

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>NHS Grampian Board</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>6 February 2025</b>
<b>Item Number:</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Infrastructure Investment: Blair Forensic Unit Improvement Works</b>
<b>Responsible Executive:</b>	<b>Fiona Mitchelhill, Chief Officer, City H&amp;SCP</b> <b>Alan Wilson, Director of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Support Services</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Craig Slessor, Head of Projects</b> <b>Angie McColl, Project Manager</b>

## 1 Purpose and recommendations

### **This is presented to the Committee for:**

**Decision:** approve an increase in the Infrastructure Investment Plan programme budgetary limits for Remedial works to the Royal Cornhill Blair Unit (Forensic) of £1 million from £1 million to £2 million phased across 2024/25 and 2025/26 in line with the agreed programme of works.

### **This report relates to:**

- NHS Grampian Strategy: Plan for the Future –Places
- Board Annual Delivery Plan – Create Condition for Sustainable Change
- Requirement – Low Secure Care Standards for Forensic patients

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

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

## 2 Report summary

### 2.1 Situation

On 11 April 2024 the Board of NHS Grampian approved the Infrastructure Investment Plan for 2024-2029 and delegated to the Asset Management Group responsibility for delivery of the programme, subject to individual items being within budgetary limits identified within the Plan. Remedial works to the Royal Cornhill Blair Unit (Forensic) featured with an allocation of £1 million.

Planning work has progressed during 2024/25 to identify and scope essential remedial works and a revised forecast cost to deliver this programme of works across two phases of £2 million was confirmed to the Asset Management Group on 18 December 2024 and therefore under the Board's governance arrangements as set out in the Schedule of Reserved Decisions the variation to forecast costs requires escalation to the Board for approval.

## **2.2 Background**

The 'Plan for the Future' sets out the strategy to deliver equitable access, inclusive growth and improved population health and wellbeing through the transformation of how and where we provide our health and social care services.

The NHS Grampian Forensic Service comprises of three wards in the Blair Unit (Forensic Acute, Forensic Rehabilitation, IPCU and Great Western Lodge. It provides Low Secure Care to the population of Grampian, Orkney and Shetland. The Blair Unit was built some 35 years ago to the then Low Secure Care specification.

The service at Cornhill is the busiest of its kind in Scotland. 1/3 of all patients seen nationally attend this location. In terms of bed numbers there are 111 NHS mental illness low secure beds in Scotland (source: Forensic Network). Grampian have 34 of these, representing 31% of the NHS provision in Scotland.

The Blair Forensic Unit does not meet current Forensic Mental Health Services Low and Medium Secure Care standards. The requirement to upgrade the existing accommodation at Royal Cornhill Hospital was highlighted in the recommendations arising from recent independent reviews of the facility including the Forensic Mental Health Review (Barron Report), Mental Welfare Commission Reports 2018-2023 and the HIS Inspection Report published June 2023.

Arrangements set out in this report are in place to address high priority areas within the current Blair Forensic Unit at Royal Cornhill Hospital. The requirement for a replacement facility has been identified in the medium term.

Residual risks are being managed clinically as appropriate through the operating procedures and practice in place within the unit aligned to a detailed operational risk register which is reviewed regularly, jointly by service clinical and operational management.

## **2.3 Assessment**

The planning stage of the works has been completed and the business case demonstrating readiness to proceed to delivery was presented to AMG in October 2024. The scope of work includes improvement works within the Forensic Acute Ward to address existing High Level Risks:

- bringing the external fencing up to Low Secure Care standards
- Replace windows
- Refurbish 2 bathrooms
- Ligature reduction works throughout including to ceilings and radiator covers

- Reducing opportunities for weaponisation
- Upgrade lighting
- Improve fire safety precautions
- Redecoration

All risks to inpatients, visitors and staff are currently managed through increased staff observation of inpatients. Undertaking these works will not only ensure that risks are reduced and recommendations met, but will allow inpatients to be cared for in the least restrictive manner possible.

Procurement of the required programme of works will be staged in phases (separate contractual lots) using a single contractor to minimise disruption to the patients on the wards and to ensure maximum efficiency benefit from an integrated approach to delivery.

