NHS Ayrshire & Arran

Meeting:	**Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board**
Meeting date:	**Monday 10 August 2026**
Title:	**Area Clinical Forum Annual Report 2025/26**
Responsible Director:	**Gordon James, Chief Executive**
Report Author:	**Dr Tom Hopkins, Area Clinical Forum Chair**

1. Purpose

This is presented to the Committee for:
- Decision

This paper relates to:
- Government policy/directive
- Local policy

This aligns to the following NHSScotland quality ambition(s):
- Safe, Effective and Person Centred

This supports the following Corporate Objectives:
- **Better Value –** Delivering innovative and sustainable services for everyone - oversight of sustainability, reform and resource use
- **Better Workplace** – Creating a great place for us to work - Cross-organisation governance and accountability
- **Better Care** – Improving your experience of care - oversight of programmes and risks impacting care delivery

2. Report summary

2.1 Situation

The Area Clinical Forum (ACF) Committee provides an assurance report annually to the NHS Board which sets out key achievements through the year in discharging its constitution and terms of reference. Included with the annual report is the ACF Constitution/Terms of Reference for Board approval.

2.2 Background

Area Clinical Forums are an established component of NHS Board governance arrangements and provide a mechanism for multidisciplinary professional advice to inform Board decision-making. National guidance (CEL 16 (2010)) emphasises the role of Area Clinical Forums and Professional Committees in supporting service planning, healthcare quality, clinical engagement and strategic development. NHS

Ayrshire & Arran's Area Clinical Forum brings together the Chairs of the professional advisory committees to provide coordinated professional advice and assurance to the Board.

2.3 Assessment

To demonstrate that the Area Clinical Forum has discharged its responsibilities in accordance with its Constitution and Terms of Reference, the attached annual report summarises the work of the Forum and its constituent Professional Committees during 2025/26. The report includes details of membership, attendance, key activities and achievements during the year, and highlights areas where professional advice, engagement and leadership have supported the Board's strategic priorities. The Constitution/Terms of Reference and approved annual Workplan are also provided as appendices.

Key Messages from 2025/26

- The Area Clinical Forum continued to provide professional advice and assurance across key strategic programmes, including urgent care developments, workforce planning and digital transformation.
- Professional Committees strengthened engagement with both current and future healthcare professionals, including increased involvement of nursing students and expanded professional representation.
- Leadership development and professional collaboration were promoted through participation in national networks, leadership programmes and dedicated development events.
- Committees contributed to service redesign, transformation initiatives and quality improvement activities, ensuring professional perspectives informed decision-making.
- Collectively, this work has supported the delivery of safe, effective and sustainable services across NHS Ayrshire & Arran.

2.3.1 Quality/patient care

Through the provision of multidisciplinary professional advice and assurance, the Area Clinical Forum supports safe, effective and person-centred care by ensuring professional perspectives inform service planning, redesign and quality improvement activity.

2.3.2 Workforce

While this assurance report does not present any direct workforce implications requiring Board action, the work of the Area Clinical Forum and Professional Committees supports workforce development, professional leadership, engagement and succession planning across a range of professional groups.

2.3.3 Financial

There are no financial implications

2.3.4 Risk assessment/management

The annual report process ensures an assessment of committee business against the agreed Terms of Reference. This mitigates against the risk of any gaps in assurance and supports the NHS Board's annual assurance statement.

2.3.5 Equality and diversity, including health inequalities
An impact assessment has not been completed because this is an assurance reporting paper.

2.3.6 Best value
This paper supports Best Value across the following themes.

- Governance and accountability

2.3.7 Other impacts
No other relevant impacts

2.3.8 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation
This paper requires no engagement with external stakeholders.

2.3.9 Route to the meeting
The annual report was considered and virtually approved by Area Clinical Forum on 30 July 2026.

2.4 Recommendation

For decision. Board Members are asked to:

- Receive the report for assurance and note the progress of the Area Clinical Forum in 2025-2026.
- Approve the constitution noting that no changes were made at the 2026 review.

