

Area Clinical Forum Report to Grampian NHS Board Meeting on the 11 December 2025.

Purpose of Report

This report updates the Grampian NHS Board on key issues arising from the Area Clinical Forum (ACF) meeting on 5th November 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.

CDU update

The Acute Medical Director and the Director of Infrastructure and Sustainability gave an update on the Central Decontamination Unit difficulties. An incident management team has met on a number of occasions to review the background to the situation and the ongoing remedial works. It was noted that a significant amount of capacity had been achieved through the Woodend service and with mutual aid from other health boards. At the time of discussion capacity in the system was sitting around 60% of normal with the view that this hopefully will increase over the next few weeks.

Of particular concern was the 5th year dental students who would be due to graduate in May 2026. The reduction in sterile equipment has meant cancellation of a number of dental procedures and therefore priority was given to ensure that the dental students would qualify in time, having reached their clinical targets. Prioritisation within the Dental Hospital is now ensuring that this should be completed.

Given the reduction in operating capacity there were concerns raised regarding the planned care targets, but assurance was given that we were still within trajectory and this would be monitored closely.

The Forum welcomed the update and will be happy to input any clinical advice that is required to ensure a smooth return to normal operation.

WorkStream updates

The Forum was updated on the three priority work streams that are progressing with pace within NHS Grampian. These are planned care, unscheduled care and value and sustainability. As noted previously, the CDU difficulties may have ongoing effects on planned care but hopefully the trajectory will stay on target. The

unscheduled care plan has been articulated well on a number of occasions now. As we move into the winter period monitoring of its performance will be essential to ensure the robustness of the plan.

The Interim Director of Improvement gave an update on the Value and Sustainability programme. It was noted that there was a significant improvement in the overall savings and we are close to reaching our target for this year. It was commented that as winter approached, there may be additional pressures within this programme and it was vital to ensure that we stayed focused on our plan as we move forward.

The Forum was very keen to be involved in the advisory aspects of any services which were paused or discontinued and noted that impact assessments are essential. It was felt that the Area Clinical Forum could have an important advisory clinical role within these to consolidate any significant changes.

The Forum welcomed the report from the Executive leads and will be more than willing to give any clinical advice required within the scope of these work streams.

Updates from advisory committees.

Updates were given from all of the advisory structures and the contents of these will be available within the minutes of the meeting. Some notable concerns were raised by our nursing and midwifery colleagues regarding a number of newly graduated nurses who had no identified posts. The vacancy controls were still a concern to the majority of this group.

Of very significant concern to the group was several incidents of violence and aggression towards nursing staff from patients, visitors and relatives. It was noted there were examples of racial and sexual aggression and some of the advice was inconsistent regarding the zero-tolerance policy. Although not discussed at length, this is a very worrying concern, and it was stressed that the zero-tolerance policy should be applied consistently and that adequate time must be given to members of staff for training in dealing with violence and aggression.

During the update from our Healthcare Scientists forum. It was acknowledged and welcomed that the roof repairs with the 4th floor of the Link building had been completed and the staff are now moving back to the Department. The Forum wished to acknowledge the significant upheaval during these works, but hopefully now the environment will be significantly improved for the staff.

The delayed appointment of a Mortuary manager was discussed again. Although this had been articulated previously, there still seemed to be no resolution to this issue. There was likely to be a significant gap once the current post holder retires with the potential for no handover to the new manager. For the service this was seen as a

high-risk strategy. Hopefully progress can be made on this issue in the very near future.

Public Health Report.

The report to the Forum was acknowledged and recognised. It was felt that the linkage between the preventive strategies and our Area Clinical Forum should be strengthened. A meeting has been organised with the Director of Public Health to better understand the role of Area Clinical Forum with our public health colleagues. It was recognised that from a sustainability point of view our preventative agenda has to be strengthened and the Forum is wholeheartedly behind this proposal and looks forward to further interactions with our colleagues and developing strategic views that the advisory structure can assist with.

New Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) – Adult Support and Protection Recording in Health Records

Kenneth O'Brien, Associate Director, Public Protection Give an update on this new standard operating procedure. The Forum welcomed the presentation and asked for the SOP to be sent around members and committees for further review and advisory input.

Overall, the Forum and committees will continue to provide clinical advice in the strategic operations of NHS Grampian. We look forward to hearing on updates on the three priorities of planned care, unscheduled care and value and sustainability. We also welcome the opportunity to speak at NHS Grampian's Annual Review in December 2025. I'm sure that these conversations will highlight the importance of Area Clinical Forum in the recovery plan of NHS Grampian during these times of stage 4 escalation.

Mark Burrell

Chair ACF

17 November 2025