

Slàinte

Health update from NHS Western Isles

NHS
Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

SUMMER 2024

CHILDSMILE 2024!



Safe Spaces for Outer
Hebrides festival-goers



Triple P Positive
Parenting on Barra



Staff Health
Fair Success



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Welcome to Slàinte - your local NHS news

Welcome to the first edition of our newly developed newsletter for the local community.

The intention of this newsletter is to update you on some of the news, developments and updates from your local health service.

This is a collection of updates we have already produced as Press Releases, or issued on social media, as well as some news and updates that we have issued to our staff.

Our intention is to gather updates on a regular basis to share with you.

Slàinte will be available on our social media pages as well as to download from our website.

Slàinte Mhaith

My Neuro survey

My Neuro survey is the largest patient experience survey of people affected by neurological conditions, including friends and family, in the UK.

1 in 6 people in the UK is living with a neurological condition, yet many are unable to access the support and healthcare needed to manage their condition.

My neuro survey runs every 2 years to give a picture of the experience of care, treatment and support for people with neurological conditions.

Nicky Cowsill, representative for Neuro Hebrides, helped to develop the next 'My Neuro Survey' and ensure the views of rural and island communities is heard.

The 'My Neuro Survey 2024' survey includes a carers survey along with the existing adult and children/ young persons surveys.

Previous My Neuro Surveys have been crucial in informing the work of the Neurological alliance of Scotland, of which Neuro Hebrides are members. The findings from the 2020/2021 survey formed the [Together for the One in Six Report](#) and were the basis for the UK-wide 'Back the 1 in 6' campaign. The campaign also triggered the NAOs to establish a Mental Health subgroup as a who published their [Recommendations for Better Mental Health Support for People Affected by Neurological Conditions](#) earlier this year.

You can complete My Neuro Survey by following this [link](#).

Make your views count, good or bad, it is crucial that a true picture of the care available for people with neurological conditions and their carers, is presented in order to enable change.





WELCOME!


Feedback Feature is your opportunity to view recent feedback received by NHS Western Isles from patients, carers, general public and staff alike.

RECENT PATIENT FEEDBACK...

- “The care and attention given to her and to us, her family, was second to none. The staff were so attentive, so caring, providing her with an extremely high standard of care. Staff just couldn't do enough for her or us, from the nursing staff, to medical staff, to housekeeping staff, to reception staff, to catering staff, to hotel services staff. We just couldn't praise them enough.”
- “Shuna at DEXA scan unit of Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway conducted her scan with great care and provided superb feedback on the results, and suggestions on how to improve matters. At a time when the entire NHS is under enormous pressure, this was a refreshing and exemplary experience, and I wish all dedicated NHS staff well.”

www.facebook.com/NHSWesternIsles

www.instagram.com/nhs_westernisles

www.x.com/NHSWI

NHS Western Isles
www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk



Share your story



Meet the Board



Gillian McCannon
Board Chair



Gordon Jamieson
Chief Executive

Executive and Non-Executive Directors



Colum Durkan
Director of
Public Health



Debbie Bozkurt
Director of Finance &
Procurement / IJB
Chief Finance Officer



Dr. Frank McAuley
Medical Director



Fiona C MacKenzie
Nurse/AHP Director &
Chief Operating
Officer



Diane MacDonald
Director of HR &
Workforce
Development



Paul MacAskill
Non-Executive
Director



Jane Bain
Non-Executive
Director/Employee
Director



Sheena Wright
Non-Executive
Director/
Whistleblowing
Champion



Julia Higginbottom
Non-Executive
Director



Annetta Smith
Non-Executive
Director



Paul Steele
Non-Executive
Director/Comhairle
Representative



Karen France
Non-Executive Director/
Chair of Area Clinical
Forum



Naomi MacDonald
Non-Executive
Director

Gillian attends His Majesty's Garden Party

Gillian McCannon, NHS Western Isles Chair, was invited to attend His Majesty's Garden Party, in recognition of her contribution to services to the NHS.

The King's Garden party took place on 2nd July, at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh. It was a spectacular event and King Charles hosted the debut Garden Party of the season with Queen Camilla by his side.



Gillian McCannon
NHS Western Isles Chair

Other senior working royals also attended, including Prince Edward; Sophie, the Duchess of Edinburgh; Princess Anne, and the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.

Gillian said: "I was honoured to accept this invitation and was accompanied to the event by my son, who I wanted to share this special occasion with.

"I had a really lovely time and felt privileged to be part of such a memorable event, which is a once in a lifetime opportunity."

There were thousands of people present who had also contributed to public service and who represented the vast diversity within Scotland.

Gillian added, "It will be an experience that I will cherish, and I was proud to represent NHS Western Isles."

GoodSAM

Join an army of crowd sourced
CPR responders

When someone has a cardiac arrest,
YOU could be the help around the corner!

Sign up today at savealife.scot/GoodSAM

"The best at what we do"

It is our responsibility to make sure that the care provided by NHS Western Isles is safe and focused on what you need.



Success at Staff Health Fair



NHS Western Isles staff were recently invited to attend a Staff Health Fair at Western Isles Hospital.

The event provided staff with the opportunity to chat to colleagues from Health Promotion, Human Resources, Occupational Health, Nutrition and Dietetics, and the Stroke Liaison Nurse.

As well as having their blood pressure checked, staff were also offered the opportunity to grab a healthy snack and obtain health and wellbeing information.

Think
about
your



Drink

The Outer Hebrides Alcohol & Drug Partnership wants to make sure everyone stays safe whilst drinking alcohol.

You should have at least 3 alcohol free days per week. Consider swapping to low or non-alcohol options which are more widely available. Choose a smaller measure of wine or spirits and be sure to keep hydrated and most importantly, pace yourself. Download the Alcohol Change UK 'Try Dry' app [Interactive tools](#) | [Alcohol Change UK](#)

If you feel your drinking is becoming a problem for you, please talk to your GP. You can also find information of alcohol and drug services available in Outer Hebrides on our website – www.outerhebadp.com

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8th September 2024

WORLD PHYSIOTHERAPY DAY

Recognising the fantastic work that our physiotherapists do for their patients and community.



Cabinet Secretary's Summer Tour visit to the Western Isles

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Neil Gray, recently visited the Western Isles as part of his summer tour of Scotland's Health Boards.

During this visit he attended Benbecula Medical Practice on Wednesday and met with practice staff, and the unscheduled care advanced paramedic and nurse practitioner providing services there before meeting with a local patient participation group and other interested parties to hear patient experiences and discuss improving access to flights in the Western Isles. The following day, he travelled to Lewis and met with representatives from Action for Children, Western Isles Community Care Forum and Independent Advocacy. He also took the time to meet with Macmillan Nursing Staff and patients to discuss the Single Point of Contact (SPoC) project in the Western Isles.

The Single Point of Contact pilots provide patients on a cancer journey with ongoing contact to support them, putting them at the heart of all decisions and actions involving them throughout their care journey.

SPoC was established in the Western Isles in October 2022 which initial funding for 2 years from the Scottish Government.

The SPoC service was introduced to support

the early and continued coordination of care and provide effective communication for patients, carers and professionals. In introducing this service, it allows patients to make one phone call to assist with all their care needs, which reduces any additional stress in what is already a difficult and challenging time.

During the meeting, Mr Gray heard a presentation from the two Single Point of Contacts in the Western Isles – Madge Macdonald-Spence and Ann Marie MacLeod – who explained their roles to the Cabinet Secretary. Following their presentation, two patients who used the service shared their experience and provided feedback on the service.

Patients in general have said they feel the service has been enhanced by the introduction of the SPoC. One local patient said: "I picked the short straw with a cancer diagnosis but definitely picked the long straw with the team I have had around me."

The availability of the SPoC service has also allowed the Macmillan Nursing Team to be able to provide a 7-day service, meaning that there is a Macmillan Nurse available at weekends and on Public Holidays to support people with all types of cancer and palliative care needs across the Western Isles.

The SPoC provides support by liaising with colleagues in mainland centres and coordinating all aspects of patient care, such as:

- travel
- local diagnostics
- phlebotomy
- SACT toxicity screening
- virtual clinic appointments

The SPoC supports patients from the very beginning of their journey from when they are referred as an urgent suspected cancer. They will coordinate the patient's care and signpost

to external agencies and support services e.g. benefit advice, local support groups, complimentary therapies, and counselling services.

NHS Western Isles has received £68,000 for 2 HCSWs, as part of the Macmillan Team, to support people with all types of cancer

Health Improvement Scotland is currently carrying out a scalability assessment of all 12 projects in order to identify best practice and how best to scale and expand these pilots.

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Don't forget to return your child's flu consent form!

NHS Western Isles response to recent reports on implementation of the GP Contract

NHS Western Isles wishes to clarify matters following recent reports on the implementation of the GP Contract in the Western Isles and the use of funding by the Primary Care Improvement Board (PCIB).

The contribution of Primary Care to patients and the overall health and social care system is recognised, as are the activity, demand and financial pressures on independent practices.

The implementation of the new GP contract is taken forward locally by a group called the Primary Care Improvement Board (PCIB) with a range of professional and clinical staff, including GPs, represented on the group. The contract, which has been running since 2018, saw a shift in terms of certain elements of care transferring from GP practices to Health Boards. Areas of development include Primary Care Pharmacists, Vaccinations, Community Treatment and Care, First Contact Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy services, Out of Hours Urgent and Unscheduled Care, and Urgent Daytime Care.

