

Meeting:	NHS Grampian Open Board Meeting
Meeting date:	19 February 2026
Item Number:	8.2
Title:	Operational Improvement Plan (OIP) Update Report Quarter 3
Responsible Executive:	Alex Stephen, Director of Finance
Report Author:	Preston Gan, Head of Performance

1 Purpose and recommendations

This is presented to the Board for:

- Assurance
- Decision
- Endorsement

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

Note

- The refinements made to the OIP response template for Quarter 3 (Q3), developed in response to Chief Executive Team (CET) and Board feedback, and the separate streamlining of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 overview into a single-page summary to support clearer interpretation of progress.

Endorse

- Endorse Quarter 3 organisational performance position, noting continued progress across the Organisational Improvement Plan, alongside the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) measures included separately in the Q3 How Are We Doing Report.

Assurance

- Take assurance from the strengthening visibility of contributions across the OIP through improvements in reporting
- The actions underway to progress implementation across the four Critical Areas

This report relates to:

- Operational Improvement Plan (OIP)
- How Are We Doing (HAWD) Report

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)

- Inability to meet population demand for Planned Care
- Significant delays in the delivery of Unscheduled Care
- Inability to affectively maintain and invest in NHS Grampian's infrastructure
- Deviation from recognised service standards of practice and delivery
- Inability to achieve the aspirations set out in Plan for the Future due to financial resource constraints and inefficiencies
- Inability to reduce demand through citizen engagement
- Insufficient change and innovation to create a system which can meet demand and deliver on our strategic intent
- Deteriorating Workforce Engagement
- Worsening health in Grampian particularly in those who experience multiple disadvantages

2 Report summary

2.1 Situation

This paper provides a Quarter 3 update on NHS Grampian's progress against the four critical areas within the Operational Improvement Plan (OIP). The report focuses on the operational priorities not covered within the How Are We Doing (HAWD) Report, including areas such as CAMHS, Psychological Therapies, and GP Access.

Across Q3, several Deliverables are reporting delays. Common themes include factors such as slippage in national initiatives managed centrally and issues with external suppliers. Additionally, pressures within Primary Care, alongside wider system capacity and funding constraints, continue to influence the pace of delivery. Workforce capacity, recruitment challenges (availability and time to hire), and national or Scottish Government-related dependencies remain key risks across multiple focus areas.

In response to feedback from CET and the Board following the Q2 cycle, further refinements have been made to the report format for Q3. The response template now prompts clearer articulation of quarterly actions and impact, next steps, and associated risks and mitigations, enabling a more accessible performance narrative. The Tier 1 and Tier 2 overview has also been consolidated into a single page to support a quicker and more coherent interpretation of overall progress.

2.2 Background

The Operational Improvement Plan (OIP), published in March 2025, outlines a national programme of reform to strengthen long-term sustainability, reduce health inequalities, harness the benefits of digital innovation, and improve population health outcomes in Scotland. The OIP is scheduled for delivery over 12–18 months, commencing in Quarter 1 of 2025/26, and is supported by additional investment through the 2025–26 Scottish Budget.

To support clearer and more focused scrutiny, reporting on progress against the OIP and the Three Change Programmes is now provided through separate stand-alone updates. This approach, introduced in Q2 and continued for Q3, replaces the previously amalgamated How Are We Doing (HAWD) Report. Recognising that some priorities

overlap between the OIP and the Change Programmes, specifically KPI performance within the Unscheduled Care and Planned Care programmes, these areas continue to be reported through HAWD. The OIP Report therefore focuses on the remaining Critical and Focus Areas to avoid duplication and to provide a complementary performance update.

The format of the OIP Report is underpinned by the Integrated Performance Assurance Reporting Framework, which promotes an iterative, continuous improvement approach to the presentation of performance information. The structure of the report has therefore evolved across quarters to improve clarity, alignment and assurance for Board members.

2.3 Assessment

This report provides an update on NHS Grampian's progress against the four critical areas of the Operational Improvement Plan (OIP):

- Improving access to treatment
- Shifting the balance of care
- Improving access to health and social care services through digital and technological innovation
- Prevention – ensuring we work with people to prevent illness and more proactively meet their needs

Latest progress continues to be reported through narrative submissions from operational teams.

Prognosis for the completion of Deliverables by March 2026 remains broadly consistent with Q2. Of the 15 Deliverables, one has already been completed and a further 10 are expected to be delivered by year end. Of the remaining four, three anticipate a Minor Delay, while one — within the Prevention area — has shifted from Complete to Significant Delay.

KPI measures have shown more variation this quarter, with some improvement observed in Shifting the Balance of Care, but a decline in performance within Improving Access to Treatment. As these KPIs are covered in detail within the Unscheduled Care and Planned Care Change Programmes, the full analysis is presented separately in the Q3 How Are We Doing Report.

2.3.1 Quality / Patient Care

This report includes information on elements required to achieve high quality, patient focused care, including waiting times, patient flow, diagnosis, finance, and workforce.

2.3.2 Workforce

This report includes performance elements indirectly relating to workforce.

2.3.3 Financial

Financial issues that may impact on the likelihood of delivery of the SG outcomes is detailed where applicable in the individual topic areas.

2.3.4 Risk Assessment / Management

Delivery of the Operational Improvement Plan (OIP) continues to be influenced by a small number of cross-cutting risks which are consistent with the themes reported throughout the year. These include:

- Capacity and workforce pressures, particularly within specialist services and Primary Care.
- Dependence on national programmes, policy decisions, or system releases, which affect the timing of several Deliverables.
- Digital and information-governance requirements, which must be met before new pathways and tools can be implemented.
- Supplier, technical or infrastructure dependencies, particularly for digital programmes and national technology roll-outs.

Operational teams have set out specific mitigations for each Focus Area within the main OIP report. Board members are encouraged to review these in detail to gain full assurance on the actions underway and the expected impact on delivery timelines.

2.3.5 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities

Equality and diversity factors are being included in this report.

2.3.6 Other impacts

All are outlined above and in attached report.

2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

All Programme Leads, System Leaders, Exec Leads for the Change Programmes are jointly involved in the design, development and agreement of Outcomes, KPIs, Deliverables and Outputs of the Three Change Programmes and the OIP.

Executive Leads, Chairs/Vice Chairs and Committee Members of the Board and Assurance Committees were involved in the consultation, review and agreement on the NHS Grampian Integrated Performance Assurance and Reporting Framework and Performance Model, enabling the production of the How Are We Doing and OIP Board Performance Reports.

Chief Executive, Chair and Committee Members approval of revised formatting of update template to provide improved assurance at last PAFIC meeting 26th November 2025.

Involvement of System Leaders, Executive Leads, and Chief Officers on providing updates to the OIP.

2.4 Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

Note

The refinements made to the OIP response template for Q3, developed in response to CET, PAFIC and Board feedback, and the separate streamlining of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 overview into a single-page summary to support clearer interpretation of progress.

Endorse

Endorse the Quarter 3 organisational performance position, recognising the progress made across the four Critical Areas of the Operational Improvement Plan.

Assurance

Take assurance that appropriate actions, risks and mitigations have been identified across the four Critical Areas of the OIP, and consider whether the level of assurance provided is sufficient in relation to the delivery expectations set by the Scottish Government.

Appendix

The following appendix is included with this report:

Appendix 1 – Operational Improvement Plan Update Report February 2026.