

November 5, 2021

Sent to you on behalf of NHS Grampian Chief Executive Caroline Hiscox and Interim Chair of NHS Grampian Board, John Tomlinson.

In yesterday's Daily Brief I committed to writing to you, on behalf of John and I, about how we will organise ourselves to meet the challenges we face over the next six months and beyond. Yesterday at the Board we agreed some immediate actions to help.

Throughout the pandemic I have been very conscious of the enormous ask that has been placed on you, our staff and indeed your families. For all of your efforts in these exceptional times, you have my utmost respect and gratitude.

As most of you will be all too aware, the entire health and care system is struggling and Grampian is no exception. There are visible examples of this including; rising unplanned admissions to hospital, significant ambulance waits, extended waiting times for urgent elective care and cancer, extended waiting times for routine surgery and, in community settings, access to primary and social care has been constrained.

We are in what continues to be an enduring period of pressure. Many of the issues we face will take a significant period to improve to get to where we want to be. There are no simple 'fixes' to the situation we are in, we need to redesign our health and care system for the next chapter of how we deliver our services to the people of the north east.

Whilst not diminishing the distress that the pandemic has brought, I believe it also gives us a golden opportunity. Our current system was never designed to meet the challenges we now face. Many of you have told me that it wasn't sustainable before, the virus has simply brought this forward. This is a lesson for me that we need to listen more. Our "Plan for the Future" seeks to create, with you, the public and our partners, a sustainable system that is fit for the future. The Plan will be considered by the NHS Grampian Board in February 2022, but in the meantime we have winter ahead of us.

Just as we have named previous waves of the pandemic Operation Rainbow and Operation Snowdrop, this coming period will be named **OPERATION IRIS** to help everyone identify with the plan. Operation Iris is likely to run from right now until to April 2022 but this will be reviewed in the spring.

In the first wave we kept a relatively short list of critical services going, whilst turning almost all of our collective effort to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic – keeping our population and our staff safe. During Operation Iris, our list of 'critical services' includes almost all aspects of health care – we need to get our services all back on track whilst still maintaining our now well-rehearsed COVID-19 response.

The main intent of Operation Iris is to stabilise our system. The NHS Grampian Board and the leadership teams the length and breadth of the north east are working for you and with you to navigate our way through more stormy waters. Be assured that we are listening and working hard to steer us through.

I look forward to bringing you news of more developments over the weeks and months ahead and thank you for all that you do every day.

Caroline & John



Professor Caroline Hiscox
Chief Executive
NHS Grampian



John Tomlinson
Interim Chair
NHS Grampian