PRIMARY CARE IMPROVEMENT FUNDING

Primary Care Improvement funding (PCIF) is allocated for a very specific purpose and cannot be used outwith the allocated purpose. It could not be used for example for other purposes or non-related services by the Health Board, and could not simply be allocated to GP Practices as a consequence of the PCIB underspending.

There is strict governance around how PCIF can be spent and spending is subject to external audit to ensure effective processes

and decision-making are in place to ensure funds are spent appropriately.

To date, we have seen significant investment and all allocations are committed to agreed areas of development. The allocation for 2024/25 is £1.186million.

It is extremely important to clarify that any money that is unspent by Boards across Scotland is reallocated back into primary care, to ensure essential services and developments are prioritised and to ensure best value for the public purse.

NHS Western Isles is not different from other Boards in terms of funding flow between Boards and Scottish Government departments and the resource allocation for new parts of the contract.

Recent reports that NHS Western Isles handed back more than £800,000 to Scottish Government are inaccurate. No money was sent back to Scottish Government, rather **(as is the case across Scotland)**, the Board's allocation was adjusted to reflect agreed areas of spend. It is also important to clarify that there was no adjustment regarding the £236,000 for 2023/24.

There are additional areas for further investment to be developed considered and approved by the PCIB. Following concerns raised, an Audit Report in March 2024 also made recommendations to further improve the governance and decision making of the PCIB which are being implemented in full. **LETTER RECEIVED BY NHS WESTERN ISLES FROM THE LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE**

A letter received by NHS Western Isles from the Local Medical Committee in 2023

highlighted that the 'GPs had no confidence in the ability of the Western Isles Integrated Joint Board (IJB) and NHSWI management to deliver the improvements to Primary Care and General Practice services expected under the 2018 GP contract'.

As the Primary Care Improvement Board (PCIB) is responsible for implementing the new 2018 GP contract, the letter from the LMC resulted in NHS Western Isles instructing internal auditors to conduct a review of the PCIB and how it functions. That report has a number of findings and made a number of recommendations to improve the decision-making and governance of that group, and action is being taken to address the findings.

PROCESSES FOR APPROVAL OF SPENDING

The implementation of the new GP contract is taken forward locally by the Primary Care Improvement Board. Decisions should be taken by the Primary Care Improvement Board. It is not within the remit of the IJB

to take decisions on how Primary Care funding is spent, and it would not be appropriate for the PCIB to delegate these decisions to the IJB.

The Chair of NHS Western Isles pointed out these roles and functions in a response to a local GP.

In local publicity, her comments were unfortunately taken out of context. The email responded to by the Chair referred to papers that were appropriate to have been considered by the Primary Care Improvement Board, as operational matters under its remit; rather than matters which should have been escalated to the Integrated Joint Board, which does not take operational decisions.

This was entirely appropriate and correct that the IJB should not interfere with established and approved decision making processes within the PCIB.

We invite you to share your views: Health Needs Assessment

5th
September
- 25th
September

NHS Western Isles is currently undertaking a health needs assessment. This is a project that aims to gain an understanding of the health and wellbeing challenges of the community in the Western Isles, and inform future work on health and wellbeing locally. Members of the local community are invited to participate, through sharing their views in a short survey.

All responses are anonymous and very much appreciated.
Thank you in advance for taking part!

SURVEY LINK:
<https://forms.office.com/e/4dJnhExsN9>



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Partnership approach to stamp out Spiking

As part of its Summer Safety Campaign, the Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership (OHADP) is working with Pub Watch Western Isles and licensed premises across the islands to raise awareness of the dangers of spiking and to ensure they continue to be a safe space for everyone.

Pub Watch Western Isles is a group of local licensees coming together to set acceptable standards of behaviour for people using their premises and to agree on common policies.

Taking a preventative approach, the OHADP has purchased and supplied local pubs and clubs with anti-drink spiking foil top glass covers and plastic bottle stoppers for bar staff to offer to customers. The anti-spiking kits will act as a deterrent and reduce the possibility of anyone tampering with drinks.

Spiking is when a person gives alcohol or drugs, or when a needle is used to inject drugs into someone without their knowledge or consent. It is a criminal offence. Signs to look out for include confusion, loss of co-ordination, slurred speech, and vomiting.

Gordon Jamieson, NHS Western Isles Chief Executive and Chair of Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership commented: "The OHADP

is pleased to support this campaign. Individuals should feel safe when they go to any licenced premises. Spiking incidents remain low here in the Outer Hebrides and can go unreported, that is why it is important that any incidents are reported to Police Scotland in the first instance so they can investigate and take the necessary action. I hope that by taking this partnership approach, it will be a deterrent to any potential risks."

If you suspect that you or someone you know has been spiked, alert the venue manager, and don't leave the person alone. For anyone that thinks they may have been spiked, we would encourage them to report any incidents to Police Scotland on 101 or in an emergency to call 999.

Photo: Pub Watch Western Isles members and Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership
Back row (L-R): Angus Mackenzie, Stornoway Sea Angling Club; Martin Flett, Stornoway Golf Club; Christian Cooksey, The Fank; Gordon Jamieson, NHS Western Isles Chief Executive & OHADP Chairman; Ryan Dowie, McNeills/The Star and John Macinnes, Lewis & Harris Rangers Club.
Front row (L-R): Peter Macarthur, The New Lewis; Dean Dowie, Rascals Music and Sports Bar; Christina Smith, Lews Castle; Christina Miller, The Caladh Hotel; Alexander Macleod, The Royal Hotel; and Angela Grant, Development Officer, OHADP.

Pictured below is the display of foil tops and bottle stoppers that will act as a deterrent to reduce tampering of drinks.



Alcohol plays a centre-stage role in our lives and society.

But there are far too many health harms and personal tragedies for it to remain at the centre of our story.

alcoholchange.org.uk #AlcoholAwarenessWeek

Any one of us can find ourselves drinking too much alcohol at some point in our lives.

If you're worried about your drinking, support is available.

alcoholchange.org.uk #AlcoholAwarenessWeek

Top tips to help you drink less and improve your health

- Have a few alcohol-free days each week
- Choose a smaller glass size and a lower ABV
- Try alcohol-free alternatives
- Keep track of your drinking

alcoholchange.org.uk #AlcoholAwarenessWeek



Norma Macleod
Health Improvement Officer

With NHS24 reporting a 580 per cent rise in calls being made to them for a mental health concern in the years between 2019 and 2022, it is clear that people need all the support they can get. The legacy of the pandemic and the ongoing cost of living crisis has been challenging for many people's well-being, but an increase in demand for mental health support at this level is alarming.

As part of the Healthy Working Lives (HWL) programme, workplaces are offered free face-to-

Mentally Healthy Workplaces

face or online training on a variety of topics, mental health being one of them. In fact, since January this year Norma MacLeod, NHS Western Isles HWL Advisor, has delivered awareness sessions to 109 staff and training to 18 managers.

Hebridean Housing Partnership, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Western Isles Volunteer Centre and BASF are among the workplaces that have given their staff the opportunity to attend a 1-hour basic mental health awareness session, looking at signs and symptoms, identifying their areas of pressure and looking at their coping mechanisms.

Managers were provided with a more in-depth session looking at how they can support their staff and ensure that their policies and practices are not discriminating against staff who may have a mental health issue.

Participants were asked what they had learnt in the course, below are some responses:

- "I have a better understanding of the fluid state of mental health and can be more understanding to people's situations."

- "Will ask for help when feeling under too much pressure."
- "Mindful of the stretch and strain scenario and not to push myself too much."
- "Importance of communicating with senior staff over issues causing stress."
- "Watch out for mental health symptoms in myself and my colleagues."
- "Recognising the area of work that may be causing stress (i.e. demand, role, etc)."
- "Recognising signs of mental health is very important."
- "More aware of stress factors."

When asked if they could identify future needs for themselves or colleagues, they commented as follows:

- "Take more proactive approach to recognising decline in mental wellbeing."
- "Regular mental health awareness sessions."
- "Better communication between departmental managers and ourselves."
- "Better and more genuine communication."
- "Restart lunchtime learning events with focus on wellbeing."
- "Training should be given to staff on an annual basis to remind them that it is ok not to be ok and discuss with someone."
- "More emphasis/encouragement for taking breaks."

This training is delivered regularly, so if your department or workplace is interested in offering its staff or managers an awareness/training session, please contact Norma Macleod, Health Improvement Officer, by emailing: norma.macleod1@nhs.scot

Pictured left: recently held Mentally Healthy Workplace training at BASF Pharma at Callanish, on Lewis.





This year, adults aged 75–79 years* will be offered the RSV vaccine.

*on or after 1 August 2024



From August, the RSV vaccine will be offered during pregnancy.



RSV vaccine offered to adults at highest risk of serious illness from RSV infection

Respiratory syncytial virus, known as RSV, is a common respiratory (lungs and airways) illness and can be dangerous for infants and older adults. RSV infection is more common from late autumn to early spring, but can happen at any time of year.

Sometimes, RSV infection can cause severe lower respiratory infections like pneumonia. It can also cause other life-threatening conditions. The RSV vaccine helps build up your immunity to the virus. This means your body will fight off the infection more easily.

Currently, it's recommended that you get only one dose of the RSV vaccine. Clinical trials currently show that the RSV vaccine provides good protection for at least two years.

The Abrysvo vaccine is not a live vaccine. It does not cause RSV infection.

Who is eligible for the RSV vaccine?

- People turning 75 years old on and between 1 August 2024 and 31 July 2025

- People who are aged 75 to 79 years old on 1 August 2024 (born between 2 August 1944 and 31 July 1950)
- Pregnant women from 28 weeks.

