

Chief Exec's Update



Monday 2 February 2026

Thank you for your hard work in recent weeks and for going above and beyond to do the best for our patients and community. The weather (between snow, wind and rain and then floods) has certainly contributed to the tough start to the year we have had. You have risen to the challenge superbly with so many examples of exceptional teamwork and really strong system working.

We know that one of our main areas for opportunity is improve the timeliness of emergency care for our patients. Based on what is within our gift, timely discharges are a key component. Currently, just 10-12% of our patients who are ready for discharge on any given day, are discharged by midday.

We need to be closer to 30% (which is considered good practice), and we'll do this by each playing our part, and contributing to movement earlier in the day.

Planning today for tomorrow with transport and medication arrangements has the cumulative effect of every ward bringing forward decisions and actions that will be significant for our patients and our flow throughout the system.

Our '10 before 10' focus aims to do just that – see 10 discharges before 10am – to help get movement and flow early in the day, so we set ourselves up to succeed.

I am pleased to report that just several weeks into our '10 by 10' focus, on Wednesday of last week, we achieved '10 by 10'. The average to before now has been 2 before 10. This may seem a small thing, but the difference for our patients will be significant. This is a win to recognise and a practice I hope to see sustained. Well done for all the cross-system working to achieve this.

We continue to make strong progress against our financial and savings plan for the year and in recent weeks we have had confirmation that we will achieve our £45m maximum deficit position, which is an incredible achievement – the result of continued hard work across the organisation. For the sixth consecutive month, we have delivered savings which exceed our plan – thanks to your efforts.

With your continued focus in the remaining months of the year, we are on track to achieve our £61.8m savings requirement for the year.

These achievements show what we can do when we work together to make ideas a reality. This is a big win and we need to celebrate the momentous effort of this whilst retaining our focus on the final two months of the financial year to get properly over the line – which I know we can do.

In the last few weeks, I have enjoyed attending our Staff Equalities Network meeting to share my vision and hopes for NHS Grampian and to share more details about the importance of our work to improve our culture at NHS Grampian. This will centre on strong, visible leadership, equality and staff health and wellbeing.

On Friday, I really enjoyed spending the day at Dr Gray's Hospital. My thanks to local staff who took the time to come to the drop-in session so I could listen to what matters, how it feels and learn more about the great work taking place. It was hugely insightful. Thanks also to the teams from pharmacy, theatres and anaesthetics for taking the time to meet with me, and to Alasdair, Duff and Helen as the leadership team for an insightful update on progress, challenges and future opportunities.

On Friday, after four months of shutdown for our Central Decontamination Unit (CDU), the unit reopened with training underway for staff. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our response over this extended period, including of course our CDU team who have been nothing short of incredible! We have completed a debrief and review exercise. It's so important that these learnings are shared nationally (which we will do at a national meeting this month) and of course locally within NHS Grampian via our own governance system.

Finally – whether big wins, or small wins – it shows we can do it. And as we plan for 2026/27, we have much to look forward to, build on and be optimistic about.

More to follow on these priorities for the year ahead on my in my next blog. You can also join future dedicated briefing sessions (open to all staff) on Monday 16 February at 10am or Monday 16 March at 12noon to find out more and have your say. Look out for the joining link in the Daily Brief.

Have a good week everyone and thanks for all you are doing for our patients.

Take care

Laura

Laura Skaife-Knight
Chief Executive