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Annex D Board Development Report
Public Services Delivery Scotland (PSD Scotland)

This report was shared with the Board Development Reference Group (BDRG) at its meeting on 04 August 2026.

Board Development Report – April 2026 (updated November 2026)

Key messages

- **Delivery:** Strong reach across the programme, including high usage of TURAS resources, masterclasses, new Non-executive Director Teams channel, Board Secretary and corporate governance support, and provision of engagement reports for every Board.
- **Networks :** Launched the Masterclass series and the Non-executive Director Teams Community. Established the Board Secretary and corporate governance administrator workstream.
- **Evaluation:** Feedback is positive, with average scores around 8/10 and clear impact from Aspiring Chairs, Board Secretary support, communications support, mentoring and Active Governance.
- **Engagement:** Uptake varies. Some Boards engage across the full offer; others more limited.
- **Improvement priorities:** Sharpen the programme's link to live governance issues, improve integration across the offer, increase impact and modernise delivery around current governance needs and new ways of learning.

1. The Future

Why the next phase needs to be different

This paper opens with the future because, from a solid foundation, there is more impact we can make towards improving Board Governance, particularly given **public sector reform.** We have built good relationships across Boards and with key experts, we have an opportunity to use that foundation more deliberately: **to support reform, respond to governance risks and make a stronger contribution** as part of the wider system of governance in Boards**.**

The current programme is well reviewed, but to a degree, fragmented. Boards and individuals can opt in, which means flexibility, but uptake is patchy in areas where we know there is need. **Sections 2–8 set out achievements to date** and provides the evidence base for this future direction. We are proposing a more **integrated and modern approach**.

What will change in practice

The next phase should position Board Development as a governance improvement intervention: helping Boards strengthen assurance, risk oversight, accountability and

whole-Board capability. It should move from separate activities to a more integrated governance improvement offer. It should help Boards identify priority governance issues, access the right support at the right time, and apply learning in practical Board business.

We understand how much information boards must deal with. We plan to anchor our work around core aspects of good governance in Boards.

The offer will be shaped by Blueprint self-assessment, independent assessment, engagement data, Board feedback, escalation learning and wider governance evidence, including from Audit Scotland and the Scottish Parliament. Strong relationships with Chairs, non-executives, executives, Board Secretaries, governance teams, sponsors and external experts will be essential to making the offer even more relevant, credible and practical.

Future programme model		
Diagnose Use Blueprint self-assessment, independent assessment, engagement summaries and governance intelligence to understand Board needs.	**Target support** Offer whole-Board, committee, role-based and bespoke support linked to live governance issues. Supplemented by support for individuals depending on experience and development needs.	**Embed and evidence** Use Once for Scotland tools, peer learning and impact tracking to support adoption and improvement.

The table below shows some of the changes we plan to make.

Area	Now	Future
Getting the basics right	Practice is variable across Boards	Support to ensure that the basics are in place, as set out in laws and guidance, for example, meeting arrangements, succession planning, publication of papers, conflicts of interest, register of interests.
Self-assessment	Facilitation for some Boards.	Core driver of support, using self-assessment survey results, 'Once for Scotland' tools and local action planning. Links to other programmes.

External review	To be introduced during financial year 2026-27.	Outputs from this will be useful to connect to this development programme.
Masterclasses	Mainly for non-executives; strong speakers and feedback.	Retain NED space and add sessions for executives, governance teams and whole Boards, with clearer actions.
Space to share tricky issues	NED action learning sets work well; wider national offer has low uptake.	Keep valued NED/Chair sets and explore adaptive learning sets linked to adaptive leadership.
Bespoke local support	Reactive support for Board requests.	Targeted support linked to self-assessment, local issues, escalation learning and national expertise.
Board Secretary and governance support	Training and mentoring with strong demand.	Continue mentoring, peer support and training; develop a handbook and join up governance support.
Turas and resources	Useful resources; navigation and uptake vary.	Simpler themed landing page, role-based pathways and shorter resources.
NED mentoring and buddying	Traditional, largely self-selected mentoring.	More purposeful matching with peers and experts around specific issues.
Communications	Multiple routes: newsletter, Teams, emails, Secretaries and Chairs.	Clearer plan, shorter outputs, themed signposting and better use of engagement data.

