

Meeting:	NHS Grampian Board
Meeting date:	10 April 2025
Item Number:	15
Title:	Update to the Standing Financial Instructions and Schedule of Reserved Decisions
Responsible Executive:	Alex Stephen, Finance Director
Report Author:	Julie Anderson, Assistant Director of Finance

1 Purpose and recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- **Assurance** –review and scrutinise the information provided in this paper and confirm that it provides assurance that improvements to the processes are being made and appropriate evidence of these has been provided to the Board's satisfaction.
- **Decision** – approve the revised Schedule of Reserved Decisions and Standing Financial Instructions.
- **Future reporting** – to agree that updates on these documents are reported annually to the Board.

This report relates to:

- Legal requirement
- Local policy

This aligns to the following NHS Scotland quality ambition(s):

- Effective

2 Report summary

2.1 Situation

The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) have scrutinised have reviewed proposed amendment to the NHS Grampian's Standing Financial Instructions (SFI) and Schedule of Reserved Decisions (SORD) and commend them to the Board for approval.

The SFIs and SORD have been updated to ensure that they remain relevant, are useable and support the Board in meeting its strategic objectives under the Plan for the Future and comply with requirements as set out in legislation and issued directives.

2.2 Background

The NHS Grampian Board on 11 April 2024 considered and approved an update to the SFIs and SORD.

The Schedule of Reserved Decisions confirms the arrangements for maintenance and review of these documents. The Board Secretary (SOs, SORD) and Director of Finance (SFIs) are responsible for maintenance of these documents, with the Audit and Risk Committee providing advice to the Board prior to any revisions being approved.

Standing Orders (SOs) regulate the conduct and proceedings of the Board and its Committees. DL(2019)24 was issued on 13 December 2019 instructing Boards to use the new model standing orders template to replace existing standing orders already in place. A modified version of the model template was considered and adopted by the Board of NHS Grampian on 6 August 2020 and no requirement to update, at this time, has been identified.

The Schedule of Reserved Decisions (SORD) is a corporate governance protocol that provides a high level summary of delegated responsibilities within NHS Grampian. The SORD complements the Operational Scheme of Delegation that details all officers within NHS Grampian who have delegated authority according to the standard categories that have been agreed on a NHS Grampian basis. It is intended that the SORD is a key reference document for senior personnel in relation to their delegated duties and delegated authority levels. It also details the decision-making powers of the Board and the responsibilities of committees that report into the Board. The Board Secretary is the officer responsible for the SORD.

The Standing Financial Instructions (SFIs) detail the financial responsibilities, policies and procedures to be adopted by NHS Grampian. They ensure that the Board's financial transactions are carried out in accordance with the law and government policy in order to achieve probity, accuracy, economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The SFIs identify the financial responsibilities that apply to everyone working for NHS Grampian.

2.3 Assessment

A comprehensive review of the SORD and SFIs alongside the Operational Scheme of Delegation (OSD) was undertaken in early 2024.

As part of the update to the SORD in 2024, the Director of Finance was delegated authority to approve minor changes to the SFIs. Those changes approved during 2024 are set out in appendix 2.

A schedule of proposed amendments to the SORD are set out in appendix 1 to this report. Key aspects to note are the recognition of a role of 'Corporate Landlord' in relation to the governance arrangements for organisation of the Board's property assets and the allocation of accommodation, the role delegated to Director of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Support Services, and oversight for associated arrangements sitting with the Asset Management Group (AMG).

Whilst most changes are minor in nature, work during the year has progressed in relation to awareness raising and the development of enhanced control in relation to cash and near cash assets.

2.3.1 Quality/ Patient Care

Clearly defined governance arrangements ensure relevant efficient and effective support arrangements are in place to support patient care.

2.3.2 Workforce

The SORD and SFI set out wide ranging arrangements and policies that will impact of the workforce and also require the workforce to comply with the detailed instructions contained in those documents.

2.3.3 Financial

The SORD and SFI are designed to safeguard and control the efficient use of the Board's resources.

2.3.4 Risk Assessment/Management

Clear and up to date governance documents are a key pillar in supporting effective internal control arrangements.

2.3.5 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities

N/a

2.3.6 Other impacts

N/a

2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

Drafting of revisions to these documents has been informed by relevant specialists.

2.3.8 Route to the Meeting

- Audit and Risk Committee, 11 March 2025

2.4 Recommendation(s)

The Board is asked to:

- **Assurance** –review and scrutinise the information provided in this paper and confirm that it provides assurance that improvements to the processes are being made and appropriate evidence of these has been provided to the Board's satisfaction.
- **Decision** – approve the revised Schedule of Reserved Decisions and Standing Financial Instructions.
- **Future reporting** – to agree that updates on these documents are reported annually to this Board.

3 Appendix/List of appendices

The following appendix/appendices are included with this report:

- Appendix 1 – SORD Change Summary
- Appendix 2 – SFI Key Changes Summary

The following documents are available on request and will be published following approval:

- SORD Consultation Draft
- SFI Consultation Draft