

Slàinte

Health update from NHS Western Isles

NHS
Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

AUTUMN 2024

**‘SAVE ONE LIFE,
YOU’RE A HERO.
SAVE 100 LIVES,
YOU’RE A NURSE.’**

HAPPY RETIREMENT

Farewell to Erica Duffy and Kathleen Macdonald,
retiring with massive 86 years of nursing experience between them!



**Summer Student
Success**



**Scottish Interfaith
Week 2024**



**Choose
Nursing**



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Welcome to Slàinte - your local NHS news

Welcome to our 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 at: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/about-us/publications/

Slàinte Mhaith

CELEBRATING NHS WESTERN ISLES FINALISTS FOR SCOTLAND’S HEALTH AWARDS 2024

NHS Western Isles was thrilled to announce that Western Isles staff were selected as finalists in Scotland’s Health Awards 2024, the annual celebration of the hard work and dedication of people working in healthcare from around Scotland.

The Community Equipment Service (CES) team was a finalist for the Unsung Hero Award: an award which is for an individual, a group or a team who in the course of doing their job, make a real difference, but whose work often goes unrecognised.

The service, operated by the Occupational Therapy team, delivers, collects and recycles invaluable equipment, such as mobility aids, bathing equipment, community beds and toilet aids, supporting people to live as independently as possible in their daily activities, whether in their home or in a community setting. It is operated by two teams, one in Stornoway covering Lewis and Harris, and the other in Balivanich, covering Uist and Barra.

Janette Murray, Service Manager Urgent & Unscheduled Care, was also shortlisted, this time for the Nurse Award – Royal College of Nursing. This award aims to recognise the high quality and compassionate NHS nursing care that an individual nurse has provided.



Janette has been praised for managing and supporting the Urgent Care Team, whilst continuing to develop the Urgent Care Service across the Western Isles. This aims to ensure appropriate care in the right place at the right time for our island communities. Over the last two years, Janette worked as the Emergency Department Manager at the Western Isles Hospital, where she was also heavily involved in the set-up of the new Acute Assessment Area.

Gordon Jamieson, NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, said, “This was an outstanding achievement for NHS Western Isles staff to be announced as finalists, and I would like to congratulate the CES team and Janette for all their hard work and dedication.

“It is fantastic that these unsung health heroes were properly recognised and celebrated in recognition of the sterling work they have provided to our local health service.”

The awards ceremony and gala dinner took place on November 7 at Edinburgh’s O2 Academy, with more than 500 guests attending. Whilst our staff were not announced as winners this time, they are always winners in our view.

Do you know a nurse or nursing support worker who’s made a difference to you or your family’s care? If so, nominate them for the RCN Scotland Nurse of the Year Awards 2025 (page 31).

Western Isles MRI project reaches design stage



Image of an MRI scanner

A significant project that will bring transformative healthcare benefits to the Western Isles community has now reached a crucial design stage.

Following Scottish Government business case approval in 2023, the NHS Western Isles Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) project has progressed to the design specification stage, where a project team is focused on ensuring that the installation of the MRI scanner meets the highest standards for patient and staff care, safety, and operational efficiency.

On approval of funding for this project last year, work has been underway on planning and the detailed design and complex technical work required to develop a safe, compliant and high-quality MRI suite in Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway. During this phase, our project team is working closely with specialist engineers, architects, and healthcare professionals to finalise the technical specifications and design layout of the MRI suite. Key considerations include ensuring accessibility, aligning the installation with existing hospital infrastructure and compliance with relevant standards and guidance.

Initial works identified unexpected potential challenges in terms of the hospital's roof height as well as additional works needed to have the sufficient power supply to the MRI suite. Whilst addressing these issues extended the original timeline, these steps have been critical to deliver a reliable and safe imaging service, and the challenges have now been resolved.

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson said: "We thought it was a key time to update our local community and staff on progress

with this significant project. This project is a significant step forward in enhancing our local diagnostic services at Western Isles Hospital. The new MRI system will not only improve the quality of care we provide but also strengthen our capacity to serve our community with some of the latest developments in imaging technology. Whilst, due to the complexity of the project, our original timescales have had to be changed, we are delighted to confirm that the main challenges have now been resolved, paving the way for the next stages of this development.

"The project design team is now nearing completion of what is known as 'RIBA Concept Design Stage 2' which marks a critical step in the planning and design process. The MRI service is projected to be fully operational by early summer 2026, pending the successful completion of design, construction, and installation phases."

Project Manager, Kathleen Macdonald added: "The work undertaken so far has been a complex and collaborative effort and beyond the local team, we have received support from NHS Highland, NHS Borders, NHS Shetland, National Procurement and Scottish Government and we would like to thank everyone involved for their hard work and ongoing commitment."

A locally based MRI scanner has the potential to further transform and redesign additional patient pathways. Prostrate, gynaecology, cardiac and breast scanning will all be potential areas for improvement in the near future. MRI therefore has the potential to replace other imaging and investigation procedures to maximise patient care delivery in the Western Isles.

Home address visibility for healthcare staff

NHS Western Isles is encouraging members of the public to ensure that their home addresses (numbers/names, etc) are made as clear as possible on properties, gates, or walls, so that healthcare staff providing care or treatment are able to find properties as quickly and easily as possible.

We are aware in certain areas that addresses/croft numbers are not clearly visible from the road, and often cannot be accessed on Satellite Navigation systems.

By helping make your address, and the addresses of those you care for, details clearer, this will help us to ensure that care and treatment can continue to be delivered in as quick a timescale as possible.

Don't forget, you can also view/update your address on the Royal Mail's Postcode Finder at www.royalmail.com/rml-shared-find-a-postcode



Your Health Guide Keep well this winter

NHS Western Isles has produced a useful 4-page guide offering help and guidance to ensure you, and those you care for, get the right care in the right place this winter, as well as helping you to keep safe, well, and warm.

With the cold weather and darker days, winter can be a more difficult time for everyone. The 'Your Health Guide' provides helpful advice on vaccinations, medications, ordering repeat (and safe disposal of) prescriptions, hot water bottle safety, as well as tips on combating winter bugs and viruses.

Important guidance is also offered on Power of Attorney, arranging Self-directed Support, your local Hospital at Home service, dealing with

childhood fevers, as well as specialist advice and links to financial and food bank support.

In addition, carer support and payments for carers features, as well as tips on how to support others, and how you can keep physically and mentally well during the winter season.

Support is also offered on substance use and Naloxone, and emergency contraception.

The guide can be found within the latest issue of Events, but can also be viewed/downloaded from the NHS Western Isles website (Resilience and Emergency Planning section) at www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/resilience

Western Isles Hospital DINING ROOM

OPEN 24 HOURS

Serving meals and snacks to all staff, visitors and the general public between 8am-7pm.



Serving tea, coffee, sandwiches, toasties, paninis, salads, light snacks, main meals, cold drinks, home baking, desserts and ice creams.

Featuring:

- 70 seat dining room
- selection of hot and cold meals
- vegetarian options available
- children's menu available
- fresh home made soup served daily
- outside patio area
- free Wi-Fi

Our staff will welcome and help you in any way they can. All meals are prepared freshly on site and we work closely with local suppliers to ensure the best quality and freshest produce is used at all times.

How to find us...

- Travel down to Level 1 (below reception level)
- Turn right exiting the stairwell or lifts into main corridor
- Travel down main corridor to the second door on the right. The Dining Room will be clearly marked.

Take-away service

Available during meal service hours with the option to phone in an order prior to collection.
Phone **01851 704704 Ext. 2131**

LOOKING FOR A QUICK SNACK OR DRINK?

NHS
Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

Visit our vending area located in the Dining Room on Level 1 (below reception level).

Available 24/7

Options include:

- healthy options
- chilled water
- soft drinks
- confectionary
- sandwiches
- salad boxes
- crisps
- biscuits
- selection of hot drinks (tea, cappuccino, latte, espresso & hot chocolate)
- microwave available for heating meals



Sandwiches and salad boxes are prepared freshly on site.

Western Isles Hospital VENDING SERVICES

Meal service:

Breakfast 8.00am - 11.00am

Lunch 12 noon - 2.00pm

Evening meals 5.00pm - 7.00pm

Serving fresh, quality meals at great prices.

No place like home

Once you have had the care you need in hospital, the best place to recover is at home. For more information on recovering at home visit nhsinform.scot/home-first

#HomeFirst

Home First Supporting Patient Recovery at Home

The 'Home First' approach brings together different strands of support to allow patients to recover at home once their need for clinical treatment is complete.

Research supports the best place to recover is at home. This approach is designed to enable this while helping maintain a patient's independence. This 'Home First' approach is part of our overarching Right Care Right Place messaging which helps the public access the right care in the right place to ease the pressure on health services and improve patient outcomes.

A hospital is the right place for medical checks and treatment, but it is not the best environment to recover in if an individual is clinically fit. Staying in hospital for longer than necessary may reduce independence, result in the loss of muscle strength or increase risk of infection.

Once hospital treatment is complete, the

best place to recover is at home.

Being at home reduces risk of deconditioning from spending too much time in bed. For example, three weeks in bed reduces fitness by the same amount of 30 years of aging.

Being at home means:

- Every day of complete rest can mean losing 5% muscle strength.
- Removes the risk of hospital acquired infections.
- The patient can return to some of their usual routine.

To support staff with discussing Home First a dedicated page has been created on nhsinform.scot. This uses the information contained within this toolkit to provide the general public with the benefits of the Home First approach.

www.nhsinform.scot/home-first



**HOME FIRST: WHEN YOUR
TREATMENT IS COMPLETE,
THE BEST PLACE TO
RECOVER IS AT HOME.**



**HOME FIRST: RECOVERING
FROM A HOSPITAL STAY AT HOME
IS BEST FOR YOUR PHYSICAL
AND MENTAL HEALTH.**



**HOME FIRST: RECOVERING AT
HOME HELPS YOU MAINTAIN
YOUR INDEPENDENCE.**

New chapter for NHS Western Isles, with re-launch of recruitment drive next year for Medical Director

Think Western Isles. Think Wellbeing

“Working as Medical Director for NHS Western Isles has been a privilege, a healthy challenge at times, but always hugely rewarding – being able to live and work in a community I care deeply about, has been the perfect way to finish my career.”

As NHS Western Isles bids a fond farewell to a dedicated and highly respected Medical Director, who is taking his well deserved retirement, the Health Board will be re-launching a recruitment campaign early in the new year for his replacement. This is an exciting opportunity to not only join a passionate and dedicated senior management team, but also to become part of an award-winning organisation with a caring workplace culture, in the heart of a stunning location and a unique and appealing culture.

Western Isles NHS Board is taking steps to promote the benefits of living and working in Outer Hebrides, in its new recruitment drive for a Medical Director. Whilst the recruitment of doctors is challenging across the country, the island Health Board is clear that the appeal of the Western Isles as a location to live and work is unrivalled and very special.

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson, explains: “We are under no illusion that

the recruitment of senior doctors is challenging across the country – however the appeal of living and working in a location like the Western Isles is something unique and special, and hugely attractive to those looking for a healthier work-life balance, and for those wanting to become part of a community. Recent recruitment campaigns focused on our unique selling points as a special close-knit island community, where wellbeing and job satisfaction are the priorities, and through sharing these special features that we have to offer, we have been able to successfully attract a range of staff to our islands.”

The post of Medical Director is an Executive level post with a salary of up to £150,000 a year, plus distant islands allowance and a generous relocation package of up to £8,000. NHS Western Isles will be advertising for a suitable candidate; a dynamic and experienced leader, motivated to improve the health and wellbeing of the Western Isles community, and to delivering high quality safe and sustainable clinical services in a remote and island community setting.

The post has been held for the past four and a half years by Dr Frank McAuley. Dr McAuley, originally from Belfast, is an Anaesthetist by background. Dr McAuley joined NHS Western Isles at the most challenging of times – starting just three weeks before lockdown – and made an invaluable contribution to the pandemic response at that time, as well as to the delivery and development of healthcare services in the Western Isles to date.

For Dr McAuley, the move to the Western Isles provided he and his wife, Helen, with the lifestyle they strived for and the opportunity to use his skills, passion and experience to help develop and shape safe and effective services for the community he and his wife have firmly become part of.

Explaining why they chose the

Western Isles, Dr McAuley recalls: “Helen and I had always had it in our heads that we would, at some time or another, move to one of the islands. I had worked many years ago in Shetland and we had spent a lot of time with our kids when they were wee in the Inner Hebrides. From a career perspective, I had been lucky enough in Gateshead to have acquired a really diverse portfolio of management roles. One of the skills I have is being able to see where things link up and that’s why I have always enjoyed broad ranging portfolios. Coming to the Western Isles, I really thought I could play to my strengths.”

He described the main benefit of living and working in the Western Isles as having time for ‘life’ whilst working in a job he enjoyed.

“The main benefit is simply life,” he explains. “After 22 years of being a consultant anaesthetist in intensive care, you realise that having ‘life’ would be a nice idea. Having life and having space to ‘be’ has been really important. Job-wise I have certainly developed new skills, and that has been really positive. I’ve been very fortunate to have been involved in some very good, positive joined up pieces of work, across different parts of healthcare.”

He continues: “Living here is really good quality. Loads of space, big skies, none of the humdrum noise and everything you would link with living in an urban setting. Living on an island gives you a unique take on life, which both me and Helen really, really like. We have really taken to that.

“Work wise, I probably couldn’t have timed it any worse, as within three weeks of starting, there was lockdown because of COVID. For that reason it was a hugely steep learning curve, but I have never felt isolated or alone. The teams are small, understandably, but there has always been support, encouragement, ‘ears’, so even though it wasn’t an ideal time to start, it has worked out very well for us.”

To step into the shoes of Dr McAuley, NHS Western Isles will be appealing for a senior leader with



Dr Frank McAuley

a passion for remote and rural healthcare, and who is able to roll their sleeves up and work both strategically and operationally. In return, they will be warmly welcomed into a supportive team, and an award-winning innovative organisation where the wellbeing of staff is paramount. A move to the Western Isles is right if you wish to improve your work-life balance, and where you’ll experience a very special extra sense of job satisfaction that comes with living and working in a remote island location.

To assist the successful candidate make that move, they’ll receive up to £8,000 tax-free relocation expenses and an annual Distant Islands Allowance payment.

Dr McAuley stresses: “For this role, you need to be an experienced clinician, and you can’t have airs or graces. You will be very hands on and you’ve got to want to do that. You’ve also got to be able to manage and keep a lot of plates spinning.

“It is a full time job and it does require to be full time. You need to be on site, you need to be visible, you need to listen and you need to be a leader, because it is very much a leadership role. You need to have experience of and enjoy being strategic and operational. You need to have that mindset of wanting to roll your sleeves up. Page 11



Take vitamin D each day

**Food
Standards
Scotland**
For safe food and
healthy eating

Stay healthy this winter

Just 10 micrograms of vitamin D can help you stay healthy this winter.

**Food
Standards
Scotland**
For safe food and
healthy eating

**Vitamin D
10µg**

Support bone and muscle health this winter with 10 micrograms of vitamin D each day.

**Food
Standards
Scotland**
For safe food and
healthy eating

In return, you get to do great things. You get to listen to your teams, you get to nurture your teams, you get to support them in what they believe is the right plan or direction, which is so important and I have got so much enjoyment from that side of things. Seeing people mature and grow is brilliant."

Like other Health Boards and Trusts across the UK, NHS Western Isles has faced increasing challenges in recruitment across a wide range of staff groups. Remote and rural island Health Boards, including the Western Isles, are competing for staff with major urban Boards, which often appear to be more appealing to potential applicants. However, in its recent campaign for a Medical Director, NHS Western Isles will highlight why a move to the Western Isles is the right choice for Wellbeing, for individuals who want to escape the rat race for a healthier work-life balance and embrace a wide range of development opportunities for improved job satisfaction.

Known as Scotland's Atlantic Islands, the Western Isles are steeped in history and culture, with stunning landscapes, spectacular coastlines, a strong sense of community and identity, and renowned Hebridean hospitality. Whilst the stunning landscapes and famous sparkling beaches are undoubtedly strong selling points, NHS Western Isles wanted to take a step back from the tourist draws and promote the Western Isles as a place to live and work, not just to visit.

The Western Isles also has excellent sports facilities, with sports centres across the islands, and an enviable local authority membership scheme for residents. Stornoway boasts a state of the art sports facility with a fully equipped gym, spa, dance studio, climbing wall and swimming pool; whilst the smaller facility in the North-West of Lewis in Ness also offers the additional features of a ten-pin bowling facility and soft play area for kids.