In future years, the vaccine will be routinely offered to those turning 75 years old between 1 August and 31 July.

How is the vaccine administered?

The Abrysvo vaccine is offered to protect against RSV in Scotland. It's usually given as an injection in your upper arm.

Information for older adults

You may be able to get the RSV vaccine at the same time as other vaccines (like shingles or pneumococcal). You can discuss this with the person giving you the vaccine. Because RSV infections often happen earlier in the year, this vaccine will be offered in August and September. You'll be offered a different appointment later in the year to get your flu vaccine.



There's now a vaccine that helps **protect against RSV.**



Information for pregnant women

The vaccine has been shown to reduce the chance of your baby becoming very ill from RSV. If you get the RSV vaccine during pregnancy, the chance of your baby developing a serious infection caused by RSV reduces by over 80 per cent.

I'm eligible, how do I get the RSV vaccine?

You'll be contacted by the NHS Western Isles Immunisation team when it's time to get your vaccine.

Further information

For further information visit www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/immunisation/vaccines/rsv-vaccine-for-adults/

#GetHelpOrGetCaught

Online child sexual abuse and exploitation can have devastating consequences for the victims, their families and for perpetrators' families.

The #GetHelpOrGetCaught campaign is targeted at those who present the greatest risk of harm to children. The campaign urges anyone worried about their own sexual thoughts, feelings, or behaviours towards children and young people to contact Stop It Now! Scotland for confidential support or risk getting caught.

There is confidential and nonjudgemental help available via www.stopitnow.org.uk/gethelpscotland. Stop It Now at Seek help now.

Latest crime figures show reports of online child sexual abuse and exploitation in Scotland have increased by 21 per cent between 1 April, 2023 and 31 March, 2024. During this period, 2055 cyber enabled sexual crimes against children were recorded, 364 more than the previous year.

Tackling online child abuse remains a key priority for Police Scotland.

Have you been looking at sexual images of children?

Get help before more lives are ruined.
#GetHelpOrGetCaught

Western Isles Cardiac CT Radiographers presented with their 3 national awards

NHS Western Isles was delighted when our Cardiac CT Radiographers won three prestigious awards from the Society of Radiographers.

The Radiography Awards took place in London in November 2023, but unfortunately the team was unable to attend due to flight cancellations.

The President of the Society of Radiographers decided to take the award ceremony to Lewis

instead recently, where he presented the team with their well-deserved awards.

The team was first named 'Scottish Team of the Year 2023' before also being selected as 'UK Team of the Year' and winning the 'Patient's Choice Award for Exceptional Care' at a special ceremony in London.

The Cardiac CT Radiographers were nominated for developing a new Radiographer-



Pictured is the team receiving their award.

L-R: Alexandra Maciver, Radiographer; Dave Pilborough, The President of the Society of Radiographers; Jane MacDonald, Radiology Manager; Ciara Mackenzie, Radiographer; and Karen Macleod, Radiographer.

led service that was established in 2019 from the ground up. The service is fully patient-centred, avoiding unnecessary patient travel and disruption and providing local diagnostics in a system where there is not a Radiologist or Cardiologist on site.

The team is made up of four enthusiastic and dedicated Radiographers who are trained to provide this innovative and effective service to the population of the Western Isles.

NHS Western Isles was the first site in Scotland to utilise the associated 'HeartFlow' technology to aid the diagnosis of coronary heart disease. Two other mainland boards are now piloting the use of HeartFlow. This is the first and only non-invasive test for detection of flow limiting disease.

Since 2020, out of 86 patients scanned, 46 were found to have mild stenosis of a coronary artery using HeartFlow, which meant they avoided long waiting lists for invasive procedures.

Prior to the development of the service, patients previously had an Interventional Coronary Angiogram off-island, with an

arterial puncture and all the associated risks. Patients now have access to a safe and local service, rather than an interventional procedure in specialist centre with significant risks associated. Patients are clinically triaged appropriately with support from the specialist centre. Whilst some patients will require an invasive Angiogram, the new service will prevent this for many.

NHS Western Isles Radiology Manager, Jane Macdonald, said: "The Cardiac CT Radiographers truly deserve these awards, I am so proud of them and their dedication to the service. The team has made a substantial effect on patient care, and significantly improved the patient pathway for the Western Isles.

"The addition of HeartFlow has further streamlined the patient pathway, we are very pleased to offer this technology locally. HeartFlow uses fluid dynamics to model any stenosis in the coronary arteries, from the Cardiac CT data already acquired."

Pictured on opposite page is a group photo.



NHS
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Being listened to, and knowing that someone cares, can help you through a difficult time.

Open up when you're feeling down.

0800 83 85 87

www.breathingspace.scot



#youmatterwecare



Benbecula to Stornoway PSO Contract

NHS Board holds Special Board Meeting to discuss new Benbecula to Stornoway PSO Contract

“Patients are at the heart of what we are here for, and it is painful to see what has happened and the impact on them, in terms of this service.”

This was one of the points made by NHS Western Isles Board Chair, Gillian McCannon, at a special meeting of Western Isles Health Board held in July to discuss the impact of the new Benbecula to Stornoway Public Service Obligation (PSO).

NHS Western Isles Board members discussed how the new Benbecula to Stornoway PSO contract has impacted patients and those travelling for health appointments, as well as the ability of the local NHS to provide certain clinics and services.

There was significant praise throughout the meeting for NHS Western Isles and NHS Highland staff who had gone to great lengths above and beyond the call of duty in an attempt to address and mitigate the impact of changes. The Board Chair, Mrs McCannon, acknowledged that the issue has challenged healthcare staff ‘in ways that I have never before seen’.

The awarding of the new Public Service Obligation (PSO) contract for the Stornoway/Benbecula route from April 2024 by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar could nevertheless lead to both a reduction in visiting services clinics to the Western Isles as well as a loss of outpatient clinics specifically in Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh (OUaB).

The Board agreed a number of mitigations and recommendations - however members were clear that, despite every effort, there will be increased disruption and inconvenience for patients and those travelling for health appointments as a result of the new service.

NHS Western Isles Director of Finance and Procurement, Debbie Bozkurt, told Board members how the new service will affect both access to health for the public, and the ability of NHS Western Isles to provide safe and effective services as close to home as possible for the residents of the Western Isles.

She also pointed out that, whilst NHS Boards in Scotland are not funded or expected to manage public transport infrastructure under the National Health Services (Scotland) Act 1978, the NHS does significantly contribute indirectly to the service in terms of passenger tickets of £3.5million to £4million annually.

Ms Bozkurt stated that NHS Western Isles did not expect to be directly involved in the pre-tender specification development, however there was an expectation that the NHS would have been consulted as a stakeholder, so that requirements in terms of timetabling and capacity could be understood, to potentially avoid an impact on health services for the local community. The NHS had, however, not been consulted.

Non-Executive Director, Paul MacAskill, suggested that such decisions should consider the risk of ‘collateral damage’ to other bodies.

Mr MacAskill said that he was particularly concerned about individuals who will need to access services over the winter months and the impact this change will have on travel arrangements and experiences at that time.

He added that he always looks at the individual experiencing the impact of change and he knows that every effort has been made by NHS staff to provide the best possible services to patients in the circumstances.

As a result of the new contract, whilst the number of days of flights has increased from two to three per week, there has been a considerable reduction in capacity from 96 – 98 seats over two days to 24-seat capacity return a week over three days. This has had a direct impact on individuals not being able to travel by air to scheduled healthcare appointments or for procedures.

The days of delivery of these services are linked to NHS Highland Consultants' Job Plans/contracts, theatre days, and other commitments the consultants may have in remote and rural areas of NHS Highland. It is not possible to simply adjust days, or increase the days needed for travel, as such adjustment is likely to impact the consultants' obligations in relation to their own Board area. NHS Western Isles cannot divert patients to NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde as no specific Visiting Service contract is in place and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde is at capacity in terms of its own patient numbers and demand.

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson explained: "The transport infrastructure is extremely important to provide our communities with access to health. The consequences of this change are clear for those trying to access healthcare, but we will do all we can within our operating parameters to reduce that impact. It is clear however that we will not be able to remove or resolve all the problems that have risen.

"There is no doubt that waiting times are at high risk of becoming longer. The issue is that waiting times in the Outer Hebrides, relative to most other NHS Board areas, have been very short, and what we might see is considerable lengthening here of waits in some specialties."

He added: "We would like to thank members of the public for working with us. It's a really difficult time for them and their families. We would also thank clinical and non-clinical staff for the huge effort in trying to find solutions for those experiencing difficulties or challenges."

Professor Annetta Smith, Non-Executive Director, stated that she recognised that staff were going above and beyond in terms of ensuring access to services for patients, with consultants taking extra time to travel to provide services and having to take more time away from home, often with additional overnight stays. She added that what staff had

done to support members of the public travelling for health appointments was 'extraordinary'.

Mr Jamieson said that he was 'humbled and impressed' by NHS Highland consultants and pointed out that there is a limit to how long consultant staff can be away from base. In terms of their day-to-day workload, appointments and on-call commitments.

"Their commitment to come here and work around challenges and put themselves at a level of additional time away, speaks for itself," he said. "They have gone as far as they possibly can. However, the risk we face is that any further reduction or changes will compound these issues beyond the redress of resolution."

Mrs McCannon, pointed out that the issue had 'challenged us in ways that I have never seen staff challenged' and she was particularly concerned about people who have been left stranded as a result of ongoing and frequent cancellations.

