

Chief Executive's Report
12 September 2024 Board Meeting
Dr Adam Coldwells, Interim Chief Executive



Purpose of this report

This report updates Board members on priority issues since the last Board meeting which are not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Performance reporting (ease of understanding/accessibility)

I would like to acknowledge the work that has been undertaken by our performance monitoring team since our last Board meeting to make the *How Are We Doing Report* more accessible. The format of this report continues to evolve as we refine its content, all with the intent of being as clear and transparent as possible about our in-year performance and progression. As a result, it now provides clearer alignment between our current performance and the deliverables set out in both our Annual Delivery Plan and the Plan for the Future Strategy as part of a robust assurance process.

Finance

As the finance update being received today shows, the landscape in which we are providing care remains extremely challenging. As I have previously reported, the Centre for Sustainable Delivery found NHS Grampian to be one of the most efficient unscheduled care systems in mainland Scotland. However, we also have the lowest bed base of the Health Boards and therefore feel the effect of issues that impact on patient flow more acutely.

Finding efficiencies and meeting savings targets in such a finely balanced system is not easy and, whilst we have a number of value and sustainability work streams underway that are focussed on delivering in-year savings in key areas, we need to go further.

We are working closely with the Scottish Government on a range of workforce and service optimisation innovations, as well as benefiting from the insights provided by external auditors as they seek to identify opportunities for further savings.

For NHS Grampian, which has a proven track record for financial rigour, not being able to set a balanced revenue budget is incredibly frustrating and will require some challenging decisions to be made over the months ahead. However, we remain committed to making these whilst balancing our financial position with our responsibilities to patients and staff whilst working towards the prevention of illness.

Capacity & Flow

With finite capacity and the known impacts of poor flow on our system, we have undertaken work to improve our bed base and address delayed discharges. The Bed Base Project Gateway paper on today's agenda details the success this particular

project has achieved to date, so here I will take the opportunity to share more information on delayed discharges.

Discharging patients from hospital in a timely manner significantly contributes to the efficient flow and delivery of care in our hospitals. Not only does it benefit the patient, who would prefer to convalesce in their own home, but it frees that bed up for the next person – and so on. However, challenges in community care, increasing clinical complexity and public expectation are among the factors adding to the considerable system pressure and resulting in people spending longer in hospital than they need to.

It is in this context that a cross-system working group has been established which meets weekly to look at opportunities for improvement. Comprising representatives from NHS Grampian and Health and Social Care Partners, the group has already hosted meetings and workshops with Healthcare Improvement Scotland, the Scottish Government and will soon meet with colleagues in other Health Boards to ensure we are taking on board learnings from other areas. In addition, they are looking inwardly at work being undertaken around Discharge to Assess – which supports patients able to leave the hospital to return to their home to receive further assessments at home – to see what more can be done to improve processes in an effort to improve Grampian's performance in relation to this national issue. I look forward to bringing updates on this topic to your attention at future Board meetings.

Dr Adam Coldwells, Interim Chief Executive 12 September, 2024