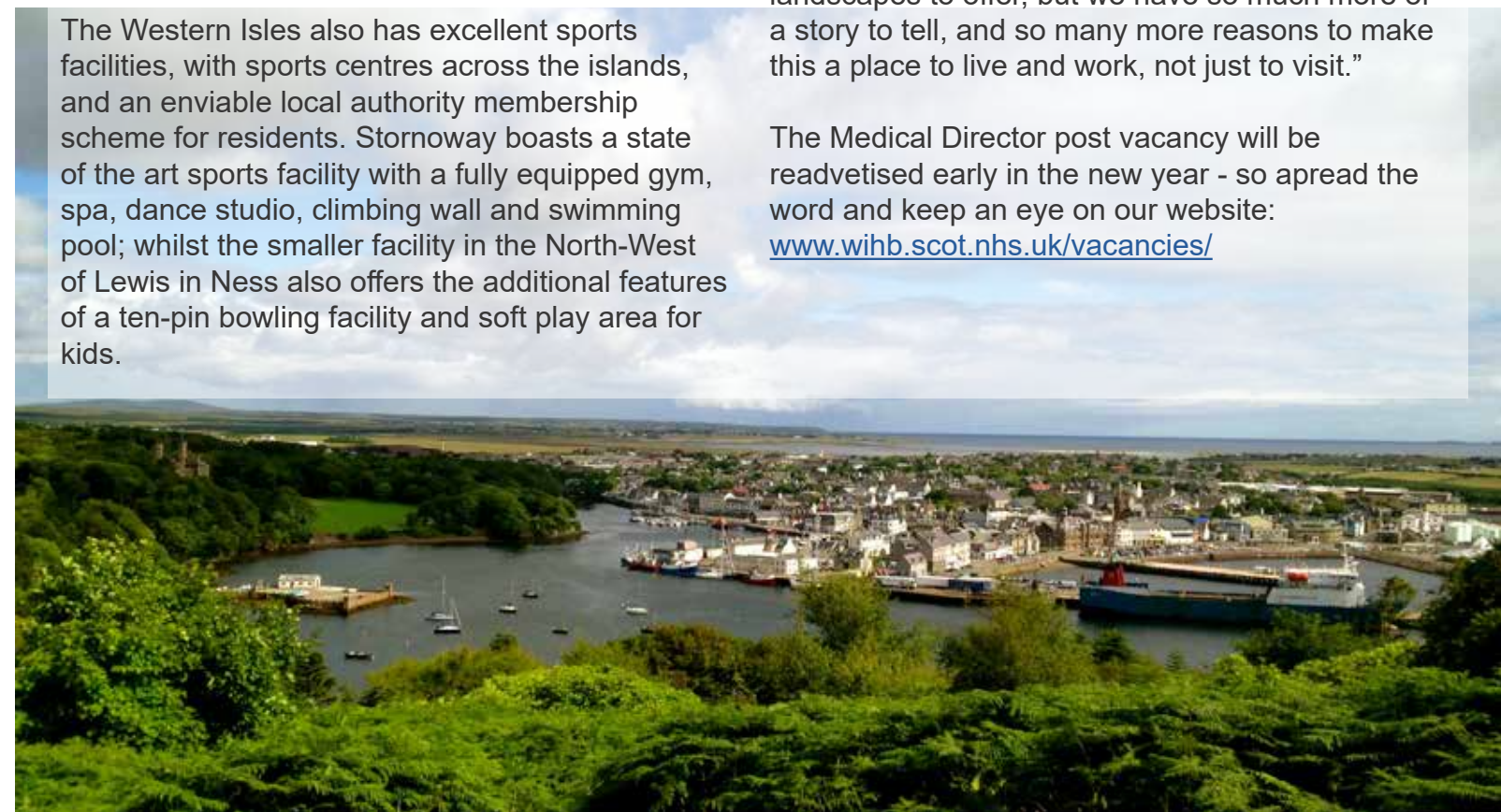
Outdoors, there are numerous sporting opportunities, from water sports such as kayaking, surfing and paddleboarding; to climbing, excellent walks, golf, rugby, bowling and football to name a few. Add to that the multi-arts venue on the Stornoway seafront (with cinema, theatre, art gallery and concert hall) and the numerous clubs and opportunities for young people, including arts, drama, dance, karate, scouting, kickboxing, and gymnastics, together with a high quality education, and you have an ideal place to raise a family.

Contrary to misconceptions about a small and basic health system, NHS Western Isles regularly leads the way in healthcare innovation, with a number of 'firsts' for Scotland achieved, and taking the use of technology to advanced levels to improve care and treatment for residents in a remote island location.

Mr Jamieson added: "It's important that we clarify misconceptions about the Western Isles for anyone thinking about a career move. We're remote, but we're accessible and we have great clinical networks. Yes, we have smaller teams, but our teams are supportive, motivated and work in an environment that empowers them to make a difference. Yes, we're small, but we're ambitious. Yes, there are limitations in terms of what we can do on-island, but we're innovative, creative and forward thinking, which leads to a high sense of job satisfaction.

"It's true we have unrivalled beaches and landscapes to offer, but we have so much more of a story to tell, and so many more reasons to make this a place to live and work, not just to visit."

The Medical Director post vacancy will be readvetised early in the new year - so spread the word and keep an eye on our website: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/vacancies/



**The early bird
can have
more treatment
options.
Cancer. Get checked early.**



**Unusual, persistent symptoms?
Your GP practice wants to know.**

Be the early bird

People in the Western Isles are being reminded that their GP practice wants to know if they are experiencing persistent symptoms that are unusual for them, that could be cancer.

The Scottish Government's 'Be the Early Bird' campaign is encouraging people, particularly those aged over 40, to get checked if they notice unexplained bleeding, unusual lumps, unexplained weight loss or something that doesn't feel normal for them.

The benefits of finding cancer at an earlier stage include more treatment options, a greater likelihood of living well after treatment and better news to tell the family.

Local GP, Dr. David Rigby, said: "In Scotland many patients with cancer are unfortunately only diagnosed at a late stage in the disease which limits the options for treatment and, unfortunately, also limits the chances of long-term survival. However, there are many ways we can help ourselves and our loved ones to pick up cancers before they have had a chance to take hold.

"The National Screening Programmes for bowel, cervical and breast cancer allow us to pick up cancer before we even know it is there, and these have consistently shown to reduce poor outcomes in these specific cancer diagnoses. Regardless of a normal screening result, it is important to seek

advice from a healthcare professional if you develop new symptoms (such as a change in bowel habit that persists over several weeks, abnormal vaginal bleeding or a change in breast examination). Detecting Cancer Early can have a huge impact on treatment whether the abnormality is picked up by screening or by getting checked with symptoms - be cancer aware for a better outcome."

'Early Bird' Graeme Clark was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia two weeks after noticing symptoms that weren't normal for him including fatigue, red freckles on his arms and bleeding gums. Graeme, who was 29 when he was diagnosed, underwent chemotherapy, radiotherapy and then a stem cell transplant and is now five years completely clear.

Graeme said: "My advice to anyone concerned about a possible symptom is to make an appointment with your GP practice immediately. It doesn't bear thinking about what could have happened if I'd not been diagnosed at that point. Go with your gut if you feel something is wrong. Don't google it or sit and worry about it, put your trust in the professionals. Regretting doing nothing is so not worth it."

If you're worried about a possible cancer symptom, your GP practice wants to know.

For more information visit getcheckedearly.org

**The early bird can
live well again.
Cancer. Get checked early.**



RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS?

Try to **stay at home** and avoid contact with others - if you do need to go out wear a well-fitting **face covering**.



**SORE THROAT,
RUNNY OR
STUFFY NOSE**



**TEMPERATURE,
ACHES & PAINS**



**CONTINUOUS COUGH,
HEADACHE OR
TIREDNESS**

**Right Care
Right Place**

For help managing symptoms at home visit **NHS inform** or your local pharmacy. If your symptoms worsen call your **General Practice**. If closed, call **NHS24** on **111**.

nhsinform.scot/right-care

The Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) (Scotland) Act 2024



Safe Access Zones

Protected zones of 200 meters around all abortion services in Scotland are now in place.

Within these zones, it is now a criminal offence to intentionally or recklessly behave in ways that could influence the decisions of women and staff to access services; impede their access; or otherwise cause alarm, harassment or distress.

Police Scotland are responsible for enforcing the legislation. People who break the law can be fined up to £10,000, or be given an unlimited fine, depending on the court procedure.

Determining whether an offence has been committed will be a matter for Police Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and the Courts. Depending on the facts and circumstances of each case, some examples of criminal behaviour may include: approaching someone to try and persuade them not to access abortion services, surrounding people as they try to go in or out of the clinic or hospital, handing out leaflets, religious preaching and silent vigils.

Minister for Public Health and Women's Health Jenni Minto said: "The introduction of Safe Access Zones is a crucial milestone in protecting women's abortion rights – no one has the right to interfere in women's personal medical decisions and the law now makes that abundantly clear.

"I thank Gillian Mackay and all those involved for their work to progress this legislation. I would like especially recognise the women who showed incredible courage in speaking up and sharing their experiences during the Bill process.

"The new zones of 200 meters around all abortion services will help ensure women have safe access to healthcare – free from intimidation. This law is about protection for women at a time when many will feel incredibly vulnerable around taking a deeply personal and difficult decision."

Background

View the [full details of the penalties](#) that apply for committing an offence.



Positive experiences for Summer Students who made significant contribution during work placements

As part of NHS Western Isles' commitment to employability and promoting healthcare careers to young people, NHS Western Isles proceeded again this year with its highly successful Summer Student Recruitment Campaign.

Through the campaign, NHS Western Isles offered students the opportunity to work for the local NHS over the summer months, to gain valuable first-hand experience, whilst also taking home a salary, with enhanced rates of pay for any weekend work.

The Health Board offered the students short term contracts of up to four months, or the opportunity to join one of our Staff Banks, where regular hours are available.

Most posts ran from June to September, all Band 2, and the Board hopes to run it again next year.

The Summer Student Recruitment campaign started in 2023 when NHS Western Isles welcomed students to Human Resources; Medical 2; Works Department; Dietetics; and Maternity.

This year we were delighted to have students in Patient Services; Human Resources; Medical 2; Occupational Therapy (OT); and Podiatry (some of the students are pictured above with Caroline Henderson, Information and Data Resources Officer, in the centre).

Success of the campaign

Feedback from students themselves was very positive, and managers were very encouraged by the impact and contribution of the students – with one team already welcoming one of the students as a permanent team member as a result!

Callum Mighton, who is doing Risk Management at Glasgow Caledonian University, was one of two students to spend the summer in Patient Services. He said: "It's been really good, everyone has been very helpful. It's something that's really good for your CV – having something in the NHS or similar is going to stand out a lot more when applying for jobs."

Erin Smith, who is currently on a gap year, also spent around three months in Patient Services. She said: "It's a very positive work environment and it's been a really good opportunity for further progression. It's a good pathway to work in the NHS in the future and to make good contacts."

Catherine Nagel, who is doing a PHD in Physiotherapy, joined the NHS Western Isles Physiotherapy Department for her summer placement and is now keen to apply for an elective placement in the Western Isles, having not previously known that that option was available here. She commented: "It's been fantastic, I've really enjoyed it. Everyone has been lovely and I've learned a lot."

The Podiatry Department was delighted to welcome

Annie Macpherson for a summer placement. Annie is currently studying Occupational Therapy at Robert Gordon University and said that her placement provided a 'good mix of practical and administration experience'. She added: "I've really enjoyed it, it's been a really good experience for going into second year."

Joining Dietetics for the summer was Paula Lema Rodrigues. Paula is in third year at university and had to choose a placement as part of her degree.

"I chose the Western Isles as I have family here and connections here," she said. "The summer post came up, I applied for it and got the position here. It's been so lovely having lots of dietitians based in the one office together – it makes communication so much easier and it's such a good and close team."

Kate MacSween joined the Human Resources Department for her placement. Kate is going into fourth year in a degree in Communication in Glasgow and had been really interested in getting office experience.

"I thought there would be quite a lot of cross-over between the two departments and I was really keen to get face to face experience," she said. "Because I live here, this opportunity was perfect for me. It's been an amazing experience, I would definitely consider HR now at university. The ladies in the office made it such a brilliant experience."

Eilidh Macleod, meanwhile, became a 'real asset' to the team when she joined Medical Ward 2 for the summer.

Katherine Stewart, Senior Charge Nurse, Medical 2, explained: "Eilidh was a real asset to the Medical 2 team, she was hardworking, very flexible and took on many roles over the summer. She really helped us to do a lot of staff admin which in turn made the ward much more organised. We will miss her and we all wish her the very best of luck as she finishes her medical training."

The outcome of the summer placement in the Occupational Therapy Department was hugely successful, as Sonja Smit, Occupational Therapy Services Manager / AHP Mental Health Lead, explained: "Our experience of having had a summer student, is that it gave a further opportunity to an OT Student who did a placement with us to consolidate their learning and experience while working with the team. The very happy outcome for us, is that she applied for an OT post once she qualified and is now a very valued member of our team."

Commenting on the Physiotherapy experience, Acting Physiotherapy Manager, Allison Martin, said: "I wish we had access to this scheme before! Our student has been brilliant and we are hoping that we will get her back as an elective placement. I would definitely recommend this to other departments. This will help 'grow our own' and also help raise awareness of the opportunities and benefits of working here. We hope that she will feed back to the rest of her year about her placement in the Western Isles."

The Dietetics Department has had summer students over the past two years, and both students have had an interest in becoming a dietitian in the future, so this was a good opportunity for them to gain some experience and to understand the role of a dietitian, while getting paid over the summer.

Nutrition, Dietetic and Catering Services Manager, Karen France, said: "In terms of the benefits to the team, the students have put their skills to good use as they have helped with data collection, organisation of resources, development of visual aids, recipe analysis and worked on developing fortified options with the catering team. The team has enjoyed having the students working alongside them, it has been very worthwhile for the department and something that would be beneficial to offer on an annual basis."

Patient Services Manager, Nicola Murray, also described a positive experience, stating: "Callum and Erin made a positive contribution to the department and it was a pleasure to have them as part of the team."

In Human Resources, Director of Human Resources and Workforce Development, highlighted that the HR Summer Student 'displayed great commitment'.

She added: "Kate has been an integral part of the team as we continue recruiting and ensuring all our systems and files are up to date."

In relation to the Summer Student placement scheme, Mrs Macdonald, added: "The summer student placement campaign provided support through paid employment whilst providing the opportunity to experience working for the NHS – one of the largest employers in the world with a wide range of career opportunities."

"We have really valued the contribution all our summer students have provided. We wish all of them all well in their studies and careers and hope to see them applying for careers in the NHS in the future."



‘Patients speak highly of the care received’ during unannounced inspection at Western Isles Hospital

Areas of good practice as well as a number of areas for improvement were identified by Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) during a recent unannounced inspection, focusing on the safe delivery of care, of Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway.

NHS Western Isles welcomes all inspections as opportunities to both identify and action improvements, as well as to acknowledge areas of good practice. Following this inspection, on September 3 and 4, 2024, NHS Western Isles has developed a full and comprehensive action plan and work on addressing improvements is underway.

Inspectors identified eight areas of good practice and twenty-two requirements.

Positively, inspectors observed staff working hard to provide compassionate and responsive care with all patients being complimentary about the care provided. Patients described to Inspectors receiving good communication from both nursing and medical staff. Patients advised that although staff were visibly busy there were no delays to responding to call bells, gaining assistance or administration of medications.

The report also highlights: “Patients we spoke with advised they would be happy if a loved one had to access care at Western Isles Hospital.”

Inspectors found the hospital environment to be clean and well maintained; whilst they described mealtimes as ‘calm and well led’ with ‘patients

receiving assistance with hand hygiene prior to meals and with eating and drinking where required’. All observed interactions were found to be ‘professional, friendly and respectful’. And despite being busy, Inspectors described that ‘staff were working hard to deliver care’.

Inspectors observed good team working and support provided by clinical support nurses (CSNs), and ‘good leadership’ in the majority of areas inspected. Staff also described to inspectors that they feel ‘supported to escalate issues and concerns to ward managers’. Also highlighted as an area of good practice was the ‘variety of development opportunities for senior charge nurses’.

The HIS report acknowledges that, at the time of the inspection NHS Western Isles, like much of NHS Scotland, was experiencing ongoing pressures including increased hospital capacity, reduced staff availability and increased patient acuity. During the onsite inspection inspectors observed that the hospital was operating between 115% and 119% capacity for acute beds. Of the 52 acute beds, there were 14 delayed discharges within the hospital due to delays with patient care packages and awaiting placement within care homes.

Inspectors commented: “During the onsite inspection, despite wards being busy with high acuity and additional patients, staff were observed working together to deliver care.”

In terms of the Emergency Department,

Inspectors highlighted that 98.1 per cent of patients were seen within the four-hour target in the emergency department at Western Isles Hospital, compared to the Scottish average at the time of 66.5 per cent. They also observed on the first day of the onsite inspection that the longest time to first assessment by a clinician was under 30 minutes, and observed that there were no delays in patient triage during the inspection period. Inspectors described the department as an ‘effective emergency department working to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place’.

One of the main issues identified by Inspectors was the number of nursing staff with up to date paediatric immediate and advanced life support training. Training is delivered annually by external trainers and whilst staff are trained in this subject, unacceptably low numbers have completed the most recent round of training to ensure valid certificates are held. This is being addressed in the Board’s action plan with staff in the appropriate areas being prioritised to attend the next round of training offered early next year.

Staff training rates in child support and protection and adult support and protection training were also found to be low and NHS Western Isles has undertaken to addressing compliance rates within acute services by the end of March 2025.

Inspectors also highlighted a lack of availability of registered children’s nurses. NHS Western Isles consistently has been challenged in trying to recruit registered children’s nurses, however was able to positively report to Inspectors that the total compliment of four in the hospital recently increased to five, with the successful recruitment of a band 6 paediatric nurse. A clinical support nurse is always on duty to support staff, along with 24 hour availability of a Consultant Paediatrician and Consultant Anaesthetist.

Fire safety was highlighted as a concern by Inspectors – in particular the outcomes of the fire safety risk assessment such as the servicing of firefighting equipment and a low compliance rate of staff training. NHS Western Isles provided assurance to Inspectors that fire extinguisher servicing would be complete by 21 October 2024, and this has been carried out.

A range of improvement actions are now also underway to address service improvement in this area.

Inspectors reported that some staff reported challenges in receiving scheduled breaks on time, or in some cases are ‘not able to take any break throughout their shift’. They also reported that ‘staff were often late leaving shift due to the acuity within the ward and shortages with staffing’. NHS Western Isles will investigate this further, as these issues had not been previously escalated, and there are processes in place to ensure staff are able to get appropriate breaks during shifts, regardless of how busy the hospital or ward is at the time. These matters are extremely important as they impact on staff wellbeing and morale, and so further investigation into this will be carried out internally to ensure that the appropriate support and measures are in place and clear.

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive Gordon Jamieson said: “We welcome all inspections and opportunities to address areas and issues to be improved so that we can provide the best care to patients that we possibly can, and to ensure that our staff are well supported.

“There are a number of points in the report that demonstrate the excellent care provided by our staff to the local population and it is testament to the staff delivering care that all patients spoke highly of the care received and would be happy if a loved one had to access care at Western Isles Hospital.

“As well as the positive findings, it is the purpose of an inspection to identify areas where improvements could be made. There were a number of areas identified for improvement and it is a priority for us to address these as quickly and comprehensively as possible. Since the inspection, we have developed a detailed Improvement Action Plan to address the areas that Inspectors have identified. Ensuring all relevant staff are up to date with their annual paediatric immediate and advanced life support training is a priority for us, and ensuring that staff continue to be supported in terms of their wellbeing is key, in particular during these challenging times when hospital occupancy is so high and as recruitment remains one of the Board’s main challenges.”

WINTER ILLNESS IN CHILDREN.

Minor illnesses like the cold, flu and runny noses are common in babies and children during the winter.



**Most children
recover quickly
at home.**

**Make them
comfortable
at home.**

**Use
over-the-counter
remedies.**

**Right Care
Right Place**

If you're concerned about symptoms call your General Practice or NHS24 on 111.

