Shetland NHS Board

Minutes of the Staff Governance Committee – Thursday 21 May 2026, MS Teams

Present

Mr Colin Campbell	Non-Executive Director (In the Chair)
Mr Bruce McCulloch	Non-Executive Director (Employee Director)
Mr Joe Higgins	Non-Executive Director (Whistleblowing Champion)
Ms Lianne Jamieson	Staff Side Representative
Mrs Lorraine Hall	Management Representative/Executive Lead for Staff Governance
Mr Brian Chittick	Chief Executive
Mrs Marianne Williamson	Committee Secretary

In Attendance

Mr Lawrence Green	Health and Safety Lead
Mrs Kirsty Clark	Learning and Organisational Development Manager
Ms Lorraine Allinson	HR Services Manager
Mrs Laura Pottinger	HR Manager (Recruitment and Systems)
Ms Edna Mary Watson	Chief Nurse (Corporate)
Ms Michelle Hankin	Clinical Governance and Risk Lead
Ms Lindsay Anderson	Spiritual Care Lead

SGC2627-01 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted from Prof Kathleen Carolan and Mr Gary Robinson.

SGC2627-02 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

SGC2627-03 Draft minutes of meeting held on 17 February 2026

The minutes of the meeting were confirmed as an accurate record.

SGC2627-04 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

SGC2627-05 Staff Governance Action Plan 2025/26- Final Update

Mrs Hall presented the update on the outgoing Staff Governance Action Plan 25/26. She highlighted overall positive performance across the year across the 5 pillars, noting the sustained operational pressures including Agenda for Change reform, workforce challenges and service transformation.

Sickness absence performance remained favourable in comparison to national benchmarks, with NHS Shetland noted as the best performing territorial Board. It was acknowledged that further work is required to identify and address organisational hotspot areas through improved triangulation of workforce data.

Members noted ongoing progress across key workstreams including the Workforce Business Systems Programme, workforce planning development and employability initiatives. Recruitment challenges were highlighted, particularly in relation to medical staffing, with further work underway to support service sustainability.

She also provided an update on Agenda for Change non-pay reform. Further discussion had taken place at the previous day's EMT meeting regarding Reduced Working Week, she confirmed all plans had been approved but there is some further discussion required with Primary Care. Challenges with progressing the Nursing Band 5 to 6 review were discussed.

ACTION: A timeline for the Band 5 to 6 process to be presented to next APF meeting (Lorraine Allinson).

Members welcomed the report and recognised the progress achieved. Discussion reflected:

- The importance of strengthening the robustness of the workforce plan, particularly in relation to future skills and workforce pressures
- The requirement to ensure consistent use of workforce planning tools alongside professional judgement
- Ongoing work required to embed appraisal improvement actions

It was acknowledged that further development of workforce planning and performance data will be required to support future organisational priorities and changing national requirements.

OUTCOME: Staff Governance Committee noted the update.

SGC2627-06 Staff Governance Action Plan 2026/27- Draft

Mrs Hall presented the Draft Staff Governance Action Plan for 2026/27. She noted the draft plan represents an initial position and is intended to be a dynamic document, which will continue to evolve as organisational objectives are finalised and cascaded.

Members welcomed the draft and highlighted the importance of ensuring the plan reflects key organisational priorities, including leadership development, digital capability and staff engagement.

Mr McCulloch proposed the use of QR codes to support feedback mechanisms, particularly in relation to Speak Up activity, to enable improved measurement of engagement over time. Ms Watson confirmed that this had been discussed at the Whistleblowing Steering Group and advised that further work is required to clarify the purpose and application of QR codes, including whether for feedback or reporting purposes (ACTION).

Mr Higgins welcomed the inclusion of the 'Leading Well' initiative and highlighted the importance of leadership development and digital capability in supporting workforce priorities.

ACTION: Mr Chittick proposed the addition of neurodiversity in the workplace to action E6 (Jenny Coleman).

ACTION: It was also proposed that consideration be given to including bereavement support within the 2026/27 action plan. (Lindsay Anderson).

OUTCOME: Staff Governance Committee noted the draft plan acknowledging that the plan will continue to be developed and refined. It is a standing item for the Committee.

SGC2627-07 Workforce Annual Report 2025/26

Mrs Laura Pottinger presented the Workforce Annual Report 2025/26. It provided an overview of workforce performance across the year, highlighting continued operational pressures, including recruitment challenges, reliance on bank and overtime usage and the ongoing impact of workforce demographics and turnover trends. It was noted that there had been growth in both headcount and whole-time equivalent, largely reflecting the filling of vacancies and service developments rather than expansion.

Encouraging progress was reported in relation to workforce stability in some areas, including reduced locum and agency spend and development of internal staff pathways. The importance of continued focus on retention, succession planning and staff wellbeing was highlighted.

