

Meeting:	NHS Grampian Board
Meeting date:	13 August 2026
Item Number:	15
Title:	iMatter Report 2026: Analysis and Recommendations
Responsible Executive:	Melanie Saunders, Interim Director of People and Culture
Report Author:	Melanie Saunders, Interim Director of People and Culture

1 Purpose and recommendations

This is presented to the Board for:

- Assurance
- Decision
- Endorsement

Recommendation(s)

- Note the positive recovery in response rate, Employee Engagement Index (EEI), overall experience and all five Staff Governance Standards in 2026.
- Recognise that team and line manager experience remains a consistent strength
- Agree that organisation-level experience remains a primary improvement priority, particularly staff involvement in organisational decisions, confidence in Senior Leaders, organisational performance management and perceived organisational care for wellbeing.
- Support a strengthened governance and reporting approach for iMatter action planning, including visible feedback loops that demonstrate action taken in response to staff feedback.
- Support further directorate-level analysis and targeted engagement, including a focused pulse survey to deepen understanding of key organisational themes.

This report relates to:

- NHS Grampian Strategy: Plan for the Future – People
- Board Annual Delivery Plan – specify which deliverable
- Emerging issue
- Local policy

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

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

This subject matter of this report is relevant to the mitigation of the following strategic risks (further information provided in the Risk section below:

- Deteriorating Workforce Engagement

2 Report summary

2.1 Situation

The 2026 iMatter results show a positive recovery from the 2025 position, including improved participation, a one-point increase in the Employee Engagement Index (EEI), modest improvement in overall experience, and improvement across all five Staff Governance Standards. The Board is asked to consider the results, agree the priority areas for further action and endorse the proposed approach to governance, reporting and targeted engagement.

2.2 Background

All NHS Scotland Boards have been required since 2018 to use iMatter, the annual NHS Scotland Staff Experience Improvement Model, to measure and discuss staff experience and support improvement action planning at team and organisational level. For NHS Grampian, iMatter provides a longitudinal evidence base of staff experience, including local authority colleagues within the three Health and Social Care Partnerships, and contributes to Staff Governance reporting.

The 2026 results should be viewed in the context of the 2025 position, when NHS Grampian saw a decline in several organisation-level indicators but improvement in action planning completion. The 2026 results indicate early recovery across a number of measures, while confirming that sustained action is still required.

2.3 Assessment

Key performance indicators

Measure	2019	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
EEI	77	76	76	78	77	76	77
Response rate (%)	62	57	57	62	60	59	62
Action planning (%)	52	37	41	46	45	58	TBC

Participation improved in 2026, with the response rate returning to 62% and respondents increasing by 404 compared with 2025. The EEI increased from 76 to 77 and overall experience increased from 6.9 to 7.0, indicating stabilisation and early recovery rather than full return to the strongest recent position.

Staff Governance Standards

Staff Governance Standard	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Change
Well Informed	79	80	79	79	82	+3
Appropriately Trained & Developed	76	77	77	77	78	+1
Involved in Decisions	72	73	72	71	72	+1
Treated Fairly & Consistently, with Dignity & Respect, in an	78	79	79	78	79	+1

Environment where Diversity is Valued						
Provided with a Continuously Improving & Safe Working Environment, Promoting Health & Wellbeing	78	79	78	77	78	+1

All five Staff Governance Standards improved in 2026. Well Informed was the strongest movement, increasing by three points to 82. Involved in Decisions remains the lowest scoring Staff Governance Standard at 72, despite a one-point improvement from 2025. Team and direct line manager experience remains a clear strength, with highest scoring questions continuing to relate to role clarity, approachable line management, confidence and trust in direct line managers, dignity and respect, and positive team experience.

Organisation-level experience remains the main improvement area. Although all organisation-level questions improved in 2026 compared with 2025, a number remain below their 2023 positions. Particular areas for focus are staff involvement in organisational decisions, confidence in Board members and Senior Leaders, performance management within the organisation and perceived organisational care for wellbeing.

The senior leadership/Board visibility question changed in 2026 from a focus on Board member visibility to senior leader accessibility. The +12 point movement should therefore be interpreted with caution and should not be treated as a directly comparable year-on-year improvement.