For more information on where to get the right advice and support should you need it visit parentclub.scot/poorly

RSV

RSV is a common and highly infectious respiratory virus that affects the lungs and is the leading cause of emergency admissions to hospital in infants. Currently, rates of RSV are highest in those children under 1 year of age. To help protect newborns and infants, pregnant women are being offered the RSV vaccine during antenatal appointments with their midwife from 28 weeks into their pregnancy.

Since August, 45% of eligible pregnant women have taken up the offer of an RSV vaccine. If you are over 28 weeks pregnant and haven't yet had your RSV vaccine, please speak to your midwife.

Maintaining proper hand and respiratory hygiene can also help protect against numerous common viruses. Covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, disposing of tissues responsibly, and promptly washing your hands afterwards, can all help to prevent infections spreading. If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection and feel unwell, or have a fever, you should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, especially those who are vulnerable to severe infection.

Latest respiratory figures highlight the importance of vaccinations to winter protection

The latest figures of viral respiratory diseases, published by Public Health Scotland (PHS), in December show a sharp increase in laboratory-confirmed cases of flu in Scotland. There were also over 350 flu-related emergency hospital admissions in the first week of December. In addition, cases of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) remain at extraordinary levels.

In Scotland, in those under the age of 65 years, over two thirds of those at greatest risk of serious illness from flu have not yet been vaccinated.

Vaccination offers the best protection against serious illness, and it's not too late to take up the offer and get protected (see page opposite).

The vaccine offered is safe and effective.



WINTER VACCINATIONS APPOINTMENTS

NHS Western Isles is currently inviting those who are eligible for their Flu and COVID-19 winter vaccination appointments.

The vaccines are being offered to those who are most at risk of getting seriously ill from Flu or COVID-19.

NHS Western Isles is inviting those eligible for the vaccines by group, starting with those in care and nursing homes, those aged 75 and over, and children.

If you are aged 75 or over and have not yet received an appointment, we would encourage you to contact us to arrange an appointment as soon as possible.

If you have received an appointment that you are unable to, or do not want to, attend, we would appeal to you to please let us know if you are unable to attend for any reason, or if you would prefer a different appointment time.

We are experiencing a concerning high level of non-attendance at scheduled appointments this season. Missed appointments waste vaccinators' precious time and mean that the number of appointments available for patients is reduced by each non-attendance that occurs.

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson, said: "We would make a plea to everyone

with a scheduled appointment to please make every effort to attend. If you are not able to, or do not wish to attend, please let us know as soon as possible. You will not be questioned as to why, however it will help us plan our scheduling more effectively. If you would prefer to reschedule your appointment, please let us know and we can do this for you.

"We would appreciate as much notice as possible if you are unable to attend, but even late notification is better than no notification at all.

"Letting us know that you are unable to make your appointment means that the appointment time may be offered to someone else, or the clinic could be reorganised to prevent a wasted vaccination clinic time."

You can notify NHS Western Isles if you are unable to attend an appointment on 0808 196 8383 (please leave a message outwith office hours or if lines are busy) or email: primarycare@nhs.scot and this will also allow us to reschedule your appointment if appropriate.

For further information on the vaccinations and eligibility, please visit www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/vaccination-services/

View our drop-in clinic schedule at <https://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/vaccination-clinics/>



‘Save one life, you’re a hero. Save 100 lives, you’re a nurse.’

Their hands have been a source of healing for more than 80 combined years - now, may they be free to embrace the privilege of retirement.

With nearly 86 years of nursing experience between them, Erica Duffy and Kathleen Macdonald are ready to hang up their Clinical Support Nurse (CSN) uniforms and head for well-deserved retirement.

The two nurses have touched countless lives throughout their careers and their knowledge, experience and care will be sorely missed by colleagues throughout the organisation. We only hope their retirements are as rewarding and fulfilling as the impact they have made to patients, families and colleagues.

Approaching 50 years as a nurse, Kathleen started her nursing career in Stornoway in the Lewis Hospital in February 1976 where she undertook her enrolled nurse training.

When recalling her training, Kathleen fondly recalled living in the 30-bedded nurses’ home and said: “What fun we had when the Night Sister would do her rounds at 10pm and ‘lights out’.”

Following Kathleen’s completion of her Enrolled Nurse training in 1978, she worked in the County Hospital just outside of Stornoway for several years before the opportunity arose for Enrolled Nurses to bridge/convert over to Registered General Nurses (RGN) in 1984. This course involved six months working at the Lewis Hospital and 21 months at Raigmore Hospital.

Kathleen said: “I applied and was successful, so I moved to Inverness in April 1986 with my husband and five-month-old baby Iain.”

On completion of this course, Kathleen moved back home and was offered a Staff Nurse post in the Lewis Hospital in 1988.

Over the following years, Kathleen worked in all the wards in the hospital as internal rotation was encouraged then to gain knowledge and experience and increase your skills in both surgical and medical nursing.

She also worked within the Community Nursing and Health Visiting teams for a spell. When the Western Isles Hospital opened in 1992, Kathleen worked for a few years in the Mixed Specialities Ward before moving to Surgical in 1997.

When talking about her time in Surgical, Kathleen explained: “I enjoyed Surgical nursing very much and loved working under the management of Ina Nicolson and Anna Maclean (known to all as Nana). I have often reflected on those nine years and realised it gave me a firm foundation to embark on my current role as a CSN.”

Kathleen joined the CSN team in 2006, and commented: “I have loved it from my very first shift, although challenging, ever-changing and demanding.”

When looking back on her time as a CSN, Kathleen mentioned the reconstruction of the out-of-hours service in 2012 and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 as some of the most challenging times in her career.

However, she said: “Despite these pressures, the CSN team is highly supportive to one another and our lead CSN – Kathleen Macintyre, or affectionately known to us all as Kaggie – ensures we are all looked after and any problems within the team are escalated to her and are dealt with promptly and always in a fair and calm manner.”

When asked about her upcoming retirement, Kathleen commented: “I will miss my job very much, my CSN family, my nursing and medical colleagues. I have met some wonderful people over the years who – along with my faith – have helped mould me into the person I am today.”

Often when you are at the end of something,

you’re at the beginning of something else, and this is certainly the case for Kathleen as she plans for retirement.

“I am looking forward to spending more time with my family and my granddaughter Rose and becoming a full-time hostess to my short-let second home in Swordale,” Kathleen shared.

Erica’s nursing career began in Edinburgh in 1986, where she did her training to be an RGN. As a newly qualified nurse she spent nine months working in a long-term care facility in Glasgow before she made the decision to move home to the island in 1990. She began her career with NHS Western Isles in a temporary contract covering the Enrolled Nurses who were doing their bridging and conversion courses.

After ‘badgering’ the then Matron, Elenor Macleay, for a job, Erica was offered a post in Surgical in the Lewis Hospital where she worked for 16 months before heading off on maternity leave in 1991. She then returned to the new Western Isles Hospital in October 1992, about two weeks after the building was opened.

Erica joked: “I came with the bricks as they say.”

Erica spent 14 years working in the Surgical Ward, mainly on nightshift, until 2004 when the CSN post came up. This was her second time applying for the role. Michael MacPhee, who worked for the college at the time, encouraged her to apply again and this time she was successful.

This October will mark an impressive 20 years in the CSN role for Erica. She describes the role as a ‘constant learning experience’.

As previously mentioned by Kathleen, the reconstruction of the out-of-hours service in 2012 saw the CSNs having to learn a lot of new skills for example, clinical examinations.

Recalling a memorable time in her career as she was the first CSN to earn their nurse prescribing qualification, Erica described: “There no direct policy for nurses to use the qualification at the time, so three of us that undertook the course decided to approach the Consultant Committee and the Pharmacy to push for a policy to be implemented that would allow us to use the qualification. It took about six months for us to be able to use our

ONLY GO TO **A&E** IF YOU NEED URGENT MEDICAL CARE FOR A **CRITICAL EMERGENCY**

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contact your **General Practice** or call **NHS24** on **111**.



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OR GO TO A&E
FOR
EMERGENCIES
ONLY**

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DURING THE DAY**

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ON 111
DAY OR NIGHT**

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qualification, but it meant that any nurses that came after us could use it straight away."

When asked about the highlights of her career, Erica responded: "Joining the CSN team and undertaking more learning. I found myself wanting to do more, develop my career, and learn new skills. In nursing, your learning doesn't stop with your qualification, it is a continuous learning journey."

Erica continued: "It is sometimes hard to think of them as highlights because they are just part of our day-to-day role. You deal with times when people are at their worst and you're just trying to improve their situation."

Kathleen then added: "There is a continuous highlight in when you are nursing patients – in particular at high dependency level – and they start to improve, and you see them getting well."

Both Erica and Kathleen praised the Consultants and the Speciality Doctors in the Emergency Department (ED) and said: "We are very fortunate with our on-call Consultants here and the Speciality Doctors in ED, they are all so supportive of the CSNs."

As described by both Kathleen and Erica, the CSN role involves 'making sure that everybody is in the right place to do the right job and ensure that the patients are safe'. That itself, they said, gives them job satisfaction.

They added: "It is important for us to try and keep everything calm, for example, if there are staffing issues or bed shortages."

They continued: "The CSN team is full of different skills which complement one another. We are all from different specialities, so we have a mixed skill set. We bounce ideas off each other and we do support each other a lot. We know how to get the best out of one another. We have monthly team meetings with Kaggie and any challenges are discussed and acted on."

"Every night is a challenge because you don't know what is coming through the door. It is never boring being a CSN, the shift always flies in."

Discussing her retirement, Erica said: "I am sad to be leaving the team, but I am looking forward to my retirement. I've got some plans for a

holiday, and just some time to chill. I am toying with the idea of a campervan as well."

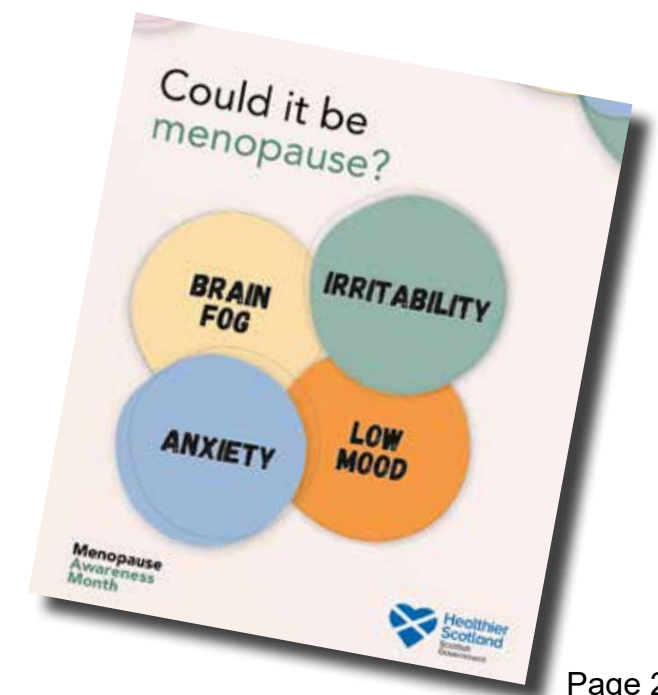
When asked about what they would miss the most, they agreed and said: "We will both miss our colleagues the most – your colleagues become your friends and family. We are making a photo book filled with pictures of all our colleagues that we can look through when we are missing the place."

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson, said: "The contribution that Kathleen and Erica have made to patients, the hospital, their colleagues and the wellbeing of the community is outstanding. I have regular contact with both the CSNs and I know the patients are in the best of hands when they are on duty, and that both will calmly and professionally rise to the challenge of whatever they are faced with. They both should be very proud of their dedication and achievements. I will miss their presence, as will many, and I wish them well for a long, busy and happy retirement."

"Thank you on behalf of myself, the Chair and Western Isles NHS Board."

Menopause Awareness

During menopause women can experience a range of psychological and physical symptoms. Psychological symptoms can include anxiety, irritability and low mood. Knowing the signs can help you navigate this life transition with more confidence. Find out more at nhsinform.scot/menopause



Don't leave it too late

Ensure your Power of Attorney is in place

NHS Western Isles is reminding everyone about the importance of having a Power of Attorney (PoA) in place. This follows on from last year's successful campaign, in partnership with local solicitor firms Ken MacDonald & Co, Anderson Macarthur Solicitor & Notaries and MacDonald MacIver & Co Limited, and their series of short information films - view at www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/our-services/home-care

There may come a time **at any age**, due to an accident, a head injury, a stroke or an ongoing progressive illness, such as dementia, that anyone can lose capacity. This means when a person no longer has the ability to use and understand information to make or communicate their decisions.

Many people believe when they are unable to make decisions for themselves, that their spouse/ partner, next of kin or named person will automatically take over making decisions for them – but this is not the case without having a registered PoA in place.

Iain Maclean, Solicitor and Notary Public, Ken MacDonald & Co, said "A PoA is a vital legal document that adults over the age of 16 should have in place. It grants power to someone that you know and trust and gives them the authority to take action or make decisions on your behalf, when you no longer have the capacity to do so."

In fact, put simply, without a PoA any future decisions taken for you may instead be taken by a doctor, the local authority or the court. This includes you receiving medical treatment, your home and living situation, and managing your financial affairs. Your family/named person would then have to apply to the Court for a Guardianship or Intervention Order for them to manage your affairs, which can be a long and expensive process.

Isabel Macleod, Director of Anderson Macarthur Solicitor & Notaries, said, "There are a number of misconceptions around having a PoA. Whilst many believe they are simply too young to have one or that by having one it is tempting fate, they may find that if the time comes and one is actually required,

it is too late by then to put one in place. For example, an accident or a sudden health issue such as a stroke can unfortunately happen to anyone at any point in their lives, therefore, it is advisable for adults of all ages to put one in place."

In addition, where a married couple has everything listed in only one spouse's name, such as household bills, mortgage and bank accounts, unfortunately this means that should that spouse be deemed without capacity and without a Power of Attorney in place, the other spouse will be unable to access or amend any of these details, so would be unable to continue paying their regular bills and payments from these accounts. As everyone should be responsible for their own affairs, couples are encouraged to speak to each other to discuss these important issues and plan ahead, should the worst ever happen.

Eilidh MacInnes, Solicitor and Notary Public, MacDonald MacIver & Co Limited, said "Many people assume that by already having a Will in place, that this will suffice. However, it is incredibly important to note the difference between a Will and a Power of Attorney – a Will only applies after your death, whereas a Power of Attorney applies while you are still alive."

Presently, the registration fee for a PoA is £85, plus the costs of the solicitor to make arrangements. The Scottish Legal Aid Board has help and information for those on low or modest incomes to set up a free Power of Attorney, if eligible, and for further information visit slab.org.uk/new-to-legal-aid or telephone 07918 334798.

In addition, the Western Isles Cancer Care Initiative have grants available to help those with a current cancer diagnosis set up their PoA.

For further information about PoA, please visit the My Power of Attorney website at: mypowerofattorney.org.uk

The PoA local solicitor films can also be viewed at: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/our-services/home-care

Recognising the importance of having a

Power of Attorney

Do you know the difference between a Will and a Power of Attorney? A Will only applies after your death, whereas a Power of Attorney only applies while you are alive.

Many people believe when they are unable to make decisions for themselves, that their spouse/partner, next of kin or named person will automatically take over making decisions for them – but this is not the case without having a registered Power of Attorney (PoA) in place.

It is important to be aware that if you lose capacity and do not have a registered PoA in place, any future decisions taken for you may instead be taken by a doctor, the local authority or the court. This includes you receiving medical treatment, your home and living situation, and managing your financial affairs.

The law says you have capacity if you are capable of acting, making decisions, communicating decisions, understanding decisions or remembering decisions. However, every year thousands of people across Scotland (at any age) can lose capacity. This could be due to an accident or fall, a head injury, a stroke or an ongoing progressive illness, such as dementia. Accidents or illnesses can happen at any age, so the sooner you complete and register your PoA, the better.

A PoA is a vital legal document that all adults over the age of 16 should have in place. It lets you grant power to someone that you know and trust, and gives them the authority to take action or make decisions on your behalf, when you no longer have the capacity to do so. Should you not have a PoA in place, your spouse/partner or family/named person would have to apply to the Court for a Guardianship or Intervention Order to be able to manage your affairs, which can be a long and expensive process.

Spouses/partners should also be aware of other complications that can arise without having a Power of Attorney in place. If the individual without capacity is the sole name on bank accounts, utility bills, insurance or house/mortgage deeds, their spouse/partner may be unable to access or manage these items, or even pay bills. It is worth ensuring both names are added to all important paperwork.

To raise awareness on the importance of having a Power of Attorney (PoA), NHS Western Isles has partnered with local solicitor firms Ken MacDonald & Co, Anderson Macarthur Solicitor & Notaries and MacDonald MacIver & Co Limited, to develop a series of 6 short information films. Contact your solicitor for further information about obtaining a PoA, or watch each of our short films at:

www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/our-services/home-care



Sacred Heart House Care Home announce Parkinson's Champions!



NHS Western Isles is delighted to announce that Christine MacAulay, Social Care Worker, and Mary MacLean, Social Care Assistant, who are both employed by Sacred Heart House Care Home on South Uist, have become NHS Western Isles' Parkinson's Champions.

The role of the Parkinson's Champion is to ensure that services are constantly improving, and staff are continually working towards a better standard and understanding of the challenges faced by those living with Parkinson's.

Angela Macleod, Neurology Clinical Nurse Specialist (Parkinson's Disease and Multiple Sclerosis), had previously hosted a Parkinson's training session at Sacred Heart and offered those attending the opportunity to become a dedicated Parkinson's Champion.

Both Christine and Mary expressed an interest in learning more about the challenges faced by those living with Parkinson's, and now continue to share their knowledge to improve patient care with their colleagues.

Angela said, "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 varies in how it affects people, which is why it is so important to have a better understanding. Everyone's experience of living with Parkinson's is different, but there are lots of issues and challenges shared by many people living with the condition.

"I'm very happy to welcome Christine and Mary as our latest Parkinson's Champions, and look forward to continuing the local Neurological Specialist Nursing Service's joint working with Sacred Heart House Care."

The very first NHS Western Isles Parkinson's Champion, Lorna McGinnity, Social Care Worker, was unveiled in Trianaid Care Home in North Uist in August 2024, and it is hoped to develop further Parkinson's Champions across the Western Isles.