The initial stage to complete the required works within the Forensic Acute Ward and the external security fencing can be contained within the original funding approval of £1 million. These works have now been instructed to commence in February 2025 and expected to be completed within 6 months. Following completion of this phase a second phase of works within the Intensive Psychiatric Care Unit (IPCU) are programmed to commence. The cost of this stage will be a further £1 million.

### **2.3.1 Quality/ Patient Care**

The forensic service aims to:

- Provide and maintain a safe, secure environment for patients, visitors and staff
- Ensure that privacy and dignity is maintained
- Provide facilities that are appropriate to the needs of patients and staff

The investment will enhance compliance and contribute to our strategic priorities of Person Centred, Safe, Effective Quality of Care, Health of Population by ensuring that here is increased access to external garden spaces, natural ventilation and ligature and weaponisation reduction.

### **2.3.2 Workforce**

N/a – there is no anticipated increase / reduction in workforce levels

### **2.3.3 Financial**

Following confirmation of scope and procurement arrangements the total required works package has been confirmed as £2million inclusive of risk allowances and contingencies. This is in excess of the budgetary allowance for the project of £1 million.

The AMG has supported the allocation of further funds to this programme of works from the Board's formula Capital allocation in 2025/26 as a priority within the Infrastructure Investment plan.

There are no anticipated workforce costs or revenue costs resulting from this project either for the duration of the project or on a recurring basis.

#### **2.3.4 Risk Assessment/Management**

Project delivery risk management arrangements are in place for the projects. Unanticipated cost risks are a feature of project and risk provision have been included in the overall forecast for the project.

There is no availability of alternative facilities for a full decant of 30% of Scotland's Low Secure Care patient population which occupy Blair Forensic wards in either a permanent or temporary capacity to allow full ward refurbishment.

Following consultation between service management and clinical & nursing colleagues an internal decant plan has been developed which will not only maintain as safe an environment as possible for patients, staff and visitors but also limit the reduction of inpatient beds nationally.

Enabling works will be undertaken within the Forensic Rehabilitation ward to temporarily accommodate Forensic Acute Ward inpatients for the duration of both phases of work. This will result in a temporary reduction of shared patient spaces and staff spaces within the Rehabilitation Ward with minor reconfiguration in how ward spaces are utilised.

This will, however, result in a temporary reduction in the Forensic Acute inpatient bed base by 3 beds for the duration of both phases of work which are anticipated at 26 weeks each (12 months in total). The Forensic IPCU inpatients will remain within the IPCU for the first phase of works within the Forensic Acute Ward. IPCU inpatients will then be cared for within the refurbished Forensic Acute ward whilst the second phase of works is undertaken within IPCU.

The reduced Forensic Acute bed base will be managed by closing beds as inpatients become ready for discharge from the ward. Support will be sought from other health boards in accommodating inpatient admission requests.

Full risk assessment and individual care plans will be developed for each inpatient in need of care at the time of project implementation to ensure the most appropriate patients receive care, and where they receive their care, within the Blair Forensic Unit.

#### **2.3.5 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities**

N/a

#### **2.3.6 Other impacts**

N/a

#### **2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation**

The project scope has been developed with operational teams (clinicians, nursing teams & AHPs), service managers, the Blair Improvement Steering Group, Senior Leadership Teams, the Forensic MHLDS Programme Board as well as colleagues within IPC & Infrastructure and Sustainability. We have also consulted with relevant specialists in the development of the project scope and solution.

Corporate Communications colleagues will support the Project Team in the development and implementation of a communication plan to ensure all stakeholders are kept informed throughout the project.

### 2.3.8 Route to the Meeting

This has been previously considered by the following group as part of its development. The group has supported the development of content, and their feedback has informed the finalisation of the documents presented in this report.

- Asset Management Group (AMG), 30 October 2024 considered a detailed business case and on , addendum and associated papers and considered that it provided assurance of readiness of the Blair Forensic Unit, Acute Ward project to proceed to delivery, subject to concluding final delivery arrangements.
- AMG received a further update on 18 December 2024 confirming phasing, updated forecast cost and contractual arrangements.

### 2.4 Recommendation(s)

The Board is asked to:

**Decision:** approve an increase in the Infrastructure Investment Plan programme budgetary limits for Remedial works to the Royal Cornhill Blair Unit (Forensic) of £1 million from £1 million to £2 million phased across 2024/25 and 2025/26 in line with the agreed programme of works.

### 3 Appendix/List of appendices

None