Organisation-level questions

Organisation-level question	2023	2024	2025	2026	Change
I understand how my role contributes to the goals of my organisation	83	83	82	83	+1
I feel my organisation cares about my health and wellbeing	74	73	70	71	+1
Senior leaders/Board members sufficiently accessible/visible*	59	56	55	67	+12*
I have confidence and trust in Board members who are responsible for my organisation	64	61	58	62	+4
I feel sufficiently involved in decisions relating to my organisation	59	56	54	58	+4
I am confident performance is managed well within my organisation	65	63	60	63	+3
I get the help and support I need from other teams and services within the organisation to do my job	73	72	71	72	+1
I would recommend my organisation as a good place to work	77	75	73	75	+2
I would be happy for a friend or relative to access services within my organisation	79	77	75	77	+2

The two iMatter questions relating to speaking up and raising concerns provide an important indicator of psychological safety within NHS Grampian.

In 2026, 79% of staff reported that they feel confident they can safely raise concerns about issues in their workplace, unchanged from 2025. Confidence that concerns will be followed up and responded to is lower at 73%, representing a one-point decrease from 2025.

These results suggest that while most staff feel able to raise concerns, there is less confidence that concerns will consistently be responded to or lead to action. This distinction is important, as a positive speaking up culture depends not only on staff feeling safe to raise issues, but also on visible and timely follow-up.

The scores for both questions are above the overall organisation-level measures and align with the generally strong team and line manager experience. However, the slight decline in perceived follow-up indicates an opportunity to strengthen feedback loops and reinforce confidence that concerns raised by staff are taken seriously and acted upon.

Further consideration should be given to how NHS Grampian demonstrates responsiveness to concerns, including clear communication of actions taken and learning from issues raised. During 2026/27 this will include:

- optimising the governance and management of whistleblowing cases through the whistleblowing governance group
- ensuring action is taken to implement learning from investigations
- developing and supporting the network of speak up ambassadors, ensuring they have visibility across the organisation and are linked into organisational culture activities to support with creating open and safe environments where staff feel they can raise concerns
- programme of activities to raise awareness of whistleblowing, the role of speak up ambassadors and training for managers

2.3.1 Quality / Patient Care

There is no direct change to patient care arising from this report. However, staff experience, psychological safety, engagement and confidence in organisational systems are important enablers of safe, effective and person-centred care. The planned focus on listening, feedback closure and organisational confidence supports the conditions for high-quality care delivery.

2.3.2 Workforce

The workforce impact is significant. Improved participation and EEI are positive indicators, and strong team and line manager experience should be recognised. The lowest scoring areas relate to organisational experience and therefore require sustained attention through leadership visibility, involvement in decisions, action planning quality and directorate-level ownership. NHS Grampian has set an ambitious target of 70% completion of action plans by 17 August 2026.

2.3.3 Financial

No specific additional financial decision is sought through this report. Any financial requirements arising from targeted support, engagement activity or survey/pulse survey activity will require to be managed through existing governance and resource routes.

2.3.4 Risk Assessment / Management

This report is relevant to the strategic risk of Deteriorating Workforce Engagement. The 2026 results show improvement, but organisation-level indicators remain below the strongest recent position and therefore require continued mitigation. Proposed mitigations include strengthened governance through the Culture Programme Board, Chief Executive Team and Staff Governance Committee; regular reporting on action planning completion, quality and impact; directorate-level analysis; visible “you said, we did, we are doing” communications; and targeted support for low-scoring teams or areas of deterioration.

2.3.5 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities

The report supports the Public Sector Equality Duty and Staff Governance responsibilities by using staff experience data to identify areas requiring attention, including staff involvement, dignity and respect, wellbeing and confidence in raising concerns. An impact assessment has not been completed because this paper presents analysis and proposed governance/action planning activity; equality considerations should be built into directorate-level analysis and any targeted interventions that follow.

2.3.6 Other impacts

There are no other material impacts identified at this stage. Further directorate-level analysis may identify specific operational or local improvement implications.

2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

The proposed approach emphasises visible feedback closure through consistent “you said, we did, we are doing” communications, directorate-level prioritisation and ongoing use of existing communication routes, leadership forums, town halls and staff briefings. Further targeted engagement, including pulse survey activity, is proposed to deepen understanding of organisational themes and inform action.

