

NHS Ayrshire & Arran



Meeting:	Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board
Meeting date:	Monday 23 May 2022
Title:	Corporate governance arrangements
Responsible Director:	Claire Burden, Chief Executive Lesley Bowie, Board Chair
Report Author:	Shona McCulloch, Head of Corporate Governance

1. Purpose

This is presented to Committee for:

- Decision

This paper relates to:

- Government policy/directive

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

- Safe, Effective, Person Centred

2. Report summary

2.1 Situation

The NHS across Scotland has been working under emergency conditions since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020.

The NHS Board has agreed interim governance arrangements during the pandemic period to enable the Board to continue to deliver our Corporate Governance arrangements with an agreed level of flexibility. With the Scottish Parliament announcement that NHS Scotland no longer remains on an emergency footing after 30 April 2022 ([S6W-08306 | Scottish Parliament Website](#)), the paper is presented to seek Board Members approval to return to normal Standing Committee corporate governance arrangements and to step down the flexibility that was introduced in November 2021.

2.2 Background

On 30 March 2020 the NHS Board agreed temporary arrangements to amend the arrangements for standing committees of the Board between end March and end May 2020 and stood down normal business and meetings of the standing committees. This excluded Audit and Risk Committee to ensure that final accounts could be approved.

During this period Integrated Governance Committee fulfilled any requirements for Covid-19 related and other governance matters.

On 25 May 2020 the NHS Board agreed a phased return of the normal cycle of meetings. It was also agreed that some flexibility would be supported so that items could be delayed where not statutory or mandated. Support was also given for verbal reports to Committees to minimise the time spent on detailed papers taking time away from the pandemic response.

On 24 May 2021 the NHS Board approved a return to normal governance committee meeting arrangements and stepped down the flexibility that was introduced in May 2020.

On 29 November 2021 the NHS Board agreed a flexible and slimmed down approach to corporate governance arrangements, whilst agreeing the importance of maintaining the Board's standing committees. This was adopted for Standing Committee meetings from November 2021 and enabled items to be delayed where not statutory or mandated. Support was also given for verbal reports to Committees to minimise the time spent on detailed papers taking time away from the pandemic response. The need for operational colleagues to attend meetings was reduced wherever possible.

2.3 Assessment

The flexibility agreed by the NHS Board in November 2021 has remained in place although it is recognised that colleagues have progressed a phased return to normal standing committee business as much as possible through the March and May cycle of meetings.

The Director-General for Health & Social Care and Chief Executive of NHS Scotland wrote to all Health Boards on 27 April to advise the intent nationally to start to look forward to recover and renew our health and care system. On 29 April health boards were advised that the Scottish Parliament announced that NHS Scotland would no longer remain on an emergency footing after 30 April 2022.

To align our local status with this intent and advice the Board Chief Executive and Board Chair have reviewed the continued flexibility our interim arrangements has provided to committees and recommend to Board Members to return to normal standing committee governance arrangements.

It is recognised that we may in future require to respond to future Covid outbreaks and if required revisit governance committee arrangements.

2.3.1 Quality/patient care

The proposal will enable a return to the planned annual programme of work for all standing committees and reporting on quality and patient care to appropriate timescales.

2.3.2 Workforce

This proposal may impact on workforce in operational areas as we aim to return to our normal reporting arrangements to Standing Committees of the Board.

2.3.3 Financial

There is no financial impact from a return to our normal standing committee arrangements.

2.3.4 Risk assessment/management

The temporary arrangements that have been in place minimised any risks to the organisation. A return to normal governance committee arrangements will enable those matters which require governance committee or Board scrutiny to be managed appropriately and timeously.

2.3.5 Equality and diversity, including health inequalities

An impact assessment has not been completed because a return to our normal corporate governance arrangements will not negatively impact on any protected characteristics.

2.3.6 Other impacts

There are no other impacts.

2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

There is no requirement for engagement with external stakeholders. The format of Board meetings will remain under review in terms of enabling the public to attend. This is via MSTeams at present in order meet continued Covid-19 guidelines within health and care settings for physical distancing. The public are able to join the meeting via MSTeams.

2.3.8 Route to the meeting

This is submitted directly to the NHS Board.

2.4 Recommendation

For decision. To align our status with the letters from The Director-General for Health & Social Care and Chief Executive of NHS Scotland of 27 and 29 April, Board Members are asked to approve a return to normal Standing Committee corporate governance arrangements and to step down the flexibility that was introduced in November 2021.