

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 Chief Executive Team (CET) 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 some of the items discussed at the Grampian Area Partnership Forum.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to note the following items from the Grampian Area Partnership Forum meetings in November and December 2025.

Well Informed (Staff Governance Standard, SGS)

Plan for Sustainability and Performance Improvement

Laura Skaife Knight, Chief Executive, provided updates on the work being done on the three highest priorities for NHS Grampian – Value and Sustainability, Unscheduled Care and Planned Care. The Programme Boards for these were now in place with an additional one for Culture being established for the work related to Culture, Leadership and Governance as part of the organisational response to being at Level 4 of the Scottish Government's Escalation Framework. The Culture Programme Board will oversee improvements across the organisation under the 3 pillars fundamental to management: Leadership & Management Development, Wellbeing/Value and Recognition, and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion.

Subnational Arrangements

Laura Skaife Knight, Chief Executive, provided updates on the initial work being done following the parliamentary announcement of new Subnational Arrangements for NHS Scotland, moving from the current Regional Model for North, East and West, replacing them with new Planning and Delivery structures for East and West, being hosted by the Board Chairs and Chief Executives of NHS Lothian and Greater Glasgow and Clyde respectively. GAPF noted these developments, expressing some concern about the potential impact on NHS Grampian due to moving away from the North Region which has worked well over the past few years. National staffside organisations also expressed concern and frustration about the lack of engagement on these plans either before or soon after they were announced. It is hoped that appropriate engagement in line with the Staff Governance Standard will take place at national and local levels to resolve these concerns.

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

Joint Meetings following Staffside Concerns

Laura and Steven updated GAPF on the outputs from the joint meetings of GAPF with colleagues from the Area Clinical Forum in response to the staffside concerns which had been raised with Assurance Board. The consensus reached after the joint meetings was the issues to focus on in the next few months would staff facilities, including changing spaces, and mental health training for reps to better support colleagues who are in distress. GAPF colleagues were in agreement with the priorities but acknowledged the importance of tangible actions being taken.

Involved in Decisions (SGS)

Donations and Fundraising Policy

Lisa Duthie, Charity Lead, NHS Grampian Charity presented this policy to GAPF following the completion of the policy review process, to bring together clear guidance on the subject. GAPF approved the policy and thanked the policy review group for their work.

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

Philip Shipman, Interim Director of People and Culture, and colleagues continue to provide monthly updates to 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, Protected Learning Time and the Band 5 Review, beginning with Nursing. Most of the work has focussed on the further reduction in the working week, due to start in April 2026, with submitted plans being checked by a scrutiny panel to ensure appropriate governance, as well as to recommend which rosters may benefit from backfill funding to maintain service delivery, despite the reduction in working hours. GAPF were pleased with the work done across the organization, resulting in submitted plans for over 90% of rosters at or close to the deadline.

Steven Lindsay

Employee Director

Co-Chair, NHS Grampian Area Partnership Forum

January 2026