It is hoped to develop further Parkinson's Champions across the Western Isles. For further information on becoming a Parkinson's Champion, please contact the Neurological Specialist Nursing Service, tel. 01851 763301 or email: wi.neurology@nhs.scot

Pictured: Christine MacAulay and Mary MacLean (both in pink and L-R) with staff from Sacred Heart House Care Home, and Angela Macleod, NHSWI Neurology Clinical Nurse Specialist (Parkinson's Disease and Multiple Sclerosis), on far right.



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NHS Western Isles welcomes Tiny Tickers' 'Think HEART' Online Course for Health Professionals

NHS Western Isles has welcomed the launch of an online learning course for health professionals called 'Think HEART: Know the signs of a potential congenital heart defect'.

The course was launched by 'Tiny Tickers', a small charity dedicated to improving the early detection and care of babies with congenital heart disease (CHD).

A baby is born with a serious heart condition every two hours in the UK. However, not all congenital heart defects can or will be detected during routine prenatal scanning or before discharge from hospital. Some babies are at risk of falling into the early stage of heart failure if their condition is not diagnosed in time, and some will not survive long enough to receive the treatment that could save them. Tiny Tickers wants to change this.

The 'Think HEART' course, designed for health professionals working with babies, including midwives, doctors, nurses, and health visitors, aims to teach the five key signs that a baby may have an undiagnosed heart defect. This innovative program addresses the critical need for early detection of congenital heart defects, potentially saving lives through timely intervention.

The charity launched the programme at the Royal College of General Practitioners' Annual Conference in Liverpool this month, by offering GP delegates free access to the course in return for their 'pledge' to educate themselves about the potential signs of undetected CHD, advocate for babies with CHD by encouraging their health professional colleagues to Think HEART and

empower new and expectant parents by helping them learn about their baby's heart health.

Jon Arnold, CEO at Tiny Tickers, said: "Every year around 240 infants die with congenital heart disease before reaching their first birthday. We want to change that, and we know detecting CHD as early as possible can help save lives. The Think HEART pledge is a straightforward way for any health professional to signal they are committed to helping these infants, and our new digital course is a great way for them to ensure they are considering CHD when assessing a baby. We're hoping as many health professionals as possible sign the pledge and take the course - and that more babies with poorly hearts get the treatment they need; when they need it."

The course was funded by Finlay and Ruth Macleod, in memory of their son, Finlay Eric, who tragically passed away when he was almost five months old from an undiagnosed heart defect. The family has raised almost £40,000 in Finlay Eric's honour, and is passionate about ensuring other babies with cardiac conditions receive a diagnosis as soon as medically possible.

Finlay and Ruth said: "We want to thank all who have donated to Tiny Tickers in Finlay Eric's memory. Your donations have given us the privilege of creating a lasting legacy for our beautiful boy, with the lifesaving aim of educating families and health professionals alike to 'Think HEART'. Finlay Eric is loved and sorely missed every moment of every day, and we treasure every precious memory of our time together. It gives us some comfort in the midst of our heartache to know that we can give hope to families throughout the UK in Finlay Eric's name".

Key features of the course include:

- Online accessibility, allowing flexible learning for busy health professionals
- Engaging content featuring presentations and real-life examples
- Interactive quizzes to reinforce learning
- Focus on practical skills for identifying signs of heart defects in babies

The 'Think HEART' can be accessed by [taking the pledge here](#).

NHS Western Isles welcomes this life-saving online resource and will be encouraging staff to undertake the training.

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive Gordon Jamieson, said: "My thoughts are with Finlay Eric's family. Sincere thanks for what they have achieved. This is a vital resource for any health professional working with young babies - including doctors,

nurses, midwives, midwifery support workers, health visitors and others - teaching the key signs that a baby may have an undiagnosed heart defect.

"Timely detection can improve a baby's chances of survival and their longer term quality of life - and this course helps health professionals to ensure that heart defects for those babies in their care are detected and treated as early as possible.

"We would like to sincerely thank Tiny Tickers, and Finlay and Ruth Macleod, who funded the course in memory of their precious baby son, Finlay Eric, who tragically passed away from an undiagnosed heart defect. This lasting legacy has the potential to save many lives, providing vital education to families and health professionals."



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/

NHS Western Isles encourages people to start the conversation about suicide and mental health

Preventing suicide is often possible and you are a key player in its prevention. Through action, you can make a difference to someone in their darkest moments – as a member of society, as a child, as a parent, as a friend, as a colleague or as a neighbour.

We can all play a role in supporting those experiencing a suicidal crisis or those bereaved by suicide.

You can help give someone hope by showing that you care. All of us can play a role, no matter how small. We may never know what we do that makes a difference. We all can reach in and ask somebody. You do not need to tell them what to do or have solutions, but simply making the time and space to listen to someone about their experiences of distress or suicidal thoughts can help. Small talk can save lives and creates a sense of connection and hope in somebody who may be struggling.

Suicide Prevention Week, which was held in September, aims to inspire confidence and light in all

of us; that our actions, no matter how big or small, may provide hope to those who are struggling.

Start the conversation

There are many ways to start a conversation about suicide and mental health. Here are some tips on how to open up a conversation with someone you are worried about:

- Choose a good time and somewhere without distractions
- Use open questions that need more than a yes/no answer, such as “How are things, I’ve noticed you don’t seem quite yourself?”
- Listen well and ask how they are feeling, such as “How’s that making you feel?”
- Avoid giving your view of what’s wrong or what they should do
- Ask if they are feeling suicidal and help them get the support they need

If you yourself are struggling you might be feeling so upset, angry and in pain that you believe these

feelings will never end. But it's important to remember that they cannot and will not last. Like all feelings, these ones will pass. There is hope. There are people who will listen and can help.

There are steps you can take right now to stop yourself from acting on your suicidal thoughts. Everyone is different, so it's about finding what works best for you.

These are some practical tips that other people have found helpful when they've felt suicidal.

- Get through the next five minutes – Taking things minute by minute can help make things more bearable. Reward yourself each time five minutes have passed.
- Follow your safety plan or crisis plan if you have one
- Tell yourself you can get through this –
- at times, we can concentrate on the negative things we tell ourselves and lose hope.
- Repeating to yourself that you can get past these feelings can help you regain hope and focus on getting through it.
- Tell someone how you're feeling – whether it's a friend, family member or even a pet, telling someone else how you're feeling can help you feel less alone and more in control.

If you can't talk to someone you know, call a helpline or listening service.

Samaritans – For immediate emotional support 24/7 and 365 days of the year call or text Samaritans for free on 116 123. You can also write to jo@samaritans.org

Papyrus – For young people under the age of 35 or concerns a young person is thinking of suicide call Papyrus Hopeline 24/7 – 0800 068 4141 or text 07860 039967.

NHS 111 – call NHS 111 and select the mental health option – this is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and the team will help you find the support and help you need

Message a text line

If you don't want to talk to someone over the phone, these other text lines are open 24 hours a day, every day.

Shout Crisis Text Line (for everyone): Text “SHOUT” to 85258

YoungMindsCrisis Messenger (for people under 19): Text “YM” to 85258.

Remember that these thoughts cannot and will not last. Like all feelings, these ones will pass. There is hope. There are people who will listen and can help.

Contact a Samaritan

If you need someone to talk to, we listen. We won't judge or tell you what to do.

Call us any time, day or night

Whatever you're going through, you can call us any time, from any phone for FREE.

Call 116 123



[Find out more about our helpline](#)

Write us an email

Sometimes writing down your thoughts and feelings can help you understand them better.

jo@samaritans.org

Response time: It may take several days to get a response by email



[Find out more about our email service](#)

Write us a letter >

Sometimes writing down your thoughts and feelings can help you better understand them.

Online chat is not available right now >

We're working to make this service more available.

Speak to a Samaritan face-to-face >

Following the suspension of our face-to-face support service during the COVID-19 pandemic, some branches are now offering this service again.



Challenge Poverty Event

To mark Challenge Poverty Week and World Mental Health Day in October, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Adult Learning team joined NHS Western Isles Health Promotion and local organisations for a community event in Stornoway Town Hall.

The event was scheduled to take place during Challenge Poverty Week, which is an annual event organised by the Poverty Alliance Scotland to highlight the injustice of poverty in Scotland, and to show that collective action based on justice and compassion can create solutions. The themes for 2024 were as follows:

- Housing
- Transport
- Adequate Incomes
- Food
- Communities and Volunteers
- Weekend of Reflection



The event brought organisations together to offer advice and information to the public in an engaging and interactive format.

Support available on the day included: Advocacy Western Isles, Child Smile, Department of Work and Pensions, Tighean Innse Gall, Third Sector Hebrides, Western Isles Employability, Western Isles Learning Shop, Gaelic Family Learning, Community Fridge, Safe Families, Public Health Protection, Smoking Cessation, Free Church, Catch 23, CNES Early Years, Food Bank and Multiply.

The positive feedback from both agencies and the public indicated a desire for this to become a yearly event in Stornoway with a similar event run in Uist and Barra during the same week.

The event also took the opportunity to showcase examples of food from various cultures living on the Island including Afghan, Ukrainian and Scottish cuisine. This was so well received that planning

has now begun to host a cultural evening in 2025, which will focus on food, music and dance.

Examples of feedback from the day were as follows:

"A really useful event. Interesting conversations with fuel poor households and other organisations."

"Excellent event – very busy and would definitely work as a yearly event."

"It's been brilliant! I got so much information and the food was amazing!"

"Hope this happens yearly and maybe more food stalls. It was so interesting to find out where the food came from and it all tasted so nice! "

"Excellent event, but the next time it would be really good to get more youngsters involved, maybe by linking up with the Nicolson. It would be good experience for them and they could perhaps volunteer."



“Event was excellent, Salvation Army should be invited to the next one.”

“Great networking opportunities! It allowed us to celebrate existing partnerships as well as forging new ones.”

“The time is not ideal as many parents are working and the schools do not finish until tomorrow. I think it would have been mobbed if families could have attended. I know you can’t please everyone, but maybe something could happen in the evening or during the holidays.”

Improving palliative care

The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that everyone who needs it can access well-coordinated, timely and high-quality palliative care, care around dying and bereavement support based on what matters to them - and views are now being sought on a new [Palliative Care Strategy: Palliative Care Matters for All](#).

Palliative care is holistic care that prevents and relieves suffering through the early identification, assessment and management of pain and other problems – whether physical, mental, social or spiritual.

An ageing population that is living longer, with more complex needs, means more people will need access to palliative care in the future. The draft strategy has been developed in collaboration with the palliative care community and people who have experience of palliative care.

The aim is to deliver the best possible standards of palliative care for adults and children, families, and carers wherever and whenever it is needed.

Public Health Minister Jenni Minto said: “Talking more openly about palliative care is the first step to understanding how and when it can benefit us – often at a much earlier stage and for longer than most people realise.”

[Read more here.](#)

Changes to Bristow SAR arrangements for Western Isles Hospital retrievals

Following a tragic incident in Plymouth in March 2022, the Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) has made several new recommendations for Hospital Helicopter Landing Sites (HHLS).

As a direct result of the recommendations, Bristow UK SAR air operator is withdrawing services to sites which they have assessed as not meeting the new additional requirements*.

This relates to 23 HHLS in NHS Scotland and impacts the site at Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway (St Brendan’s on Barra and Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh on Benbecula are not impacted**).

Only 10 sites across Scotland have been designated as ‘green’ and will continue to be used by SAR helicopters for landing.

NHS Western Isles would wish point out that in over 30 years of operation, there have been no incidents relating to physical injury as a result of the location of the helipad at Western Isles Hospital, however we acknowledge and accept the recommendations of the AAIB.

NHS Western Isles can reassure the public that, in the short term, arrangements are in place for any retrievals by Bristow SAR helicopter from Western Isles Hospital to take place from Stornoway Airport until further notice.

Discussions are underway locally to identify potential new sites which could be temporarily used as landing sites in the meantime. This may involve test landings in areas that have not historically been used for

Coastguard helicopter landings, so members of the public should not be alarmed if they see the helicopter landing in an area unexpectedly.

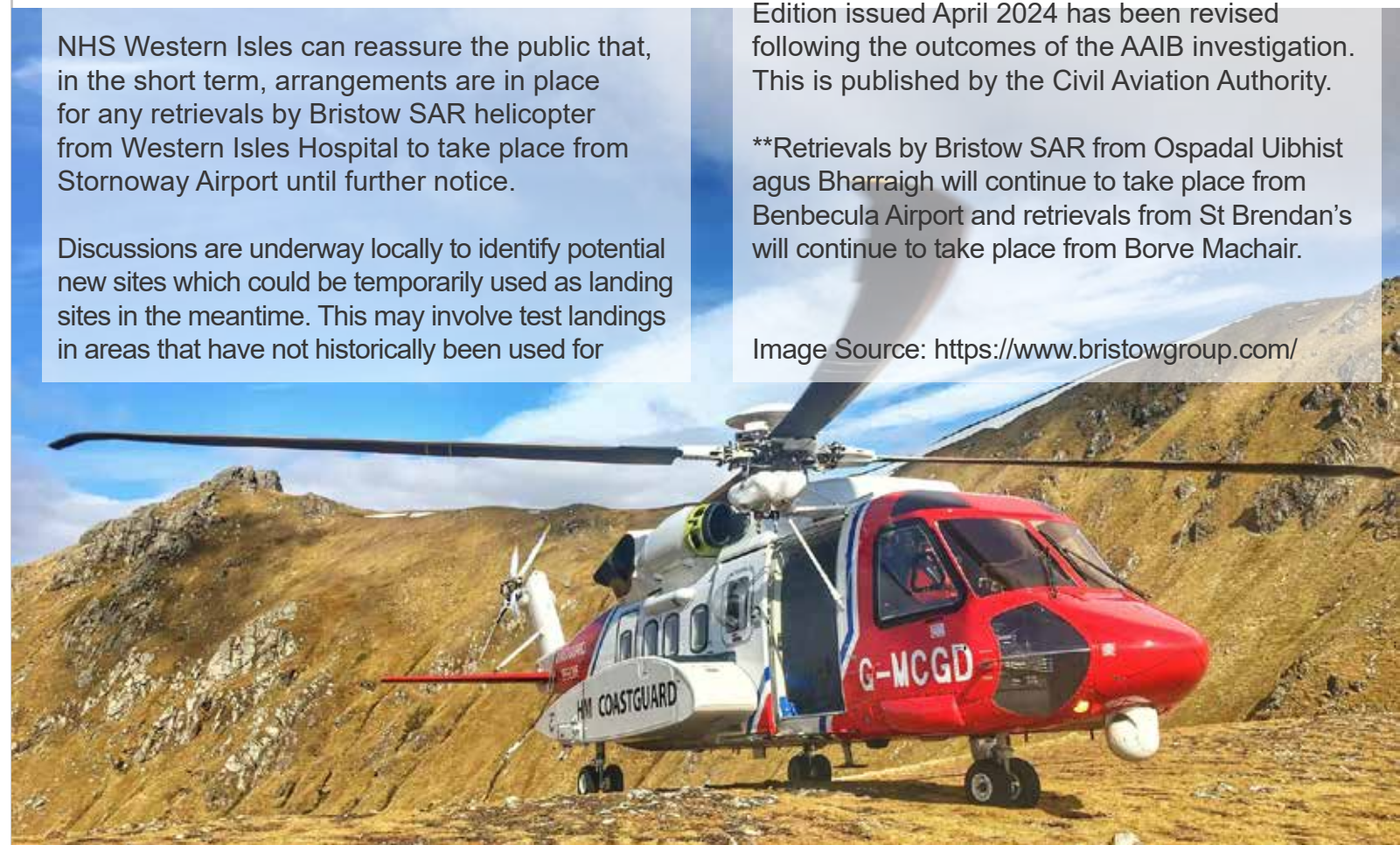
In terms of a permanent solution, work has already commenced internally and with partners into taking forward potential options to relocate or extend the site of the helipad to meet the requirements of the AAIB. It is important to NHS Western Isles that the longer term landing of SAR helicopters is available at Western Isles Hospital.

NHS Western Isles would wish to stress that the above changes do not impact on Scottish Ambulance Service air retrievals, which continue to take place from the Western Isles Hospital helipad.

*The main requirement relates to ‘downwash risks’ and that the downwash zone for large helicopters should extend 50 to 65 metres from the edge of a ground level hospital landing site, with a 30m downwash helipad zone that should be clear of people, parked cars and buildings. The helipad at Western Isles Hospital does not meet this new requirement. CAP 1264 Standards for Helicopter Landing Areas at Hospitals Third Edition issued April 2024 has been revised following the outcomes of the AAIB investigation. This is published by the Civil Aviation Authority.

**Retrievals by Bristow SAR from Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh will continue to take place from Benbecula Airport and retrievals from St Brendan’s will continue to take place from Borve Machair.

Image Source: <https://www.bristowgroup.com/>



NHS Board Meetings

NHS
Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

Members of the public are encouraged to attend our NHS Board meetings to hear updates and discussions.

You can attend meetings online by contacting Michelle.Mcphail@nhs.scot
Our full Board meeting calendar is available on our website at www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/about-us/meet-the-board/board-calendar



Response to Blar Buidhe closure

NHS Western Isles issued the following response, to the announcement that HC-One has taken the decision to close Blar Buidhe nursing home.

This is a clearly a disappointing and unwelcome decision with wide and significant implications and it is vital that in the first instance, action is taken to ensure that residents and their families, as well as Blar Buidhe staff, are fully supported and communicated with, at this very unsettling time.

The Comhairle has been in regular communication with NHS Western Isles in terms of their options to manage the withdrawal of service, with the use of Bremner Court Housing with Extra Care confirmed as a likely option they have for residents and staff.

The wider and longer term impact of this decision is expected to be significant, not least in relation to the possible impact on the availability of care home places in the Western Isles for those no longer assessed as able to safely stay in their own homes and those who need to be discharged from hospital into a more appropriate environment for their assessed and agreed needs.

NHS Western Isles already provides a level of input into the nursing and care homes by our community based staff which will continue. We will be working with partners and colleagues to fully assess and identify the emerging impact, consequences and risks associated with this decision.