Measuring impact

Currently, our impact evidence is weighted towards uptake, attendance and individual learner evaluation feedback. To have a stronger role as part of overall governance improvements in Boards, a more rigorous approach would track adoption, implementation and observable changes in governance practice.

The impact approach should focus on five tests: are Boards being reached, are they using the support, are Once for Scotland tools and self-assessment actions being adopted, are we seeing any early warning signs of things going wrong and is there observable or reported improvement in governance practice.

2. Overall engagement by NHS board

Boards are engaging with different parts of the programme, reflecting their size and local needs. Direct comparison is difficult, but the table gives a broad indication of individual engagement across NHS boards. Lower uptake may indicate gaps in capacity, awareness or understanding of the offer. We use various promotional approaches including direct emails to target audience, newsletter, teams channel, via Board Secretaries.

	eLearning modules	**Masterclass**	**Governance teams mentoring & minute training**	**Bespoke local Board support**	**Aspiring Chairs Programme**
Measure	*Average module completion rate across 7 modules*	*Count of session attendances by Board*	*Count of attendance*	*Count of attendance*	*Count of hosts and Aspiring Chairs*
NHS A&A	34%	30	0	15	*
NHS Borders	15%	*	0	0	*
NHS D&G	14%	*	16	7	*
NHS Fife	71%	41	*	19	*
NHS FV	21%	20	8	36	*
NHS Grampian	31%	21	7	0	*
NHS GGC	63%	49	*	0	*
Golden Jubilee	19%	16	0	16	*
NHS Highland	11%	34	*	19	*
HIS	25%	29	15	14	*
NHS Lanarkshire	27%	10	*	0	*
NHS Lothian	6%	12	80	0	*
PHS	76%	16	*	0	7
PSDS	41%	31	8	26	9
NHS Orkney	44%	15	*	20	*
SAS	19%	24	0	0	*
NHS Shetland	9%	16	*	15	*
State Hospital	4%	7	*	0	*
NHS Tayside	14%	44	6	0	*
NHS WI	39%	16	0	0	0

NHS24	81%	21	*	0	*
Other			11		
Total		*	*	187	*

*Masterclass figures are the sums of the ten session columns in the detailed attendance table, from June 2025 through September 2026, including Whistleblowing and Population Health. They count session attendances attributed to each Board, not unique people; someone attending several sessions is counted at each session. NHS GGC's total is 49: 43 across the first eight sessions plus 3 at each September session. The Board-attributed total is 460, compared with 459 in the event attendance figures. The report notes that **********. October's 96 bookings and recording views are not included.*
Board Secretary and corporate governance teams support shows people who attended training or were mentored
Bespoke local support – number of board members attending.
Aspiring Chairs = count of people who either mentored or who hosted over the 3 years

3. E-Learning Modules

The **Essential Learning Modules** on Turas Learn provide seven core eLearning modules, covering the regulatory, operational and strategic foundations of effective Board governance. The modules are optional and can be completed according to learning need. Some experienced non-executives may not need all modules. New non-executive directors are contacted after appointment and encouraged to use the modules alongside wider Board Development support. The table shows the **percentage** of non-executives who have completed modules by Board.

Board	Active Gov	Audit & Risk	Equality	Finance	Effective NXD	Blueprint	Succession
NHS A&A	40	33	47	33	47	20	20
NHS Borders	13	25	13	25	13	13	0
NHS D&G	10	30	20	20	20	0	0
NHS Fife	77	69	77	62	69	69	77
NHS Forth Valley	47	27	13	27	7	13	7
NHS GGC	61	75	71	61	68	50	54
Golden Jubilee	30	10	10	40	10	10	20
NHS Grampian	50	44	25	44	13	13	25
NHS Highland	0	26	21	26	*	0	0
HIS	17	25	25	33	33	8	33
NHS Lanarkshire	27	33	27	27	33	20	20
NHS Lothian	9	9	13	9	*	0	0
NHS24	78	78	89	78	89	78	78
NHS Orkney	44	67	33	56	33	33	44
PSDS	29	36	57	50	43	43	29

PHS	83	58	83	75	83	83	67
SAS	30	10	20	10	30	20	10
NHS Shetland	11	22	0	11	22	0	0
State Hospital	0	14	14	0	0	0	0
NHS Tayside	13	19	25	25	0	6	13
NHS Western Isles	50	50	50	60	50	10	0

Feedback, what did we learn and how will we improve?

