

NHS Highland



Meeting: Highland Health and Social Care Committee
Meeting date: 06 March 2024
Title: Committee Self-Assessment Review
Responsible Executive/Non-Executive: Pam Cremin/Gerry O'Brien
Report Author: Pam Cremin/Gerry O'Brien

1 Purpose

This is presented to the Committee for:

- Discussion
- Assurance

This report relates to a:

- Government policy/directive
- Legal requirement

This aligns to the following NHSScotland quality ambition(s):

- Safe
- Effective

This report relates to the following Corporate Objective(s)

Clinical and Care Excellence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving health • Keeping you safe • Innovating our care 		Partners in Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in partnership • Listening and responding • Communicating well 	
A Great Place to Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing talent • Leading by example • Being inclusive • Learning from experience • Improving wellbeing 		Safe and Sustainable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting our environment • In control • Well run 	X X
Other (please explain below)			

2 Report summary

2.1 Situation

NHS Boards across the UK operate in an increasingly demanding environment. Good governance is essential in providing high quality, safe, sustainable health and social care services. Governance issues are increasing in the public sector, as is the public interest in governance problems being experienced by public bodies. Regular assessment of the effectiveness of governance arrangements within NHS Boards is a fundamental building block for improvement. NHS Highland introduced a self-assessment of the effectiveness of the governance committees and the Board in 2021 and improvement plans were agreed in 2022. A further round of self-assessments has taken place in 2023, following a refresh of the Blueprint for Good Governance in NHS Boards and the overall Board self-assessment exercise, which took place early in 2023. This report advises of the results of the latest Staff Governance Committee self-assessment and seeks agreement to hold a short development session to address issues arising therefrom.

2.2 Background

NHS Boards are expected to work towards the Blueprint for Good Governance and to regularly assess the effectiveness of their governance arrangements. The Board piloted a self-assessment against the revised Blueprint with support of Scottish Government and an external facilitator. Board wide actions are being implemented to address common themes. Committee self-assessments were paused for a period during the pandemic. It was agreed that these would be re-instated during 2023 to inform action plans for 2024/25.

2.3 Assessment

All Committee members were invited to complete a self-assessment questionnaire during November 2023. 15 out of the 26 members of the Committee completed the questionnaire. A summary of responses to the individual questions are set out in the attached Appendix, with some potential areas to explore highlighted in bold. Key themes arising from the responses and comments are summarised below under strengths and areas for improvement.

STRENGTHS	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engaged membership willing to challenge and add valueEffective leadership from Chair and Lead ExecutiveDevelopment opportunities providedGeneral consensus amongst	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lack of clarity for some about role of the committeeEnsuring that we hear from everyone and that those inputs are respectedIs the agenda balanced in terms of health and careTimeliness and content of papers

Committee members met on 31st January 2024 to discuss the findings of the self-assessment exercise and following a wide ranging discussion the following areas were identified by those present as area requiring further exploration by the committee and potential discussion by the Board of NHS Highland.

- There was general agreement that the summary table presented represented a consensus of opinion across committee members;
- The purpose and the mission of the committee, as set out in the Terms of Reference, required to be revisited in order to establish if it was still relevant, or has the health and care system and landscape evolved to an extent that the purpose of the requires to be amended in some way to reflect the evolving nature of health and social care planning and delivery;
- If the committee is truly to perform the purpose set out in its Terms of Reference and provide full assurance to the Board in areas such as finance, workforce, quality then reports need to provide a greater level of detail in order that committee members can fully understand the key drivers for adverse variance and actions being undertaken being taken to address such;
- Following on from this point was the issue of time and size of agenda, if reports were to become more detailed, also raised was the issue of cross over with other Board Committees, e.g. Staff Governance, Finance and Performance, if they are providing scrutiny, why does it need to be done again and what does this mean for committee assurance requirements;
- It was agreed that subject to appropriate amendments to the committee Terms of Reference then it would be possible for this committee to receive finance and workforce information on a 'information only' basis;
- A more general issue of duplication across committees was raised examples cited included, the NHS Board, Joint Monitoring Committee and Children's Strategy Group;
- The question of committee membership was raised and the question of why are certain people on this committee when it is, as per its Terms of Reference, an internal committee of NHS Highland presenting assurance to the Board of NHS Highland;
- Recent discussions in NHS Highland in relation to 'frugal governance' were highlighted and the benefit to be obtained from utilisation all committees to provide assurance, this would also involve cross committee assurance;
- Members agreed that committee work plans had not really satisfactorily addressed the key platform of Public Health and the absolute necessity to ensure that Public Health and inequalities were at the heart of service provision;

