

NHS Shetland

Meeting:	Shetland NHS Board
Meeting date:	19 September 2023
Agenda reference:	Board Paper 2023/24/35
Title:	Temporary Revised Approach to Governance Arrangements
Responsible Executive/Non-Executive:	Gary Robinson
Report Author:	Carolyn Hand, Corporate Services Manager

1. Purpose

This is presented to the Board/Committee for:

- Decision

This report relates to:

- Government policy/directive
- Local policy

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

- Safe
- Effective
- Person-centred

2. Report summary

2.1. Situation

In light of current organisational pressures it is proposed the Board considers establishing temporary, appropriate governance arrangements that support the organisation for the next four months. It is not proposed to cancel any meetings, but to review and potentially reduce the matters considered at these in order to release additional capacity into the system.

Board Members are asked to consider their governance needs for the next four months in order to exercise safe, thorough and proportionate governance.

2.2. Background

A number of operational matters over and above business as normal are requiring to be progressed in a short space of time. This includes, but is not limited to, the implementation of the Allocate eRostering system. This is having a significant impact on staff, including heads of service and senior managers, who require the ability to focus on current workload demands. As such a more agile approach to governance arrangements for a short period of time would be welcomed.

2.3. Assessment

The Board must however ensure that the organisation continues to operate within an appropriate legal framework, acts in the best interests of the population, is efficient in the use of resources and puts the safety of staff and patients at the forefront of its efforts.

It is suggested Board and Standing Committees will go ahead in line with the Board's Business Programme. However, governance meeting Chairs and Executive Leads are requested to receive delegated authority to review agendas, in liaison with paper authors as required, to consider if there are items that can be held over, standing items that can be temporarily ceased, whether reporting by reception would be acceptable and whether verbal updates rather than written papers could suffice during this time. Guidance is included in the supporting paper.

This temporary revision to Board governance arrangements will be reviewed at each Board meeting ahead of a return to business as usual when appropriate.

3. List of appendices

The following appendices are included with this report:

Temporary revised approach to governance arrangements paper.



NHS Shetland Board

Temporary revised approach to Corporate Governance Arrangements

Gary Robinson, Chair

Carolyn Hand, Corporate Services Manager

Introduction

In light of current organisational pressures it has been proposed the Board considers establishing temporary, appropriate governance arrangements that support the organisation for the next four months. It is not proposed to cancel any meetings, but to review and potentially reduce the matters considered at these in order to release additional capacity into the system.

Board Members are asked to consider their governance needs for the next four months in order to exercise safe, thorough and proportionate governance.

Purpose of the Report

A number of operational matters over and above business as normal are requiring to be progressed in a short space of time. This includes, but is not limited to, the implementation of the Allocate eRostering system. The Board is asked to recognise the significant impact on staff, including heads of service and senior managers, who require the ability to focus on current workload demands. As such a more agile approach to governance arrangements for a short period of time would be welcomed.

The Board must however ensure that the organisation continues to operate within an appropriate legal framework, acts in the best interests of the population, is efficient in the use of resources and puts the safety of staff and patients at the forefront of its efforts.

The Board needs to ensure it provides support, and where appropriate, effective challenge regarding the information it receives, balancing this with allowing the organisation to maximise the time available for staff to focus on the delivery of additional operational asks.

Recommendations

1. The Board is asked to approve a temporary revised approach to corporate governance arrangements until the end of the calendar year by considering its governance needs based upon the principles of

agenda management at Appendix 1. If accepted, this will have the effect of reducing the time required by key individuals to support more typical governance arrangements while the current workload pressures continue.

2. Based on the decision taken at 1, Board/Standing Committee Chairs and respective Executive Leads are asked to meet and review business programmes for their areas for this period of time and determine, particularly in areas where performance is stable, where some efficiencies may be possible, taking a more agile approach to agenda management.
3. The following proposed changes to the business planning for the Board, and its governance committees, should be reviewed at each Board meeting so that a return to the more established arrangements can be achieved at the earliest opportunity.

Proposed Revised Governance Arrangements

Board and Standing Committees will go ahead in line with the Board's Business Programme.

Meeting Chairs and Executive Leads will review agendas, in liaison with paper authors as required, to consider if there are items that can be held over, standing items that can be temporarily ceased, whether reporting by reception would be acceptable and whether verbal updates rather than written papers could suffice during this time. The Chair and Executive leads should be given the authority to deploy the revised approach for their area of responsibility for the period in question.

What must still happen?

- Board meetings are still conducted in an open and transparent manner.
- Board and delegated Standing Committee business is transacted in accordance with the [Board's Standing Orders](#).
- Statutory and mandatory reporting requirements are met.
- Staff continue to recognise the authority of the Board and its Standing Committees to request information and updates in any area of business as required.

Key Risks to the approach

1. It is seen as a green light to 'not do governance'.
2. That key decisions needed to run the organisation or address areas of concern are held up.
3. Executive Board members and others cannot attend governance meetings due to the need to attend to operational matters.

Timescale for Review of Temporary Arrangements

This temporary revision to Board governance arrangements will be reviewed at each Board meeting ahead of a return to business as usual when appropriate.

Appendix 1 – Agenda planning considerations

The Board and the four governance Standing Committees – Audit, Clinical Governance, Finance and Performance and Staff Governance - all receive a mix of agenda items ranging from decision making papers to information for noting. The work of a number of sub committees feed into this process.

In considering adopting a more agile approach to agenda management for the next four months, it must be recognised that the work of each standing committee varies, so decisions about agenda management are required to be taken by those closest to the work strands (i.e. the Chair, the Executive Lead and the individuals that bring the agenda items). Guiding principles are as follows:

1. All planned agenda items/content/reports to be categorised and handled as follows:
 - i) Essential* – items come forward as normal.
 - ii) Desirable – potential for scaling back, e.g. to a reduced reporting style, reporting by exception or a verbal update.
 - iii) Discretionary – potential for scaling back as above, deferring to a later meeting or ceasing reporting for the period.

*All statutory and mandatory compliance will fall into this category.

In considering how to categorise agenda items, the following is proposed:

Essential: items are presented for decision/action, or are required for external scrutiny/regulatory requirements.

Desirable: items are more likely presented for awareness, in areas Board Members feel to be stable and strongly managed, have a good record of delivery and not likely to require immediate decisions.

Discretionary: Items presented for awareness, often one-off/bespoke items.

2. Based upon decisions made at 1. these will thereby translate into a reduction in business at sub or feeder committees for the same period.