Cllr Paul Steele, Leader of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, said: "Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's priority is the wellbeing of residents, their families and affected employees within our community. Work is ongoing to ensure that all Blar Buidhe residents are offered alternative placements where they can receive the care and support they require. The Comhairle's existing resilience and recent investment in the development of care facilities gives some flexibility to allow for a local response to progress. While this is

positive it will be a challenging process that will rely upon the flexibility of staff and the support of families."

In a statement HC-One has given the following commitment: "All residents and our colleagues at the home will be supported to move safely to an alternative care placement. We will work closely with each of them, and with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, to ensure that this happens as smoothly as possible, and we will not close the home until each person has been supported to safely move."

The Comhairle's preferred option has always been the continuation of the HC-One managed service and the local authority has been engaged with the provider to support consideration of any viable alternative. The investment required to develop the asset to the appropriate standards has inevitably impacted on the feasibility of a transfer of ownership to a new provider.

Given the risk associated with the decision by HC-One to place the Blar Buidhe service on the market, the Comhairle has been exploring options to manage any withdrawal of service. Initial discussions with the Care Inspectorate have been positive, focused on exploring opportunities including utilising Bremner Court Housing with Extra Care to support residents and retain the valued Blar Buidhe workforce. Now the position of HC-One has been confirmed, dialogue with residents and their families will help inform plans.

A spokesperson for the Comhairle said: "The Comhairle is in the process of contacting residents and their representatives and will work closely with HC-One to secure alternative care arrangements for each individual. While this work progresses, it is important that considerations are made for the wider impact of the closure on the local health and social care system."

Blar Buidhe is a 38-bed nursing home that has performed well in recent care inspectorate reports.



Can Self-directed Support help you?

Do you feel you need care support at home? Are you, or do you have a loved one who is unable to return home due to a lack of home carers in your local area?

Self-directed Support (SDS) assists people who need social care to live independently and with the right support. If eligible for SDS, you would play a role deciding how that social care is organised and provided to you. There are 4 options to access SDS:

Option 1: A Direct Payment - The payment is made direct and you organise support yourself. This means you becoming an employer and recruiting a suitable individual to provide personalised care services to your individual needs and wishes.

Option 2: An Individual Service Fund - You choose and direct your support and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar or another organisation arranges it all and handles the finances.

Option 3: Comhairle nan Eilean Siar organised - When Comhairle nan Eilean Siar organises your care from their staff and from their preferred providers.

Option 4: A Combination - A combination of any of the first 3 options.

Useful Support Services

Advocacy Western Isles offers Self Directed Support Services to support you, even if you have been assessed as not eligible for care input from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Contact Advocacy Western Isles by emailing: office@advocacywi.co.uk or tel. 01851 701755.

Western Isles Community Care Forum (WICCF), offers an online Personal Assistant Directory to help you find a suitable employee quickly. The WICCF website also hosts a Contract of Employment template and other useful information. Contact WICCF via email: info@wiccf.co.uk, tel. 01859 502588 or visit: www.wiccf.co.uk

Harris Voluntary Service can provide a Payroll Service for those recruiting a Personal Assistant for a small charge. Tel. 01859 502171.

Care Information Scotland offers support if you are looking after an adult, need care yourself or are planning for your future care needs. This includes information about your rights, care home costs and support. Visit www.careinfoscotland.scot or tel. 0800 011 3200.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar can arrange a carer's assessment if you're an unpaid carer. This will help them understand how they can also support you. Visit: cne-siar.gov.uk or tel. 01851 822708 or 600501.



www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/our-services/home-care

23 years and counting for the CSN team

The Clinical Support Nurse (CSN) team celebrated its 21st birthday in 2022, so the team has decided to provide a sneak peek into the role of a CSN.

In 2001, the CSN team was started as part of the Hospital at Night initiative, at which time there were only three CSNs on the team and one CSN would be on shift each night to support the two doctors on the night shift.

At this time the CSN role involved:

- triaging the pages from the ward
- helping to prioritise the workload
- giving IV antibiotics and IV drugs
- cannulating patients
- carrying out ECGs
- running bloods to the mini lab
- being the first point of contact for patients
- initiating immediate treatment until a doctor could review the patient.

In 2004, the team was increased to seven CSNs due to the European Working Time directive being implemented within the NHS. This then meant that there would only be one doctor on at night covering the hospital and the Emergency Department. The CSN team began doing dayshifts on weekends at this point too to support the clinical staff. The team carried out bed management and staff management out of hours as they are the senior nurse on site out of hours.

The team is also required to support or lead the Cardiac Arrest Team. They have other responsibilities with regard to hospital security, major incidents, site management and fire response whilst also supporting St. Brendan's and Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh (OUaB) with any concerns or issues they may have.

As the team increased, so did their skills and knowledge, with all the team completing the degree level Independent and Supplementary Prescribing course as it was called then, over the next two years. The team became more involved in identifying and initiating treatment of patients, thus improving patient care. The CSNs also support staff on the wards, using their various ranges of experience within the team and support them in learning new skills.

In 2007, the team invaded the doctor's mess room during a change in the junior doctor rotation and created an informal handover process to know which patients required review when they came on shift. This became more formal and structured when they put a whiteboard up in the office for information to be written on. This then improved further with the introduction of the CORTIX computer system which was linked to the TOPAS system and all patients who were admitted then had to have an SBAR which could be accessed on the computer. Thus began the more formal and better structured handovers between doctors and CSNs.

In the following years the team increased to 10 to accommodate the introduction of dayshifts and a 24/7 service for the CSN team.

In 2011 it was proposed to have no doctors covering the hospital at night and only a GP covering the Emergency Department and NHS24 with consultants on call to support the CSN team. The team stepped up to train in examining, assessing and diagnosing patients by undertaking the degree level Advanced Clinical Examination (ACE) course. By completing this degree level module, some members of the team were able to complete their BSc in

Nurse Practice. This module gave the team the knowledge and skills to assess, diagnose and implement treatment of patients in the wards. During the pilot of this model, the CSNs demonstrated that, if there are clear plans for the patients' care and treatment left in the notes, then the consultants would receive fewer calls.

The CSN team cover all the specialities within the hospital and are involved in many areas out with their work expectations. All members of the team have been involved in the following:

- Patient safety work streams
- EMRS
- Doctors' rotas
- Helping to develop TEPs
- Warfarin charts
- Fluid charts
- Acutely ill patients
- Transfusions
- Major incidents.

The team currently has a complement of 12: eight Registered Nurses (RNs) at band 7, two RNs at band 6 who are developing their skills/competencies with the role before stepping up to a band 7, and two Health Care Assistants at

band 3 who are essential in supporting the CSNs and the wards throughout the hospital.

At the moment, there are also two RNs at band 5 who are working with the team to gain experience in what a CSN does and help them to learn with the hope that they will go on to develop and train as ANPs and in the future join the team. Most of the team are Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) or in the process of doing their ANP course.

All the CSNs are Non-medical Prescribers and do clinical examinations of patients.

The team is often referred to by medical consultants as the 'glue', as it is one consistent group of clinical staff within the hospital and ensures the rotating junior doctors and locums adjust quickly to their roles, advise and support them in any way they can and maintain NHS Western Isles standards and practices for patient care.

The team is an ever changing and dynamic entity, in that it adapts to whatever changes are needed and necessary to maintaining and improving the standards of nursing care and the safety of patients in the Western Isles.



Quit now and save in time for Christmas!

NHS
Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

Did you know....

The average 10 a day smoker could save £450 in 12 weeks if they quit.

**QUIT
YOUR
WAY**
with our
support

If you would like to stop smoking, or would like to know more about the service please call 01851 701623 or Email: wi.hebridesquityourway@nhs.scot

Smoking cessation offered at Dental Centre

Quit Your Way Hebrides, the stop-smoking service for the Western Isles, is now available to meet clients (by appointment) within the Western Isles Dental Centre.

As well as providing confidential advice and information on a one-to-one or group basis, the team offer free, confidential, advice, help and support to anyone in the Western Isles who would like to QUIT smoking. They also offer information on the full range of Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT).

To make an appointment, please

contact the team by telephoning (01851) 701623 or emailing: wi.hebridesquityourway@nhs.scot

Pictured below are various smoking cessation support items available via the team, as well as Margaret 'Mags' Ralston, Smoking Cessation Coordinator.



NRT Inpatient Packs

As part of the care package when an inpatient enters hospital, Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) packs have been produced by the Pharmacy team, in conjunction with the Smokefree Hebrides Team.

For further information contact Hebrides Quit Your Way at the details above.





Eoligarry School



Daliburgh School



MACINNES, Isabel (DAYS WESTERN ISLES)



Castlebay School



lochdar School



Sgoil Uibhist a Tuath

Immunisations champions in Western Isles Schools

A pilot project is underway in Western Isles schools.

Uist and Barra primary schools and all the Secondary schools were offered the opportunity to nominate pupils to become 'Immunisation Champions'.

The pupils attended four online training sessions, led by Isabell MacInnes, Health

Protection and Screening Nurse Specialist.

The pupils developed their understanding of how diseases spread, the history of vaccines, the incidence of vaccine preventable diseases and the uptake of vaccination across Scotland.

The sessions also discussed the importance of consent and confidentiality. The project fulfils experiences and outcomes across health and

wellbeing, sciences and social studies within curriculum for excellence.

The Champions had to research and give a one-minute presentation on a disease, this was very enthusiastically received and delivered by the pupils.

Presentations were given about Rabies, Measles, Mpox, Smallpox, Flu, Malaria and

Polio. The Champions in each school put up information displays in the schools and have helped with getting the consent packs out to all pupils. They will also be supporting the school nursing teams when they deliver the flu vaccine in the next few weeks.

For further information contact Isabell MacInnes, Health Protection and Screening Nurse Specialist email: isabell.macinnes@nhs.scot

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>

MEET DEMENTIA FOR A COFFEE



AND HELP ME STAY WELL FOR LONGER

When a friend or relative is diagnosed with dementia it can be hard to know what to do, but helping someone stay connected and socially active can help them stay well for longer.

nhsinform.scot/RethinkDementia

Scottish Government and COSLA campaign calls on Scots to Rethink Dementia

When a friend or relative is diagnosed with dementia it's natural not to know what to do, but helping someone stay connected, socially active, and doing many of the things you've always done together, can help them stay well for longer. The Scottish Government in partnership with COSLA has launched a new campaign to challenge the stigma surrounding dementia.

The 'Rethink Dementia' campaign encourages people to continue doing the things they always did with friends or relatives diagnosed with dementia. Created in collaboration with a National Dementia Lived Experience Panel, the campaign emphasises the importance of maintaining relationships with those living with dementia. Research has shown that making this effort to stay in contact and include individuals in social activities can help alleviate symptoms of depression, agitation, sleep disturbance, anxiety and apathy that can often come with dementia.

Dementia affects an estimated 90,000 people in Scotland and 3,000 of whom are under the age of 65. Insight informing the campaign highlighted that many people associate dementia with the later stage of the illness and therefore change their behaviour towards a friend or family member who has been diagnosed, some even step away.

The Rethink Dementia campaign will play a key role in getting friends and family to think differently about a dementia diagnosis and provide simple ways they can help a friend or loved one live fulfilling lives with dementia and help them stay well for longer.

Irene, 61, was diagnosed with Early Onset Alzheimer's at 53 and was surprised by the reaction of some of her friends. "When I was first diagnosed my friends weren't being themselves. Some friends just walked away but others stayed, and some were behaving differently. I had to remind them that I was still the same person that loves going to the gym, having fun, and gossiping about the things we always did. Being able to still do these things together really helps me."

For more information around supporting someone with a dementia diagnosis, please visit nhsinform.scot/RethinkDementia

Watch the campaign film on YouTube [here](#).

NHS Western Isles commits to becoming Endometriosis Friendly Employer

NHS Western Isles is the latest organisation pledging to support colleagues impacted by endometriosis, by joining the Endometriosis Friendly Employer scheme.

Through the scheme, which is run by charity Endometriosis UK, NHS Western Isles will improve its support for those in the workplace affected by this common disease, as well as breaking down taboos and stigmas around menstrual health.

up, after NHS Ayrshire & Arran also recently became an EFE.

Endometriosis impacts the physical and mental health of 1 in 10 women and those assigned female at birth from puberty to menopause, although the impact may be felt for life.

Symptoms include chronic pelvic pain, painful periods, painful bowel movements and pain when urinating. Despite being so common, it **takes an average of eight years and ten months** to get diagnosed in Scotland, for reasons including lack of understanding of the disease.

As part of the scheme, the board will be appointing Endometriosis Champions, who will receive training from Endometriosis UK, to enable them to provide support and information to colleagues.

Emma Cox, CEO of Endometriosis UK said: "I'm delighted to welcome NHS Western Isles to the diverse range of organisations tackling taboos around menstrual health and endometriosis

through the Endometriosis Friendly Employer scheme.

"By showing its team that they are valued and can expect support and reasonable adjustments to help those with endometriosis and menstrual conditions succeed at work, they will be increasing engagement across the whole of their workforce, ultimately making the organisation more successful."

Milly Shanks, an Endometriosis UK volunteer who leads its Western Isles support group, said: "I'm delighted to hear that the local health board has signed up to be an Endometriosis Friendly Employer – we'll be keen to work with them to support staff living with endometriosis. I also hope that by increasing understanding of endometriosis across NHS Western Isles, that those accessing treatment are more likely to be understood and listened to."

NHS Western Isles Director of Human Resources & Workforce Development, Diane Macdonald, commented: "We're delighted to join the Endometriosis Friendly Employer scheme to ensure we can support those in the workplace with endometriosis, as well as break down taboos about menstrual health. We look forward to working with Endometriosis UK, and hope that other employers will commit to joining the scheme as well."

Endometriosis UK is the leading UK charity championing the rights and needs of the more than 1.5m in the UK with endometriosis.

As well as providing support services, reliable information and a community



L-R: Stuart King, Organisational Development & Learning Manager, Diane Macdonald, Director of Human Resources & Workforce Development, and Gordon Jamieson, Chief Executive.

for those affected by endometriosis, Endometriosis UK works to ensure that everyone with endometriosis gets prompt diagnosis and the best treatment and support, to end chronic menstrual related pain being brushed off as normal, and to raise awareness of endometriosis with the wider public.

Endometriosis occurs when cells similar to the ones in the lining of the womb are found elsewhere in the body, usually within the pelvic cavity. Each month these cells react to the menstrual cycle in the same way to those in the womb, building up and then breaking down and bleeding. Unlike the cells in the womb that leave the body as a period, this blood has no way to escape. This leads to inflammation, pain, and the formation of scar tissue (adhesions).

Find more information on the Endometriosis Friendly Employer scheme at: www.endometriosis-uk.org/endometriosis-friendly-employer-scheme



Milly Shanks, Endometriosis UK volunteer for the Western Isles support group at a Fresher's Fair at UHI.



**Feel unwell?
Check in with the experts**

Help yourself stay well this winter by staying on top of your repeat prescriptions.

Feeling unwell? Make NHS inform your first port of call. From symptom checkers to pharmacy finders, get all the health advice you need, brought to you by real experts.



visit **NHSinform.scot**



Powered by people



Know your Limit

The Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership (OHADP) social media winter campaign has a focus on reminding individuals of the harms that can be caused by excessive alcohol use and how to keep yourself and others safe. Make sure you don't overdo the drinking so you can enjoy your festive celebrations.

Scotland is facing a public health challenge with the highest level of alcohol related deaths in the UK, with 1,277 people who died of alcohol specific causes in 2023. This is the highest number since 2008.

Too much alcohol can lead to a hangover, where you don't feel good the next day and it may affect your work or unable to do other planned activities. Alcohol misuse can lead to high blood pressure, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis and affects your immune system, brain and nervous system. Heavy and prolonged drinking also affects those close to you. Families can be affected by domestic violence, family breakdown and child neglect.

Evidence tells us that adults who are low risk drinkers or do not drink have improved mental well-being than those who drink. Having a positive attitude towards alcohol can improve your overall health and wellbeing. You can do this by reducing the amount of alcohol you take. There are options for those that choose not to drink, such as mocktails, no or low alcoholic drinks or soft drinks, asking for smaller glasses of wine, or lower strength beers. Pace yourself and eat before and whilst you drink.

For those that plan to drink alcohol, it is recommended that you don't drink more than

14 units of alcohol each week. If you do intend to drink, you should consider spreading this evenly across the week rather than 'bingeing' in one session. It can be easy to go over the 14 units, which can be six pints of beer, at 4% alcohol by volume (abv) or six medium glasses of 13% abv wine. If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy the safest option is not to drink any alcohol. Why not check out the Count14 drinks calculator at <https://www.count14.scot/#unit-calculator> to monitor your drinking and be sure that you do not overdo the Christmas cheer.