2.3.8 Route to the Meeting

- Chief Executive Team

2.4 Recommendation(s)

The Board is asked to:

- **Assurance** - Note the positive recovery in response rate, Employee Engagement Index (EEI), overall experience and all five Staff Governance Standards in 2026 and recognise that team and line manager experience remains a consistent strength
- **Decision** - Agree that organisation-level experience remains a primary improvement priority, particularly staff involvement in organisational decisions, confidence in Senior Leaders, organisational performance management and perceived organisational care for wellbeing.
- **Endorsement** - Support a strengthened governance and reporting approach for iMatter action planning, including visible feedback loops that demonstrate action taken in response to staff feedback and support further directorate-level analysis and targeted engagement, including a focused pulse survey to deepen understanding of key organisational themes.

3 Appendix/List of appendices

The following appendix/appendices are included with this report:

- Appendix 1 – NHS Grampian iMatter Report 2026
- Appendix 2 – NHSG iMatter Components Report 2026
- Appendix 3 – All NHS Grampian iMatter Questions

Appendix 1: NHS Grampian iMatter Report 2026

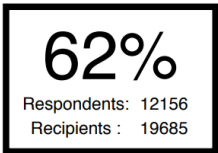


Board Report 2026

NHS Grampian

Total number of respondents: 12156

Response rate

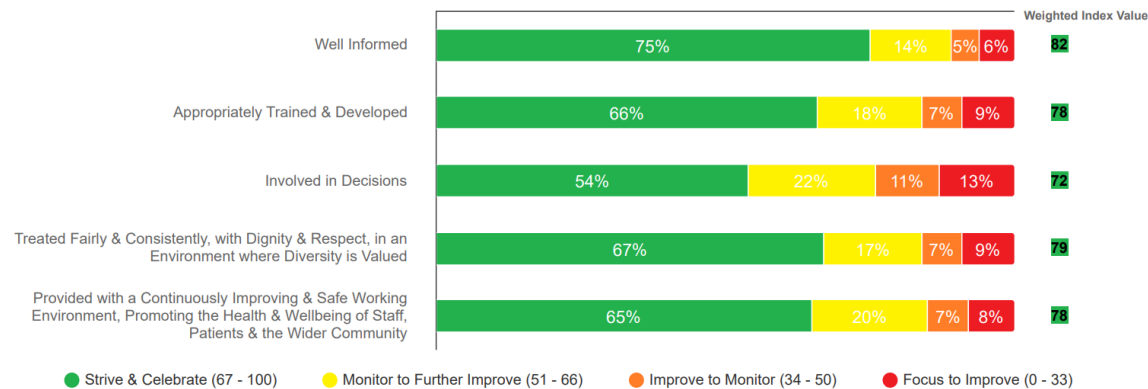


EEI



Employee Engagement Index

Staff Governance Standards - Strand Score Index



question
overall number of responses to the
then added together and divided by the
value (e.g. 1) (see right). These scores are
divided by the number of responses
on the scale (2) (e.g. 1) (see right)
The number of responses for each point
Calculating the Average Score

1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral / Disagree
4	Neutral / Agree
5	Agree
6	Strongly Agree

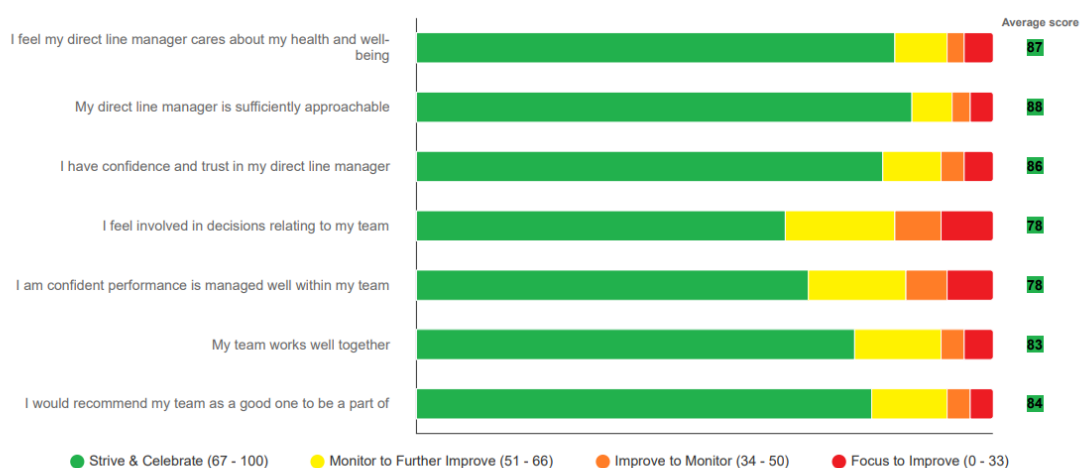
Thinking of your experience in the last 12 months please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Number of respondents: 12156



