

EXCLUSIVE: NHS Tayside chief stands down days after data breach

Grant Archibald's five years in charge have been marked by a series of high-profile controversies.



Grant Archibald.



by **Kieran Webster**

The chief executive of NHS Tayside is to leave his post by the end of the year, *The Courier* has learned.

Grant Archibald told colleagues at the beleaguered health board last week that he would retire in December after five years in charge marked by a series of high-profile controversies.

News of his shock departure comes just days after a [data breach at NHS Tayside](#)

which left staff “angry” and “distressed”.

We told how the trust was forced to apologise when an email containing employees’ details was mistakenly shared with workers in the corporate equalities team.

An NHS Tayside source insisted Mr Archibald’s decision to step down was simply a matter of him reaching retirement age.

From promises to controversy

Mr Archibald was appointed the role in January 2019, joining from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde where he had been chief operating officer of acute services.

Before climbing the management ladder the Dundee-born health boss – who grew up in Broughty Ferry – started out as a porter at Ninewells before securing a place on the National Graduate Trainee Programme.

Mr Archibald promised to make NHS Tayside one of the best performing health boards in Scotland but it has been engulfed in controversy during his tenure.

In January, then First Minister Nicola Sturgeon was asked to stop Tayside chiefs scaling back surgery in a bid to mask financial troubles.

A month later John Burns, chief operating officer of NHS Scotland, intervened to ensure the plan was scrapped.



Around that time, the region was said to be at the epicentre of a “national scandal” in adult psychiatric care.

Meanwhile, Mr Archibald was repeatedly criticised for failing to get to grips with the NHS Tayside breast cancer crisis unfolding on his watch.

[The Courier released a feature-length documentary](#) exploring the lack of evidence around government claims patients were put at an increased risk of having their cancer return because of the strength of chemotherapy they were offered.

The treatment was largely delivered before Mr Archibald took up the chief executive role.

But senior cancer specialists accused bosses of throwing them under the bus when the revelations first came to light.

Eljamel scandal

This year NHS Tayside has faced questions over its handling of the scandal that saw rogue surgeon Sam Eljamel leave hundreds of patients scarred for life following botched operations.

Whistleblowers claim managers knew about concerns over the disgraced Dundee doctor years before he was suspended in 2013 – an allegation denied by the organisation.

We revealed on Friday that [the health board is carrying out an ongoing “due diligence” review](#) into all documents held concerning Eljamel.

The probe is being carried out for health chiefs to “gain a better organisational understanding” into their response to the crisis.