

SUMMARY REPORT OF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Name of Committee	Staff Governance Committee
Date of Meeting	1 September 2026
Committee Chair	Philip MacRae / Steve Walsh (Vice Chair)

KEY POINTS FROM DISCUSSION AND ESCALATION

ALERT

- Highland HSCP Spotlight Session – Committee considered updates on Partnership responsibilities, workforce profile, staff experience, appraisal and training activity, and staffing pressures. Areas of discussion included workforce flexibility, culture and stress drivers, service integration and service sustainability in remote and rural areas.
- People and Culture Strategic Risk Review – Discussion of aspects relating to visibility and reporting of risk data relating to adult social care services and how this could be improved, noting existing governance and risk escalation arrangements.
- Health and Care Staffing Act Implementation Q1 Report 2026/27 – Discussion of aspects relating to potential risk capture, and impact on corporate risk register detail. Discussion of assurance level, with differing views expressed.

ASSURE

- People and Culture Performance and Delivery Board Update – Moderate
- People Metrics and Integrated Performance and Quality Report – Moderate
- Q1 Whistleblowing and Confidential Contact Report – Moderate
- Communications and Engagement 6 Monthly Update – Substantial
- Health and Safety Committee Annual Report 2025/26 – Report Noted
- People and Culture Strategic Risk Review – Moderate
- Health and Care Staffing Act Implementation Q1 Report 2026/27 – Moderate:

Members held differing views on the appropriate assurance rating for the HCSA item. Some considered limited assurance more appropriate given the scale of the challenges and improvement work still required, while others supported retaining moderate assurance considering enhanced reporting, programme planning and management actions. Members emphasised that the concerns raised and differing views expressed should be clearly reflected in both the minute and the update to the NHS Board.

As consensus could not be reached, the Chair proposed retaining moderate assurance, subject to the discussion and differing views being reflected in the minute and updated Board summary report. The Employee Director and Dawn MacDonald (Staffside Representative) requested that their preference for limited assurance be recorded.

ADVISE

- People and Culture Performance and Delivery Board - Noted the reshaping of the associated governance structure and reporting arrangements, need to refresh the health and wellbeing strategy, appraisal activity, and recent employability activity success.
- Q1 Whistleblowing and Confidential Contact Report – Noted Internal Audit review scheduled for October 2026.

- Health and Safety Committee Annual Report 2025/26 – Noted strategy and improvement plan in place, outputs from earlier internal audit review were being taken forward, and discussion was ongoing in relation to appropriate support for health and safety representatives.
- People and Culture Strategic Risk Review – Noted activity relating to key actions, organisational strategy and audit action plan for Health and Care Staffing Act. Update provided on rollout of Healthcare Guardian and retention of Datix reporting.
- Health and Care Staffing Act Implementation Q1 Report 2026/27 – Noted updates on internal audit action plan activity and improvement timescales, including in relation to existing real-time staffing procedures. Noted a further update would be presented to the next meeting.
- Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Health and Care (28 July 2026) and Letter from Health Workforce Directorate (Whistleblowing Analysis) – Noted
- Committee Self-Assessment – Noted update on questionnaire engagement and development session arrangements.
- NHS Highland Meetings Calendar 2027-2030 – Noted.
- Models of Integration – Noted circulated documents and update on current discussion and engagement arrangements.

ACTIONS

- Committee Work Plan to be aligned to that for Area Partnership Forum.
- People and Culture Strategic Risk Review – Update on rollout of Healthcare Guardian to be brought to next meeting
- People and Culture Strategic Risk Review – Agreed concerns relating to health and safety risk reporting, escalation and governance systems, and potential gaps in appropriate risk reporting be further identified and discussed.

LEARNING