Several Boards use the modules consistently, but Some Boards make little use of the modules. This suggests a need to improve the offer. Key improvement areas are:

Issue	Why this matters	Action
Limited time and varied needs	Lengthy/generic learning reduces completion and relevance.	Streamline content with shorter, targeted modules for specific learning needs.
Navigation on Turas Learn	Users may struggle to find the most relevant learning quickly.	Create a clearer Board Development landing page and guidance.

4. Turas Learn Resources

The Board Development site on Turas Learn provides a one-stop hub for learning, and guidance, designed exclusively for NHS Board members and build with contributions from governance experts, including existing Board members. Between 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 there were **5631 users** of the Board Development site. There were **7324 sessions** accessing Board Development site resources and **16284 page views.** The table below shows a detailed breakdown of the views for all pages that had a minimum of twenty views (100 resources with a total of 15678 views):

Theme	Most-used resources	What this suggests	No of resources	Views
Core governance and essential learning	Essential learning modules; Board Development; Active Governance programme; Core Governance Modules and Learning Materials; Introduction and Context; Demonstrating Good	The highest use is around core governance content, suggesting strong demand for clear, accessible foundations and	7	6,398

	Governance; Resources and Questions for Good Governance.	practical governance guidance.		
Role-based support for Board members	Essential Learning for Board Members; Welcome Aboard; Getting Started as a New Board Member; Behind the scenes - Roles on your Board; How to be an effective Board Member; Non-Executive Roles on your Board; New Board Member support.	New and existing Board members are using Turas to understand their role, responsibilities and how to contribute effectively.	7	1,075
Assurance, risk, finance and data	Understanding and Interpreting Data for Good Governance; Finance and NHS Scotland; Effective audit and risk; Making Data Count session PowerPoint; Assurance Tools; Board Assurance Questions; Three Lines of Assurance; Good Practice Integrated Performance Reports.	There is clear interest in practical tools that help Board members interpret data, strengthen assurance and ask better questions.	8	1,278
Appraisal, mentoring and development	Appraisal Support; Appraisals; Non-Executive Appraisal Form; Mentor handbook; Mentee handbook; Example Mentoring Agreement; Mentoring; Continuing Personal Development; Values Based Reflective Practice resources.	Users are drawing on resources that support individual development, reflection, appraisal conversations and structured mentoring.	9	1,559
Board Secretary and governance team support	The Art of Minute Taking; Dedicated Support for Board Secretary; Board Secretary support; Board Secretary Induction; The role of Board Secretary; Standards of	Turas is being used as a practical support route for governance professionals, particularly around minutes, induction	7	785

	Business Conduct; REMCO resources.	and core Board processes.		
Networks, peer learning and leadership pipeline	Guide to action learning sets; Connect and Grow: Peer Support Network; Action Learning Sets; Aspiring Chairs Programme; Aspiring Chairs Programme: Preparing the Next Generation of NHS Board Leaders; Masterclass Library.	Resources linked to peer support, leadership development and the Aspiring Chairs pipeline continue to attract use, supporting the wider system leadership offer.	6	679
Equality, integration and wider governance context	Equality and the role of Board members in meeting the Public Sector Duty; Equality Diversity Inclusion and Human Rights; Integration of Health and Social Care; Introduction to policy; Fairer Scotland Duty; National Performance Framework.	There is interest in resources that connect Board governance to wider public duties, system context and policy responsibilities.	6	1,209
Other	Remaining lower volume	A lot of resources with low usage.	110	606
Total			50	12,983

There were also **1609 file downloads** from the Board Development site pages during the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The table below shows a breakdown of the files that were downloaded a minimum of twenty times (29 resources with a total of 1255 file downloads).

