

Grampian Area Partnership Report (GAPF) to NHS Grampian Board

The GAPF is the main Grampian forum for the conduct of employee relations. It has delegated authority from the Executive Team (ET) and the NHS Grampian Board to develop and reach agreements on Grampian-wide employee relations matters subject to approval by the relevant senior management and individual Trade Unions and Professional Organisations involved.

Purpose of Report

This report updates the Grampian NHS Board on key items discussed at the Grampian Area Partnership Forum.

Recommendation

Board Members are asked to note the following items from the Grampian Area Partnership Forum meetings in June and July 2026.

Well Informed (Staff Governance Standard, SGS)

Organisational Priorities

Laura Skaife-Knight, Chief Executive, and colleagues from the Executive Team provide monthly updates on the work being done on the Organisational Priorities – Clinical Quality and Safety; People, Leadership and Governance; Prevention; Planned and Unscheduled Care; Value and Sustainability. This information ensures the Forum is aware of the actions taken against the priorities, as well being able to ask questions and provide constructive challenge. Members welcomed the openness of reporting and highlighted the importance of ensuring strong links between clinical governance, staff governance and wider health and safety arrangements.

Sub-National Planning Arrangement

Laura Skaife-Knight, Chief Executive continues to update GAPF on the work being done within the East Scotland Sub-National Planning and Delivery Committee and the related workstreams. While discussions continue with National Staffside to confirm partnership involvement, GAPF agreed that appropriate support will be given to those colleagues who are employed within the existing North of Scotland Planning structures, during this transition period.

iMatter Results and Staff Engagement

Melanie Saunders, Interim Director of People and Culture reported on the 2026 iMatter organisation-level results, noting increased participation levels and improvements across all Staff Governance questions, including positive movement in staff perceptions of communication and leadership visibility. Members welcomed these early signs of improvement while recognising the need to sustain momentum through local action planning and continuous staff engagement.

GP Walk in Centres Staffing and Workforce

Fiona Mitchellhill, Chief Officer, and Emma King, Primary Care Lead, Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership reported to GAPF on the work done to establish the first of three Grampian GP Walk-in Centres in Aberdeen Health Village, as part of the Scottish Government's one year pilot scheme to improve access to primary care. The centre has seen 230 patients since opening in June, and there are the centre is appropriately staffed at this time. The Forum acknowledged the work that has been done, and asked about the acuity of patients, onward referral to secondary care, and how the activity and staffing will be reviewed before the end of the twelve month pilot period.

Appropriately Trained and Developed (SGS)

Statutory and Mandatory Training and Appraisal

Melanie Saunders, Interim Director of People and Culture presented GAPF with a dashboard of statutory and mandatory training compliance and appraisal completion rates. Members noted overall improvement trends while recognising that some training areas require additional focus. Ongoing work is being undertaken within the People and Culture Directorate to improve performance and support managers to achieve required standards.

Involved in Decisions (SGS)

Non-Pay Elements of the 2023/24 Agenda for Change Pay Award

Steven Lindsay, and Jenny Savage, Deputy Director of People and Culture, updated GAPF on the ongoing work being done by the Agenda for Change Programme Board, sharing progress with the ongoing work on the Reduced Working Week (RWW), Protected Learning Time and the Band 5 Review, beginning with Nursing. Since the work to implement RWW has been completed, subject to the staff survey being launched after the summer holidays, further updates on this work will now be given to GAPF on a quarterly basis.

Staff Facilities and Catering Services

Gavin Payne, General Manager – Facilities and Estates presented an SBAR, which provided the rationale for the planned change of use for the Orange Zone Café in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. The plan would be to close the non-patient catering provision, replacing them with vending machines, and the café becoming a staff rest area. Gavin also described proposals to review the non-patient catering provision within Dr Grays and Royal Cornhill Hospitals, all linked to the financial sustainability of retail operations.

Members of GAPF discussed the proposals, with concerns expressed about the lack of engagement, with the staff who use these facilities and the potential impact on their wellbeing. Staff-side representatives highlighted the importance of maintaining access to suitable catering facilities and hot food options for staff, particularly where service changes may have unintended consequences for staff wellbeing. It was agreed that the proposed changes would be paused to allow full staff engagement and consultation to take place before any decisions were made.

Provided with a continuously improving and safe working environment, promoting the health and wellbeing of staff, patients and the wider community (SGS)

Health & Safety / Prevention & Management of Violence & Aggression (PMVA)

GAPF received a detailed update from Ian Cowe, Head of Health and Safety, covering compliance with workplace inspections, Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) management arrangements, face-fit testing, PMVA training and violence and aggression reduction initiatives. Members welcomed progress made but recognised further improvement remains necessary, particularly in relation to training compliance and consistent reporting within sectors and directorates. The ongoing development of the Behavioural Protocol was noted as an important piece of preventative work to support staff safety.

Steven Lindsay

Employee Director

Co-Chair, NHS Grampian Area Partnership Forum

July 2026