

Monday 6 July 2026

Hi everyone

I hope you have been enjoying and making the most of the better weather we have had recently. Now we are well and truly into the summer months I know many will be looking forward to a break and some down time.

I want to start this month's blog with a brief update on our 2026 iMatter results. These are a further indication of the organisation recovering and improving, and of your engagement with iMatter and the organisation improving. I don't under-estimate how far we have to go or the work we still have to do to meaningfully evidence that we are consistently listening to and acting on your feedback and what matters to you most throughout the year and learning when things don't go to plan. We need to improve our culture (how we do things here), and central to this is making sure you feel confident speaking up when you have concerns, including safety concerns. You need to know they will be acted on and the feedback loop closed. The two iMatter questions relating to 'Speak Up' don't indicate any progress but rather suggest we have stalled a little here. I have asked that 'Speak Up' gets more formally locked into our culture programme so we can re-double our efforts and make the further necessary improvements in this vital area.

Moving on, last month we agreed our de-escalation criteria. Knowing what we need to do to move from Stage 4 to 3 of the NHS Scotland Support and Intervention framework marks an important step forward. We have shaped the criteria as a Board and have engaged extensively with Scottish Government, including via the Assurance Board, in doing so. Our de-escalation criteria give us a clear set of deliverables and a route map out of Stage 4, which is our goal to achieve in 2027. We will share progress updates with you on a regular basis.

Last week was a memorable one. After many years of hard work, Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital achieved Magnet® designation with distinction for care excellence – the highest possible international standard for nursing care. RACH has become the first children's hospital in Europe and the first hospital in Scotland to achieve Magnet designation. I cannot emphasise enough just how significant this achievement is, which puts NHS Grampian on the map for all of the right reasons. Being part of the moment we heard the excellent news about our designation with distinction and seeing just how much this meant to everyone is a moment I will never forget. This is such great news for our patients, local community, and staff - and will no doubt have a positive impact on recruitment and retention too.

Finally, we are now into Quarter 2 of 2026/27. We will be holding our first staff briefing session on Tuesday 28 July, 2-2.30pm, to share how we did in Quarter 1 against the priorities we have set ourselves for the year. We will also be sharing a written update later in the month recognising not everyone can get along to these sessions, to keep you well-informed. The link for the briefing session will be shared via the Daily Brief nearer the time, so keep an eye out for it.

Have a great week everyone.

Laura

Laura Skaife-Knight, Chief Executive