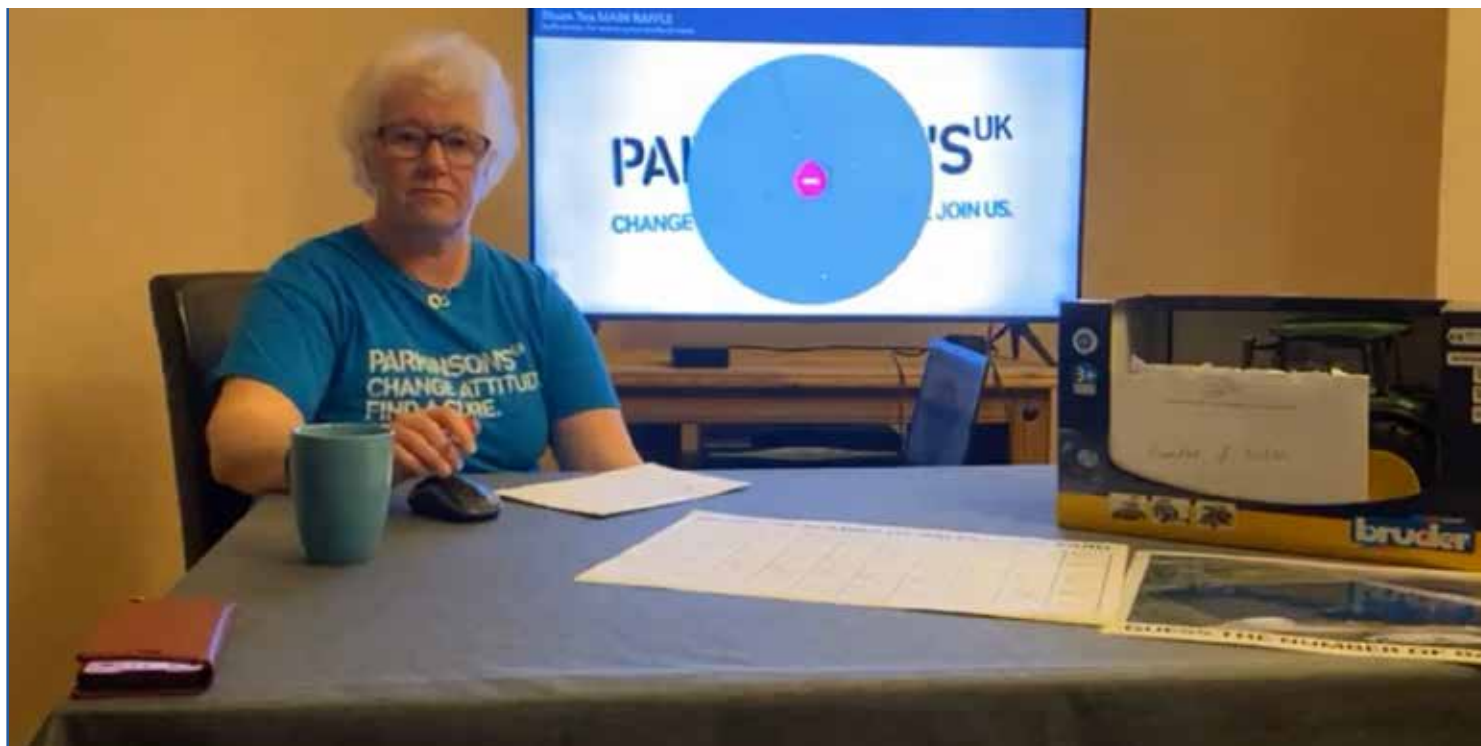
If you require emergency contraception, this is freely available from all pharmacists & GP practices. You have up to 72 hours, but it is more effective the earlier it is taken.

Further information on the risks of drinking too much and tips for cutting down is available on [nhsinform.scot](https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/alcohol/the-risks-of-drinking-too-much) at www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/alcohol/the-risks-of-drinking-too-much

Local and national services are listed in the Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership Recovery Support Services Directory at www.outerhebadp.com/services/our-services

Keep an eye on NHS Western Isles' social media pages for daily posts containing information on alcohol and drugs over Christmas and New Year.

And as always, make sure to plan your route home and most importantly when out with family or friends make sure to stay together so everyone gets home safely.



Uist Parkinson's Fundraiser

We would like to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone in the local community who contributed to this year's Strùan Tea for Parkinson's fundraiser, held on 28th September on South Uist.

£12,600 was raised for Parkinson's UK through a bake sale, hosted at Lovats Supermarket, where, as ever, there was keen demand for the famous strùan! The sale raised £2424, while a raffle, held later in the day, took in almost £9000.

The final total includes £1260 kindly donated

by the family of the late Kate Ann MacAskill, South Uist, who passed away recently. This was the amount raised through the retiring collection after Mrs MacAskill's funeral earlier in September.

Thank you to everyone who donated money, prizes, bought raffle tickets, baked and helped out on the day.

Your amazing efforts will make a real difference to the lives of people living with Parkinson's!



Generous donation of Lego from Fairy Bricks

Fairy Bricks is a charity that donates LEGO toys to children in hospital.

Play is a vital part of the recovery process when children are in hospital. LEGO is an item many children are already familiar with and can provide an instant escape at a very difficult time.

Lachlan Mac Pherson (Hospitals Manager) with Kate Muir and Rebecca Cook (Medical 1) are pictured with small selection of the generous donation of LEGO from Fairy Bricks.

Lachlan commented that we are grateful for another significant donation from Fairy Bricks, and that LEGO is a product that provides comfort and a distraction for children in hospital.

Kate commented that LEGO brings joy to children in the ward, and thanked Fairy Bricks for their kind donation.

Fairy Bricks delivers LEGO to over 200 hospitals throughout the UK.

NHS Western Isles' staff marked International Week of Happiness at Work in September by telling us what makes them happy at work. You can view it at: <https://www.youtube.com/>





A Transfer of Grace: Island Lives

New book launched by WIAMH

Western Isles Association for Mental Health (WIAMH) recently published a book titled 'A Transfer of Grace: Island Lives', produced in partnership with local author Peter Urpeth and An Lanntair, and funded by their Creative Connections Project.

The book features poetry and prose produced by members of Catch 23's Writers Group, with illustrations done by Catch 23 Art Group members.

Rebecca Mahony, WIAMH Project Manager, said "We think this is a great achievement by a group of very talented individuals all united, but not defined by, their lived experience of mental health issues.

When asked what taking part in the project has meant to them, project participants replied:

"Only when I lost myself in writing is my mind truly calm.

"Despite many years of mental illness, during my time at Catch 23, I have acquired the skills and confidence to become an artist and writer."

"A book that speaks truth, from the darkest of nights to happy sunny days."

"The project has dissipated some of the invisibility I always experience. Someone asked to hear my voice, and at last, I could speak up."

"A puzzle piece that never seemed to fit in. This book is a space for

us all to mould ourselves how we see fit."

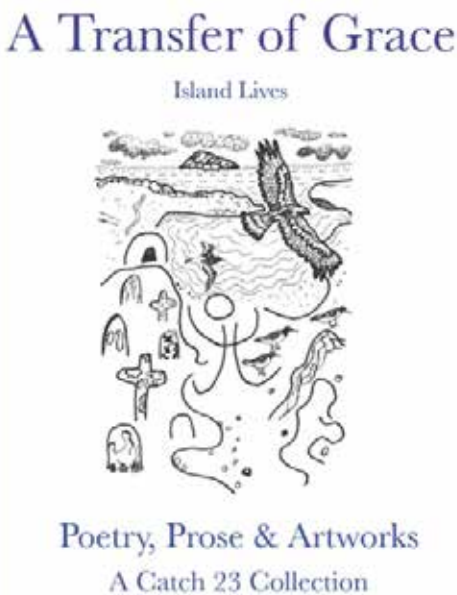
The following are reviews of the book by local authors

"Handsome production. Great range of writing and full of energy and hope." Ian Stephen

"A testament to the power of language to unlock and unleash the spirit. Insightful and inspiring, gritty and honest, moving and funny." Roddy Murray

"Here are works revealing the intensely personal relationship many have with the land and seascapes of the islands they inhabit, and their wildlife and flora. But also, too, the collection provides a snapshot of home and community life, of friendships, of love and loss, with flashes of wit, candour, insight and, courage." Peter Urpeth

Making a great stocking filler or Christmas gift, copies of the book are available to purchase from either An Lanntair or from Amazon at £6.99 each - or alternatively contact WIAMH direct on 01851 704964.



At Western Isles Association for Mental Health (WIAMH) they believe everyone's mental health matters.

WIAMH delivers a range of activities designed to promote positive mental health and well-being via it's Catch 23 support services.

Their members were asked to describe what Catch 23 is all about and this was their favourite description received:

"Catch 23-A drop in the ocean of tranquillity, creativity, community & fun!"

If you are interested in joining any of their groups or activities listed below, please contact them to arrange an initial introductory appointment.

The initial appointment provides you with an opportunity to find out more about the groups or activities you are interested in, as well as an opportunity for them to find out about your current mental health support needs and help assess the suitability of their services to support you in your recovery journey.

Western Isles Association for Mental Health
23 Bayhead, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, HS1 2DU
Tel: 01851 704964. Email: info@wiamh.org

Weekly Programme of Activities

Day	Activity	Delivered in Partnership with	Times
Monday	Drop-in Session		12.30-15.30
Monday	Drug & Alcohol Hebrides (DASH) Support Group	NHS Western Isles ADP	12.30-13.30
Monday	Easy Walk & Talk Group (round Castle Grounds)	Penumbra & Paths for All	14.00-14.30
Monday	Gardening Group		14.00-15.30
Tuesday	Drop-in Session		12.30-15.30
Tuesday	Yoga & Relaxation Sessions	Pre-booking essential	12.00-14.30
Tuesday	Walk & Talk Group Walk (round Castle Grounds)	Penumbra & Paths for All	14.00-15.00
Tuesday	Music Group-Top Tunes Playlist		14.00-15.30
Wednesday	Art Group		12.30-15.30
Thursday	Drop-in Session		12.30-15.30
Thursday	Sketch & Chat		14.00-15.30
Friday	Writers Group		12.30-15.30

NHS Western Isles Laundry Department



Repair and Alteration Service

Did you know that the NHS Western Isles Laundry Department offers a repair service/alterations, etc - both to staff and the public?

Their price list is shown opposite, and for further details please contact the Laundry Department direct by telephoning 01851 704704 and asking for the Laundry Department.

PRICE LIST

(ALL PRICE INCLUDE VAT 20%) APRIL 2024

GENERAL REPAIRS	FROM £2.04
REPLACING TROUSERS ZIPS	£8.40
REPLACING JACKET ZIPS	£12.96 - £21.00
REPLACING CUSHION ZIPS	£9.60
REPLACING COAT ZIPS	£24.00 - £29.50
ALTERATIONS - DRESS/SKIRT	£15.96 - £34.20
ALTERATIONS - BLOUSE	£7.92 - £16.32
ALTERATIONS - TROUSERS	£6.66 - £16.32
HEM TROUSERS (MACHINE)	FROM £7.92
HEM TROUSERS (HAND)	£12.82
HEM DRESS/SKIRT (MACHINE)	£14.62
HEM DRESS/SKIRT (HAND)	£20.40
SEWING BUTTONS ONTO GARMENTS (*6)	£3.36
SEWING BADGES ONTO GARMENTS	£6.84
SLEEVES SHORTENED	£7.98
DU VET COVER REPAIR	FROM £6.66
ADJUST TABS	£6.66
ELASTIC WAIST BAND	£7.92
CURTAINS HEMS (LINED)	£24.00
CURTAINS HEMS (UNLINED)	£19.08

SHIELD YOUR IMMUNITY THIS WINTER

Get your Flu vaccine and COVID-19 Booster

Flu and COVID-19 can be serious, especially for people with underlying health conditions. Getting the winter vaccines when offered provides the best possible protection against serious illness from the viruses. This winter, those aged six months to 64 years who have an underlying health condition and all those aged over 65 years are eligible for the flu and COVID-19 vaccines.

We have reviewed patient data in the Western Isles and from 1st September until 18th October 2024, 70% of patients seen in the period had not had the vaccines they were offered. These patients were seen by healthcare professionals with flu-like symptoms,

and they subsequently tested positive for COVID-19.

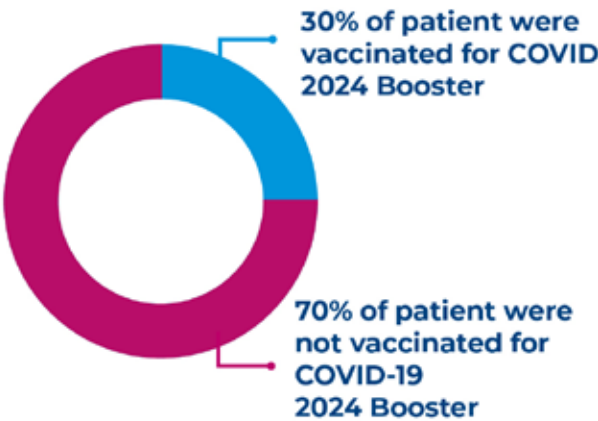
There is concern that this 70% of 'AT RISK' and eligible patients had not received any covid vaccines in 2024 and were unwell and had to attend a GP or Hospital.

Please encourage your 'AT RISK' family and friends who will receive an invite to a vaccination clinic to attend.

For more information visit our dedicated vaccination page: <https://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/vaccination-services/>

Across the
Western Isles,
since the 1st
September, 70% of
vulnerable people
who tested positive
for COVID were
not up to date with
their vaccinations

Patients accessing healthcare who tested positive for COVID-19 since 1st September 2024



For people in at-risk groups, such as older people or those with an underlying health condition, flu/covid can be a serious disease

Vaccination reduces the spread of viruses in the community

Vaccines are the best protection we have against covid/flu virus

Encourage people to attend their vaccination appointment

Protect the most vulnerable in our community- Get vaccinated

NHS
Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

SHIELD
YOUR
IMMUNITY
THIS
WINTER

get your
Flu vaccine
& COVID-19 Booster

it protects more than
just you

Have you heard of Parent Club?

Being a parent is the best job in the world, just not all the time. It can be the hardest and sometimes it can be tough. And in those moments, when you need somewhere to turn, Parent Club is here to help and support you.

We have tips and advice for all the challenges that come with family life. Through pregnancy and toddler tantrums, to starting school and all the way up to those tricky teenage years, Parent Club is here to help you and your family.

After all, we're all in the same club.

Find out more at www.parentclub.scot



Parent Club

A focus on the NHS Western Isles'

Macmillan Team

The Macmillan Nursing Service provides a specialist cancer and palliative care service for people in the Western Isles, their families and carers, and members of the multi-professional team within both the hospital and community setting.

As part of this year's World Cancer Day, NHS Western Isles shone a light on the specialist service that the Macmillan Nursing Service provides here on the Western Isles for cancer patients, from diagnosis and beyond.

The Macmillan Nursing Service provides a single point of contact for anyone with cancer from initial diagnosis and onwards throughout their journey. You can be referred to the Macmillan Team by any health professional, or you can self-refer to your local team based in either Uist and Barra or Lewis and Harris.

A seven-day service is provided by the Macmillan nurses, meaning that there will be a Macmillan Nurse available at weekends and on Public Holidays, who can provide advice to patients, families, carers, and other professionals across the Western Isles. The Macmillan Nurse on call may be on a different island to you depending on the rota but they will still be able to provide support.

The team also provides support to individuals who have been referred to hospital as an 'Urgent Suspected Cancer'. Even if it turns out not to be cancer, the team understands the anxiety and worry that being referred to hospital both locally and to the mainland can cause and can provide emotional support throughout this process.

As well as meeting the needs of patients with cancer, the Macmillan Team will support people with any illness that requires palliative care. The

nurses can help you with the following:

- Talking about your diagnosis with you and your family.
- To understand the tests and treatment that you might have.
- To manage your symptoms.
- Coordination of your care, working alongside colleagues in mainland cancer centres.
- Refer you to other support services e.g. physio, dietician, finances, Move More, WICCI (Western Isles Cancer Care Initiative).

Local resident, Nicola MacDonald shared her experience with her Macmillan nurse, "Having support from a Macmillan Nurse, from the very start of my cancer diagnosis and throughout my treatment was one of the strongest forms of support to me and my family.

"In what can only be described as a very dark and frightening time, the Macmillan Nurse stepped in and equipped me with the strength and tools to navigate my way through it all and helped me to break the journey down and not feel so overwhelmed by it all.

"The care, compassion, commitment, and overall support they provided me with was outstanding and left me with a better understanding of what I was going through. I will be forever grateful to the help I received from Macmillan Nurses and feel they are an absolute lifeline to anyone going through cancer."

Another local resident has also praised the support given by the Macmillan Nurses, "I had a full Prostatectomy when I was 47 years old. In a nutshell my nurse was there for me every single step of the way, I had post op problems

and I was seriously worried, my nurse calmed me down, made phone calls and sorted everything out in under 10 minutes! There are no words for just how incredible my nurse was, Macmillan is and always will be close to my heart."

NHS Western Isles Macmillan Lead Nurse Cancer, Palliative Care and Neurology, Gail Allan, said, "The NHS Western Isles Macmillan Team has worked really hard over the last few years to develop the service to meet the needs of people with cancer and palliative care across the Western Isles and I was very proud when this was acknowledged at the Macmillan Professionals conference in November 2023, when the team won the 'Whatever it takes' award.

"The Macmillan Team is continuing to support the development of services and partnerships with island organisations such as [Western Isles Cancer Care Initiative \(WICCI\)](#), which provides an invaluable service for people with cancer. There is also an exciting new project, Macmillan Improving Cancer Journey, coming soon, which there will be more information in the coming months."

You can contact your local Macmillan Team office seven days a week by emailing: wi.macmillannurses@nhs.scot or telephoning the following numbers – answering machines are available if there is no one to take your call, and staff will return your call at their earliest convenience.

Meet Your Local Macmillan Team

Lewis & Harris Team from L-R:

Claire Macritchie - Macmillan Development Nurse
Ann Marie Macleod - Healthcare Support Worker
Kerrie Macleod - Macmillan Clinical Nurse Specialist
Mairi Smith - Macmillan Advanced Clinical Nurse Specialist/Team Lead
Cathy Ann Mackinnon - Macmillan Clinical Nurse Specialist
Donna Young - Macmillan Clinical Nurse Specialist



LEWIS & HARRIS TEAM

Meet Your Local Macmillan Team

Uist & Barra Team from L-R:

Madge Macdonald Spence - Healthcare Support Worker
Mary Buchanan - Macmillan Advanced Clinical Nurse Specialist/Team Lead
Sheena Macsween - Macmillan Clinical Nurse Specialist



UIST & BARRA TEAM

Contacting the Macmillan Nursing Service

- Lewis & Harris Team - tel. 01851 704704 ext. 2401
- Uist & Barra Team - tel. 01870 603010
- Email: wi.macmillannurses@nhs.scot
- Web: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/our-services/nurse-led-services/macmillan-nursing-service/

Big Step Challenge

Congratulations to Mairi Macaulay (pictured right) who was presented with an insulated flask prize by Laura MacKay, NHS Western Isles Health Improvement Practitioner.

Mairi was a lucky, randomly selected recipient of one of 30 insulated flasks prizes in a prize draw, comprising all participants of the Big Step Challenge who had reached the John O'Groats Milestone of the Big Step Challenge by 4th October.

The Challenge closed on 2nd December, during which 175 participants across the Western Isles registered with the Big Team Challenge App and logged their local steps and activities to carry them along a virtual route of the North Coast 500.

Mairi is now joined by Gold, Silver and Bronze winners of Big Team Challenge £150/£100/£50 Shop Local Vouchers respectively, in two categories:

- Furthest Distance; Marion Davidson (Barra), Allison Martin (Lewis) and Eilidh Paterson (Barra)
- Most improved; Donna Macleod (Harris), Annie Maclean (Barra) and Jennifer Murray (Lewis).

