

## Shetland NHS Board

### Minutes of the Staff Governance Committee – Thursday 20 November 2025, MS Teams

#### Present

Mr Colin Campbell	Non-Executive Director (Chair- Staff Governance Committee)
Mr Joe Higgins	Non-Executive Director (Whistleblowing Champion)
Mr Bruce McCulloch	Non-Executive Director (Employee Director)
Mrs Lorraine Hall	Director of HR and Support Services (Exec Lead for Staff Governance)/Management Representative
Miss Lianne Jamieson	Staff Side Representative
Mr Brian Chittick	Chief Executive
Mrs Marianne Williamson	Committee Secretary

#### In Attendance

Mrs Kirsty Clark	Learning and Organisational Development Manager
Ms Lorraine Allinson	HR Services Manager
Mrs Laura Pottinger	HR Manager (Recruitment, Planning and Systems)
Ms Edna Mary Watson	Chief Nurse- Corporate
Mr David Wagstaff	Head of Estates and Facilities

#### **SGC2526-33 Welcome and Apologies**

Mr Campbell welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Prof Kathleen Carolan and Mr Gary Robinson.

#### **SGC2526-34 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **SGC2526-35 Draft minutes of Staff Governance Committee 04 September 2025**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

#### **SGC2526-37 Matters Arising**

No matters arising, actions identified on the decision note had been actioned.

#### **SGC2526-38 Staff Governance Action Plan 2025/26- Update**

Mrs Hall presented an update on the Staff Governance Action Plan for 2025/26, outlining progress against the five Staff Governance strands. Key highlights included the

embedding of priority ratings and supporting documents within the action plan, the work that has begun in the development and procurement of new national systems and efforts to align workforce planning with service delivery and sustainability objectives. The committee discussed the importance of transformation capability, change management and organisational development in delivering strategic priorities.

Updates were provided on initiatives such as the reduced working week, recruitment and retention, equality and diversity and trauma-informed training (TRiM). The committee noted positive feedback from national stakeholders and ongoing collaboration with Scottish Government and peer networks. The importance of supporting staff well-being and continuous improvement was emphasised.

Members made the following comments:

Mr Chittick emphasised the need for closer alignment between workforce planning, service planning, and sustainability strategies, supporting a more integrated approach to organisational planning.

Mr Higgins queried whether the organisation has the necessary transformation capability to deliver strategic objectives, highlighting the importance of a professional and structured approach to change management.

Mr McCulloch stressed the value of effective feedback mechanisms during organisational change, particularly regarding staff impact and reporting to partnership groups and the committee. He also noted the importance of investing in organisational development and preparing teams for change.

The committee acknowledged the significant work undertaken and the value of the action plan in supporting staff and organisational objectives.

**OUTCOME:** Staff Governance Committee noted the update.

### **SGC2526-39            Improving Appraisal Rates Research**

Mrs Clark presented a summary of the research she had undertaken as part of an MSc dissertation, focusing on appraisal processes within NHS Shetland and across Scotland. The study combined a literature review with both quantitative and qualitative research, including input from NHS Shetland staff, managers and appraisal leads from other Scottish boards.

She noted some of her key findings and explained that she will develop recommendations for consideration by the Executive Management Team. Findings are being shared with other appraisal leads to inform the development of national resources supporting the new 'Once for Scotland' PDRP policy.

Members commended the research and noted the correlation between mandatory training and appraisal completion. Questions were raised regarding sampling methods, span of control for appraisers and the challenges faced by managers with large numbers of direct reports. Staff Governance Committee acknowledged the cultural and organisational challenges, particularly the perception that appraisals are a competing demand rather than a strategic priority. It was agreed that a clear, stated organisational position on appraisals is needed and that any future actions should be carefully considered and communicated.

The importance of leadership, support prioritisation and the use of protected learning time for appraisals was emphasised.

**OUTCOME:** Staff Governance Committee thanked Mrs Clark for presenting a summary of her research and looked forward to future recommendations.

## **SGC2526-40            Agenda for Change Non-Pay Implementation Update**

### **Reduced Working Week**

Mrs Hall provided an update on the implementation of the reduced working week. The Board has submitted its return to the Scottish Government and is participating in a national group to share lessons and receive support. Communications with managers and teams are ongoing and she felt that the process is on track. The Reduced Working Week group has issued communication regarding potential impacts on benefits for some staff. Additional staffing has been approved where required to support service delivery as identified in the returns submitted by managers over the summer.

Mr Higgins expressed concern that the reduced working week could result in unchanged workloads and expectations, potentially increasing pressure on staff. He asked how these risks are being monitored and managed. Mrs Hall replied that additional resources have been approved where identified to maintain service delivery and the situation will be closely monitored. She also mentioned that a staff survey is being considered, referencing positive feedback from a similar survey in NHS Grampian.

### **Band 5 to 6**

Ms Allinson reported on the Band 5 nursing job description review. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has engaged with staff, which has accelerated progress. The first Band 5 to 6 application has been received, with 18 further applications being progressed and in pipeline. Training for job evaluation panel members is being arranged and additional sessions for managers are scheduled to ensure the process is understood and implemented consistently.