3. List of appendices

Appendix 1 - ACF annual report for 2025-2026
Annex 1 - Constitution/Terms of Reference
Annex 2 - Approved workplan

NHS Ayrshire & Arran Area Clinical Forum

Annual Report for 2025/26

1. Summary

1.1 The Area Clinical Forum (ACF) continued its transition to a more proactive and strategic model of engagement, supporting early clinical and professional input into the Board's key priorities. A structured annual work plan and calendar of speakers were developed, aligned to the Board's strategic objectives for the year. This enabled programme and project leads to attend ACF meetings to present emerging work, seek advice and engage with Professional Committees at an early stage, ensuring that professional perspectives inform service planning, transformation and decision-making.

Governance arrangements introduced in 2024 have now been embedded. The ACF Annual Report continues to be submitted directly to the NHS Board, while Professional Committee Annual Reports and Terms of Reference are considered through the ACF. This approach has strengthened oversight, improved alignment between the ACF and Professional Committees, and supported a coordinated professional contribution to the delivery of Board priorities.

1.2 **Key Messages**

- The multidisciplinary expertise of the ACF and Professional Committees continues to provide valuable clinical advice and constructive challenge, helping to ensure that service developments are safe, effective and person-centred.
- Committees continue to prioritise digital maturity, integrated records and technology-enabled service improvement as key enablers of transformation.
- The shift toward prevention, community-based care and improved patient access pathways remains a key strategic direction.
- The ACF supports the Board's focus on sustainable service models, improving patient flow, planned and unscheduled care performance, and delivering transformation in line with the Caring for Ayrshire vision.
- Stronger alignment between the ACF, Professional Committees and Board governance arrangements has improved oversight and supports a coordinated professional contribution to the achievement of the Board's strategic priorities.

2. Remit

2.1 The ACF Constitution is included as Annex 1 to this report.

3. Membership

3.1 The Committee's membership during the reporting period was as follows:

Dr Tom Hopkins ACF Chair, Area Medical Professional Committee Co-Chair and Hospital Sub Committee Chair
Mr Iain Fulton and Ms Annmarie Crowe, Area Pharmaceutical Professional Committee Co-Chairs
Mr Ed Coote, Area Dental Professional Committee Chair
Mr Alistair Duff, Area Optical Professional Committee Chair
Dr Rachel Fraser, Area Medical Professional Committee Co-Chair and GP Sub Committee Chair
Ms Suzanne Kean and Ms Alison Wallace, Area Allied Health Professions Professional Committee Co-Chairs
Frances McCluskey and Karen Little, Area Nursing and Midwifery Professional Committee Co-Chairs
Dr Peter Ronald, Area Psychology Professional Committee Chair

The Chief Executive, Medical Director, Nurse Director and Director of Public Health are invited to attend meetings.

4. Meeting

4.1 The Committee met on six occasions between 18 May 2025 and 20 March 2026.

4.2 The NHS Board has previously agreed that attendance at Committee meetings should be recorded in the relevant Annual Report. The attendance record of each member is shown below (Y indicates attended).

	Dates					
Member	16/05/25	01/08/2025	19/09/25	21/11/25	23/01/26	20/03/26
Dr Tom Hopkins (Chair)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Iain Fulton/ Annmarie Crowe	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ed Coote			Y		Y	Y
Alistair Duff	Y	Y		Y	Y	
Rachel Fraser	Y			Y	Y	Y
Suzanne Kean/ Alison Wallace	Y	Y			Y	Y
Frances McCluskey/Karen Little	Y	Y		y	Y	Y
Mr Peter Ronald		Y	Y	Y		Y

5. Committee Activities

5.1 The Area Clinical Forum considered updates on Flow Navigation Centre and Urgent Care developments, Caring for Ayrshire and Level 4 planning, workforce and staffing initiatives, and digital transformation programmes including the Integrated Care Record.

