



APPENDIX 2

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NHS Board Chairs
Copy to Board Secretaries

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Dear Colleagues

COVID-19 AND BOARD GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Thank you to the NHS Board Chairs and Board Secretaries who have contacted me over the last week to discuss the maintenance of governance arrangements in their Boards during the current CoVid-19 outbreak.

The primary concern of all Boards will be to ensure an absolute focus on the response to the current situation and that they can give support to the Chief Executive and the executive team as they prepare the organisation's response.

Effective governance will need to be maintained – but that will need to be different from the structures used currently. I am aware that Boards are standing down committees and altering agenda to allow the maximum focus on their CoVid response. I would advise that the options on the model that you wish to move to are put to the Board quickly and that the Board decide on what model of governance should be deployed over the period. For good governance reasons, the Chair should not make a unilateral decision on a model unless that is unavoidable.

No single approach will fit all Boards during this period but you will wish to ensure that the model enables agile and effective decision making, places staff and their resilience at the centre and builds important links with the public and community at this time. Boards should also continue to operate in an open and transparent manner (e.g. publication of board papers) and enable public scrutiny, even if the meetings cannot be held in public.

In making changes to the current governance arrangements, Board's should be mindful of the requirements in legislation and within existing Standing Orders. Where the new arrangements don't comply, it will be important to document the reasons behind this variation and confirm that the Board was aware of this when making the changes.



In relation to audit arrangements, the Auditor General has been clear in her recent appearance before the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit and Post Legislative Scrutiny Committee that a pragmatic and flexible approach would be adopted by Audit Scotland during this period. You should ensure that your own internal audit arrangements mirror that.

I would be grateful for an outline of any agreed changes to governance, along with the rationale that underpins these, to be sent to OCENHS@gov.scot , where you may also direct any queries.

Yours sincerely

