

Area Clinical Forum Report to Grampian NHS Board Meeting on the 1st of September 2021

Purpose of Report

This report updates the Grampian NHS Board on key issues arising from the Area Clinical Forum (ACF) meeting on the 1st of September 2021.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to note the following key points:

Public Health

The ACF welcomed Susan Webb (Director of Public Health) to the meeting to discuss the Grampian Public Health vision and to discuss the current situation, initiatives and partnership working which will be essential to meeting the goal of supporting people to live longer and healthier and more fulfilling lives. The ACF are keen to help shape the way forward with emphasis on the preventative agenda. This will also be something that the ACF we will revisit on a regular basis and will be providing feedback to public health as and when required.

Health and Wellbeing

The professional groups continue to report concerns regarding staff health and wellbeing. Concerns ranging from staffing numbers and challenges to provide sustainable services, to increased working hours and additional stress from home working solutions. The Allied Health Professional Committee noted significant recruitment challenges in all professions and in particular podiatry who have significant gaps and can only currently provide critical services. It is also felt that in some areas staff to inpatient ratios have reduced resulting in a negative impact on staff health and wellbeing. In addition there are concerns over environmental temperature control in some of our facilities and transparency around what mitigations are possible and what are not in order to manage staff expectations. The ACF also acknowledge the wider work which has been happening around staff Health and Wellbeing and members are involved in work and ACF also have a role on the 'We Care' Steering group.

Cross-system pressures

Noted by a number of the professional groups are the considerable cross system pressures that exist at the moment mostly due directly or indirectly to the pandemic. Examples include negative feedback directed at colleagues sometimes due to poor understanding of new systems and without appreciation of the pressure that other colleagues in other sectors or services may be under. Inter-professional referrals and pressure around urgency for individual cases are creating additional stress for colleagues. Also noting that reduced staffing for a number of reasons adds to the pressure on those staff who are still working in services however this information will not always be known to those outside of a service. It is felt that improved communication and understanding could help to alleviate some of these issues.

Workshop

Due to the leadership structure of NHS Grampian changing and also changes to meeting structures there is a requirement to ensure that the forum continues to be integrated into the system and to ensure that the ACF provide meaningful professional engagement and opinion in many forums. It was decided that we will move forward with a plan to hold a workshop type event with representatives of the ACF, professional committees and the wider NHS team. The

focus will be around how we interface with existing structures and how we interface going forward and how we can work together more effectively. The plan is for this to take place in November.

Healthcare Science

Alan Gray (Director of Finance) and Vicky Ritchie (Healthcare Science Forum chair) provided a presentation on vulnerable sustainable services. The Healthcare Scientists Forum formed a Short Life Working Group (SLWG) to assess their vulnerable services looking at service needs, sustainability, training and development. There are a number of specialities which are particularly vulnerable due to dependence on a single scientist or a small number. Noting that healthcare science input is key in multiple patient pathways and involved in eighty percent of all clinical diagnoses. It is vital that these roles are involved in forward planning for new and existing services and in building future capacity there must be innovation and transformation. This piece of work has been vital in reviewing and potentially reshaping the landscape for healthcare science and work will continue on this in line with the new Grampian Strategy.

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 System Leadership Team (SLT) and Board on relevant topics. We look forward to planning our meetings in 2022 aligning with the new Board programme when it is available.

Kim Cruttenden
Area Clinical Forum Chair
September 2021