting of the Executive Team (ET).

Matters for discussion	Major Actions Commissioned/ Work Underway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognised ongoing operational pressures, particularly in unscheduled care, with performance static and high demand persisting. Delayed discharges and mental health unscheduled care remain under sustained pressure. Clinical governance processes require further strengthening, with recent external correspondence from Regulator emphasising the need for a focus on strengthening clinical governance and learning across the organisation. Occupational Health service capacity is under review due to increased demand and short-term leadership gaps, with immediate support actions being progressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft terms of reference for a new Clinical Quality and Safety Improvement Board have been drafted and an external support package from Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) agreed to complement internal improvement work to strengthen clinical governance arrangements across the organisation. Work is progressing in relation to the frailty bed expansion, including detailed workforce and financial modelling. The acute sector governance structure is being reviewed in response to feedback, with new data packs and assurance mapping underway. The Culture Programme Board is being streamlined for greater agility, and programme management support has been secured. Resource mapping across all Programme Boards and strategic objectives is in progress to ensure delivery capacity, with a two-phase approach to prioritise organisational commitments.
Positive Assurances to Provide	Decisions Made
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial and early verbal feedback from Day 1 of a two-day unannounced inspection at Dr Gray's Hospital noted improvements in patient care quality and culture, with visible progress since the last visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement was reached to continue funding the staff retirement teas based on total NHS service. The Executive Team endorsed the approach to resource mapping and prioritisation for programme delivery and supported the establishment of the new quality and safety improvement board. The frailty bed expansion project will proceed to the next phase of detailed planning, with a commitment to bring a full options appraisal and impact assessment to the Board. Responses to recent external letters on clinical governance will be finalised and shared with the NHS Grampian Board and Assurance Board.

Wellbeing, Culture, and Development Wednesday

- **Management Development Programme** Our trusted programme equips aspiring and current managers with the skills and knowledge to lead effectively. The deadline is approaching for our June cohort; [follow this Turas link to learn more and apply](#).
- **April's wellbeing talk** Taking place tomorrow (Thursday, 2-3pm), this will focus on neurodiversity in the workplace. Want to join? Email gram.wcd@nhs.scot for the Teams link.
- **Plan ahead with retirement financial sessions.** Upcoming sessions include [NHS Partial Retirement](#) for 1995 Scheme members exploring draw down and pension flexibilities, and [Retirement Planning for a Positive Future](#) for anyone considering their future options. Dates available throughout the rest of the year; follow the links in the session titles for more information.
- **Spaces for Listening** May and June dates for Spaces for Listening are now available for booking. [Follow this link for more information](#).

For more information on any of these items or to raise any queries, please contact the team via gram.wcd@nhs.scot

Tune of the day Jacqueline Lamb, receptionist at Bayview Dental Practice in Banff, is 60 today! Her colleagues - friends - at Bayview wish her all the best for her special day and have requested [Dancing Queen](#).

Also having a special day is Kenny McKenna, staff nurse at Dr Gray's Hospital, who retires today after more than 35 years' service to the NHS. The team at DGH have requested Nat King Cole and [Unforgettable](#)

We're saying farewell to pharmacist Elaine Neil, who retires today after nearly 40 years with the NHS. Colleagues shared a heartfelt tribute to her, which we don't quite have the space for, but these lines stuck out for me:

Your dedication and unwavering commitment to patient care, were always clear, as was your belief in how Teams should work together. You set standards that many of us will continue to follow throughout our own careers – consistently, thoroughly and properly.

Elaine, it's safe to say the people you work with love and respect you and you will be very much missed. They've requested Michael Bublé and [Feeling Good](#) (EP).

If you want to request a tune, follow up on items included in this brief, or suggest an item for sharing, drop us an email via gram.communications@nhs.scot