We would like to thank HITRANS for funding this Challenge and prizes, and congratulate all participants for their efforts. Many walkers improved their step-count across the Challenge, and some even completed the full 488.6 miles route across the 12 weeks.

In addition, a group of Harris participants inspired the provision of Hi-Viz armbands to keep walkers safe during the darker nights.

Pictured right is Donna Macleod with her faithful doggy, wearing the armbands (who also won the Big Team Challenge Gold prize). Their Harris walkers chat has been buzzing with her getting this prize and she has received so many wonderful comments about how much she deserves it.

Congratulations and well done to you all!



Staying Safe over the Festive Season

The Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership (OHADP) social media winter campaign is focussing on reminding individuals of the harms caused by drug use and how to keep yourself and others safe.

In 2023, there were 1,172 deaths caused by drug misuse in Scotland. This is an increase of 121 deaths compared with 2022. Opiates and opioids, including heroin, morphine and methadone were implicated in 80% of those deaths with street benzodiazepines linked to 572.

Worryingly, there are more dangerous and potent drugs in circulation which contain substances which could affect your reaction. OHADP advises people not to take illegal drugs. However, if you do, it is important that you only try a small amount and wait at least an hour to gauge the effects before considering taking any more, and only take drugs in a safe environment and not alone.

Spiking has had increased publicity, where a person is given alcohol or drugs by someone else without their consent. Spiking using Ketamine or Cocaine can be very dangerous when mixed with alcohol, as this could result in an overdose. Be aware of the signs to look out for such as confusion, loss of co-ordination, slurred speech, and vomiting. If you suspect you or someone you know has been spiked, stay with them and alert the venue manager, who should notify the police immediately and call an ambulance if there is a deterioration. Spiking is an offence, and anyone charged with this crime could face a prison sentence. Make sure to ask staff at local licensed bars and clubs for spiking covers or bottle stoppers to prevent your drink getting spiked.

Naloxone can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose, from drugs such as heroin, methadone, and buprenorphine, as well as other illicit and prescribed opiate-based medications. A discreet click and deliver postal service for Naloxone prefilled injection or nasal spray kit are available from Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs through their secure online portal - www.sfad.org.uk/support-services/take-home-naloxone

Look after yourself, your friends and family. If you are worried about your own drug use or someone

else's use, please have a chat with your GP or nurse practitioner. You can also find a list of local and national services available in the Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership Recovery Support Services Directory at www.outerhebadp.com/services/our-services.

There are also various sites; SFAD's website contains drug and alcohol factsheets, information on prescription drugs, support for LGBTQ+ people, families, and communities as well as helplines and online forums. If you are [Worried About Your Drug Use? - Know the Score website](#) contains information on the most current, up to date drugs and their side effects.

Keep an eye on NHS Western Isles' social media pages for daily posts with further information on alcohol and drugs over Christmas and New Year.

Make sure an STI or unintended pregnancy is not on your festive wish list!

NHS Western Isles offers family planning services, information, advice and contraceptive supplies, free of charge throughout the Western Isles.

There are many different contraceptive methods available, and it is worth taking the time to find out more about each one so that you can choose the best method to suit you. Family planning and sexual health appointments can be booked at any GP Practice, even if it is not at your own regular GP Practice. Simply request a sexual health appointment when booking an appointment. It is important to get contraception sorted out before you start having sex.

Emergency contraception can be taken within 72 hours of having unprotected sex, but it is more effective the sooner it is taken.

For further information visit: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/our-services/sexual-health-services

LET'S TALK MEDICINES

Hospital Admission?

The importance of taking your medications to hospital

NHS Western Isles is re-introducing its medicine awareness campaign to remind those in our communities of the importance of bringing your medication with you when you are admitted to hospital or when you come for an appointment.

As we enter the winter months, it is likely that the number of admissions to hospital will increase. This is why we're reminding people to bring their medicines with them when being admitted to hospital (both planned or unexpected) or when attending outpatients appointments.

We understand that it may be difficult to take your medications with you if you are admitted as an emergency via ambulance. However, we ask that you get a family member or friend to drop them off if possible as our hospitals may not be stocked with the medications you require.

This will help NHS Western Isles avoid medicines waste by using the medicines that you already have.

The local hospitals also do not hold every medicine prescribed across the health board, so bringing your own medicines will help to avoid missing important treatments. It also helps the pharmacy team to get your discharge medicines ready faster when you are ready to go home.

Please bring all prescribed medicines like tablets, liquids, creams, inhalers and suppositories, along with any over the counter medicines, herbal medicines or vitamins that you take regularly.

Before you are discharged, you will meet a member of the Pharmacy Team who will review your medicines, answer your questions and help to solve any medicines related problems you might have.

At home, it is important to remember to only order the medicines that you need. Unused medicines can't be reused. However, if you do have medicines at home that you no longer need, please return them to a local pharmacy for safe and sustainable disposal.

Never dispose of unused medications in fires, toilets, sinks, or bins. Returning your medicines for proper disposal helps to reduce their impact on the environment.

Sue Price, Chief Pharmacist, NHS Western Isles, said "It is really helpful to hospital staff if patients bring their current medications with them when coming to the hospital. This includes prescription medications, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and any herbal supplements you may be taking. Having your medications on hand helps our medical team ensure accurate treatment and avoid potential drug interactions.

"Additionally, bringing your medications can help reduce unnecessary delays and costs, as it may prevent the need to supply replacements during your stay. If possible, please also bring a list of your medications, including dosages and schedules, to assist in providing you with the best care possible. If you have any questions about medicines remember to speak to your pharmacist, we are the medicines experts."

Are you or someone you care for being admitted to hospital?

If you are being admitted to hospital (either planned or unexpectedly) please remember to bring all your medicines with you.

This includes all prescribed medicines like tablets, liquids, creams, inhalers and suppositories, along with any over the counter medicines, herbal medicines or vitamins that you take regularly.

If you can't bring your medicines, you can always ask a family member or friend to bring them later. This will help the NHS avoid medicines waste by using the medicines that you already have. This helps to conserve valuable NHS resources which can then be used for other activities.

Before discharge, you will meet a member of the Pharmacy Team who will review your medicines, answer your questions and help to solve any medicines related problems you might have.

At home, remember to only order the medicines that you need. Unused medicines can't be reused.



Emer Friel, Antimicrobial Pharmacist & Kathleen (Beenie) Mackenzie, Pre-registration Trainee Pharmacy Technician.

healthy
hebridean
kids

Makeover for Healthy Hebridean Kids!

The Healthy Hebridean Kids website has had a makeover! The website www.healthyhebrideankids.scot.nhs.uk is developed and managed by NHS Western Isles, and is aimed at helping local parents, family members and carers of young children to be healthier and happier by making healthy lifestyle choices.

The website holds information on: nutrition, vitamins, being active, HENRY training sessions for parents as well as lots of useful links when pregnant or a new parent/ carer.

NHS Western Isles Health Visiting & School Nursing Team Lead, Anna MacDonald, said: "We want to give our children the best start in life and we hope the website can guide parents on how to do this. Habits during a child's early years can influence their future outcomes, good healthy habits will help them to live healthier and longer lives which will reduce their risk of developing a

range of health issues later in life."

Karen France MacLeod, NHS Western Isles Nutrition, Dietetic & Catering Services Manager, added: "The website has a range of helpful links and information for parents. There is also information on HENRY, a programme aimed at giving babies and children the best possible start in life by supporting the whole family to make positive lifestyle changes. Although the site is helpful if any parent or carers would like additional information, advice or support with a child's eating they can confidentially get in touch with dietetics at: wi.dietetics@nhs.scot or call 01851 708279."

'Healthy Hebridean Kids' is hosted by the NHS Western Isles Maternal & Infant Nutrition Group, a partnership whose members include the local authority and Community Groups across the Islands, the aim is to improve the health of children and families.

Talking about Winter Vaccinations with Dr Dave Rigby

Visit our social media pages (Facebook, Instagram and X) or our NHS Western Isles [YouTube channel](#) to watch Dr Dave Rigby, GP at Langabhat Medical Practice, explain why it is so important to take your winter vaccines to fight flu and COVID-19 when you are offered them.



You can't fight sleep. Many of the counter measures drivers use e.g. opening a window, pinching yourself, turning up the radio, simply do not work. Planning ahead can help you avoid tired driving:

- Plan regular breaks in your journey
- If your journey is very long, or you know you won't have had much sleep, consider using alternative transport or planning an overnight stay.

If your journey is unavoidably delayed and you're driving for longer than planned:

- Ask another insured driver to take over
- If that isn't an option have a caffeinated drink, and rest for 20 minutes while the caffeine kicks in.

Driving Tired Kills

Fatigue is a contributory factor in 17% of all fatal collisions in Scotland; however, experts estimate the real figure is even higher, with up to 20 per cent of all collisions involving driver fatigue.

To tackle the serious issue of driver fatigue, the Scottish Government and Road Safety Scotland (part of Transport Scotland) are running a campaign with a clear message for all drivers – Driving Tired Kills.

Sleep related collisions are around 50 per cent more likely to result in death or serious injury. When drivers fall asleep, the police find no signs of braking, or any avoiding actions, so they tend to result in higher speed collisions.

Preventing Common Winter Illnesses

-  Wash your hands regularly with soap and warm water
-  Clean surfaces like your computer keyboard, telephone and door handles regularly
-  Use tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze
-  Bin used tissues as soon as possible
-  Avoid unnecessary contact with others while you're infectious
-  Stay off work or school until you're feeling better
-  Take vaccines when you are offered them



Gentle Exercise Classes

The two classes offered are:

Gentle Movement These classes take participants through a range of exercises which incorporate breathing techniques and mindfulness; the exercises are designed to get people moving but also provide an opportunity to relax.

Body Boosting Sessions This is a dynamic fun and interactive way to introduce strength and balance to adults. All movement's can be done seated or standing. These sessions have been developed by Age Scotland.

For more information and to book an online session contact

Marion Matheson
42 Winfield Way
Balivanich
HS7 5LH
Tel: 01870 603156
Email: marion.matheson1@nhs.scot

In Person

MONDAY

11.00am - 12.30pm - Trianaid (North Uist) - Members of the community welcome, **Gentle Movement**

TUESDAY

2.00pm - 3.30pm Sacred Heart House (South Uist) - Members of the community welcome, **Gentle Movement and Body Boosting Session**



Online

WEDNESDAY

11.00am - 11.30am - Ardseileach Centre (Stornoway) - Members of the community welcome, **Body Boosting Session**

11.30am - 12.30pm Blar Buidhe Care Home (Stornoway) - Members of the community welcome, **Gentle Movement and Body Boosting Session**

THURSDAY

2.30pm - 3.00pm - St. Brendan's Care Home (Barra) - Members of the community welcome, **Body Boosting Session**

3.30pm- 4.30pm - Members of the community welcome, **Gentle Movement**

All of the above sessions are open to the public. You will receive a warm welcome at each of the sessions.

NHS Western Isles attends Careers Fairs Across the Western Isles



Sgoil Lionacleit

NHS Western Isles staff were pleased to be invited along to this year's careers fair in Sgoil Lionacleit, held on 13th November 2024.

During the event Isabell MacInnes, Health Protection and Screening Nurse Specialist, and Alison MacDonald, Senior Health Promotion Officer, had discussions with young people about factor that can affect people's health and the role

public health have, we spoke of the variety of careers available within the NHS and looked at some current and recent job adverts within NHS Western Isles. Staff went over what a job pack looked like and highlighted the essential criteria section to ensure pupils know what subjects certain career paths are looking for.

Thanks to Developing the Young Workforce for inviting us along.



Nicolson Institute & Sir E Scott

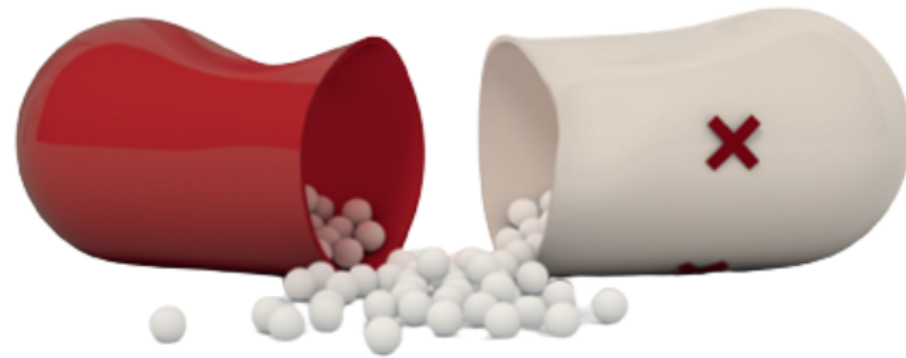
The following NHS Western Isles teams attended the careers fair held in the Lewis Sports Centre with Nicolson Insitute and Sir E Scott pupils:

- Medics
- ANP
- Laboratory
- Maternity
- Professional Practice Team
- Cardiac Team
- Nutrition & Dietetics
- Physiotherapy
- Speech and Language
- Occupational Therapy
- HR

The stalls were interactive and the teams had a really good time engaging with the pupils.



Remember, antibiotics don't work on viruses like the common cold or flu.



Talk to your Pharmacist.



Osteoporosis risk checker

The Royal Osteoporosis Society (ROS) osteoporosis risk checker is intended to raise awareness of factors that are known to increase the risk of developing osteoporosis and broken bones.

Complete the osteoporosis risk checker and get a personalised report on your bone health.

Osteoporosis is a condition where bones lose strength and become more likely to break. Over 3.5 million people in the UK are currently living with the condition.

It's never too early or too late to start looking after your bones.

The risk checker is not designed for people who have already been diagnosed with osteoporosis or had their bone health assessed by a healthcare professional.

The information provided is a guide and not a replacement for medical advice. The risk checker is not a diagnostic tool, only a healthcare professional can diagnose osteoporosis and predict your risk of breaking a bone.

Access the risk checker at: theros.org.uk/risk-checker



Scottish Interfaith Week

NHS Western Isles celebrated Scottish Interfaith Week which was held in November.

Celebrating 20 years of Scottish Interfaith week provides the opportunity for interfaith groups, faith communities, organisations and local communities to celebrate Scotland's religious diversity.

Freedom of religion and belief is a key part of Scottish society, but few of us are aware of how many beliefs are practised, or of the diversity within each community.

The NHS has a very diverse workforce. Diane Macdonald, Director of Human Resources & Workforce Development, said: "For me interfaith is working together to find common values whilst also respecting differences."

Interfaith Week is a great opportunity to deepen understanding and importance of the faith and beliefs of both patients and staff. The theme of this year's Interfaith Week is 'Discovery'.

Opening our hearts and minds to discovery is one of the biggest gifts we can give ourselves and those around us. Learning about others opens us up to different ways of being; different cultures, beliefs, perspectives, ways of celebrating the cycle of life, and of course – delicious foods!

Through discovery, we can challenge prejudice and misunderstanding, both inside of us and in the world around us. We do not need to understand each other in order to love and respect each other. Nurturing curiosity is a powerful step towards building bridges between communities.

The following events took place to celebrate this important week:

- An open afternoon in the Western Isles Hospital Sanctuary which shared resources from religious organisations across the Western Isles.
- There was a Faces of Faith exhibition in the former League of Friends area at the Western Isles Hospital all week which showcased some of Scotland's diverse religious and cultural communities.
- An Interfaith Health Walk took place on Tuesday 12th November at 1pm, which left from the Western Isles Hospital entrance.
- The Dining Room at the Western Isles Hospital has been promoting foods from different cultures.
- Staff provided comments on what Interfaith Week means to them.

Here are some examples of what staff said when asked what Interfaith Week meant to them:

“In a world full of hate, let us find a way to love each other.”

“Multiple faiths coming together in harmony, respecting each other and being kind to everyone.”

“All we need is love.”

“Collection of different religions coming together to interact more positively with each other.”

“Different faiths coming together to celebrate our love of one God.”

“All faiths together, cooperation and understanding.”

“Showing compassion no matter our faith.”

“All working together.”

“No matter what our differences, let’s work together to strengthen our communities.”

“ONE human family.”

“All inclusive, agree to disagree.”

“Mutual acceptance, recognition, respect, and celebration of people of all faiths and beliefs.”

“Learning to be kinder, caring for each other and being one in the world.”

“All together as one!”

“In our increasingly diverse community, interfaith for me is about appreciation, welcoming, respect, reflection and learning.”

“An opportunity to meet with people from all walks of life.”

“Different faiths coming together for the benefit of human kind.”

“Mutual respect for people of all faiths. The human bond of love and caring for each other. We connect with each other in a caring and compassionate way.”



Change to One Stop Breast Clinic for some Western Isles patients

A One Stop Breast Clinic is provided for Western Isles residents as part of NHS Western Isles' agreement with NHS Highland.

A One Stop Clinic enables a patient to see the clinician and have any necessary tests in the shortest time possible. Ideally, the patient will also have the results of the investigations the same day.

NHS Western Isles has been informed that, due to staffing issues, regrettably some patients requiring access to a One Stop Clinic will be triaged by NHS Highland to the NHS Forth Valley service until further notice.

This will impact some patients from the Western Isles, and those patients impacted will be informed about arrangements.

Triaging some patients to Larbert in Falkirk will ensure that this important service continues and waiting times are kept to a minimum.

Patients affected by this change have previously been notified.

NHS Western Isles will continue to support all patients with their travel arrangements. If patients have any queries, they should contact the Patient Travel team on 01851 708021.

We anticipate this change will be in place for the foreseeable future, and we will keep our community updated.

NHS Western Isles Climate Emergency and Sustainability Report 2023/24

NHS Western Isles has published its 2023/24 Climate Emergency and Sustainability Report, outlining progress toward national targets for delivering a net-zero carbon emissions service, reducing waste, enhancing biodiversity, and promoting sustainable healthcare practices.

Despite challenging financial circumstances, the organisation has made significant strides in multiple areas. Staff and management have demonstrated strong commitment to addressing the urgent threat of climate change. Between April 2023 and March 2024, NHSWI achieved the following reductions: building energy emission by over 5%; medical gases emissions dropped by 24%; clinical waste from all sites and general waste emissions from Western Isles Hospital were cut by 15%.

One of the largest contributors to healthcare-related emissions is the use of metered-dose inhalers (MDIs) for asthma and COPD treatment. While emissions from MDIs saw a slight increase over the past year, NHSWI has launched several initiatives to mitigate this impact. For example, patients are encouraged to return used inhalers to dispensing practices or community and hospital pharmacies for safe disposal, ensuring harmful propellant gases are contained.

