

# Internal Audit Assurances – NHS Dumfries and Galloway Annual Report 2024/25

## Summary for Integration Joint Board (IJB) Consideration

### 1. Overview and Opinion

The Internal Audit Annual Report for NHS Dumfries and Galloway covers the financial year ending 31 March 2025. It was delivered under the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), with proactive alignment to the new Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) and UK Public Sector Application Note which came into effect from April 2025.

The **Chief Internal Auditor’s Opinion** for 2024/25 is:

- **Moderate assurance** over the **Control Environment, Governance, and Risk Management**.
- Internal controls were found to be generally adequate and effective, despite the ongoing financial and workforce pressures faced by the organisation.
- There were no significant deviations from PSIAS requiring disclosure in the Governance Statement.

### 2. Audit Coverage and Key Findings

#### Audit Plan Delivery

During 2024/25, nine audits were completed and reported to the NHS Audit and Risk Committee. To support delivery of the audit plan, a co-sourcing arrangement was introduced with Henderson Loggie, enhancing capacity and resilience. The audits focused on high-risk areas and were designed to assess whole processes, ensuring that the assurance provided was meaningful and comprehensive.

#### Assurance Levels

The assurance levels from the audits were mixed, as detailed in the table below.

Three audits; Residences, Young Patient Family Fund, and Primary Care Claims, received Limited Assurance. These Limited Assurance audits are being actively monitored and reported to the Audit and Risk Committee to ensure appropriate follow-up and improvement.

Audit Title	Assurance Level
Recruitment Processes	Significant
Property Transactions Monitoring	Significant
Infection Control	Moderate
Interpretation and Translation	Moderate
Patient Information	Moderate
Alcohol and Drug Partnership	Moderate
Residences	Limited
Young Patient Family Fund	Limited
Primary Care Claims	Limited

### **3. Governance and Risk Management Insights**

#### **Governance Statement Support**

The Governance Statement for 2024/25 included two disclosures: one relating to the cyber-attack and another concerning ongoing financial challenges. Internal Audit confirmed that the content of the Governance Statement was consistent with the findings from audit work undertaken during the year.

#### **Risk Management**

A moderate level of assurance was also provided over the Risk Management Framework. While the Board's Risk Appetite was reviewed during the year, demonstrating that it is embedded in decision-making remains a challenge.

The Board's risk maturity was assessed as progressing from "Risk Managed" to "Risk Enabled," which is the highest level. There is much work to be done to enhance our risk maturity and this is measured against many aspects and the Risk Management report may not be reflecting the full amount of work that needs to be undertaken, as well as revisiting previously attained elements, to get us there.

#### **Best Value**

We also mapped Internal Audit work to the principles of Best Value. A self-assessment exercise showed improvement in several areas, although some subjectivity in the assessment process remains. The audit team continues to support the organisation in strengthening governance, accountability, and performance management.

### **4. Relevance to the IJB**

Several of the audits completed during the year provide indirect assurance to the Integration Joint Board due to shared systems, processes, and staffing across NHS Dumfries and Galloway and the Health and Social Care Partnership. In particular, the audits on Recruitment, Residences, Patient Information, and the Alcohol and Drug Partnership are of relevance to the IJB and should be considered as part of its overall assurance framework.

At the time of reporting, 104 audit actions remained open across NHS Dumfries and Galloway, with 79 of these overdue. Governance-related findings accounted for the majority of outstanding actions (68%), with procedural and monitoring weaknesses also noted. These figures highlight the importance of continued focus on action tracking and resolution.

Performance against the audit plan was lower than in previous years, with 54% of the plan completed (compared to 80% in 2023/24). The External Quality Assessment (EQA) conducted by the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors concluded that the service "Partially Conforms" with PSIAS. Work is ongoing to address the recommendations from the EQA and to align more fully with the new GIAS framework.

## **5. Conclusion for IJB**

The NHS Internal Audit Annual Report provides a moderate level of assurance over key governance areas that are relevant to the Integration Joint Board. While no IJB-specific audits were undertaken during the year, the findings from NHS audits offer valuable insights into shared systems and risks that affect the delivery of integrated services.

The IJB is encouraged to consider these assurances in its own governance and risk assessments. Particular attention should be given to the progress of actions arising from limited assurance audits, especially those relating to Residences and Primary Care Claims. Continued engagement with both NHS and Council audit teams will be essential to strengthening joint assurance planning and ensuring that the IJB's responsibilities are supported by robust and coordinated internal audit arrangements.