Downloads are concentrated around practical governance support, particularly minute taking, appraisal and mentoring, assurance tools, and core governance resources. This suggests users are most likely to download materials that can be applied directly in Board, committee or development conversations. It's good to see the Board secretary and governance administration resources being so heavily used.

Resource theme	Examples included	Downloads

Board Secretary and governance administration	The Art of Minute Taking Board Secretary Induction	**224**
Appraisal, mentoring and reflective development	Non-Executive Appraisal Form; Mentor handbook; Mentee handbook; Example Mentoring Agreement; appraisal and values-based reflection resources	**310**
Assurance, risk and effective challenge	Assurance Tools; Three Lines of Assurance/Defence; Board Assurance Questions; Internal Assurance Questions; Effective Use of Data Questions; General Good Governance Questions	**260**
Core governance and active governance	Blueprint for Good Governance; What do we mean by Governance and Active Governance? ; governance questions and blueprint resources	**164**
Chairing, strategic thinking and leadership practice	Effective Chairing Resource Pack; Strategic Thinking Resource Pack	**77**
Quality, safety and improvement	Moving from Quality Improvement to Quality Management; Quality of Care Approach; Early warning signals; Safety Culture Discussion Cards	**116**
Equality, policy and public duties	Fairer Scotland Duty guidance	**25**
Data and performance reporting	Making Data Count session PowerPoint	**22**
Other 72 resources	Remaining lower-volume downloads	**354**
Total		**1,552**

Feedback, what did we learn and how will we improve?

The analytics relating to the use of Turas Learn resources allow us to see which resources are most useful/popular with Board members. But the figures suggest areas that are of less interest to Board members and could be retired or repurposed.

Issue	Why this matters	Action
Some resources used in a limited way	Navigability issues on Turas Learn may make it difficult to find resources.	Refresh organisation of Board Development site to better map to Blueprint for Good Governance and improve tagging/finding of resources.

5. Masterclasses

We extended learning from the Aspiring Chairs Programme to a wider non-executive audience through the Masterclasses, with positive feedback. The aim was to connect non-executive directors across NHS Scotland to share expertise, good practice and build stronger networks. Masterclasses are delivered live over Teams and a recording is available afterwards and this is signposted to all non-executives and Board Secretaries.

When	Masterclass	Individual attendance
Jun 2025	**Making Data Count**	**45**
Sep 2025	**The Effective NXD**	**44**
Oct 2025	**Remuneration Committee**	**59**
Nov 2025	**Equality for NXDs**	**44**
Dec 2025	**Finances for NXDs**	**50**
Mar 2026	**Audit Scotland**	**51**
May 2026	**Ethical Standards**	**40**
May 2026	**Clinical Governance**	**34**
September 2026	**Whistleblowing**	**37**
September 2026	**Delivering the Population Health Framework**	**55**
October 2026	**Culture and the Role of the Board**	**96 (bookings)**

The table below shows non-executive session attendances attributed to each Board across the ten masterclasses from June 2025 through September 2026, including both September sessions. These figures include repeat attendances across sessions and are not counts of unique people. They sum to 460 Board-attributed attendances; the event attendance figures sum to 459, with the *** footnote noting * attendee on * Boards. October bookings and views of recordings are excluded.

	Board Data	Effective NXD	EDI	Finance	REMCO	Audit Scotland	Ethical Standard	Clinical Gov	Whistle-blowing	Population Health

NHS A&A	*	0	0	*	7	6	*	*	*	*
NHS Borders	0	0	0	0	*	0	*	*	*	0
NHS D&G	*	0	*	0	0	0	0	0	*	*
NHS Fife	9	*	*	6	7	8	*	0	*	*
NHS FV	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
NHS Grampian	*	*	0	0	0	*	*	*	*	7
NHS GGC	6	6	7	8	*	*	6	*	*	*
Golden Jubilee	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	*
HIS	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	6
NHS Highland	*	*	*	*	7	*	*	0	*	6
NHS Lanarkshire	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	0	*	*
NHS Lothian	0	*	*	*	*	*	0	0	*	0
PHS	*	0	*	*	*	0	*	*	0	*
PSDS	*	*	*	*	*	7	*	*	*	0
NHS Orkney	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	*
SAS	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	*	*
NHS Shetland	6	*	0	0	0	*	*	0	*	*
State Hospital	0	*	*	*	*	*	0	0	*	0
NHS Tayside	*	7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
NHS WI	0	*	*	*	*	*	0	0	*	*
NHS24	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Totals	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

***** *is on * boards.*

Feedback, what did we learn and how will we improve?

