

Chief Exec's Update



Monday 1 June 2026

This week marks the start of June and the final month of quarter 1 of the financial year.

I want to start by updating you on the work we are doing proactively with Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) to further strengthen safety and quality across our services. Recognising the importance of having external and independent support alongside our ongoing internal improvement work, we asked HIS for their support with our organisation-wide clinical governance improvement work. This support will start with a diagnostic review to help us to understand what is working well, where there are risks, and where there are opportunities to improve. Following this review, HIS will produce a report with clear findings and recommended priorities. This will help to inform our next steps and organisation-wide safety and quality and improvement work for NHS Grampian. We will keep you informed as this work progresses.

The iMatter survey is open for another 7 days (it closes on 8 June). As at Friday of last week, we were at a 44% response rate (compared to 47% this time last year) - so if you haven't had your say, please prioritise doing so. If we don't know how you feel about working here, we can't act on your feedback. You will find the link to your iMatter survey in your inbox. If you need any support, please speak to your line manager or contact gram.imatter@nhs.scot. Improving staff experience is part of our People, Leadership and Governance strategic objective. We are committed to doing better when it comes to listening to and acting on your feedback, strengthening health and wellbeing support and addressing violence and aggression against staff which is a growing trend we must start to see reversing through the interventions we are taking.

Since December we have been working with Scottish Government on the criteria to see us being de-escalated from Stage 4 of the NHS Scotland Support and Intervention Framework. We asked for this to be agreed as quickly as possible because we need light at the end of the tunnel and sensible steps to aim for over a defined time period. These are now agreed and is entirely consistent with our 26/27 priorities previously shared with you. This is an evidence-based approach to delivering sustained improvements in the areas which we are already focused on - quality and safety, finance, unscheduled care, planned care included - will be how we are measured. We're taking the de-escalation criteria to our 11 June public board meeting and will share this with you all via the Daily Brief and upcoming staff briefings. This is another important step forward, and one we are absolutely owning.

Whilst we won't ever shy away from talking about our challenges, we must equally remember and talk about the incredible work taking place here every single day, including so many examples of

outstanding patient care. I was absolutely delighted the Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Service achieved Pathway to Excellence® designation on 12 May 2026 which was fittingly International Nurses Day. NHS Grampian is the first health board in Scotland to receive this recognition and the first mental health service in the UK to do so. This is a significant achievement and reflects the strength of leadership, staff engagement and commitment to high-quality, person-centred care across the service. There are so many positives to celebrate and recognise - so let's keep doing so. This is one of many.

Have a great week everyone.

Take care

Laura

Laura Skaife-Knight
Chief Executive