She added: "It pains us seeing people having to travel in ways that they would not normally have to travel. It has tested every single individual around this table in how to manage this one particular issue. Patients are at the heart of what we are here for and it is painful to see what has happened and the impact on them, in terms of this service. I commend everyone who has been trying to provide workarounds for patients – they have gone above and beyond."

Additional concerns expressed by Board members with regard to the new contract included the requirements in terms of the Equality Act, with Professor Annetta Smith referring to the lack of disabled access on the aircraft providing the service. "People who are disabled are quite significantly affected," she stated.

Whilst the impact of the new service on healthcare and patients was the main focus of discussions, Board members also expressed concern about the impact of the changes on the sustainability of the Western Isles.

Non-Executive Director, Ms Julia Higginbottom, expressed concerns about the impact of the new service on depopulation and 'quality of life' for islanders.



Non-Executive Director, Paul MacAskill, added: "Inter-island services are key for our survival as communities. It's important these are maintained. We have seen the impact that this change has on people. It's important to have an integrated transportation approach, where links to the mainland and back to the islands are interconnected and joined up in a cohesive way."

NHS Western Isles suspects that, as a direct consequence of the new Benbecula to Stornoway PSO, Loganair is set to withdraw the 7am flight from Inverness to Stornoway from August. This is the flight that clinical staff used to travel to Stornoway to provide visiting services. It also used to connect to and from Inverness to Benbecula, as it was a direct flight, but no longer does so under the new contract.

If morning flights are not provided after August 1, then up to 40 per cent of the activity delivered by visiting consultants at Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway is at risk (more than 3,000 procedures or outpatient clinic appointments).

Mr Jamieson pointed out: "If this flight does not continue post-August, there will be significant additional implications. We will strive to provide as much safe and effective care as we can in the Outer Hebrides. However, to do that care here, there needs to be an optimal and reliable

transport system. It is a mission critical service.

"Looking to the winter, I am more than anxious about what any additional impact may be. The winter will be a challenging period. Our staff want to do their best for every patient, and they find it a real struggle when anything stops them from doing that. I can only apologise to people for any inconvenience, distress and disappointment that they have had. We are doing everything we possibly can to mitigate that in terms of our own operating parameters."

Board members agreed to a range of recommendations, including working with Caledonian MacBrayne to block book vehicle spaces; continuing discussions with Loganair to discuss the early morning flight from Inverness; to undertake an assessment of all clinics to consider where remote clinics can be provided; and to continue to work with NHS Highland on any reasonable changes that could be made to safeguard services.

The full Board papers are available at: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/about-us/meet-the-board/board-papers

Parkinson's Disease Consultants visit benefits Western Isles

NHS Western Isles welcomed Dr Ed Newman and Dr Vicky Marshall, Consultant Neurologists from Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, to Stornoway recently, as they provided dedicated Parkinson's Disease specialist patient clinics and tutorials aimed at local clinicians and health professionals.

Parkinson's Disease, which is a condition that affects the brain, causes problems like shaking, slow movement and stiffness, which get worse over time. Parkinson's Disease is caused by a loss of nerve cells in part of the brain, however, it is still not clear exactly why this happens.

Consultants Newman and Marshall spent two full two days providing practical face-to-face and online education teaching, skills sessions, as well as case discussions in clinical presentation, differential diagnosis, role of imaging, drug therapies and Atypical Parkinsons. Staff also learned about the benefits of Deep Brain Stimulation for Parkinson's Disease; a surgical therapy used to treat certain aspects of Parkinson's.

Dr Micheal Macdonald, from Langabhat Medical Practice, who attended said: "This training has been invaluable in helping me understand more about how the Parkinson's Disease service works locally. The tutorials and case

discussions have also increased my clinical knowledge and awareness of what I could be doing in my own daily practice before making any referrals. It has also enabled me to be aware of what our patients can expect at their Parkinson's Disease reviews. In general, these in-person learning events with mainland-based specialties not only improve our understanding of how the service works, and what can be offered, but also greatly improves the patient experience by strengthening a team-based approach to their care. All of this is vital in maintaining functional health services in a remote setting and I intend to share this learning with my colleagues."

Dr David Fearon, Group Medical Practice, who also attended, added: "It was very helpful seeing the common issues for Parkinson's Disease patients, which although common to primary care, does remain a challenge. It was very helpful to hear and learn about the different potential diagnoses and typical drug regimes. It was also useful to learn more about advanced therapies such as DBS (Deep Brain Stimulation)."

Rhoda Morrison, NHS Western Isles Neurology Nursing Team, said: "It was a privilege to be present at each of the sessions. This team-based approach to patients living with a neurological condition in remote communities such as the Western Isles is vital."

Several local Parkinsons Disease patients also benefited from the visit, by attending a number

of specialist face-to-face clinics provided by the Consultants, which usually would take place online via Near Me/Attend Anywhere remote consultations.

Feedback from patients was also very positive with one patient commenting: "It was great to see my Neurologist face-to-face. He explained everything so well and made me feel at ease. The thought of travelling to Glasgow makes me nervous, especially when I have problems with my tremor. This was just ideal."

Another patient explained: "I loved the way the Consultant dictated the letter to my GP in front of me. It made it clear what my plan was again. He (Dr Newman) was so easy to speak to and put me at ease. He really listened to me."

Consultants Newman and Marshall stated they themselves found their visit to be of immense benefit.

The Consultants reported that they were very impressed with NHS Western Isles' IT systems, acknowledging how everything ran smoothly for them during their visit. However, they did obtain an insight to the challenges that local patients face when having to travel to Glasgow for hospital appointments, when their own return flight was delayed.

Pictured above are Dr Vicky Marshall, Dr Ed Newman and Angela Macleod, NHS Western Isles Neurology Clinical Nurse Specialist (Parkinson's Disease and Multiple Sclerosis).



COST OF LIVING SUPPORT

Find out what support is available to you during these difficult times

www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/cost-of-living-support/



The Western Isles Dental Centre was all ready to welcome kids during July - with games, lucky dips and competitions for the little ones!



Feedback from parents and carers

"Excellent event, kids loved it! Positive dental experience for them, brilliant!"

"It's a brilliant idea as it not only teaches children about oral health it teaches the adults too."

"Love this idea my child was so at ease, staff were amazing."

Kind donation from across the pond

On a recent visit to the Isle of Lewis, Pastor Kim Cooper and his wife Jill from Ontario, Canada, visited NHS Western Isles' Spiritual Care Department at Western Isles Hospital.

During that visit they met with Rev. TK Shadakshari, Lead Chaplain & Strategic Diversity Lead, and Helen Gallacher, Healthcare Chaplain, to see how spiritual care is delivered in the Western Isles and to exchange stories.

Whilst here, they donated gifts of children's/babies blankets and hats, which were delivered to both the Maternity Ward and Medical Ward 1 in Western Isles Hospital, and received with thanks from staff. Pictured are Maternity and Medical Ward 1 staff with the beautiful gifts.



Sex, Drugs & Young People

NHS Western Isles hosted several training events in Uist and Barra focusing on young people's drug use and the impact it can have on their sexual and reproductive health.

The training, previously held in Lewis and Harris during 2023, was well attended by colleagues and partners from health and social care, Police Scotland, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Education and Children's Services, Scottish Ambulance Service, and the Third Sector.

Course participants were provided with the knowledge to understand why some young people may use drugs, recognise the signs and symptoms when people are under the influence of substances, whilst also giving them a better understanding of the risks to the user's sexual wellbeing, including acknowledging and preventing victim blaming in vulnerable situations like assault.

Colum Durkan, NHS Western Isles Director of Public Health, said: "This training is important for helping staff and partners see the importance of their role in delivering key harm reduction messages, as well as ensuring early sexual health interventions are provided in many different settings."

Feedback was extremely positive, with all participants stating that they were more informed about drug use and the impact on sexual health.

In addition, participants also stated that, due to the course, they had an increased confidence in speaking with young people about their drug use, and know how best to support them to access sexual health services.

For further information on sexual health training please contact Isabel Steele, NHS Western Isles Senior Health Improvement Officer, by emailing: isabel.steele@nhs.scot



Isabel Steele,
Senior Health Improvement Officer

What's your story?

What's your story?



Care Opinion has produced the following 'What's your story?' format to engage with children/younger people (and their parents/carers) who have experienced paediatric health care...

Has someone helped you feel better when you were sick or needed care recently? Maybe a doctor, nurse, or someone special? I'm here to hear all about it!

Sharing your experience can help others feel brave and strong. It can make things better for everyone.

You can say why you needed to be looked after and where you had to go. You can say what you liked and what you did not like!

Please don't put your real name in your story. Ask a grown up to help if you are not sure.

What will happen to my story? We will publish it on this site, if we can, so everyone can read it. Then we will tell the service about your story, and they might reply.

Don't worry: we never share your name or email with anyone.

View at: <https://www.careopinion.org.uk/go/3425/tell-bear-your-story>

Students are
11 TIMES
more likely to develop
invasive meningococcal
disease than the
general population.



The HPV vaccine helps
prevent HPV infection,
which can cause
genital warts
and certain types
of cancer.



Cases of measles are
on the rise. Young
adults and students
are at higher risk.



Students urged to ensure their vaccines are up-to-date

Students in the Western Isles are encouraged to ensure their vaccinations are up to date when heading off to college or university this year.

Infectious diseases such as meningitis, septicaemia (blood poisoning) and measles can spread easily in universities and colleges. Vaccination offers the best protection against these diseases, which is why it's important to check your vaccines are up to date.