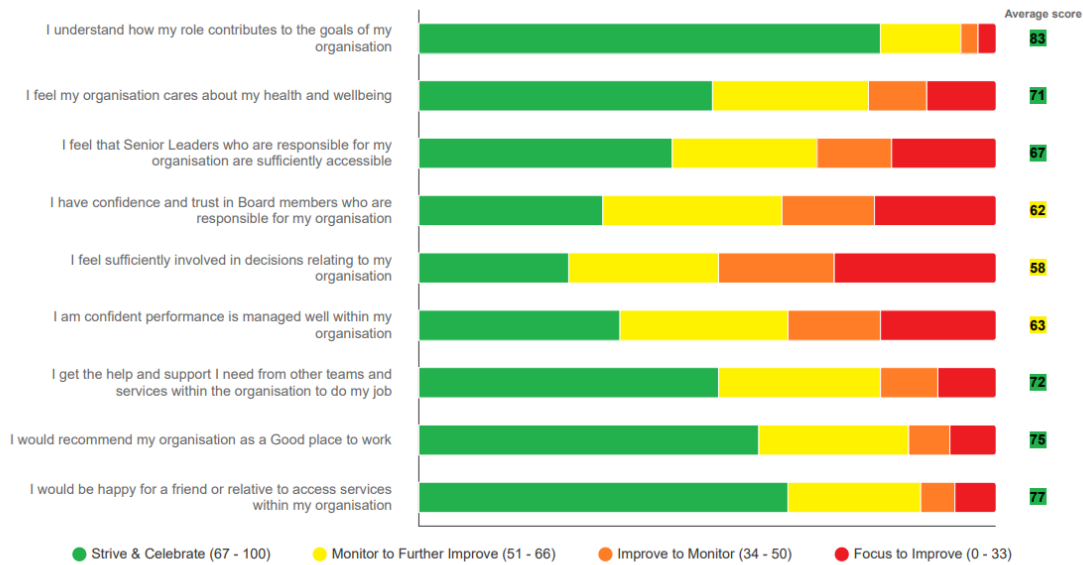
Thinking of your experience in the last 12 months please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to your team and direct line manager:

Number of respondents: 12156



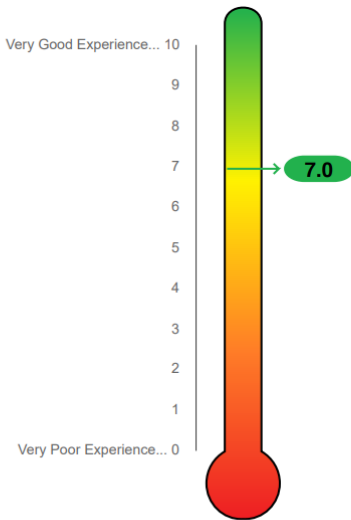
Thinking of your experience in the last 12 months please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to your Organisation:

Number of respondents: 12156



Please tell us how you feel about your overall experience of working for your organisation from a scale of 0 to 10 (where 0 = very poor and 10 = very good):

