

# Chief Exec's Update



Friday 1 May 2026

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Hi All

There's lots to report since my last blog, so I'll share a series of 'headlines'.

Our financial results for 25/26 signal an important step forward. We have gone beyond what we committed to achieving which inspires confidence in the improvement work we are leading.

We delivered a financial outturn of £35m (£8m better than originally forecast) and £64m savings, £48m of which is recurring, which is one of the highest levels in Scotland. This is the first time in three years that our underlying financial position has improved, so we are moving in the right direction. Quality impact assessments continue to be carried out on all schemes to ensure there is no adverse impact on patient care, quality or experience of staff wellbeing and morale.

These results are more than numbers of a balance sheet. They are the product of your hard work, and I want to recognise your willingness to think and work differently to make savings and improvements.

All of this means we go into 26/27 in better shape and with the belief that we can do this with a collective effort and continuing the focus and discipline we have applied over the last year.

Since December we have been discussing with Scottish Government, at our request, the de-escalation criteria for NHS Grampian so we can see light at the end of the tunnel and have a path to move from level 4 to level 3 of the NHS Scotland Support and Intervention Framework. As a Board we are owning this and I'm pleased to report we are close to agreeing our final criteria, to come to our June 2026 Board meeting. Watch this space for more to follow.

I know from our conversations and communications that we have much to do when it comes to consistently listening to and responding to your feedback across the organisation. We are determined to do better. This is a core part of our People, Leadership and Governance priority for 2026/27 so we can improve your experience of working here. The 2026 iMatter survey opens on 18 May, closing 8 June, and we want to hear from as many of you as possible so we get a better understanding of where we are and what more we need to do to respond to your feedback in a meaningful way. We're currently in the confirmation window and I would encourage managers to ensure their team information is accurate.

Creating a culture where you feel safe speaking up with concerns and have confidence they will be taken seriously and acted on is what we aspire to, along with ensuring your concerns lead to learning and improvement that we can evidence. Professor Shantini Paranjothy, our Director of Public Health, is, from this week, our new Executive Lead for Whistleblowing. I look forward to the work we have done on speak up and whistleblowing being built on, recognising how important this is to creating the right culture here and the distance we still have to travel.

Last week was a week of inspections and assessments. This started on Monday morning which was day one of a three-day site visit for the ANCC Magnet Recognition Programme. This was an opportunity for our teams at Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital (RACH) to showcase the excellent work taking place to further improve patient and staff experience. The energy, commitment to improvement, and determination to get us to this stage is hugely impressive. It was our time to shine and we certainly did. The appraiser team were blown away by what they saw and heard, saying so many special things happen at RACH with so many examples of outstanding care being delivered. Well done everyone; I could not be prouder. This was another key moment for us here at NHS Grampian on our improvement journey.

Before I move on to last week's Healthcare Improvement Scotland inspections, I want to stay with nursing and recognise the incredible achievements of NHS Grampian colleagues at the Royal College of Nursing Scotland Nurse of the Year Awards, with NHS Grampian shining very bright, with one winner, two highly commended colleagues and one runner-up. [You can read more here](#) and many congratulations to: Laura Reid, Vicky Burnett, Patricia Dow and Caroline Reid.

We also welcomed Healthcare Improvement Scotland inspection teams to Dr Gray's Hospital on Monday and Tuesday, where they did Safe Delivery of Care inspections in Maternity, Mental Health, and Acute. This was followed by a two-day Safe Delivery of Care inspection in Maternity at the Aberdeen Maternity Hospital on Wednesday and Thursday. Thank you to everyone who supported this; inspections of any kind can be daunting. In their initial verbal feedback, the inspectors shared with us that staff were welcoming with many open conversations taking place and many examples of good practice observed, which we can be proud of. This includes improvements and evidence of culture change at DGH. At AMH many positives were noted including our morning site huddles which are examples of inclusive and MDT working and our baby loss service which is one of many examples of person-centred care the inspectors observed. On both sites the inspectors saw how proud staff are working here. There are inevitably areas we can improve, which is what this process is all about. Following the in-person inspections, evidence requests will follow and then the final reports mark the last stage. These inspections, and the reports produced, should always be seen as an opportunity to improve the care and the experience of our patients and staff, including pan-Grampian opportunities for improvement across DGH and AMH. In summary however, to reinforce at this early stage, there is much good work and great care to recognise and be proud of. We will continue to keep you informed of timescales for next steps in this process.

May is a busy month in healthcare. To our midwives, nurses, and ODPs, I hope you enjoy the days dedicated to you. Hand hygiene, ovarian cancer, skin cancer, stroke, mental health, oral health, and clinical trials are just some of the subjects of awareness days, weeks, or the whole month of May. We also have our annual research conference to look forward to. I know our corporate communications team will do a brilliant job keeping you informed, so keep an eye on the Daily Brief and the NHS Grampian social media accounts throughout the month for more updates on these topics, and more.

Have a great week all.

Laura

**Laura Skaife-Knight**  
**Chief Executive**