Students are 11 times more likely to develop invasive meningococcal disease, which causes meningitis and septicaemia. The meningitis ACWY (MenACWY) vaccine helps to protect against these very serious diseases.

Parts of the UK and other countries in Europe have been seeing an increase in the number of people getting measles, and evidence suggests students are at higher risk. That's why it's important to check you've had two doses of the MMR vaccine, which protects against measles, mumps and rubella and has saved over 4,500 lives across the UK.

NHS Western Isles Director of Public Health, Colum Durkan, said: "These diseases can be severe and, in some cases, life threatening. Students are at increased risk due to the large amounts of mixing with new people in enclosed spaces. Increasing cases of measles and meningococcal disease in particular were observed earlier this year. Vaccines are the best way to ensure you're protected and these are offered for free on the NHS in Scotland. These vaccines are offered as part of the routine childhood immunisation schedule however if they've been missed, it's not too late to catch up.

"Ideally, they should be given at least two weeks before the new semester starts."

There is also still time to get the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, although most students will have received this at school. It helps protect against HPV-related cancers including

head, neck and cervical cancer and also protects against over 90% of genital wart infections.

To find out how you can get these vaccines, as well as any others you may be eligible for, please visit www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/vaccination-services/

or nhsinform.scot/vaccinesforstudents

International students may be able to get additional vaccines that were not available where they lived before

**Make sure you're
up-to-date with all
your vaccines if you're
going to college or
university this year.**



Healthier
Scotland
Scottish
Government



Speech and Language Student Placement

Team Brief Case Study

Katie and Olivia, two third year Speech and Language students on placement with NHS Western Isles, led a short improvement project in relation to supporting people living with dementia to overcome communication barriers in Alzheimer Scotland's daycare service SOLAS based in Taigh Shipoirt.

This opportunity developed from an existing close local working partnership with Karen Mackenzie, Speech and Language Therapist, NHS Western Isles, and Catriona MacRitchie, Commissioned Service Lead, Western Isles Services, Alzheimer Scotland, and with additional national support and guidance from Elaine Hunter, National Allied Health Profession Consultant, Alzheimer Scotland.

For three consecutive Fridays, Katie and Olivia attended a session in SOLAS to demonstrate the

use of Talking Mats and support the Day Service team to gain more confidence in using the Talking Mats in practice.

A Talking Mat is a visual communication framework which supports people with communication difficulties to express their feelings and views. Talking Mats can be carried out physically or in a digital space, for example a tablet, laptop or computer for which we have created one of the best apps for communication disability.

Once the topic has been chosen, the participant is given the options one at a time and asked to think about each one, placing it on the Talking Mat to indicate how they feel about it.

The decision to focus the improvement project on communication barriers and communication tools was made following a recent training audit and survey which identified gaps in knowledge and experience in using communication tools such as Talking Mats by the day service team in SOLAS. Both students also sought the opportunity to use the breadth of their knowledge and skills gained throughout their training to support staff with other areas as well as supporting those with difficulties with eating and drinking.

Learning and skill development was further supported following each session through a short feedback session offering an opportunity for the students and staff to reflect and ask questions.

So what?

The Day Service team found that by using the Talking Mats with those they support living with dementia, some found it easier and more helpful to express things that matter to them and their needs which previously they may have found difficult to do otherwise. Using the Talking Mats also offered an

opportunity for the team to support a more focused 'getting to know me' exercise with those who attend in relation to certain topics or subjects such as likes and dislikes regardless of whether there were barriers to communication or not, resulting in improved relationships and increased trust and rapport between staff and those who attending.

Furthermore, the Day Service team found it was extremely helpful having the students there to help direct and support using the talking mats as with any new skill, it does take some getting used to at the beginning.

Christine Macleod, Day Care Organiser, said: "It was such a pleasure to have two SLT Students attend our Day Centre for three consecutive Friday's. They were a ray of sunshine to staff and particularly interacted well with the people living with dementia that we support.

"On the first day we asked them to observe one of the people we support who has some difficulty with eating her food and they gave us constructive feedback afterwards. They joined in a musical session, and one of them sang a song for us. One of the people living with dementia that we support said 'I danced often to that song'.

"On the second Friday, they talked us through the Talking Mat and gave us the opportunity to use it, resulting in us getting to know more about two of the people we support. This was an excellent activity and one that we will continue to use.

"On their last Friday, we all interacted with playing a game with balloons and bats which those we support really loved and laughed a lot throughout the activity.

"Those we support said that the students were lovely, and personally wished them all the best in their career."

What Now?

This opportunity has led to the Day Service team



feeling more confident in using Talking Mats and has also opened an avenue for formal Talking Mats training, which is offered by NHS Western Isles' Speech and Language team. It has also continued to pave the way for further partnership working opportunities and future projects placements through NHS Western Isles and Alzheimer Scotland's Western Isles Services.

Most importantly though, the team has furthermore developed a skill which helps to ensure that people living with Dementia are continued to be encouraged and supported in ways to express their needs, wants and wishes regardless of communication difficulties and barriers – Your Voice, Your Choice, Your Future ([click here](#)).

Contact Information:

Want to find out more about Alzheimer Scotland Western Isles Services? Get in touch with Catriona MacRitchie (Commissioned Service Lead) by email cmacrithchie@alzscot.org or mobile 07824561305. You can find your local Office, Daycare Service and Dementia Resource Centre at Taigh Shipoirt, Sinclair Avenue, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, HS1 2AP.

Be safe & informed

Drug and alcohol awareness

The Outer Hebrides Alcohol & Drug Partnership wants to make sure everyone stays safe by providing information on drinking sensibly and substance use, and helping individuals to make informed decisions.

Across Scotland, one in four people drink at a potentially harmful level with 1,276 alcohol-specific deaths in 2022 (where alcohol was the underlying cause of death). This is an increase of 2 per cent (31 deaths) in 2021. Of those deaths in 2022, 440 were women and 836 were men.

In addition, there were 1051 deaths due to drug misuse in 2022 with those aged between 35-54 more likely to die. There are risks involved in taking any drug, especially when you are unaware of the content. You cannot be sure of the purity of a drug, and it can be more potent than you expect unless they have been prescribed specifically for you. This can be dangerous when mixing with other prescribed medicines and could lead to unpredictable results and impair your judgement.

Summer can be a busy time where there are invites to outdoor events, camping, beach parties, festivals etc. and being able to make an informed choice whether to drink or take drugs, or not, can be difficult when your peers may be encouraging you to join in. Having a few drinks can make you feel relaxed and improve your mood due to the dopamine levels increasing in the brain. However, alcohol is a depressant, so this is only a short-term effect on the brain. Continuing to drink can replace

that happy mood with more negative thoughts where you can become angry, stressed, and anxious. Not to mention the hangover from being dehydrated which can

leave you feeling awful the next day.

All this can have a big impact on an individual's health and wellbeing. The risks to health increase if you consume over 14 units per week. There are higher risks to developing certain head and neck cancers. Heavy drinking can lead to hypertension and increased risk of stroke, cirrhosis and liver failure. Alcohol can also cloud a person's judgement and is linked to casual and unsafe sex that can lead to pregnancy and STIs.

Alcohol does not have to be key factor in all this. There are options and choices that you can make. You should have at least three alcohol free days per week. Consider swapping to low or non-alcohol options which are more widely available. Choose a smaller measure of wine or spirits and be sure to keep hydrated and most importantly, pace yourself.

You can download the Alcohol Change UK 'Try Dry' app [Interactive tools | Alcohol Change UK](#) which keeps track of your mood, sleep, energy levels and has a journal for keeping notes as well as tracking your drinking patterns, number of units and dry days.

If you feel your drinking is becoming a problem for you, please talk to your GP. You can also find information of alcohol and drug services available in Outer Hebrides on our website at www.outerhebadp.com

If you plan on using drugs, be cautious of the source, try a small amount and wait at least an hour before considering taking any more. Always have someone with you in case you become unconscious or at worst, overdose.

Always protect yourself on a night out. If you feel you may have been 'spiked' tell the venue manager and make sure a trusted friend stays with and seeks medical attention, should you become unwell. Consider contacting the police on 101 so they can help stop this happening to anyone else.

Naloxone can reverse the effects of an overdose

Putting someone into the Recovery Position

Step 1



Put the hand closest to you by the head (as if the person was waving).

Step 2



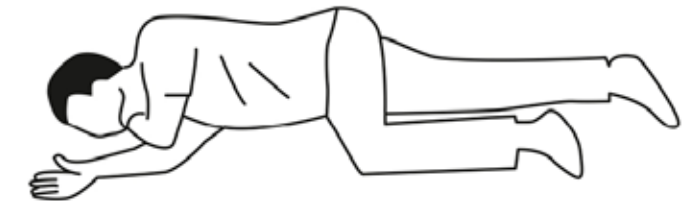
Put the arm furthest away from you across the chest, so that the back of the hand rests against the cheek.

Step 3



Hold the hand in place and lift up the knee furthest away from you, making sure the foot is planted firmly on the ground.

Step 4



Push down on the bent leg to turn the person on their side and call 999.

of opioids, such as heroin and codeine. If you or someone you know uses opioids and could be at risk of an overdose you can request a Naloxone Take Home Kit through the Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs (SFAD) postal service at <https://www.sfad.org.uk/support-services/take-home-naloxone>.

If someone falls unconscious it is vital that you put them in the recovery position (see above).

You may be worried about a family member's drug use but there are resources you can access where you can find information on each drug, the street

names, and effects. www.crew.scot/ and www.talktofrank.com/

Relationships with family can be affected, where they may have to deal with tension in the home and possible neglect of family members and children.

