Board Development

## Board Development Reference Group – 4th August 2026

Note of meeting

This is an informal note of the key issues raised at the session.

### Attendance

[redacted]

### Apologies

[redacted]

### Item 1 Welcome and Introductions

[redacted] welcomed the group to the meeting.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

### Item 4 Board Development Report April 2026

The group reviewed the Board Development Report and thanked the Board Development Team for the work in producing the helpful report and on the programme over the last year.

In discussion the group discussed:

- That the programme is useful for executives and others as well as non-executives but also recognised the importance of balancing widening the programme to executives with maintaining safe spaces for non-executive directors.
- Ongoing challenges regarding the availability, time commitment and engagement of some board members, for example employee directors.
- The link to appraisals where Board chairs have a prompt to raising levels of engagement with board development resources.
- The need to engage directly with those few boards who are making less use of the programme.
- The value of the report, recognising that this was produced for this group and therefore not for wider sharing, not least due to upcoming changes via Programme for Government which will be published later in the year.

**Actions**

- Contact the Board Chair and Board Secretary in those few boards who have lower engagement levels with the Board Development Programme (Lead: [redacted])
- Continue engagement efforts with employee directors and stakeholder members by seeking direct input and addressing scheduling constraints. (Lead: [redacted])

**Item 5 Board Reporting**

The group considered a proposal around a strengthened approach to Board reporting, via a paper which was considered and supported by NHS Board Chairs and Chief Executives.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- Members shared positive experiences where the proposed approach has been adopted and helped to distinguish common cause variation from genuine performance improvements, helping boards to focus on those things that matter most. The group emphasised that data must be supported by a clear narrative ("what, so what, what next") to maintain strategic clarity and highlight sustainable improvements. This is part of the evidence-based approach.

- Recognition that, as some boards in Scotland have adopted this approach we could do more to share examples and learning from this work.
- The importance of Chairs of Governance committees being closely involved in how this development is rolled out in local areas.

Actions:

- Present a progress update in December regarding the use of this approach to Board reporting, including Scottish case studies. (Lead: [redacted])

[redacted]

**Item 7 Guidance for Noting - Use of AI for Non-Executive Directors; and Support for Writing for Boards and Governance Committees**

The group reviewed newly developed guidance documents on report writing clarity and the ethical use of AI. The AI guidance was produced in collaboration with the Ethical Standards Commissioner and external experts to provide concise resources for board chairs. The report writing guidance aims to improve clarity and assurance within board papers.

The group welcomed the two documents which should be helpful for Boards and encouraged the team to circulate them widely.

Actions:

- Finalise amendments to the report writing guidance, distribute the most current version to boards, and present it at the upcoming Board Secretaries meeting. (Lead: [redacted])

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]