Members welcomed the report and commended the quality of both the data and supporting narrative. Mr Higgins raised a query regarding training spend, noting that actual spend was significantly lower than projected. Mrs Clark advised that this reflected a gap between requested training and delivery, with some planned activity not being undertaken. Work is underway to distinguish mandatory training requirements from discretionary learning to support more effective budget allocation. He also queried the reliability of TURAS appraisal data, noting inconsistencies in reporting. Mrs Clark confirmed that data quality issues had arisen following system changes and that further work with NES is ongoing to improve accuracy, acknowledging that reporting functionality remains limited.

Following a query about the training spent, Mrs Clark explained she felt that the Protected Learning Time workstream will strengthen clarity around mandatory training requirements and support consistent application across services. It was noted that low levels of Protected Learning Time have been recorded and do not reflect actual activity, with further communication and system guidance required.

Mr Campbell queried turnover data comparability with national figures. Mrs Pottinger clarified that national ISD data is not directly comparable and that local reporting provides a more accurate reflection of workforce turnover. Mrs Pottinger confirmed that national ISD data is not directly comparable and that local reporting provides a more accurate reflection of workforce turnover.

OUTCOME: Staff Governance Committee noted the report.

SGC2627-8 Health and Safety Annual Report 2025/26

The Health and Safety Annual Report was presented by Mr Lawrence Green. The report provided an overview of health and safety performance across the year, including progress against key priorities, compliance with statutory requirements, and ongoing work to strengthen organisational safety culture. It was noted that good progress had been made in a number of areas, including incident reporting, training compliance and the continued rollout of lone worker devices.

Members acknowledged the breadth of work undertaken and the continued focus on strengthening systems and processes to support staff safety.

Members discussed the rollout and use of lone worker fobs, recognising the importance of both organisational systems and individual responsibility in ensuring staff safety. It was emphasised that while the provision of devices supports staff, this must be underpinned by clear safe systems of work and consistent use in practice. Members expressed disappointment in the low numbers of staff turning on the device.

ACTION: Brian Chittick and Bruce McCulloch agreed to issue a joint statement to reinforce expectations regarding personal responsibility and the consistent use of lone worker arrangements.

OUTCOME: Staff Governance Committee noted the report.

SGC2627-11 Spiritual Care Annual Report 2025/26

Members received the Spiritual Care Annual Report 2025/26 and update on the NHS Scotland National Service Specification from Lindsay Anderson.

The report provided an overview of spiritual care provision across NHS Shetland, including progress in embedding the national service specification, development of local governance arrangements, and continued delivery of person-centred support to patients, families and staff. It was noted that the service continues to evolve, with a focus on accessibility, awareness and integration within wider clinical services.

Members welcomed the report and recognised the importance of spiritual care as part of holistic healthcare delivery. Mr Higgins sought assurance on how awareness of the service is promoted across the organisation, with Ms Anderson confirming that a range of approaches are in place, including engagement with teams and visibility within clinical areas, although further work is required to ensure consistent understanding. Mr McCulloch highlighted the need to ensure equitable access to spiritual care services across all settings, including community services, with assurance provided that outreach work is ongoing to strengthen accessibility. Mr Campbell queried how implementation of the national service specification will be monitored, and it was confirmed that governance arrangements are in place, with further development of reporting mechanisms planned to strengthen assurance.

OUTCOME: Staff Governance Committee noted the report.

SGC2627-12 Whistleblowing Standards Annual Report 2025/26 (including Q4)

The report was presented by Edna Mary Watson.

The report provided an overview of whistleblowing activity across the year, including the number and nature of contacts received, progress of ongoing cases, and work undertaken to promote awareness and support a positive speaking-up culture. It was noted that processes remain in place to ensure concerns are managed appropriately, with access to independent external investigation where required.

The report was welcomed, recognising the importance of maintaining a transparent and supportive environment for raising concerns. Members discussed the importance of early intervention and management ownership in resolving concerns before escalation. Mr Higgins, in his role as Whistleblowing Champion, confirmed assurance that the report accurately reflects the organisational position and emphasised the value of continued awareness-raising activity. It was noted that targeted engagement with staff groups less familiar with whistleblowing processes, including estates and support services, will continue to be progressed.

Members discussed the importance of early intervention and management ownership in resolving concerns before escalation. Mr Higgins, in his role as Whistleblowing Champion, confirmed assurance that the report accurately reflects the organisational position and emphasised the value of continued awareness-raising activity. It was noted that targeted engagement with staff groups less familiar with whistleblowing processes, including estates and support services, will continue to be progressed.

OUTCOME: Staff Governance Committee noted the report.