Non-executives valued the opportunity to hear from peers, share practice and discuss issues openly. Speaker insights and reminders of core principles prompted further reading, and feedback showed strong demand for more sessions. Areas for improvement are set out below:

Issue	Why this matters	Action

Low feedback form completion despite positive verbal and follow-up feedback	Limits evidence of impact and insight into improvements.	Shorten the form to three standard questions and emphasise it takes only a few minutes. Provide a link to the form at the end of the session and ask participants to complete before leaving.
Limited time within sessions	Sessions generate rich discussion, but time can feel tight.	Keep sessions short to support attendance but sharpen agendas and focus discussion time.
Breakout groups were used in early sessions	They reduced opportunities for wider peer learning.	Continue using whole-group discussion instead of breakout rooms.
Some preference for in-person sessions	In-person delivery could support networking.	Keep Masterclasses online for national access, and use planned "meet the DG" sessions for networking.
Impact needs clearer definition	Sessions should contribute directly to better governance practice.	Define intended impact for each session and build follow-up around it. Include more practical advice in sessions Include a call to action at the end

6. Board Secretary and corporate services administration support

This workstream began in May 2026 and recognises the strategic role Board Secretaries play in supporting strong Board governance. Across NHS Scotland, the role varies between Boards, local professional support is variable, and succession and career pathways are not always clear. Chairs and Board Secretaries therefore identified a need for targeted support for Board Secretaries and their teams.

The workstream consulted corporate governance colleagues across Boards to understand need and developed a delivery proposal endorsed by BDRG, Board Chairs and Chief Executives. Its aim is to provide professional development and peer support for Board Secretaries, their teams and the wider NHS Board Secretary Network.

From May 2025 to date, * Board Secretaries have received mentoring and 251 people have attended the live governance minute-taking training workshop. As the workstream

develops, it will strengthen both corporate governance capability and the quality of Board governance.

Feedback, what did we learn and how will we improve?

Mentoring has helped increase the skills, governance knowledge and confidence of Board Secretaries. This has been of real value to Board Secretaries new in post and particularly those from backgrounds other than the NHS. The governance minute training session was very well attended and positively reviewed, with the resources available on TURAS. There were areas for improvement:

Issue	Why this matters	Action
Whilst the workstream is successfully reaching Board Secretaries and corporate governance administrators, there is scope to reach others with corporate governance roles, those with delegated corporate governance responsibility who are often the line manager of the Board Secretary	This will help support the development of the Board Secretary role and the overall strategic corporate governance support to the Board Chair, CEO and the overall Board.	Draft a Board Secretary Handbook and seek feedback from a sample of Board Secretaires, Chairs, CEOs and Corporate Governance Executive Leads

7. Bespoke local board support

We provided bespoke support for Boards helping them to address specific governance issues they were facing, relevant to the local context, with sessions delivered to Healthcare Improvement Scotland, NHS Fife, NES, NHS Grampian, NHS Golden Jubilee, NHS Borders and NHS Orkney, alongside communications support and digital mindset work.

The **aim** was to respond to requests for bespoke support from individual boards drawing in expertise where possible to help build networks and respond to areas of board governance improvement and / or raising awareness.

The **content** covered a range of issues from active governance, equalities, using data and the fundamentals of the role of the Board. These sessions were delivered to whole boards or to non-executive directors only depending on local circumstances and requirements

Feedback, what did we learn and how will we improve?

