

Thursday 9 October 2025

This is a special edition of the Daily Brief, focused solely on the publication of an external review of the organisation. As always, we encourage everyone reading to share this brief with colleagues, especially if you/your team don't have routine or regular access to a computer.

What is the external review? The external review was commissioned by Scottish Government to coincide with our escalation to Level 4 of the NHS Scotland Support and Intervention Framework in May 2025.

What was reviewed? Three specific areas:

1. Our leadership and governance arrangements
2. Further analysis on the main causes of our deteriorating financial position
3. Potential opportunities for cost savings and optimising current services

What did the review find? The final review report can be read in full [here](#). The key findings are that we have more work to do in these core areas:^[LG1]

1. Strategic prioritisation
2. Leadership, culture, governance and workforce
3. Working with partners
4. Delegated decision-making in the organisation
5. How we set our budgets each year
6. Financial reporting and scrutiny, including of Integration Joint Board finances
7. Sharing learning and listening to and acting on feedback from staff
8. Visibility of strategic risks, controls and actions

While we have much to do, we can already evidence progress in each of these areas – as you can see with the Progress Update linked [here](#)

How have we responded to the review? Laura Skaife-Knight, our chief executive, said: *“We welcome this independent assessment and the ongoing support we are receiving from the Scottish Government and wider Health Boards, all of which are informing and further strengthening our improvement plans, which we are focused on delivering.*

“We are confident our financial and savings plans will be achieved this year. All savings schemes will continue to be carefully considered to ensure patient experience, clinical care and staff wellbeing is maintained or improved. We are grateful to the Scottish Government for the additional funding provided to NHS Grampian to further improve access to our urgent and emergency services and reduce waiting

times for operations and appointments (planned care) for the populations we serve. We also continue to benefit significantly from the learning and support we are receiving from other Health Boards.

“We are committed to working collaboratively with our local, regional and national partners, and to working as a whole system so that ideas for improvement are designed and developed together for the benefit of the local communities we serve, and to openness and transparency as an organisation, all of which are critical to taking our organisation forward.”

What next? Thanks to your hard work and our organisation-wide focus, we have already made a lot of progress since May 2025. We were not waiting for the outcome of this review to start taking action. This review and the resulting recommendations, serve to further inform and strengthen our improvement plans, which was already well developed. Along with support from Scottish Government, from other Health Boards in Scotland, and your dedication and expertise, we are confident our progress will only continue. In response to the review, we are focusing resources and energy on three priority areas:

1. Planned Care - reducing our longest waits so that no patient is waiting longer than 52-weeks by the end of March 2026
2. Urgent and emergency (unscheduled care) - reducing ambulance turnaround times, improving access to urgent and emergency care at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and reducing the number of people in hospital who do not need acute care (delayed transfers of care)
3. Delivering our financial and savings plans – reducing our costs by improving efficiency and clinical productivity, and fully utilising procurement potential

Our commitment to you We will continue to carefully and thoughtfully consider all savings ideas to ensure patient experience, clinical care, and your wellbeing is maintained or improved, with support from our clinical leaders.

We commit to improving access to services and reducing waiting times for the people we serve, and we are grateful for the additional funding received from the Scottish Government that enables this.

We will be open and transparent about our progress in delivering our ongoing improvements. This will include updates at our bi-monthly public Board meetings, the Scottish Government-chaired Assurance Board (fortnightly), and quarterly updates from us to you, summarising how we are doing against our plans. The minutes from the Assurance Board meetings being published and available online is a positive step and means anyone who wants to access the notes from the meeting, can do so [here](#). We will continue to use this brief to keep you informed. Attendees at the wider system leadership team meetings are expected and encouraged to share its content with their teams.

Next steps Tomorrow, a range of partners and external stakeholders will be briefed on the report, recommendations and our response. You can also expect to see or hear media coverage of the report tomorrow. Some of this may be critical of our performance. As highlighted above in Laura’s statement, our response to any interviews will be clear we have improvement plans in place and are now on the right path. We recognise we have some way to go, and the focus must now be on delivery and doing what we say we are doing to do. What has never been in question is your commitment to providing the best of care to people. Let’s remain focused on working together as Team Grampian to do the best for our patients and communities we serve on continuously improving our care and services and we will make sure we recognise and share our progress along the way.

Questions? If you have queries or concerns which have not been answered by the above, please get in touch via gram.communications@nhs.scot. We will aim to get you the answers you need and share those here as appropriate and have regular staff briefings and updates to keep you well informed and create a space for you to ask questions or share concerns.

Support

If any staff feel impacted by what they've read or heard today or in the coming days, please know there is support available:

- Chaplaincy – [Spiritual Care](#)
- Occupational Health Services - [Pages - default](#)
- Wellbeing Hub - [Pages - default](#)
- We Care - [We Care \(wellbeing support for health & social care staff\)](#)
- Supporting Staff in Distress and Crisis - [Information and Signposting](#)
- NHS Practitioner Health - [NHS Practitioner Health](#)
- Values Based Reflective Practice – [VBRP](#)

Staff members can also speak with their Trade Union representative or contact the [HR Department](#) for further information.