If you feel you may have a problem with drugs, substances or even prescribed medication please talk to your GP. You can also find information of other alcohol and drug services available in Outer Hebrides on our website www.outerhebadp.com.



**Outer Hebrides
Alcohol & Drug
Partnership**

Safe spaces for festival-goers



EDF Benbecula

Isabell MacInnes, Health Protection and Screening Nurse Specialist, and Marion Matheson, Health Improvement Practitioner, from NHS Western Isles' Public Health teams helped at the Safe Space Tent at the Eilean Dorcha Festival (known as EDF) in Benbecula on 26th and 27th July.

EDF is the annual summer music festival based on the island of Benbecula.

Both staff have helped at the tent since the festival began in 2016, and were part of a team of the on-site crew, which included paramedics and ambulance, police, coastguard and fire service everyone is there to keep festival goers safe.



Heb Celt Festival, Stornoway

Pictured above at the Safe Space Tent at Heb Celt Festival on Thursday 20th July are some of the staff and volunteers from Action for Children, NHS Western Isles, Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership and other organisations, including third sector.

The tent is situated in the festival grounds and is staffed over the three days by experienced and supportive staff who are trained to manage risks to

festival goers.

The volunteers are split into teams of two, with staff covering the front of tent, intensive support, inside the arena and the periphery. The Safe Space provides a monitored rest and recovery area for those that may have taken too much alcohol or substances, or may just be feeling anxious and needs some emotional and practical support.

Everyone coming into the tent is well looked after. Anyone requiring additional support is safely passed to the care of the on-site paramedics and ambulance crew, reducing the need for the person to be taken to hospital.

This service would not be possible without the amazing team of volunteers who come from a range of backgrounds and who care about people's wellbeing.



The Recovery Support Services Directory offers information on the range of local and national services that best meet an individual's needs and circumstances.

It contains details of alcohol and drug support services across the Outer Hebrides that provide assessment, treatment, advice and information on drug and alcohol use for service users and for those who may be concerned about someone else's substance use.

Find out more at: <https://www.outerhebadp.com/services/our-services/>

Secondary School pupils participate as Mentors in Violence Prevention

NHS Western Isles and the local Education Department have begun implementing the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) peer education programmes recently, the first of which was delivered to over 20 pupils in Sir E Scott Secondary School in Harris.

The programme, currently being delivered in three of the Western Isles secondary schools, is an effective bystander intervention peer mentoring programme that gives young people the opportunity to take a leadership role in challenging gender-based violence.

This means to provide them with the chance to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin gender-based violence.

Mary Clare Ferguson, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Head of Education: said "The MVP programme further supports our Western Isles approach to promoting

positive relationships and behaviour across the authority and wider community, encouraging our young people to actively adopt inclusive, nurturing and restorative approaches. MVP provides our young people with the opportunity to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin gender-based violence."

MVP addresses a range of behaviours including sexting, controlling behaviour, sexual harassment and consent, and uses a 'bystander' approach where individuals are not looked on as potential victims or perpetrators, but as empowered and active bystanders with the ability to support and challenge their peers in a safe way. A strong emphasis has been placed on building healthy, respectful relationships both in the school and in the community.

Colum Durkan, NHS Western Isles Director of Public Health, said, "Our Public Health Division supports the delivery of MVP throughout the Islands and it is really very encouraging to see how well the young people have embraced the programme. I would like to sincerely thank the secondary schools, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Education Department and other partnership agencies, for coming together to prioritise and deliver this positive relationship initiative."

"Nowadays it is not an easy world for our young people to navigate through, so it's more important than ever that they are able to discuss and safely challenge the issues around gender-based violence."

The programme is part of the Scottish Government's Equally Safe strategy which drives the work of the local Violence Against

Women and Girls Partnership.

MVP provides opportunities for young people to explore healthy relationships and is an important tool in supporting wellbeing and positive mental health.

Pictured above is the current group of 21 young mentors delivering the programme in Sir E Scott secondary school in Harris, along with their trainers Isabel Steele, NHS Western Isles Senior Health Improvement Officer, and Diane Kennedy, Sir E Scott Secondary School Principal Teacher for PSE (far left), and Adam Johnson, Sir E Scott Secondary School Deputy Head Teacher (far right).

For further information contact Isabel Steele by emailing: isabel.steele@nhs.scot



NHS WESTERN ISLES LAUNCHES MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE THAT PROVIDES IMMEDIATE SUPPORT IN TIMES OF DISTRESS

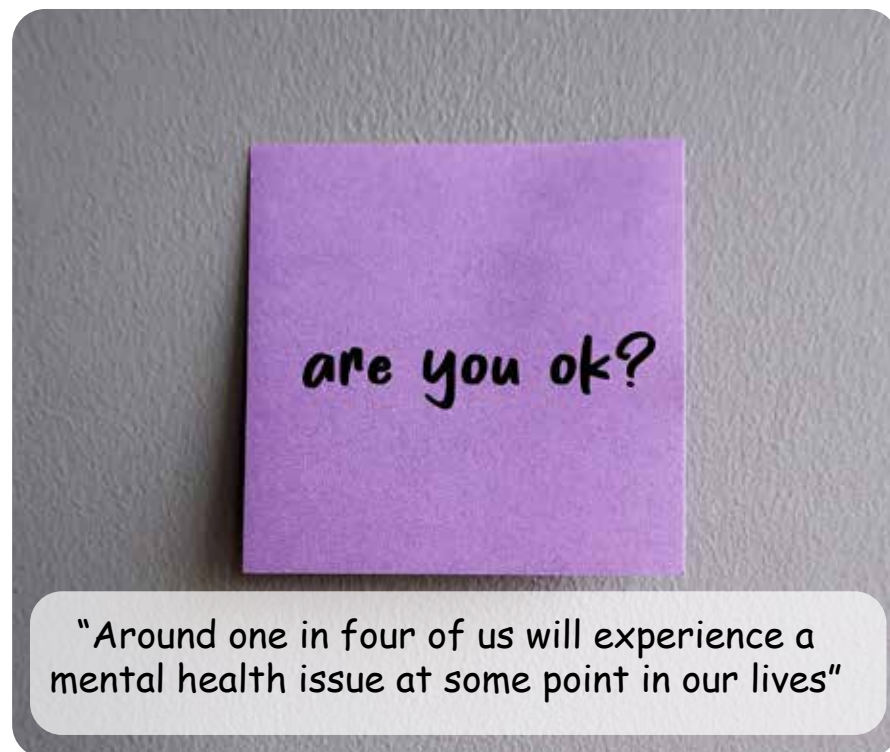
A mental health service that provides up to two weeks of early intervention, immediate, compassionate support to people in distress has launched across the Western Isles following successful rollouts in other regions of Scotland. National mental health charity Change Mental Health is delivering Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) in the Western Isles as part of an expansion of the Scottish Government funded programme.

Distress Brief Intervention is a 365 days a year service for people experiencing mental distress, aiming to reduce pressures on frontline staff. The programme is built around an “ask once get help fast” response to people in distress, with DBI Coordinators delivering support and services to a range of clients aged 16 and over. The overall aim is to provide a connected, compassionate and effective response to people in distress, making it more likely that they will engage with and stay connected to services or support that may benefit them over time. DBI works to provide early intervention which is crucial in managing mental and emotional health problems and equipping people with the skills and support to improve their own health and to prevent future crisis.

Referrals can be made by a number of frontline services, including GPs, the Emergency Department (ED), Police Scotland, Community Mental Health Teams, NHS24 and the Scottish Ambulance Service. The DBI service will then contact the person within 24 hours and, over the next two weeks, work closely with them receiving support both in person and virtually to complete a distress management plan, develop coping strategies, and establish connections with people and organisations within their local community.

Ian Graham, National Distress Brief Intervention

Project Lead at Change Mental Health, said: “Change Mental Health is delighted to have been awarded the contract to provide the Distress Brief Intervention programme in the Western Isles. We have begun the process of working



with key partners, including employing local DBI Coordinators and commencing training to open the new pathways for people to access the service. The DBI programme provides a framework for creating a consistent, collaborative, connected, compassionate and effect response to people experiencing distress in Scotland.”

Nick Fayers, Chief Officer of the Western Isles Integrated Joint Board, said: “Around one in four of us will experience a mental health issue at some point in our lives so it’s vital that when this happens people have access to the right treatment and support to help them recover as soon as possible. Our clinicians are often the first responders to have contact with a person experiencing mental health distress. Our ambition through DBI is to connect people to the most appropriate care to meet their needs in as timely a manner as possible”.

Local learning to help save lives

NHS Western Isles has trained over 120 people from all sectors of our local communities and workplaces in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) in the last 12 months.

Elaine Mackay, Strategic Planning and Development Officer, and Marion Matheson, Health Improvement Practitioner, (pictured below) have undertaken the programme of suicide prevention ASIST, which has been held within the Western Isles since 2005.

With over 2000 people locally trained through the NHS Western Isles Public Health Division, ASIST is designed to look at the idea of suicide first aid, on helping a person at risk stay safe and seek further help and looks to train people to recognise invitations for help, reach out and offer support. The training also helps individuals review the risk of suicide, apply a suicide intervention model, and link people with community resources.

Feedback from recent course participants include:

“The model we are taught has given me the confidence to know that I can support someone who is suicidal whereas, before attending I felt I needed to be more specialist to be able to. I now know I just need to start the conversation!”

“Before the course I would have said I felt 2/10 in my confidence to support people - now I’m a 10/10 and know I could easily have the conversation and make that safe plan.”