Regular updates from Professional Committees ensured professional views and emerging issues continued to inform ACF discussions and assurance role. Highlighted from Committees are provided below:

5.2 **Investing in the Future Nursing Workforce(ANMPC)**
The Area Nursing and Midwifery Professional Committee welcomed nursing students as core members of the committee. Their inclusion has brought fresh perspectives, strengthened engagement with the future workforce and demonstrated a commitment to developing the next generation of nursing leaders.

5.3 **Strengthening Collaboration Across Scotland**
Committee leaders established links with Nursing and Midwifery Professional Committees across Scotland to share good practice and explore innovative approaches to membership, governance and engagement. This collaborative work supports continuous improvement and professional networking.

5.4 **Promoting Leadership in Pharmacy (APPC)**
The Area Pharmaceutical Professional Committee benefited from the experiences of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians involved in the Scottish Clinical Leadership Fellows Programme. Their contributions have supported a culture of leadership, innovation and service improvement across pharmacy services.

5.5 **Supporting Safe and Sustainable Pharmaceutical Care**
The pharmacy committee continued to provide professional oversight across acute, primary care and community pharmacy sectors. Through engagement with transformation programmes, quality improvement activity and national consultations, members helped support safe, effective and sustainable care.

5.6 **Psychology Influencing Service Planning (APsyPC)**
The Area Psychology Professional Committee worked constructively with psychology teams and service managers to consider proposed changes affecting clinical bases and service delivery. This collaborative approach ensured professional perspectives informed decision-making and patient care considerations.

5.7 **Growing Professional Representation**
The psychology committee expanded its membership and strengthened links with psychological services across the organisation, improving opportunities for engagement, consultation and professional representation.

5.8 **General Practice Leadership and Engagement (GPSub)**
The GP Subcommittee maintained strong participation and attendance, representing the views of general practitioners at both local and national levels. Members contributed actively to service redesign discussions and wider strategic conversations across the health and care system.

5.9 **Creating Space for Shared Reflection**
A dedicated development day enabled GP representatives to reflect on common challenges, identify priorities and build stronger collective leadership. This collaborative event helped shape future priorities and strengthened professional engagement.

6. Priorities for 2025/26

6.1 To strengthen the influence of the ACF and Professional Committees, ensure professional voices continue to inform strategic change, support workforce and staffing developments, provide assurance on Caring for Ayrshire and Level 4 programmes, and maintain oversight of key digital and service transformation initiatives aligning with the Board's strategic priorities.

7. Chair's Comments

7.1 This has been another significant year for the Area Clinical Forum as members continued to provide independent professional advice and constructive challenge on a range of strategic developments.
The ACF welcomed engagement with Executive Leads and programme teams on Caring for Ayrshire, Level 4 planning, Primary Care and Urgent Care redesign, workforce planning, implementation of the Health and Care Staffing (Scotland) Act, and digital transformation programmes.

I would like to thank members and Professional Committee Chairs for their continued commitment and contribution. Through regular updates from the Professional Committees, this has ensured that professional perspectives have informed discussions and supported the Board's decision-making processes during a period of continued change and service transformation.

Looking ahead, ACF will continue to strengthen the influence of professional voices, support delivery of Caring for Ayrshire and Level 4 developments, and provide assurance on workforce, staffing and digital transformation priorities across NHS Ayrshire & Arran

Dr Tom Hopkins
Chair – Area Clinical Forum
21/07/2026

Approved virtually by ACF
30/07/2026

Area Clinical Forum

Constitution and Terms of Reference

1. Title

This Committee will be known as the Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board Area Clinical Forum (ACF).