SGC2627-13 Healthcare Staffing Act- Annual Report 2025-26

The report was presented by Ms Watson. She provided an overview of progress in implementing the requirements of the Healthcare Staffing (Scotland) Act, including the continued rollout of staffing tools, governance arrangements and assurance processes to support safe staffing across services. It was noted that progress continues, with increasing use of systems to support real-time staffing assessment and escalation.

Members welcomed the report and noted the assurance provided.

Members discussed the ongoing use and embedding of staffing tools across services, particularly SafeCare and Allocate as a whole, noting the importance of consistent utilisation to support accurate data and decision-making. Colin Campbell sought assurance on the level of adoption and impact of the system, with Edna Mary Watson advising that implementation is progressing, although it is still early to demonstrate measurable change.

It was noted that directorate-level reporting is being used to support oversight and improve compliance, with an emphasis on the role of Directors in ensuring sustained use of the system. Members also noted the importance of data quality and ongoing engagement with teams to embed consistent practice across the organisation, including reinforcing that the use of Allocate is an organisational requirement.

OUTCOME: Staff Governance Committee noted the report.

SGC2627-14 Michelle Hankin- Experience of Secondment

The Committee received a staff story presentation from Michelle Hankin on her experience of undertaking a part-time secondment with NHS Grampian whilst maintaining her role with NHS Shetland.

The presentation provided an overview of the individual experience of secondment, including the opportunities for skills development, increased confidence and broader understanding of organisational processes. The value of secondment opportunities in supporting career development and workforce flexibility was highlighted.

Members reflected on both the benefits and challenges associated with secondments. Mr Higgins noted the value of sharing staff experiences to promote learning and encourage uptake of development opportunities across the organisation. Mr McCulloch highlighted the importance of ensuring equitable access to secondment opportunities for all staff groups. Members also acknowledged potential drawbacks, including the impact on substantive teams, the need for appropriate backfill arrangements and the risk of increased pressure on colleagues during secondment periods. It was recognised that clear planning and management oversight are required to balance development opportunities with service continuity.

OUTCOME: Staff Governance Committee noted the presentation.

SGC2627-15 Strategic Risk Update

The report was presented by Ms Watson.

The report provided an update on the strategic risks aligned to the Committee, including current risk ratings, mitigations in place and progress across the reporting period. It was noted that there had been limited movement in risk scores since the previous report, with work ongoing to address key workforce-related risks.

Members welcomed the report and noted the assurance provided.

Members discussed the current status of risks and the importance of maintaining accurate and up to date risk information. Ms Watson confirmed that progress continues against key risks, including improvements in lone worker arrangements and ongoing work in relation to training compliance and information governance. Members also noted ongoing Board-level work to review risk appetite with further work planned to support a consistent organisational approach.

OUTCOME: Staff Governance Committee noted the report.

SGC2627-16 Area Partnership Forum- Verbal Update

Members received a verbal update from Bruce McCulloch and Brian Chittick on the recent work of the Area Partnership Forum.

The update highlighted ongoing partnership working across key workforce priorities, including Agenda for Change non-pay reform and wider organisational challenges.

Members welcomed the update and recognised the value of constructive partnership working. Discussion noted the importance of maintaining open and transparent engagement between staff side and management, with continued joint working supporting early resolution of workforce issues and collaborative approaches to change.

OUTCOME: Staff Governance Committee noted the update.

SGC2627-17 AfC Non-Pay Reform Update

This item had mostly been discussed under the Staff Governance Action Plan, however the following additional points were noted. A summary of progress was provided across key workstreams including the Reduced Working Week, Band 5 to 6 progression and Protected Learning Time, with implementation continuing across services. Members noted the importance of maintaining momentum on delivery, ensuring clear communication with staff, and progressing Band 5 to 6 applications in a timely and consistent manner.

OUTCOME: Staff Governance Committee noted the update.

SGC2627-18 Circulars and Letters for Noting

The following were noted by Staff Governance Committee:

PCS(ESM) 2026/01 Pay and conditions of service, Executive and senior management pay 2025–26, consolidated performance related pay	SPPA 2026/01 Annual Return Data Requirements 2025–26
SPPA 2026/02 Public Service Pensions Indexation and CARE scheme revaluation 2026	SPPA 2026/03 Employee contribution tier bandings from 1 April 2026
DL (2026) 03 Publication of the National Service Specification for Spiritual Care	DL (2026) 04 Short Term Cover Principles and Definitions
PCS (PH) 2026/1 Public holiday for Scotland’s opening FIFA World Cup game, 15 June 2026	SPPA 2026/04 Disclosure of Salary and Pension Information 2025–26 annual reports and accounts
PCS (DD) 20225/1 Addendum 2 Residents, pay and conditions for medical and dental staff	MSG (2026) 39 Medical Bank Rates, Resident Doctors 2026/27

[MFGW May 26]