The bespoke sessions are resource intensive and developed in collaboration with the Boards. They typically involve whole boards, rather than just non-executives or executives. They are an important part of our work and a great opportunity to learn

alongside boards, share expertise and make connections and improvements to our other work. Key improvement areas are:

Issue	Why this matters	Action
Sessions not as connected or integrated as they could be	There is huge value from integrating our support offer to other things happening locally and nationally, rather than sessions being seen as a one off.	Plan a more integrated support offer, with the intention of improving Board governance drawing on all relevant contributions.
Patchy take up and lack of awareness of the offer	Some boards who could benefit from this kind of support may not be aware of the support or feeding in on their needs.	Build a more comprehensive offer and engage will all boards, including those who are not working with us around bespoke support, to better understand and respond to their needs.

8. Aspiring Chairs

Started in 2022, the Aspiring Chairs Programme has made a significant contribution to strengthening the leadership pipeline and building system leadership capability, with impact beyond its original purpose. This section summarises the 3-year programme; a full report is available separately.

*Board	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	Aspiring Chairs			Hosts		
Ayrshire & Arran	*					
Borders	*		*	*		*
D&G		*				
Fife			*			*
Forth Valley	*					
Grampian				*	*	*
GG&C	*	*			*	*
Golden Jubilee	*			*		*
HIS		*		*	*	
Highland					*	*
Lanarkshire	*		*	*	*	
Lothian	*	*		*	*	*
PHS	*	*	*	*	*	
NES			*	*		*
NSS		*	*	*	*	*
Orkney				*	*	

SAS		*	*		*	
Shetland		*			*	*
State Hospital		*			*	*
Tayside	*		*		*	
NHS 24		*				*
SFR			*			*

Feedback, what did we learn and how will we improve?

Feedback from participants on the Aspiring Chairs Programme was positive, with an average satisfaction score of 8/10. All Aspiring Chairs would recommend it and were more effective. Over 60% progressed to Chair or other senior roles.

Issue	Why this matters	Action
Planning and administration	A smoother participant experience depends on strong forward planning.	Better planning and widened Advisory Group.
Content and impact	The programme should show impact beyond progression into Chair roles.	Strengthened impact measures.
Recruitment	Limited places require a fair, transparent and consistent process.	Engaged with Chairs earlier and capped applications.

9. Induction

During the period 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 eighteen new non-executive directors were appointed. All new non-executive directors are contacted upon starting in role, and at the 6-month and 12-month point and are provided with appropriate resources and signposting to support their induction, as part of the three-stage induction (public bodies, National NHS, Local NHS).

Feedback, what did we learn and how will we improve?

Providing new non-executive directors with a range of resources at the point of commencement in role allows them to work at their own pace through a set of core learning materials.

We have found that scheduling in some more informal follow-up of individuals provides timely reminders of support available from the Board Development team and

encouragement to ask for additional support (e.g. in the form of buddying and mentoring). We will continue to build upon this.

Issue	Why this matters	Action
Unclear if induction resources are meeting the critical needs of new non-executive directors	Colleagues may be wrestling with issues or be unsure of where to go for help.	More informal follow-up of new starters during the induction window to understand needs and to signpost and support at the earliest opportunity.

10. Partnership working and other support

In addition to the core support we offer, there are other contributions from the programme.

These include:

Area	Individual uptake	impact
Digital Mindset completions	**78**	Evidence of engagement with digital capability development, with scope to increase uptake further.
Active non-executive mentoring partnerships	**7**	Mentoring is valued but is small and remains a priority area for growth across Boards.
Live Action Learning Sets participants	**29**	Peer learning is established, with opportunity to expand participation and spread learning more systematically.

Working in partnership makes our programme impactful and built on practical experience. We work closely with the Board Chairs and non-executives and want to do more to harness their respective experience. As well as working in Boards, we work with other external organisation in developing our resources, including:

- The Ethical Standards Commissioner
- Audit Scotland
- Governance leads within the Colleges sector.
- Scottish Government who commissions our work, and policy leads who contribute to our programmes.

- Leads for inquiries.
- Leaders in other public bodies.
- IJBs

We are also linked with other organisations who lead on governance or have a contribution that could help improve NHS Board Governance, including training via CIPFA and using resources from other key governance organisations and reviewing any governance reports or learning from inquiries.

The evidence base and connection across other partners is an area we want to develop further in future.