2. Duties and functions

The core function of the Area Clinical Forum should be to support the work of the NHS Board by:

- Reviewing the business of the Area Professional Committees to ensure a co-ordinated approach on clinical matters among the different professions and within the component parts of the local NHS system (acute services, primary care, health improvement etc);
- Promoting work on service design, redesign and development priorities and playing an active role in advising the NHS Board on potential for service improvement;
- Sharing best practice among the different professions and actively promoting multi-disciplinary working – in both health care and health improvement;
- Engaging widely with local clinicians and other professionals, with a view to encouraging broader participation in the work of Area Professional Committees;
- Providing the NHS Board with a clinical perspective on the development of the Strategic Plan and the NHS Board's strategic objectives;
- Investigating and taking forward particular issues on which clinical input is required on behalf of the NHS Board, taking into account the evidence base, best practice, clinical governance etc and make proposals for their resolution. The Committee should be pro-active as well as re-active on these issues;
- Advising the NHS Board on specific proposals to improve the integration of services, both within local NHS systems and across health and social care.

a) The Chair of the Area Clinical Forum will, subject to formal appointment by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, serve as a Non-Executive Director of the NHS Ayrshire & Arran Board.
b) The Forum must not concern itself with remuneration and conditions of service.

3. Membership of the Forum

The membership of the Forum will be comprised of Chairs (or in the case of the Area Medical Committee, 2 Co-Chairs) of the Area Professional Committees as follows:

- Allied Health Professions
- Dental
- Healthcare Science
- Medical Practitioners (GPs and Hospitals)
- Nursing and Midwifery
- Optical
- Pharmaceutical
- Psychology

3.1 Attending

Persons other than members may be invited to attend a meeting for discussion of specific items at the request of the Chair. The NHS Board Chief Executive, Director of Public Health and Board designated Lead Director shall be expected to attend meetings of the Forum. All the above will take part in the discussions but do not have voting rights. Non-Executive members will be invited to attend as required. Vice Chairs of each Professional Committee may attend if they wish.

4. Sub Committees

The Forum may appoint ad hoc Sub-Committees as appropriate to consider and provide advice on specific issues.

5. Tenure of office

Members will serve for a maximum of 4 consecutive years and will be eligible for re-election up to a maximum of 8 years, however in exceptional circumstances, ACF can agree to extend the maximum term. If a member resigns or retires, the appropriate Area Professional Committee will choose a replacement. The replacement will hold office for the remainder of the period for which the member he/she replaces would have held office.

Should a Professional Committee Chair be elected as Chair of the Area Clinical Forum, with agreement from the relevant Professional Committee and Area Clinical Forum and approval of the NHS Board, the term of office of the Professional Committee Chair may be extended to enable the four year term of office of Chair of ACF to be fulfilled.

It is recognised that this will also require consideration of membership terms of office to ensure that no staff are disadvantaged should they wish to be nominated to join a Committee through the normal election process.

6. Office bearers of the Area Clinical Forum

The Forum will elect from within its membership the following officer bearers:

- Chair
- Vice Chair

The ACF Chair must be the Chair of their respective Professional Committee.

Should a member be elected to the role of ACF Chair or Vice Chair, the incumbent would normally hold office for 4 years, following which there would be an election process. The Chair will be eligible for re-election to a maximum of 8 years, however in exceptional circumstances, the Board can agree to extend the term of office.

Normally the Chair and Vice Chair will be drawn from different Professional Committees.

The Chair and Vice Chair will have discretionary powers to act on behalf of the Forum but in doing so will be answerable to the Forum.

The Chair, whom failing the Vice-Chair will, except in exceptional circumstances, attend meetings of the NHS Board.

The Chair may nominate another member or representative of the Forum to attend meetings of the NHS Board or other meetings if the Vice Chair is unable to attend.

The office bearers will aim at all times to reflect the views of those within the Forum.

