

Monday 2 March 2026

Last Wednesday, I attended the Scottish Parliament Public Audit Committee with our Chair, Alison Evison, and Alex Stephen, our director of finance. We were called to give evidence on behalf of NHS Grampian in response to our Section 22 Audit Report which we learnt about last November.

At the forefront of my mind on the day was that I was representing all 18,000 staff who make up this organisation. In doing so, I wanted to make sure I did all I could to represent your views well, describe our improvements and progress and be nothing other than honest and authentic in doing so. I wanted to share with you an extract from the opening statement I have on behalf of the organisation to the Committee - to give you a feel for my message:

Today we will share evidence of progress.

I am pleased to inform you that for the current financial year, we are confident we will deliver our £62m savings requirement and come in below our maximum overspend target of no more than £45m agreed by the Scottish Government. This will be a significant achievement and is the result of a sustained focus by staff across the organisation and much-strengthened grip and control and financial discipline being consistently applied.

Whilst 2026/27 will be more challenging still, we have well-developed plans to deliver another £40m savings and a maximum deficit position of £36m, and we are forging a path to get back into financial balance by 2029/30.

Central to this is working in a more integrated way with our system partners when it comes to service and financial planning. There is a refreshed commitment to partnership working in the North-East to explore service redesign and transformation opportunities, which is critical to achieving financial sustainability.

Since being escalated to Level 4 of the NHS Scotland Support and Intervention Framework, we have welcomed the external diagnostic review commissioned by the Scottish Government. It informed our Board-approved Improvement Plan which sets out how we are responding to the recommendations from this review.

The Scottish Government-Chaired fortnightly Assurance Board is providing support and scrutiny in equal measure, which I believe is key to driving improvements at the required pace.

In my first 6 months as Chief Executive, I have focused on stabilising the organisation, visible and compassionate leadership and putting people first. Key to this is our new culture programme which focuses on staff health and wellbeing, leadership and equality. Creating a continuous improvement culture and becoming a learning organization is also key.

In conclusion:

We in no way shy away from the challenge we face or under-estimate the distance we still have to travel – however, there are very strong grounds for optimism.

We are on track to deliver our financial and savings plan for the year and we continue to reduce our longest wait patients. The improvements we are making to culture, governance and leadership underpin everything we do.

We are working collaboratively with partners locally, regionally and nationally on our improvements, and are investing in these vital relationships recognising they are key to our success. This includes maximising our engagement and leadership in the new sub national arrangements in the NHS in Scotland which presents further opportunities to improve services and access for our communities, and the people of Scotland.

Most importantly, the dedication of our 18,000 staff give me confidence that NHS Grampian can continue to deliver sustainable improvement, better outcomes and high quality care for the communities we serve.

If you want to read my opening statement in full, it is [available at this link](#).

I was very proud to represent you all last week. It is right and proper I am held to account in this way. Answering the questions made me reflect on the journey we have started together and the journey I look forward to continuing with you all in 2026/27 and beyond, knowing we will only continue to improve care, services and experience for our patients and community.

You can access the recording of the meeting [at the Scottish Parliament website](#).

Have a great week everyone.

Take care

Laura

Laura Skaife-Knight
Chief Executive