Number of respondents: 12156



Appendix 2: NHSG iMatter Components Report 2026

Board Yearly Components Report

NHS Grampian

Total number of respondents: 12156

iMatter Components						
iMatter Questions	Staff Experience Employee Engagement Components	Average Response				
		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
I am clear about my duties and responsibilities	Role Clarity	87	85	88	88	88
My direct line manager is sufficiently approachable	Visible and consistent leadership	87	88	88	88	88
I feel my direct line manager cares about my health and well-being	Assessing risk and monitoring work stress and workload	85	86	86	86	86
I have confidence and trust in my direct line manager	Confidence and trust in management	85	86	85	86	86
I am treated with dignity and respect as an individual	Valued as an individual	84	86	85	85	85
I would recommend my team as a good one to be a part of	Additional Question	84	85	85	84	84
I get the information I need to do my job well	Clear, appropriate and timeously communication	81	82	82	82	83
I am treated fairly and consistently	Consistent application of employment policies and procedures	83	84	83	83	83
My team works well together	Effective team working	83	83	83	83	83
My work gives me a sense of achievement	Job satisfaction	81	83	82	82	83
I understand how my role contributes to the goals of my organisation	Sense of vision, purpose and values	82	83	83	82	83
I have sufficient support to do my job well	Access to time and resources	79	81	81	81	81
I feel involved in decisions relating to my team	Empowered to influence	77	78	78	77	78
I am confident performance is managed well within my team	Performance management	78	79	79	78	78
I would be happy for a friend or relative to access services within my organisation	Additional Question	78	79	77	75	77
I am confident my ideas and suggestions are listened to	Listened to and acted upon	76	78	77	77	77
I get enough helpful feedback on how well I do my work	Performance development and review	75	76	77	76	77
I feel appreciated for the work I do	Recognition and reward	76	78	77	77	77
I would recommend my organisation as a Good place to work	Additional Question	75	77	75	73	75
I am given the time and resources to support my learning growth	Learning & growth	73	75	75	75	75
I am confident my ideas and suggestion are acted upon	Listened to and acted upon	73	74	74	73	74
I feel involved in decisions relating to my job	Empowered to influence	73	74	74	73	73
I get the help and support I need from other teams and services within the organisation to do my job	Appropriate behaviours and supportive relationships	71	73	72	71	72
I feel my organisation cares about my health and wellbeing	Health and wellbeing support	73	74	73	70	71
I feel that Senior Leaders who are responsible for my organisation are sufficiently accessible	Visible and consistent leadership	57	59	56	55	67
I am confident performance is managed well within my organisation	Performance management	64	65	63	60	63
I have confidence and trust in Board members who are responsible for my organisation	Confidence and trust in management	62	64	61	58	62
I feel sufficiently involved in decisions relating to my organisation	Partnership working	57	59	56	54	58

Appendix 3: All NHS Grampian iMatter Questions

iMatter Question	2023	2024	2025	2026	Year on Year Movement	NHS Scotland 2025
My Experience as an Individual						
1. I am clear about my duties and responsibilities	88	88	88	88	0	88
2. I get the information I need to do my job well	82	82	82	83	+1	82
3. I am given the time and resources to support my learning growth	75	75	75	75	0	75
4. I have sufficient support to do my job well	81	81	81	81	0	80
5. I am confident my ideas and suggestions are listened to	78	77	77	77	0	77
6. I am confident my ideas and suggestion are acted upon	74	74	73	74	+1	73
7. I feel involved in decisions relating to my job	74	74	73	73	0	72
8. I am treated with dignity and respect as an individual	86	85	85	85	0	85
9. I am treated fairly and consistently	84	83	83	83	0	83
10. I get enough helpful feedback on how well I do my work	76	77	76	77	+1	76
11. I feel appreciated for the work I do	78	77	77	77	0	76
12. My work gives me a sense of achievement	83	82	82	83	+1	82
My Team/My Line Manager						
13. I feel my direct line manager cares about my health and well-being	86	86	86	87	+1	87
14. My direct line manager is sufficiently approachable	88	88	88	88	0	89
15. I have confidence and trust in my direct line manager	86	85	86	86	0	86
16. I feel involved in decisions relating to my team	78	78	77	78	+1	77
17. I am confident performance is managed well within my team	78	78	77	78	+1	79

iMatter Question	2023	2024	2025	2026	Year on Year Movement	NHS Scotland 2025
18. My team works well together	83	83	83	83	0	83
19. I would recommend my team as a good one to be a part of	85	85	84	84	0	85
My Organisation						
20. I understand how my role contributes to the goals of my organisation	83	83	82	83	+1	83
21. I feel my organisation cares about my health and wellbeing	74	73	70	71	+1	71
22. I feel that senior leaders who are responsible for my organisation are sufficiently accessible	59	56	55	67	+12 *	56
23. I have confidence and trust in Board members who are responsible for my organisation	64	61	58	62	+4	60
24. I feel sufficiently involved in decisions relating to my organisation	59	56	54	58	+4	55
25. I am confident performance is managed well within my organisation	65	63	60	63	+3	62
26. I get the help and support I need from other teams and services within the organisation to do my job	73	72	71	72	+1	71
27. I would recommend my organisation as a good place to work	77	75	73	75	+2	75
28. I would be happy for a friend or relative to access services within my organisation	79	77	75	77	+2	77
Raising Concerns						
29. I am confident that I can safely raise concerns about issues in my workplace	80	79	79	79	0	79
30. I am confident that my concerns will be followed up and responded to	75	74	73	73	0	73

*Important interpretation note: the senior leadership/Board visibility question changed in 2026 from a focus on Board member visibility to senior leader accessibility. The +12 point movement should therefore be interpreted with caution and should not be treated as a directly comparable year-on-year improvement.