7. Selection of a Chair and Vice Chair of the Area Clinical Forum

Chairs of the Area Professional Committees will be eligible for selection as Chair of the Area Clinical Forum. The following process will be used:

- The ACF Chair will produce a Job Specification agreed by the NHS Board Chair.
- Chair gives 12 weeks' notice of effective resignation or 12 weeks before the end of an incumbent's term of office an election date will be set.
- Following the elections to the Professional Committees and the appointment of office bearers, Chairs and Vice Chairs will be formally notified of an election date and closing date for nominations within one week of an election date being set by the Head of Corporate Governance (Returning Officer).
- Nominations for candidates should be submitted in writing to Head of Corporate Governance (Returning Officer).
- Nominees will submit written details, not in excess of 500 words, of what they can contribute to the post, to the NHS Ayrshire and Arran Head of Corporate Governance. These will be distributed in a common format to Vice Chairs of all Professional Committees who will facilitate discussions of the Professional Committees.
- Each Professional Committee Chair will be provided with a ballot paper to submit by 12 noon on the election date. Ballots can be submitted either by post or in person to the Corporate Department, Eglinton House, Ailsa Hospital, Ayr KA6 6AB.
- Each Committee will consider all of the candidates and provide their respective Chair with their preferred choice of candidate. If there are only one or two candidates, a first past the post electoral system will be used. Under the first past the post system, a successful Chair must receive 50% or more of the eligible votes. In the event of each candidate having 50% support, the final decision will be made by lot. This process will be supervised by the Board Chair.
- If there are more than two candidates, a single transferable vote electoral system will be used to ensure a Chair has at least 50% support.

- The ballot result will be announced to the Professional Committees by the Head of Corporate Governance (Returning Officer) and submitted to the Chair of the NHS Board for recommendation to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport.

Following the election of the Chair, the same process will be followed for the election of the Vice Chair (with the exception of a recommendation to the Cabinet Secretary).

8. Notice of meetings

The Committee Secretary will send agenda, minutes and notices of meetings to every member of the Forum 5 working days before the day of the meeting. Failure by one or more members to receive papers will not invalidate proceedings.

9. Minutes

Minutes of meetings of the ACF will be drawn up by the Committee Secretary and draft copies will be sent to each member normally within 5 days of the meeting. The draft will be approved at the following meeting of the ACF. Once ratified, the minutes will be signed by the Chair of the ACF and published on the Area Clinical Forum intranet page.

10. Meetings

Meetings will usually be held on an 8-weekly basis to synchronise with the NHS Board meeting calendar, but this can be varied at the discretion of the Chair.

The Forum has the right to alter or vary these arrangements to cover holiday months or other circumstances.

<u>Forum Members</u>

In the event of a member of the Forum being unable to attend, apologies for absence should be sent to the Committee Secretary.

<u>Persons not Members of the Forum</u>

The Forum will have the power to invite persons who are not members of the Forum to attend meetings.

11. Quorum

Five Committees represented at the Area Clinical Forum will be deemed a quorum. In the exceptional circumstances that the Chair and Vice Chair are not able to attend, those present will nominate a temporary Chair.

12. Forum decision

Where the Forum is asked to give advice on a matter and a majority decision is reached, the Chair will report the majority view to the NHS Board but will also make known any minority opinion and present the supporting arguments for all view points.

13. Requesting meetings

Two members may, by writing to the Chair, request an extraordinary meeting of the Forum and should specify the business to be discussed at such a meeting. The Chair's decision on whether to accede to the request will be final, and must be reported to the next ordinary meeting of the Forum.

14. Administrative support

Administrative support to the Forum will be provided by the Committee Secretary. This will include the review of policy documents, summarising the documents and ensuring that they are issued for consideration and/or consultation as appropriate and to the relevant Area Professional Committees. Additionally the Committee Secretary will ensure that copies of the minutes, agenda and other relevant papers are prepared and circulated for the attention of the Area Clinical Forum.

15. Conduct of meetings

The Chair will be responsible for the conduct of the meetings and for ensuring that the agreed recommendations of the Area Clinical Forum are conveyed to the NHS Board.

16. Alterations to the Constitution and Standing Orders

Proposals for alterations will be progressed only by a majority of not less than two thirds of the member Committee at a special meeting of the Forum called for purpose, of which, at least 21 days notice will be given setting out the proposed alteration or amendment. Such alterations or amendments so agreed will be intimated to each member of the Forum.