Members noted the need for clear communication to ensure that staff and managers understand the process.

### **Protected Learning Time**

Mrs Clark provided an update on Protected Learning Time. Core modules and renewal periods have been confirmed and a circular is expected. System changes are being made to enable improved reporting, though this will lead to increased workload for HR and Learning and Development staff. There is ongoing work to ensure managers are recording protected learning time appropriately.

**OUTCOME:** Staff Governance Committee noted the updates.

## **SGC2526-41            Short Life Working Group- Raising Concerns**

Mrs Hall presented the outcomes of the Raising Concerns SLWG, which was established to address feedback from staff regarding the process of raising concerns within NHS Shetland. The group engaged with staff to identify what worked well and where improvements were needed. As a result, a suite of documents was developed to support

individuals involved in the process, including commissioners, investigators, those being investigated and witnesses. These documents aim to ensure key people aspects are addressed and that staff are supported throughout the process. The documents have been tested in practice and will continue to be refined based on feedback. Relevant materials aligned with whistleblowing will also be uploaded for further reference.

Members discussed the importance of having clear and robust business-as-usual processes for raising concerns, separate from formal whistleblowing procedures. Mr Higgins commended the Short Life Working Group's work and emphasised that the new guidance documents should be widely shared to support staff. Mr Campbell agreed, noting that the documentation would make the process more accessible and reduce unnecessary escalation to whistleblowing. The committee supported ongoing refinement of the documents and highlighted the need for continued feedback to ensure the process remains effective and people-focused.

**OUTCOME:** Staff Governance Committee noted the update.

#### **SGC2526-42            Workforce Report Q1/Q2 2025/26**

Mrs Pottinger presented the report which covered Q1/Q2 of the reporting year.

Members noted the comprehensive nature of the report and the progress made in recruitment, training and workforce planning. She noted a rise in staff establishments with six new posts (including two apprenticeships). Recruitment successes were achieved in dental, anaesthesia, public health and GP roles. Increased bank staff usage was attributed to sickness absence, workload demand and vacancies with supporting charts provided. Vacancy levels remained stable year-on-year. A short life working group is progressing recruitment for consultant posts with rolling adverts planned. Training and development remain active, with three apprentices in post and ongoing learning opportunities. Sickness absence rates have fluctuated, with a recent increase in stress-related cases under active management. The report also highlighted concerns about incomplete corporate induction attendance, with targeted engagement underway to improve compliance.

Members welcomed the introduction of RAG ratings to clarify key issues and next steps, and asked how retrospective data informs future decisions. Under the 'Employ' pillar, Mr Higgins requested clarification on 'capacity weaknesses' and funding for transformation, which was explained as a need for creative solutions and collaboration with local employability pathways. The committee discussed strategies to improve the low uptake of modern apprenticeships and Mr Campbell raised concerns about incomplete corporate induction attendance, which is being addressed through direct engagement.

**ACTION:** The Learning and Organisational Development Manager will contact Chief Executive to write to areas who are ensuring their staff attend Corporate Induction.

**OUTCOME:** Staff Governance Committee noted the report.

#### **SGC2526-43            Staff Governance Monitoring Return 2024/25**

Mrs Hall presented the annual Staff Governance Monitoring Return which has been prepared for submission to the Scottish Government. Its purpose is to summarise compliance with the Staff Governance Standard and to highlight key areas of challenges and successes.

**ACTION:** Following a request from Mr Higgins, on the whistleblowing cases table, 'not applicable' should be replaced with 'nil' where no cases were reported. Once this change made, Mrs Williamson to submit to Scottish Government with supporting documentation attached.

**OUTCOME:** Staff Governance Committee approved the document, with small change, for submission.

#### **SGC2526-44            HR Procedures**

Mrs Pottinger presented two HR procedures for committee review: the Relocation Procedure and the Working Time Procedure. The Relocation Procedure had been updated to change references from "junior doctor" to "resident doctor" and to include a paragraph on repayment of relocation expenses. The Working Time Procedure reflected the change in standard hours for Agenda for Change staff from 37.5 to 37 hours per week, with further reduction to 36 hours scheduled for April 2026.

Mr Higgins queried whether these documents as procedures should be presented to Staff Governance for formal approval. Mrs Hall clarified that these procedures historically have been reviewed and noted by the committee as good practice.

Members also raised the issue of the overnight allowance rate in the Relocation Procedure, questioning whether £75 remains appropriate. Mrs Pottinger and Mrs Hall confirmed that a review of the rate is underway and any changes will be progressed through the Area Partnership Forum.

Ms Watson also suggested including both the current and future working hours in the Working Time Procedure for clarity. Mrs Pottinger agreed to update the document accordingly without requiring further committee review.

**OUTCOME:** Staff Governance Committee approved the Relocation Procedure and Working Time Procedure.

**ACTION:** Mrs Pottinger will ensure that Information Governance Team and IT department update the Board website.

#### **SGC2526-45            Estates Policies**

Mr Wagstaff presented two policies for final approval:

##### **Medical Gas Policy**

Mr Wagstaff reported that the Medical Gas Policy had been updated in line with the national template, with individual names replaced by job roles. No significant procedural changes were noted. The committee discussed departmental risk, confirming that risks are low due to recent system upgrades and contingency measures for supply logistics.

