



E: fiona.bennett@gov.scot

Laura Skaife-Knight
NHS Grampian
Summerfield House
2 Eday Road
Aberdeen
AB15 6RE

Board Meeting
13.08/26
Open Session
Item 9.1

Dear Laura,

Thank you to you and your team for the considerable work that has gone into developing the Frailty Expansion and Strengthening of the Emergency Department Consultant Staffing Model proposals, and for confirming Board approval on 9 July 2026.

The proposals present a strong opportunity to improve patient care through an expanded frailty model and greater focus on the front door, helping to improve performance and reduce ED delays. The business case is robust, with clear detail on costs and expected benefits, including performance improvements of up to 15 percentage points. Given the importance of embedding this ahead of winter, it is encouraging that implementation is already progressing at pace.

On funding, we are content to approve the proposals subject to the following conditions:

- No additional funding is required in 2026–27.
- We will underwrite (rather than fund) the risk in 2027–28 and 2028–29 up to £3.4 million. However, all attempts should be made to deliver this within NHS Grampian's existing budget.
- An open-book approach is maintained, ideally through the Assurance Board, with NHS Grampian providing updates on performance, expenditure, any financial gap, options to mitigate it, and any remaining shortfall.
- Evidence is provided that all reasonable options to close any funding gap have been fully explored.

We would also appreciate further detail on the staffing requirements for the frailty model, as the numbers appear relatively high given the proposal involves reconfiguration rather than expansion of bed capacity. In addition, it would be helpful to understand your confidence in recruiting to the required posts and delivering the planned increase in frailty beds by the September target date. Please provide an update by 5 August to allow review ahead of the next Assurance Board meeting on 11 August.

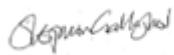


As you note, this is a significant opportunity to improve front-door performance, reduce delays and enhance quality and safety for both patients and staff and we look forward to seeing this work progress over the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely,



Fiona Bennett
Chief Financial Officer Health and Social Care



Stephen Gallagher
Director of Assurance & Improvement