

## **Area Clinical Forum Report to Grampian NHS Board Meeting on the 9th of October 2025.**

Board Meeting 09.10.25 Open Session Item 7.1
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### **Purpose of Report**

This report updates the Grampian NHS Board on key issues arising from the Area Clinical Forum (ACF) meeting on 3rd September 2025. .

### **Recommendation**

The Board is asked to be assured that the ACF is fulfilling its role as an advisory committee to the Board and Chief Executive Team.

### **Outgoing Chief Executive.**

The forum would like to formally recognise the retirement of Adam Coldwells as he not only retires as Chief Executive but also as the Executive member of the ACF. Adam has been working with the committee for a considerable number of years, firstly as Deputy Chief Executive and latterly as interim Chief Executive. The relationship between CET and ACF remains very strong, and I am sure that this is due to the guidance and supportive role that Adam played with our committee. We wish him a happy and long retirement.

We look forward to working closely with the new Chief Executive as she takes up her role and hope to continue the close working relationship between ACF and CET.

### **Putting People First (PPF)**

Luan Grugeon updated the committee on the progress of the Putting People First initiative. It was noted that the Community Appointment Days are really proving their value and the rollout of real time feedback loops will hopefully enhance the principles set out in this project.

The embedding of the culture of PPF will be invaluable as we progress forward and links between primary care and the community will be essential to allow for the self-management of certain conditions.

It was also felt that due to the rurality of some of our populations that close working relationships with our Health and Social Care Partnerships was vital and joining up with already established local networks would be beneficial.

Area Clinical Forum welcomed the presentation and agreed the potential for greater involvement by general practice in community engagement initiatives, the need to raise awareness of challenges in rural areas and members will consider which services would benefit from input from this approach.



## **Neurodevelopmental Pathway for Children and Young People**

Tracy Davis presented slides which outlined the planned transformation of neurodevelopmental pathways in Grampian, focusing on service integration, early support and improved outcomes for neurodiverse children and families

It was recognised that there are long waiting lists for assessment with a lack of consistent support and that a new approach to early identification could improve the support to both the child and family.

Whilst recognising the specialism of this service the development of tools to provide primary care staff with information to improve signposting to available resources, including the family link worker, was seen as important. This should also include supporting the staff working with families who often find themselves in challenging situations.

## **Dr Gray's Hospital Orthopaedic Services – Update**

Professor Duff Bruce updated the forum on the reconfiguration of orthopaedic services at Dr Gray's Hospital (DGH) in Elgin, detailing workforce challenges, service integration, patient transfer protocols, outcome monitoring and ongoing governance.

It was recognised that there had been a considerable amount of work in this program and that stabilisation of the service alongside robust governance is being achieved.

ACF will continue to seek assurance regarding the transfer of frail and elderly patients as we move into the winter months and that the neck of femur pathway will stay under close review.

As previously discussed, it would be vital to ensure that any impact on trainees is monitored, and any concerns raised are fed back through established pathways.

## **Financial Recovery/SG Assurance Board – Update**

Dr Coldwells, Mr Stephen and Ms Irvine updated the Area Clinical Forum on NHS Grampian's financial position, the ongoing deficit, savings plans and the role of the SG Assurance Board in monitoring performance and governance.

ACF welcomed the opportunity to share updates in relation to the Assurance Board at the Monday morning meetings with CET and looked forward to wider consultation with the advisory structure



## **Updates from advisory committees.**

Emergent themes related to workforce challenges. This is seen probably most acutely in the Nursing and Midwifery and our Allied Healthcare Practitioners committees, with the implementation of the reduced working week along with recruitment difficulties putting real pressure on services.

In a similar staffing concern our Healthcare Scientists forum indicated that with the retirement of the Mortuary manager at the end of this year there was a perceived risk that recruitment to a new post may be challenging and that strong leadership in the new Mortuary would be essential to ensure operational delivery. The Forum will keep this under close review and report back as required.

Looking forward, it was noted that the Occupational Therapist Centenary Celebration took place in RGU to recognize the first OT in the UK beginning in Aberdeen in 1925.

It was also encouraging to note that all community pharmacy Service Level Agreements for enhanced services have been successfully negotiated and agreed.

The ACF and all the professional advisory committees continue to work closely with the CET, providing clinical inputs in these challenging times. These committees are vital to the organisation and often struggle to find the administrative support to function smoothly. The use of AI in supporting these activities will no doubt be invaluable in the future for compiling agendas and minute writing for the committees. Will we watch this space with interest!

Overall, the general feeling is of an organisation under significant pressure. The ACF will work collaboratively with the multitude of workstreams in place around the Planned and Unscheduled Care programs, inputting when and where required.

Mark Burrell

Chair of Area Clinical Forum.

3 October 2025