##### **Fire Safety Policy**

He explained that The Fire Safety Policy was substantially revised to reflect new Scottish Healthcare Technical Memoranda. The main change is the introduction of cascade training, making departmental and ward managers responsible for delivering and recording

fire safety training for their teams. This approach ensures training is tailored to specific areas and improves compliance. The committee noted the importance of maintaining high compliance rates and welcomed the cascade training approach.

**OUTCOME:** Staff Governance Committee approved the Medical Gas Policy and the Fire Safety Policy.

**ACTION:** Mr Wagstaff will ensure that Information Governance Team and IT department update the Board website.

#### **SGC2526-46            Health and Safety Policies**

Mrs Hall presented this item on behalf of Lawrence Green. The following policies were presented for final approval:

- Management of Occupational Road Risk Policy
- Shetland Workplace Transport Management Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

All policies had undergone review and revision, with input from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee and the Area Partnership Forum. Amendments included updates to terminology, legislative changes, and minor improvements based on organisational learning and feedback. The committee noted the importance of these policies in maintaining statutory compliance and supporting a safe working environment.

**OUTCOME:** Staff Governance Committee approved the Management of Occupational Road Risk Policy, Shetland Workplace Transport Management Policy, First Aid Policy and Health and Safety Policy.

**ACTION:** Mr Green will ensure that Information Governance Team and IT department update the Board website.

#### **SGC2526-47            Staff Governance Committee- Meeting Dates 2026/27**

Mrs Williamson presented proposed meeting dates for the Staff Governance Committee for the 2026/27 session. The proposal included a suggestion to move meetings to the morning, rather than the afternoon, to avoid clashes with some national groups such as HRDs and Directors of Nursing meetings. The dates were set following the pattern of previous years.

**OUTCOME:** Staff Governance Committee approved the meeting dates for 2026/27.

**ACTION:** Mrs Williamson to submit to Corporate Services for inclusion in Board Business Planner.

#### **SGC2526-48            Whistleblowing Standards Q2 2025/26**

Ms Watson presented the Whistleblowing Standards report for Quarter 2 2025/26. The report highlighted one case raised in Quarter 1 that escalated to Stage 2 in Quarter 2 and is currently under external review. Additional contacts were noted, with ongoing support provided by confidential contacts. The committee was informed of continued quarterly

updates to the Clinical Governance Committee and the conclusion of the Short Life Working Group on raising concerns.

The committee noted improvements in accessibility to the whistleblowing inbox and ongoing peer support and training for confidential contacts. Members welcomed the proactive engagement with staff and management teams to promote a culture of openness and support.

**OUCTOME:** Staff Governance Committee noted the report.

**SGC2526-49 Strategic Risk Register Report**

Ms Watson presented the Strategic Risk Register Report, providing an update as of 30th October 2025. The report noted that there are four risks aligned to the Staff Governance Committee, with two currently under comprehensive review relating to IG training. Updates were provided on workforce risks, including ongoing measures to attract substantive post holders and the use of innovative recruitment approaches. Progress was also reported on the implementation of emergency fobs within the Community sector, with completion expected prior to winter.

No risks were closed during this period. The committee was informed that a risk appetite session is scheduled for 15th December 2025. The committee discussed the importance of continued monitoring and proactive management of strategic risks.

**OUTCOME:** Staff Governance Committee noted the report.

**SGC2526-50 Health and Care Staffing Act- Internal Compliance Report Q2**

Ms Watson presented the Internal Compliance Report for Quarter 2 in relation to the Health and Care Staffing Act. The report provided updates on engagement across professional groups, progress with health roster implementation and targeted support for safe care and staffing level tool runs. The committee noted ongoing challenges with staff turnover affecting data collection and the need for continued support to ensure accurate reporting.

Progress was highlighted in embedding Safecare within acute sector huddles. The committee discussed the importance of integrating staffing, activity, and quality data to support operational decision-making. The report also covered compliance monitoring, quarterly and annual reporting requirements, and ongoing efforts to manage high-cost agency spend.

**OUTCOME:** Staff Governance Committee noted the report.

**SGC2526-51 Circulars and Letters for Noting**

The following correspondence was noted:

SPPA 2025/10 Availability of 2025 Annual Benefit Statements and Annual Benefit Statements combined with a Remediable Service Statements (ABS-RSS)	DL (2025) 22 Supplementary Staffing- AHP Controls
DL (2025) 21 Job Planning Guidance	DL (2025) 23 Supplementary Staffing-Nurse Agency Controls
PCS (AFC) 2024/2- UPDATED	PCS (MD) 2025/01 Pay and Conditions

REDUCTION IN THE WORKING WEEK FOR AGENDA FOR CHANGE STAFF IN NHS SCOTLAND	2025/26: Health Board Medical Directors/Formal Medical Directors on Protection
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