ASIST training is free of charge, offered throughout the Western Isles, and is held over two consecutive dates.

For further information on ASIST and future training dates, please contact Elaine Mackay, Strategic Planning and Development Officer, by emailing: elaine.mackay3@nhs.scot

suicide-safer communities





ONLINE PARENT SESSIONS

FIND OUT how to manage your child's social media habits over the summer holidays, as well as...

- ✓ finding out how Kooth works
- ✓ how to keep young people safe on Kooth
- ✓ supporting young people online

TWO ONLINE SESSIONS

- ~~THUR 20TH JUNE~~
 - THUR 12TH SEPTEMBER
- BOTH HELD 7.30PM-8.15PM**

SIGN UP AT:

 <https://tinyurl.com/4p9hb7h2>

Unable to attend either date?

If you're unable to attend, you can still complete the online sign-up form and select the option to receive session recording.



Positive results for Primary Care in the Scottish Health and Care Experience (HACE) survey

A survey of over 1000 residents in the Western Isles has found that the majority of GP patients report a positive experience of their care.

The Scottish Health and Care Experience (HACE) survey is a postal survey which was sent to a random sample of people who were registered with a GP in Scotland based on information available on 25th September 2023.

Questionnaires were sent out in October and November 2023 asking about people's experiences during the previous 12 months.

The response rate for our NHS Board area was 27 per cent with 1149 responses to the survey. The survey covered five areas of health and care experience:

- Your General Practice
- Treatment or advice from your General Practice
- Out-of-hours healthcare
- Care, support and help with everyday living
- Caring responsibilities

When asked 'how easy is it for you to contact your General Practice in the way that you want?' 95 per cent of people had a positive experience.

Most people (90 per cent) felt positively about the quality of information that was provided to them by the Medical Receptionists. When rating the overall care provided by General Practices across the Western Isles, a high proportion of



Kind donation from the Western Isles Kidney Patient Association (WIKPA)

The Western Isles Kidney Patient Association (WIKPA) recently donated funds to allow the renal dialysis unit to purchase a water-cooler for our patients.

Senior Charge Nurse, Rebekah Macleod, and the Renal team would like to thank WIKPA for this generous donation and for their ongoing support given to renal patients here in the dialysis unit.

respondents had positive experiences (86 per cent).

Arrangements for getting to speak to members of the multidisciplinary team at the practices also received positive feedback, such as pharmacist (83 per cent positive), physiotherapist (65 per cent positive) and a mental health professional (56 per cent positive).

Continued success for Quit Your Way Hebrides

Congratulations to NHS Western Isles Smoking Cessation Team for their continued success

NHS Western Isles' stop-smoking service Quit Your Way Hebrides is delighted to update you on the recent release by Public Health Scotland (PHS), presenting information on NHS Stop Smoking Services in Scotland and their progress towards their annual Local Delivery Plan (LDP) Standard. The LDP Standard for NHS Scotland in 2023/24 is to achieve at least 7,026 self-reported successful 12-week quits through smoking cessation services in the 40% most deprived areas (60% in NHS Island Boards).

Smoking remains a major cause of poor health in Scotland.

- During Q3 of 2023/24, NHS Scotland achieved 59% (1,039 quits out of 1,757) of the required quarterly LDP Standard.

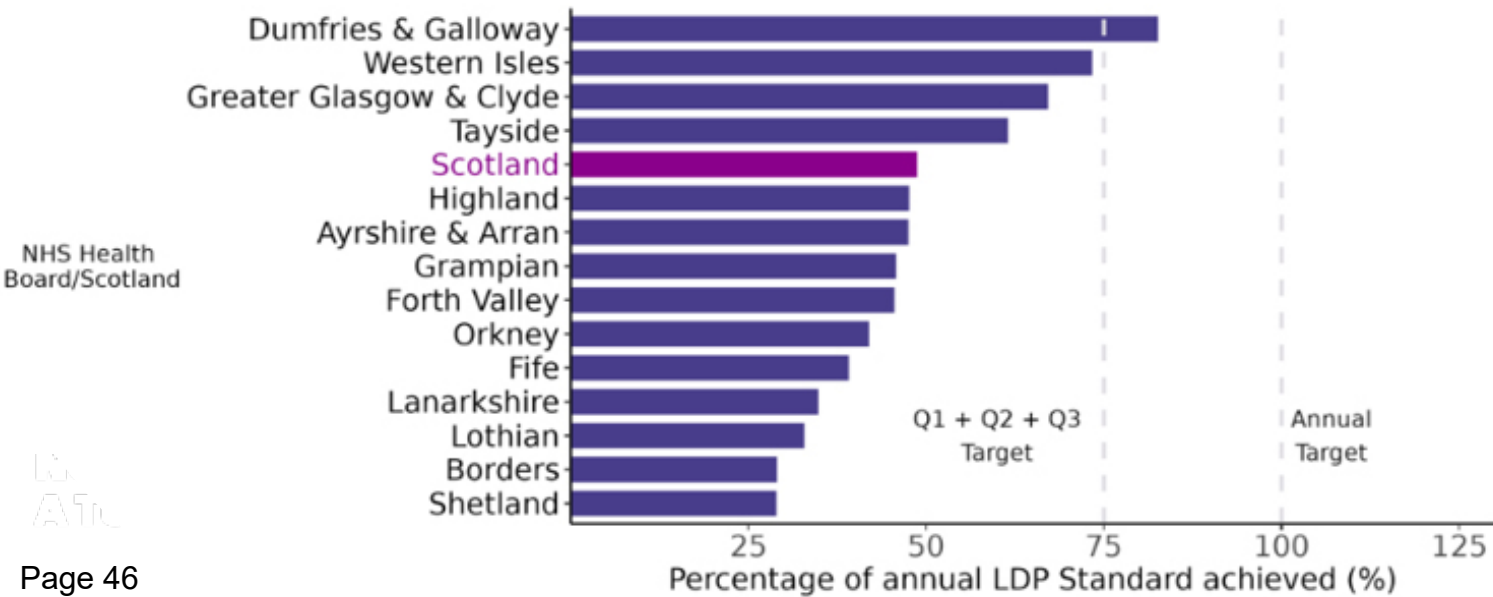
- In the financial year 2023/24 so far, NHS Scotland has achieved 49% (3,424 quits out of 7,026) towards the required annual LDP standard.

Mags Ralston, Smoking Cessation Coordinator, said "I am delighted with all the hard work and commitment by our local smoking cessation team. This is evidenced by the number of quits and the ongoing support given to our clients. A big thank you to all the referrers."

Colum Durkan, Director of Public Health, said: "Stopping smoking is one of the best things someone can do to improve their health. The excellent work undertaken by Mags, Joyce and Marion to support patients on their quitting journey is demonstrated in these fantastic results."

Referrals can be processed through SCI Gateway, email or just call us on 01851 701623.

Scotland and NHS Board performance against the LDP Standard at end of Q3



QUIT YOUR WAY with our support

Quit Your Way Hebrides offers free, confidential, advice, help and support to anyone in the Western Isles who wishes to quit smoking. They can also provide you with information on a full range of Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT) and advise on vaping.

Evidence shows that you are four times more likely to successfully quit smoking for good with the support of Quit Your Way Hebrides service. The team understands that quitting smoking is a very challenging, but they are there to help and support you through it.

Quit Your Way Hebrides

A guide to the smoking cessation service in the Outer Hebrides

QUIT YOUR WAY with our support



Margaret 'Mags' Ralston,
Smoking Cessation Coordinator (Stornoway base)



Marion Matheson,
Health Improvement Practitioner (Uists base)

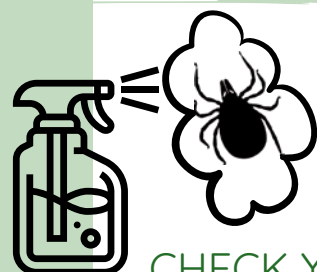


Joyce Beverstock,
Smoking Cessation Advisor (Barra base)



ARE YOU TICK AWARE?

DO'S:



REPELLENTS

Use insect repellents containing DEET

CHECK YOUR CLOTHES

Wear light coloured long clothing so ticks are easier to spot and brush off



Remove your clothes when arriving home; not in the bedroom, as ticks could remain on carpets/bedding.



CHECK YOUR SKIN

Ticks like warm, moist places; think waist, armpits, hair line, groin, ears

Keep exposed skin to a minimum. Wear long sleeves and tuck trousers into socks



GOING OUTSIDE

Avoid/take care in areas with dense vegetation

Walk on paths

PETS

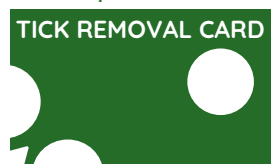
Wash pet bedding by itself at 50°C



REMOVING TICKS:

remove the tick as soon as possible

to use the card: place card between tick and skin. Then scrape the tick off



FOLLOWING A TICK BITE, IF YOU FEEL UNWELL WITH FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS OR DEVELOP A RASH AROUND THE SITE OF ATTACHMENT PLEASE CONSULT YOUR GP.

