

Meeting:	NHS Grampian Board
Meeting date:	13 August 2026
Item Number:	16
Title:	NHS Grampian Whistleblowing Annual Report 2025-2026
Responsible Executive/Non-Executive:	Shantini Paranjothy, Director of Public Health Albert Donald, Whistleblowing Champion and Non-Executive Board member
Report Author:	Cover paper and Annual Report – Louise Ballantyne, Head of Engagement

1 Purpose and recommendations

This is presented to the Committee for:

- Assurance

Recommendation(s)

The Board is asked to:

- Assurance –review and scrutinise the information provided in this paper and confirm that it provides assurance that the National Whistleblowing Standards are being met.
- Future reporting – receive and review next year's Annual Whistleblowing Report.

This report relates to a:

- Government policy/directive

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

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

2.1 Situation

NHS Grampian implemented the new national Whistleblowing Standards in April 2021. This is the fifth annual report that will be presented to the Board, which is set out as a requirement in the new Standards.

2.2 Background

This paper presents the NHS Grampian Annual Whistleblowing Report for 2025–2026, which provides an overview of all concerns raised under the National Whistleblowing Standards during the reporting period. The Standards are designed to encourage staff to raise concerns in the public interest, ensure they are supported confidentially, and enable organisations to learn and improve from issues that may not otherwise be identified.

The report outlines performance against nationally required key performance indicators, including learning and improvement arising from concerns, the experience of those involved in the process, and levels of staff awareness and training. It also provides assurance on governance arrangements, including oversight by the Staff Governance Committee and NHS Grampian Board.

2.3 Assessment

The report evidences how NHS Grampian continues to support a speak-up culture, with arrangements in place to enable staff and others working alongside NHS Grampian to raise concerns and receive appropriate support.

Learning from whistleblowing cases is being used to inform improvements to processes, governance, and organisational culture, with strengthened oversight through the Whistleblowing Governance Group.

While the number of concerns meeting the whistleblowing criteria in 2025–2026 was low, the report highlights ongoing challenges in the timeliness of investigation processes and variability in staff training uptake. Actions are underway to address these issues, including improving processes, enhancing governance, and increasing capacity and training to support more effective and timely handling of concerns.

Specifically this will include:

- Optimising the governance and management of whistleblowing cases through the whistleblowing governance group. The terms of reference for the Whistleblowing Governance Group has been refreshed to optimise governance and management of cases, as well as ensuring action plans are implemented and learning is shared across the system.
- 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

2.3.7 Route to the Meeting

The 2025/26 Whistleblowing Annual Report has been presented to the Staff Governance Committee for their consideration and is now being presented to the NHS Grampian Board for consideration.

2.4 Recommendation

The Board is asked to:

- Assurance –review and scrutinise the information provided in this paper and confirm that it provides assurance that the National Whistleblowing Standards are being met.
- Future reporting – receive and review next year’s Annual Whistleblowing Report.

3 List of appendices

Appendix 1 – NHS Grampian Whistleblowing Annual Report 2025-2026