- The continued use of Teams as the only means of the committee meeting was questioned. Members recognised the advantages of virtual meetings but felt that at least one face to face meeting per annum would be beneficial for engagement, committee development and perhaps would help others to more fully participate;
- A counter to this was more use of the full functionality of Teams and a move away from a strict business agenda e.g. break out rooms;

Members present agreed that the discussion had been extremely worthwhile and allowed them to express some opinions that had been forming for a while. There was agreement that priorities for moving forward were a) Revised Terms of Reference, b) Interface with other committees and groups, c) membership and d) Roles and Responsibilities of members.

2.4 Proposed level of Assurance

This report proposes the following level of assurance:

Substantial	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Limited	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>

The assurance level will be raised to substantial following implementation of any actions arising from discussion of the self-assessment responses.

3 Assessment

3.3.1 Quality/ Patient Care

An engaged workforce operating within a culture that promotes psychological safety and staff wellbeing will make better decisions leading to improved outcomes for those receiving our services and their families.

3.3.2 Workforce

There are no direct workforce consequences of this paper.

3.3.3 Financial

There are no direct financial consequences of this paper. Good governance contributes to the efficient and effective use of resources within the Committee's control.

3.3.4 Risk Assessment/Management

An effective Committee will be better placed to identify risks and opportunities and scrutinise proposed mitigating action by management.

3.3.5 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities

No immediate impacts identified.

3.3.6 Other impacts

N/A

3.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

All members of the Committee received an invitation to complete the original self-assessment questionnaire and were likewise be invited to the Development Session discussion.

3.3.8 Route to the Meeting

Discussion between Lead Executive, Chair and Vice Chair.

4 Recommendation

The Committee are recommended to discuss the findings of the self-assessment exercise and suggest actions to address areas for improvement.

The Committee are recommended to take moderate assurance that the self-assessment for 2023 has been completed appropriately. The assurance level will be raised to substantial following implementation of any agreed actions.

4.1 List of appendices

The following appendices are included with this report:

- Appendix No 1 Summary of Responses 2023

APPENDIX ONE: RESULTS OF COMMITTEE SELF ASSESSMENT 2023

	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
05	<i>I am clear about my role and how my participation can best contribute to the Committee's overall effectiveness</i>	7	5	1	2
07	<i>I am able to express my opinions openly and constructively</i>	6	5	3	1
09	<i>There is effective scrutiny and challenge of the Executive from all Committee members, including on matters that are critical or sensitive</i>	3	7	2	3
11	<i>I have received appropriate development opportunities/briefings in relation to the areas applicable to the Committee's areas of business</i>	3	8	2	2
13	<i>I have received appropriate development opportunities/briefings in relation to the areas applicable to the Committee's areas of business</i>	3	11		1

15	<i>The leadership of the Committee by the Committee Chair is effective and supports input from all members</i>	6	7	2	
17	<i>The lead executive of the Committee is effective and is supportive of the constructive challenge from committee members</i>	4	10	1	
19	Information and data included within the papers is sufficient, not too excessive, and easy to understand so as to allow members to reach an appropriate		9	4	2
21	<i>Papers are provided in sufficient time prior to the meeting to allow me to effectively scrutinise and challenge the assurances given</i>		8	5	2
23	Committee meetings allow sufficient time for the discussion of substantive matters	1	11	1	2
25	<i>Minutes are clear and accurate and are circulated promptly to the appropriate people</i>	3	11		1

27	Action points clearly indicate who is to perform what and by when, and all outstanding actions are appropriately followed up in a timely manner until satisfactorily complete	3	11		1
29	I believe the Committee gives assurance to the Board on areas within its Terms of Reference and makes clear recommendations on areas under its remit when necessary	4	8	1	2
31	The Committee's agenda is well managed and ensures all topics within the Committee's Terms of Reference are appropriately covered	2	10	1	2
33	The committee has been provided with sufficient membership, authority and resources to perform its role effectively and independently	1	11	2	1