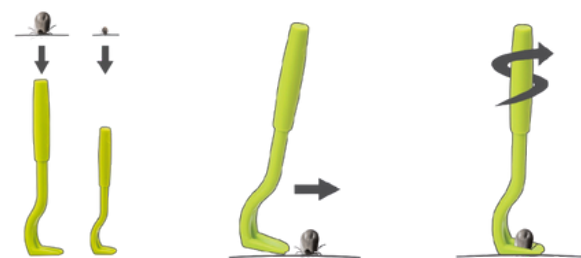
DO NOT

cover the tick with oils, lotions, chemicals or petroleum jelly

try to burn the tick off with a lit cigarette end or match. This can increase the likelihood of the tick passing on a disease

ensure all mouthparts are removed, any parts left in the skin can cause a local infection

to use the remover tool:



apply antiseptic to the bite area/wash with soap and water. Keep an eye on the site for several weeks for any changes



squeeze or squash the tick



Triple P Positive Parenting on Barra

Marion Matheson, NHS Western Isles Health Improvement Practitioner, and Kerry Anne MacNeil, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Castlebay Nursery Childcare Manager, recently delivered the Triple P Positive Parenting 8-week programme on Barra.

The programme is a comprehensive, evidence-based parenting and family support system designed to improve the quality of parent-child relationships and de-stigmatise parenting information and family support.

Seven parents took part in the sessions and the following feedback was received:

- "This has changed my life."
- "Simple, worthwhile course. Definitely worthwhile taking time out to do it."
- "A man's class would be great."
- "You learn about yourself and easy to understand and work out."
- "Wonderful programme."
- "Should be encouraged to do pre-natal or in first year of birth."

Missing from the photograph is Maggs MacIntosh, Laura Macneil and Lisanne MacInnes.



WHERE TO BUY TICK REMOVERS



Shining a light on Volunteers Week

As part of Volunteers' Week 2024, NHS Western Isles hosted an event to shine a light on the remarkable work of local volunteers, working in conjunction with the organisation.

The event was opened by NHS Western Isles Chair Gillian McCannon, and attended by individuals from Volunteer Centre Western Isles, Western Isles Diabetes Support Group, and Paths for Health Walk Leaders attended alongside staff from NHS Western Isles' Health Promotion, Human Resources, Public Focus Public Initiative, Equality & Diversity and Chaplaincy teams. Mrs McCannon spoke about the valuable contribution that volunteers make to NHS Western Isles and society in general and said, "On behalf of NHS Western Isles, I personally want to thank volunteers for everything they do."

"Volunteers are the backbone of what we do and what we've done within the NHS."

Volunteering is a selfless act with individuals giving up their time to connect with another person - but it has a two-way merit, with both receiving valuable personal gains."

The group also heard of the unfortunate reduction in the number of people volunteering, both locally and nationally, since the COVID-19 pandemic, and hoped that more individuals would be encouraged to begin volunteering within their local community.

During the event, Mrs McCannon took the opportunity to encourage individuals to apply for Non-Executive vacancies at Western Isles NHS Board when they arise, helping to make a difference to the NHS in their local community.

Those with an interest in applying or wishing to discuss the role further are encouraged to visit www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/become-a-boardmember



Manage worry and anxiety during back-to-school season with Daylight

Daylight is a digital program for worry and anxiety, available to you at no cost.

trydaylight.com/nhs



Back-to-school season can be a complicated time. Kids are often excited and nervous about going back — not to mention a little sad that summer is over. A parent's job is to help their kids adjust. Oh, and it's also to plan routes to school, buy supplies, and reorganise the family schedule.

Worry and anxiety are common during this time

Parents are grappling with yet another set of changes to routines, schedules, and emotions, without much time to care for themselves. Even the most on-top-of-it parents can find themselves struggling with worry and anxiety.

Daylight can help, and it's available at no cost

Daylight is a science-backed, clinically proven app built by leading mental health experts that can help you gain control over your worry and anxiety. In a recent clinical trial, not only did Daylight help **71%** of participants reduce worry and anxiety, but **57%** also reported improvements in mood, and **47%** experienced improved sleep.

Disclaimer: Daylight may not be suitable for everyone, please review the associated safety information by going to the Suitability Page (www.trydaylight.com/suitable) for more details prior to starting the program.

Try Daylight and start feeling better today

trydaylight.com/nhs >



Staff News

CONGRATULATIONS A huge well done to the fabulous Lesley Murray (pictured right) from Eastside Community Team for completing her fourth Butt To Barra cycling challenge raising money for Bethesda Hospice.

The whole team was behind her and those doing it during such awful conditions, and in true Lesley fashion, she finished smiling!!!



WELL DONE to the Medical Ward 2 staff (pictured below) who came together in June to run a fundraising lunch for the Moldova Support Group.

They all worked together to cook, bake, help to set up the night before, and helped out on the day. A huge team effort going above and beyond their already excellent team working in the ward. To work so hard together again on their days off all for a really good cause. They are a group well deserving of recognition.





The NHS Western Isles Staff Pool Bike pilot was launched at the end of July at Western Isles Hospital.

Staff from several Departments, including the Chief Executive Office, I.T., Health Promotion, Radiography, Psychiatry, Medical and General Practice came along to try the new NHS Western Isles bikes and complete their Induction to be added to the list of authorised users for the Pool Bikes.

The Pool Bikes and Shelters were funded by the Cycling UK Rural Connections Fund and HiTrans.

This initiative is the result of months of inter-departmental partnership working between:

- Health Improvement Team Grant Applications and Finance support to secure Cycling UK and HiTrans funding;
- Works and Estate Management support of the construction;
- Health & Safety advisors input to Risk Assessment;
- Information Governance and Business Management consideration for the Bike User Agreements;
- NHS Bike Champions support for inductions
- Western Isles Hospital, Health Board Office and Health Centre reception and administration staff co-operation to keep the booking sheets and keys for the shelters;
- I.T. Department working on adding the bikes to the Room Book system.

It is hoped that the "e-bike smile" on the participants' faces shown will assure colleagues

FREE WHEELING



that the hard work has been worthwhile!

The second inductee of the day was Gordon Jamieson, Chief Executive, who was impressed with the quality of the bikes and commented that it was a "brilliant initiative".

The initiative was the initial idea of former colleague Jeanne Mackay, Health Improvement Practitioner, who retired in March this year. We hope Jeanne will visit soon to see her hard work and vision realised.

Colum Durkan, Director of Public Health, commented: "The Public Health Division are grateful to colleagues for their support to bring this staff benefit to the organisation. The initiative supports our commitment to increasing Physical Activity, improving Staff Wellbeing and promoting Active and Sustainable Travel."

There are now four e-bikes and six regular bikes available to book for work-related journeys, between NHS sites.

Staff must complete an Induction on the bikes and the booking process beforehand, and can do so at any time by e-mail request to: laura.macleod2@nhs.scot

This is a new initiative for NHS Western Isles, aligned with the organisations Health Promotion and Wellbeing Strategy and Sustainable Travel Action Plan. It is hoped to grow and expand this initiative to our other sites, where there is a demand and suitable funding to do so.

For further information please contact Laura Macleod, Health Improvement Practitioner, email: laura.macleod2@nhs.scot



Recruitment



| Job Vacancy | Closing Date | Band | Job Ref |
|---|--------------|------|---------|
| Consultant Old Age Psychiatry | 13.09.2024 | Cons | 194889 |
| Consultant in Paediatrics | 13.09.2024 | Cons | 194893 |
| Medical Secretary | 13.09.2024 | 4 | 195434 |
| SCN Uist Community Nursing Team | 13.09.2024 | 7 | 195445 |
| Integrated Midwife | 13.09.2024 | 5/6 | 195442 |
| Substance Misuse Support Worker | 16.09.2024 | 4 | 194379 |
| Alcohol and Drug Partnership Coordinator | 17.09.2024 | 7 | 195919 |
| Community Psychiatric Nurse CAMHs | 17.09.2024 | 6 | 196001 |
| Health and Safety Manager | 23.09.2024 | 7 | 196286 |
| OD & Learning Admin Assistant (Modern Apprenticeship) | 23.09.2024 | 2 | 195916 |
| Catering Assistant | 25.09.2024 | 2 | 196461 |
| Consultant General Adult in Psychiatry | 04.10.2024 | Cons | 196300 |
| Consultant Radiologist | 04.10.2024 | Cons | 196303 |
| Consultant Physician in General Medicine | 04.10.2024 | Cons | 196306 |

All NHS Western Isles vacancies appear on the NHS Western Isles website:

www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/vacancies/

Right Care Right Place



NHS inform

- Check your symptoms
- Find local services and opening times
- Health advice to help you stay well

NHS 24 Online App

A handy app to help you check your symptoms and find your nearest service



Pharmacist

- Coughs, colds, and sore throats
- Aches, pains and UTIs
- Diarrhoea or constipation
- Help if you run out of your repeat prescription

Mental Wellbeing

- Help for mental wellbeing: nhsinform.scot/mind-to-mind
- Breathing Space: 0800 83 85 87
- For urgent mental healthcare call NHS 24 on 111



Optometrist

- Red and/or sticky eye
- Blurred or reduced vision
- Flashes and floaters

Dentist

- Injury to mouth or teeth
- Swelling in mouth
- Toothache and general dental advice



GP Practice

A range of clinicians, including doctors and nurses, to help you with both physical and mental health issues

Minor Injuries Unit

- Cuts and minor burns
- Sprains and strains
- Suspected broken bones and fractures



NHS 24

When your GP and pharmacy are closed, and you are too ill to wait call NHS 24 on 111

999 or A&E

For emergencies including:

- Suspected heart attack or stroke
- Severe breathing difficulties
- Severe bleeding



If you think you need to attend A&E, but it is not life or limb threatening call NHS 24 on 111

To check your symptoms visit: nhsinform.scot



Work With Us

Find out more about working with NHS Western Isles and living within the Outer Hebrides [by clicking here.](#)