The proposals must be submitted to the NHS Board for approval before implementation.

17. Delegates powers of Sub Committees

Sub-Committees will have delegated to them such powers as may be agreed by the Forum. The Forum will approve all Standing Sub-Committee Constitutions.

18. Confidentiality

All members of the Forum will be responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of NHS Ayrshire and Arran documents. The Chair will rule where necessary to advise on the confidentiality of documents.

19. Conflict of interest

Members are elected to act objectively and will declare any possible conflict of interests as soon as possible after the commencement of a meeting.

20. Expenses

Members of the Forum and Sub-Committees who incur reasonable expenses will have travelling and other allowances, including compensation for the loss of remunerative time, defrayed by the NHS Board, subject to the approval of the Scottish Ministers. Payments will only be made as respects the exercise of functions conferred and where they are not met by any other body.

Version:	Date:	Summary of Changes:	Approved by
1.0	31/03/2014	Review of constitution. Add a maximum 8 year term of office for a member of ACF.	NHS Board
2.0	03/12/2018	Review of constitution. 2.a) addition to clarify that the Chair of the ACF will, subject to formal appointment by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, serve as a Non Executive Director of the NHS Ayrshire & Arran Board. 5. Tenure of office, ACF can agree an extension to Members normal 8 year maximum term in exceptional circumstances 6. Simplified term of office arrangements for ACF Chair and Vice Chair. Addition that 8 year maximum term can be extended with agreement of ACF members and the NHS Board. 9. Signed minutes will be published on the ACF Intranet page	NHS Board 3 December 2018
3.0	30/07/2020	Additional wording under “Tenure of Office” to clarify process to fulfil ACF Chair role.	NHS Board 17 August 2020
3.1	27/01/2023	Annual review of constitution – minor formatting changes and update Corporate Business Manager title to Head of Corporate Governance	NHS Board
3.2	17/01/2025	Annual review of constitution – no changes made.	NHS Board 2 June 2025
3.3	20/03/2026	Annual review of constituent – no change	NHS Board

AFC Workplan 2026-27

ACF Agenda item/topic	**Lead**	20-Mar-26	15-May-26	21 Aug 26 face to face	02-Oct-26	04-Dec-26	22-Jan-27	26-Mar-27	Purpose
Paper deadline		14-Feb-26	24-Apr-26	18-Jul-26	05-Sep-26	04-Nov-26	18-Dec-26	25-Feb-27	
Standing items									
Introductory remarks, welcome and apologies	Chair	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Minute of previous meeting	Chair	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Decision
Matters arising/action log	Chair	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Discussion
ACF business	Chair	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Discussion
Key topics/work programmes									
ACF engagement with NHS Board	Chair								
Caring for Ayrshire	Chair/ Chief Executive	Y Chief Exec		Y					Discussion – CE
Flow Navigation Centre and Primary Care	DMD PC/ Hd PUC				-		Y		Discussion
Digital Services/ integrated care record	Nicola Graham/Marie Richmond		~~Y~~	Y		Y			Discussion – Marie Richmond
Health and Care Staffing (Scotland) Bill	Alistair Reid			Y	-		Y		
HR update inc. Culture work + EHRC upate	Sarah Leslie			-	-				Discussion - tbc
Heatlh and Social Care Partnership updates									
East Ayrshire	Craig McArthur	-							tbc
North Ayrshire	Caroline Cameron								tbc
South Ayrshire	Mark Inglis					-			tbc

AFC Workplan 2026-27

To note NHS Board Papers	All members	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Discussion
Key items report from Prof Committee Chairs	All members	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Awareness
Corporate Governance									
Engagement with ACF and Prof Committees	Head of Corp Gov (HOCG)					?Y			
ACF annual report	ACF Chair	Y		-				Y	
ACF ToR review	ACF Chair	Y					Y		Decision
Prof Committee Constitutions/ToRs	Prof Committee Chairs	Y							Decision
Approval of ACF meeting dates	ACF members	Y				Y			Decision