

Meeting:	NHS Grampian Board
Meeting date:	8 October 2026
Item Number:	8.1
Title:	Integration Joint Board Integration Schemes
Responsible Executive:	Drew McGowan, Interim Board Secretary
Report Author:	Lauren Cowie, Legal Services Manager (Governance), Aberdeenshire Council

1 Purpose and recommendations

This is presented to the Board for:

- Decision

Recommendation(s)

The Board is asked to:

- Review and scrutinise the information in this report and confirm that it provides assurance that preparations are under way to implement the legislative changes to Integration Joint Board membership and voting arrangements.
- Note that, from 1 September 2026, voting rights extend to service user, unpaid carer and third sector representatives on Integration Joint Boards.
- Note that these representatives are expected to comply with the same governance standards and Code of Conduct requirements as other Integration Joint Board members.
- Approve the proposed changes to the Aberdeenshire Integration Scheme as set out in this report.

This report relates to:

- Government policy/directive
- Legal requirement
- NHS Board/Integration Joint Board Direction

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

- Effective
- Person Centred

This subject matter of this report is relevant to the mitigation of the following strategic risks

-  Inability to effectively engage citizens to shape service improvement and transformation

2 Report summary

2.1 Situation

The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Integration Joint Boards) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2025 extends voting rights on Integration Joint Boards to service user, unpaid carer and third sector representatives. The change comes into force on 1 September 2026. The Board is asked to note the legislative change, consider the assurance provided on implementation preparations and approve the proposed amendments to the Aberdeenshire Integration Scheme at this time.

2.2 Background

The Amendment Order was laid before the Scottish Parliament in December 2025. It changes the existing membership arrangements by placing representatives with lived experience on an equal voting footing within Integration Joint Board decision-making. Previously, these representatives could participate fully in discussions but did not have voting rights.

The change follows recommendations from the Independent Review of Adult Social Care and wider Scottish Government engagement on strengthening the voice of people who use and support health and social care services. The policy intention is to recognise the insight brought by service users, unpaid carers and third sector representatives, remove the distinction between voting and non-voting participation, and strengthen the contribution of lived experience to health and social care governance and decision-making.

2.3 Assessment

The extension of voting rights is intended to strengthen the contribution of lived experience within decision-making, improve partnership working, support better-informed decisions and increase public confidence in inclusive governance. Service users, unpaid carers and third sector representatives will have an equal vote in decisions affecting services and will participate on the same basis as other voting members.

The legislative change does not alter members' collective responsibility to act in the interests of the Integration Joint Board. Representatives who become voting members will be expected to act in the best interests of the Integration Joint Board, exercise independent judgement, maintain confidentiality where required, declare and manage interests appropriately, and comply with the applicable Code of Conduct and governance framework.

National guidance was published on the 28th August 2026 – available [here](#). NHS Grampian and the respective councils are providing induction, training and governance support to members moving to voting status.

Each Integration Joint Board has considered the implications of the legislative change and is implementing local arrangements to support compliance with the new requirements. A summary of progress is set out below.

Aberdeen City

- Standing Orders have been amended to reflect the legislative change. Voting membership of committees has not yet been amended.
- Enhanced training is to be delivered before the representatives sit as voting members in September 2026. Further discussion is also required with members and the groups they represent about proxy arrangements and future commitment. The position will be reviewed later.
- The Integration Scheme will not be amended solely for the voting change because the change in law prevails. A wider review of the Scheme is intended, including clarification of hosted service arrangements, with any proposed changes to be developed in collaboration with NHS Grampian and Aberdeenshire/Moray Council colleagues and submitted to Scottish Ministers in due course.

Aberdeenshire

- The Integration Joint Board has agreed to recommend proportionate technical changes to the Integration Scheme to NHS Grampian and Aberdeenshire Council.
- Of the five existing non-voting members who could take up voting rights, four representatives from the third sector and unpaid carer sector do not wish to take a voting position at this stage. They will be appointed as non-voting lived experience members while further training and support are provided.
- Short-term vacancies are expected, with the aim of achieving a full complement by Christmas 2026. Outstanding issues include the late publication of Scottish Government guidance, liability questions and the extent of Clinical Negligence and Other Risks Indemnity Scheme protection.
- The Integration Scheme is being updated to reflect the immediate legislative change and will be reviewed more fully alongside any future change. The proposed changes to the Aberdeenshire Integration Scheme are shown in bold below, comprise the entirety of the amendments required at this stage, and relate to Section 3 (Board Governance):

*“3.2 The Council shall nominate five councillors, and NHS Grampian shall nominate five NHS Grampian Health Board members, **and the IJB shall appoint such other voting members as permitted by legislation to be voting members.***

*3.4 The voting membership of the IJB shall be appointed for a term of three years however a member may be reappointed for further three year terms of office. Board members appointed by the Parties will cease to be members of the IJB in the event that they cease to be a Non-Executive Board Member of NHS Grampian Health Board or an Elected Member of the Council. **Other voting members will cease to hold office if they no longer represent the interest or sector for which they were appointed.**”*

- The Governance Handbook has been revised, including Standing Orders, delegations, key officer roles, financial regulations and quorum arrangements. Ongoing member development includes ethical standards training.

Moray

- Stakeholder training for board members who are moving from non-voting to voting positions has been delivered.
- The Members handbook has been updated to reflect the new constitutional arrangement.
- Draft amendments to our Integration Scheme are proposed which will be submitted to Grampian NHS Board and the Moray Council for approval in due course, and to the Integration Board for noting.
- These amendments comply with the Order provisions, with one particular elective provision: for MIJB appointed members to limit them to 1 member from each of the lived experience groups, rather than “at least” one member. This is to ensure voting balance on the board.
- The amended scheme will then be submitted to Scottish Government for approval.

2.3.1 Quality / Patient Care

The change is intended to ensure that direct experience of services contributes equally to decisions affecting care and service delivery. No direct adverse impact on patient care has been identified.

2.3.2 Workforce

Induction, training and governance support will be required for representatives moving to voting status.

2.3.3 Financial

No quantified capital, revenue, efficiency or other financial impact is identified.

2.3.4 Risk Assessment / Management

The principal governance risks are inconsistent implementation, insufficient preparation or support for new voting members, unfilled voting positions, and unresolved questions about liability and indemnity protection. Mitigations include amendments to governance documents, proportionate changes to Integration Schemes, induction and training, continued national guidance work, and further reporting to the relevant boards and councils.

2.3.5 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities

Extending voting rights to service user, unpaid carer and third sector representatives is intended to strengthen the influence of lived experience and support more inclusive decision-making.

2.3.6 Other impacts

Governance documents, committee arrangements and Integration Schemes may require amendment or review. The legal change itself prevails from 1 September 2026, regardless of the timing of local documentation updates.

2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

The legislative change followed wider Scottish Government engagement on strengthening the voice of people who use and support health and social care services. Local discussions and member support arrangements are under way.

2.3.8 Route to the Meeting

Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board considered implementation of the legislation and agreed to recommend proportionate technical changes to the Integration Scheme. These are as set out in Section 2.3 of this report.

2.4 Recommendation(s)

The Board is asked to:

- Review and scrutinise the information in this report and confirm that it provides assurance that preparations are under way to implement the legislative changes to Integration Joint Board membership and voting arrangements.
- Note that, from 1 September 2026, voting rights extend to service user, unpaid carer and third sector representatives on Integration Joint Boards.
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3 Appendix/List of appendices

No appendices are enclosed.