# Easy Read Summary

## NHS Grampian Responsive Diagnostic Review

**We looked at how NHS Grampian makes sure services are safe and good quality for people who use them.**

**November 2026**




Healthcare Improvement Scotland

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## About Healthcare Improvement Scotland and NHS Grampian

**Healthcare Improvement Scotland** is part of NHS Scotland.

We work to make sure health care services in Scotland are better for everyone.

**NHS Grampian** - is part of the NHS that helps look after people's health in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray. It runs hospitals, GPs and other healthcare services for people living in these areas.

## What this review is about



**Laura Skaife-Knight, NHS Grampian Chief Executive**

Healthcare Improvement Scotland and NHS Grampian's Chief Executive have serious concerns about patient safety and how health services in Grampian are run.

A **Chief Executive** is the person in charge of making sure a Health Board runs properly and that patients get the care they need.



A **concern** is when someone is not happy or is worried about something.



Some people may find this report difficult to read.  It says things are not going well in NHS Grampian.  There is a risk to patient safety and treatment.



NHS Grampian must use this report to make things better now and in the future.

## What we looked at in the review




NHS Grampian asked Healthcare Improvement Scotland to look at how NHS Grampian:




Makes sure health services at Dr Gray's Hospital are safe, work well and keep getting better for patients.



Makes services safer and better for patients across all their health services.

Makes sure people in charge work together to make decisions.




Make sure staff are safe, cared for, supported and have the right skills.




Learns from mistakes and makes plans to improve things for the future.




We looked at lots of different information to find out what is going on in NHS Grampian.

This included meeting papers, reports, what staff have said and visiting hospitals.

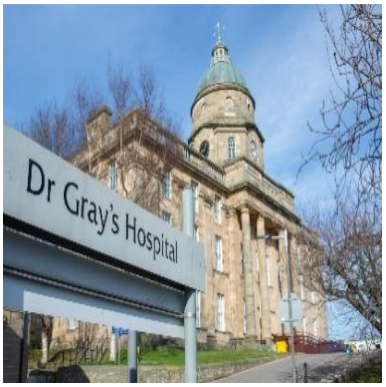



We compared what we found with how things **should** work.

## What we found



**The review found 4 things that NHS Grampian needs to do better.**




1. **Concerns at Dr Gray's Hospital in Elgin, Moray.**

Dr Gray's Hospital is seen as separate from the rest of NHS Grampian. Staff at the hospital do not feel supported or listened to by people in charge in NHS Grampian.

The problems include:



- patient safety and the level of care given to patients.




- having enough staff available to look after patients safely.



- problems and risks not being looked into well enough.




Most concerns are about problems across all of NHS Grampian and not just at Dr Gray's Hospital.

**2. NHS Grampian has failed to fix problems on patient safety properly.**



NHS Grampian have known that they were not keeping patients safe. There is evidence of harm to patients.



They knew staff were not working well together.




NHS Grampian has not put in good ways of working that make sure patients are safe. These must be fixed now.

**3. NHS Grampian's Board has not dealt with concerns about safety and quality of care.**



**NHS Grampian's Board** is the group of people who make sure NHS Grampian is run properly, follows the rules and sorts any problems.



NHS Grampian's Board is not asking good questions about the information it gets. They are not helping as much as they could to make services run well and be safe.

**4. NHS Grampian needs to get better at how they lead and manage the doctors better in their hospitals.**



The people in charge at NHS Grampian are not leading or supporting doctors well enough in all their hospitals.




They don't have plans in place to make this better.




There is harm to patients happening at NHS Grampian.

If NHS Grampian does not make things better there is a risk of more harm happening to patients.

NHS Grampian needs to make things better now.

## What we think NHS Grampian should do




We have asked NHS Grampian to look at **6 recommendations** that can help make things better.

A **recommendation** is an idea or suggestion about what should happen next to make things better.




**Recommendation 1: Create a clear long-term plan for Dr Gray's hospital.**




NHS Grampian should make a plan that says what services can be given safely at Dr Gray's Hospital.



They need to think about health services across North Scotland when planning. This is to make sure that patients can get access to all the safe, high-quality services they need.




NHS Grampian must ensure that there are enough staff in the hospital. They need to make sure that care is given safely now and in the future.




The plan must be clear about who is responsible for doing each thing in the plan and who they need to work together with.

**Recommendation 2: Improve how NHS Grampian's Board checks that services are safe and high quality.**

NHS Grampian's Board need to:



- Get better information to help it understand the issues properly.




- Ask more questions when information is missing or something does not seem right.




- Make sure they have enough staff available for each service.



- Look at how staff are supported to do their job well.




- Look at feedback from patients.




- Understand their role and show how they make decisions.

**Recommendation 3: NHS Grampian must lead and manage its doctors better.**

NHS Grampian needs to:




- Have a plan showing how many doctors are needed for each service.




- Make sure doctors have all the right skills for the jobs they do. This should be done by working with staff and people in charge.



- Have good information about how the plan is working.

**Recommendation 4: NHS Grampian should have fewer groups for making decisions.**



NHS Grampian has so many groups and ways of sharing information that it can be harder to make decisions.



NHS Grampian should decide what works best to help them share information and make decisions. They should not create any new groups they don't need to have.

**Recommendation 5: Other organisations including the Scottish Government should help check that NHS Grampian is getting better.**

NHS Grampian have shown they are not good at solving problems very well in the past.



NHS Grampian and the other organisations should agree how they will know things are getting better. They should work together to decide if progress is being made.




To show progress the organisations involved will need to make sure problems are being sorted and things are getting better for doctors and patients.

**Recommendation 6: NHS Grampian should get better at making decisions and explaining how decisions have been made.**



**Laura Skaife-Knight, NHS Grampian Chief Executive**



**Professor John Connaghan CBE, Interim Chair of NHS Grampian**

NHS Grampian's Chief Executive and Chair of the Board should lead the Board and its directors to sort out the issues in this report.

This will make sure:



- Everyone knows what is needed of them.




- That services work well.



- The right information is given to the right people.



- Everyone understands the information.




- Decisions are made by the right people.



- Concerns are looked at.

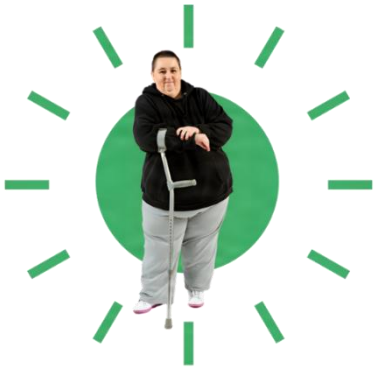


- Everything works and continues to make services better.

## What next

NHS Grampian must accept the problems highlighted in this report.

It is NHS Grampian's responsibility to make the changes we have recommended.



This will improve safety and care for staff and patients at NHS Grampian.

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