NHSWI is also advancing in sustainable transport. Nearly one-third of its vehicle fleet now comprises electric vehicles, complemented by the acquisition of 10 pool bicycles, of which four are electric. Bike shelters and secure veloboxes have been installed at various NHS sites across the Western Isles as part of wide range of Active Travel initiatives. Additionally, the Our Hospital Garden, created by the Rotary Club and located at Western Isles Hospital, serves as a sanctuary for native plants, shrubs, insects, birds, and butterflies. This natural sanctuary not only supports local biodiversity but also provides a peaceful and restorative environment for patients, staff, visitors, and the wider community to enjoy.

Colum Durkan, Director of Public Health and Chair of the NHSWI Sustainability Steering Group, said, "Tackling the climate emergency is one of the most significant challenges of our time, and NHS Western Isles is committed to leading by example. Despite competing pressures, we've made meaningful progress in reducing our environmental impact while continuing to deliver high-quality care. This report highlights the dedication of our staff and the innovative steps we are taking to build a more sustainable healthcare system for future generations."

The report can be accessed via the NHS Western Isles website's Publications section (Annual Climate and Sustainability Report) or visit: <https://bit.ly/4gdjzQ2> For more information, contact wi.sustainability@nhs.scot

Western Isles patients are spending less time in hospital thanks to Hospital at Home

Hospital at Home is a 'virtual hospital system' where patients receive hospital level care in the comfort of their own home.

The team consists of Doctors, Nurse Practitioners and Healthcare Support Workers. Should you become unwell, an assessment will be made by your own GP, an Urgent Care Nurse or sometimes by the Ambulance Service on whether transfer to the hospital is required or if you could receive the same treatment at home.

Delivering integrated care in the community ensures patients are treated appropriately and quickly, avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions and enabling everyone across Lewis and Harris to live a good life, for as long as possible, in their own homes.

Intravenous antibiotics for skin infections, blood monitoring, oxygen therapy and intravenous diuretics are just some examples of the type of care that can be delivered at home.

When an older individual goes into a hospital or care home and lies in a bed for a prolonged period of time, it can further affect their wellbeing and physical function. This is known as 'deconditioning syndrome'.

This can lead to an increased risk of falls, confusion or disorientation, further immobility, constipation and incontinence, poor appetite and digestion, and an increased risk of swallowing issues which can lead to pneumonia.

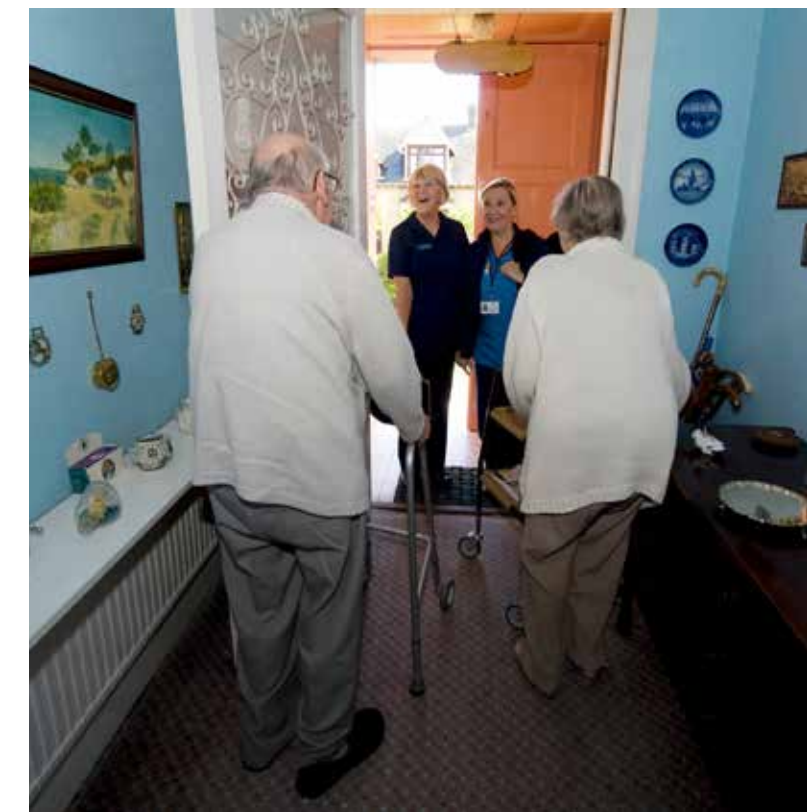
Receiving care in your own home has many benefits such as the comfort of being in your own surroundings, enabling your family to remain present, not disturbing your routine and enabling you to maintain your independence. This can all lead to fast recovery times and improved mental wellbeing.

A patient who recently used the service provided feedback, "Your team inspire confidence, which is essential when you are feeling unwell and unreliable. As they say attitude makes the difference. The Hospital at Home scheme is new but a vital part of the NHS armoury."

Hospital at Home patients are all cared for by senior medical staff and they work closely with other services such as Cardiac and Macmillan Nursing Teams.

The NHS is treating tens of thousands of people, with various conditions, safely in their own homes through Hospital at Home and virtual wards. Locally, the Hospital at Home service has reduced hospital admissions and the constant evolution of the service is striving towards enhancing better care at home for our patients.

The Hospital at Home team want to help you to avoid a stay in hospital or reduce the length of your stay.



Promoting FASD Awareness Day

Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership recently promoted International Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Day on 9th September.

The Western Isles Library display highlights the harm caused by parental alcohol exposure and the need to support women to avoid alcohol during pregnancy, or if planning a pregnancy.

FASD is a lifelong condition and is unfortunately the most overlooked neurodevelopmental condition in Scotland with only a small proportion of people being diagnosed with FASD.

Without early diagnosis and appropriate support starting in childhood, FASD is associated with secondary disabilities including reduced educational attainment and outcomes, mental health, and addiction problems.

For more information on FASD and why it's best to avoid alcohol during pregnancy or when trying for a baby visit NHS Inform at [Alcohol and pregnancy | Ready Steady Baby! \(nhsinform.scot\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder/)



VAPING ADDICTION SOON TAKES HOLD OF THEM

In Scotland, it's illegal to sell vapes or e-cigarettes to anyone under 18, or to buy them for someone who's under 18. But this doesn't stop young people from getting hold of them.

Young people are particularly vulnerable to nicotine addiction and more likely to take health risks and discount the future consequences of their behaviour. Nicotine addiction can impact young people's mental health, making them tired, stressed and anxious and it can affect their concentration and impact their ability to learn and study.

E-cigarettes contain some potentially harmful chemicals, similar to those found in cigarette smoke, although at a much lower level. While the longterm effects of vaping are still being researched, it's thought they could have negative effects on the health of the heart and lungs but there is currently insufficient evidence to assess this.

Getting help and support

If you're concerned about your child vaping, you don't have to cope with the situation on your own. You can talk to your GP or call Quit Your Way Scotland on 0800 84 84 84 for advice and support.

For more information visit parentclub.scot/vaping and nhsinform.scot/vaping.

VAPING ADDICTION SOON TAKES HOLD OF THEM

Vapes can contain nicotine and may quickly become harmfully addictive for children and young people. Affecting their mood, their mental health, and their sleep.

Get the facts at
nhsinform.scot/vaping



#ChooseNursing

Make a difference one patient at a time

She discovered a love for helping others, providing a high standard of person-centred care, and advocating for patients and their families – Mairi Claire Davidson (pictured below), a newly qualified Staff Nurse at St. Brendan's Hospital in Barra, shares her experience of training through the Open University.

"In 2020, I was fortunate to secure a place on the four-year BSc Adult Nursing course with the Open University (OU). I undertook the degree with support from my employer (NHS Western Isles – St Brendan's Hospital) continuing to work in my clinical role alongside studying.

The OU pathway for nursing enabled me to study the course whilst continuing to raise my two young children on the island. Although it was challenging, juggling tutorials and assignment deadlines alongside working full-time, it was always rewarding and the OU tutors I was supported by were fantastic. Lots of study was undertaken in my own time (often late at night when my children were in bed), but I enjoyed the flexibility of being able to complete university work when it suited me. I also attended placements off-island which enabled me to gain invaluable skills and knowledge through the different practice settings I attended. Balancing family life was difficult whilst studying long distance and travelling away for placements, but I am extremely lucky to have such a supportive family unit, without them I'd have never achieved what I've achieved.

It wasn't my intention leaving school to undertake a career in nursing, (in fact, I'd actually have run in the opposite direction if anyone had said to me leaving school, I'd become a nurse). But sometimes life leads you down a different path for a reason. It was through my work as a care assistant with the local council and joining the bank as a Healthcare Assistant (HCA) in the hospital that exposed a whole different side to my personality that I never really knew I had! I found a real love for helping others, providing a high standard of person-centred care and being an advocate for patients and their families, and this is what I really love the most about nursing. I can't believe my training has finished and I'm extremely excited about starting out my lifelong learning career as a nurse on the Isle of Barra.

Nursing is a really special vocation, and I feel privileged that I have been trusted to undertake my training with the support of my employer. I can't thank my amazing colleagues at St Brendan's Hospital enough for being



there for me throughout and I will be forever grateful to the OU and NHS Western Isles for providing me with the opportunity to train as a registered nurse. My advice to anyone thinking about starting their training with the OU would be not to delay it, grab the opportunity with both hands and go for it. It is a brilliant pathway with so much flexibility and the four years fly in!"

If you are thinking about becoming a nurse and want to find out more, you can visit www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/our-services/nurse-led-services/studying-recruitment/.

Know Who to Turn To

If we all use NHS services wisely, we can keep well and get the care we need quickly, safely and as close to home as possible.

Emergency Department

Your local Emergency Department is for emergencies, such as suspected heart attack or stroke, severe breathing difficulties or severe bleeding. In an emergency you should always go directly to your local Emergency Department or call 999. If you think you need to go to the Emergency Department but it is not life threatening, you should call NHS 24 on 111, they will assess you and advise you on the next steps.



NHS Inform

Self-care is the best option when you have a minor illness or injury, or just need some advice. NHS Inform has a wide variety of self-care guides for conditions such as headaches, sore throat, flu-like symptoms, vomiting and diarrhoea.

www.nhsinform.scot/symptoms-and-self-help/



Local GP Practice

When you have an illness or injury that won't go away, make an appointment to see your General Practitioner (GP). If your condition really can't wait until your surgery re-opens, contact NHS 24 on 111.



NHS 24

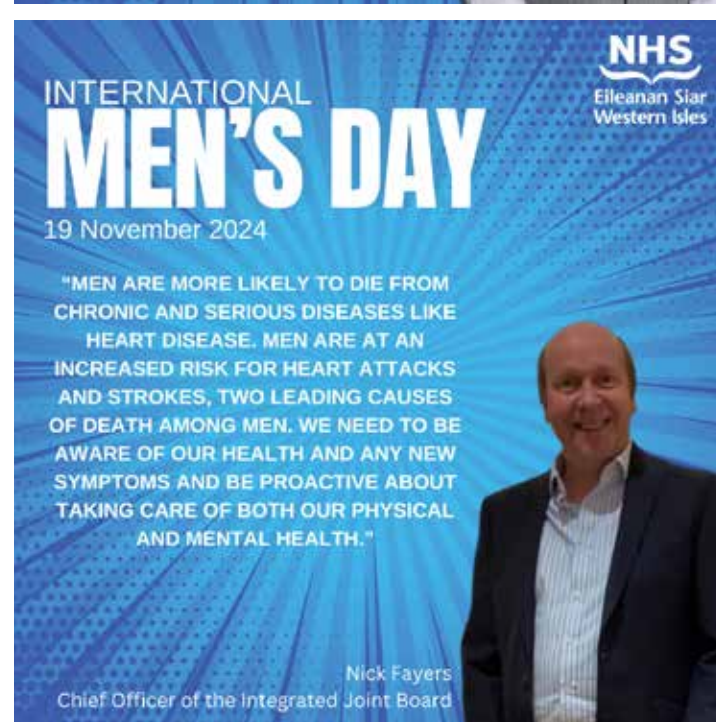
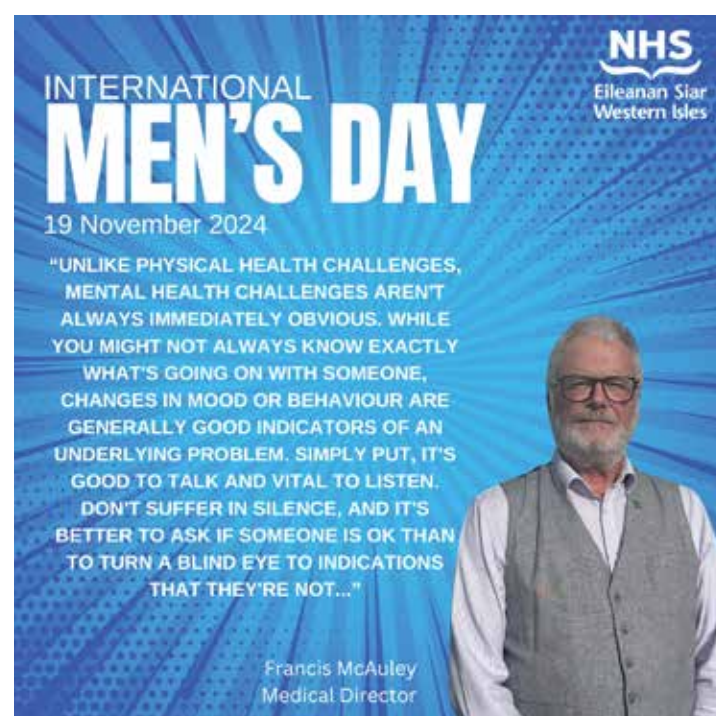
For immediate advice when your GP surgery or Dental Practice is closed and you're too ill to wait until it re-opens, call NHS 24 on 111. NHS 24 will assess you over the phone and advise you on the next steps. When further medical assessment is required, they will refer you on to the most appropriate health professional or advise you to attend your local Emergency Department.



Community Pharmacy

Your local pharmacy can help with many common health issues such as coughs, colds, sore throats and stomach upsets. There is no need to make an appointment.





International Men's Day 2024

NHS Western Isles promoted International Men's Day on 19th November, reminding men to look after both their physical and mental health.

Men are more prone to chronic illnesses and are at increased risk for heart attacks and strokes. Stay alert for any symptoms and if you notice anything unusual get checked by your GP as soon as possible.

Remember, it's good to talk and to break the silence and stigma surrounding men's mental health.

Mental health struggles can affect any gender, but as a result of societal expectations of masculinity, men are less likely to reach out and ask for help and more likely to suffer in silence.

The National Records of Scotland shows that males remain three times more likely to die by suicide than females.

Movember, the leading charity in men's health, has recommended using the ALEC tool to help navigate a conversation with a friend who might be struggling:

Ask: start by asking how he's feeling

Listen: give him your full attention and let him know you're not judging

Encourage Action: help him focus on simple things that might help e.g. sleep, exercise and diet

Check In: arrange a catch up soon after, in person preferably

If you can't talk to someone you know, call a helpline or listening service.

Breathing Space: call 0800 83 85 87 (available 6pm-2am Monday – Thursday and 6pm Friday – 6am Monday)

The Samaritans: call 116 123 (available 24/7)
NHS 24: call 111 (available 24/7)



The importance of hydration

What counts?

Milk, Coffee, Water, Tea, Milkshakes, Squash, Fizzy drinks

Alcohol does not count towards hydration.

Key Hydration Points

Dehydration happens when the amount of fluids taken are not enough to replace the fluids lost.

- Drinks provide 70–80% of water needs.
- 20–30% of water needs comes from food.
- General recommendation is 6 to 8 glasses per day

Milky drinks such as hot chocolate and milkshakes are a good source of protein, calories, and fluid too!

Eat your water!

High water fruit and veg: Mushrooms, Melon, Strawberries

Some high water content food ideas: Custard, Gravy, Soup, Jelly, Ice cream

Signs of dehydration

- Thirst
- Small amounts of urine
- Darker urine
- Muscle cramps
- confusion
- Constipation
- Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)
- Mobility changes – increased falls
- Headache

NHS
Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

Malnutrition Awareness Week

As part of this year's recent Malnutrition Awareness Week, NHS Western Isles focused on the topic of hydration. We know that nutrition and hydration go together but often hydration is overlooked.

Not having enough fluid can have a major impact on someone's health and well being

Older adults can be at higher risk of becoming dehydrated.

Encouraging men to attend their AAA screening this International Men's Day

AAA (Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm) screening is offered to all men aged 65. The screening process is painless, and involves taking an ultrasound scan of the abdomen to detect the signs of an aneurysm.

An AAA occurs in 1 in 70 men, but not all of those who are eligible come forward for screening. Marking International Men's Day, the local public health team took the opportunity to promote AAA screening.

Colum Durkan, Director of Public Health, said: "The AAA screening programme can help to detect the early signs of abdominal aortic aneurysms, which can then be treated to prevent serious complications. The screening takes about ten minutes, and the results are given at the end of the appointment. If you're invited for AAA screening, it's important to attend as part of reducing your risk of complications."

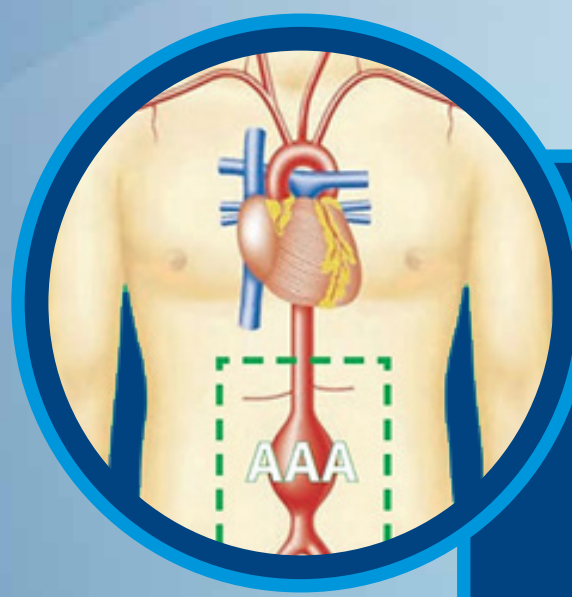


Colum Durkan
Director of Public Health

AAA (Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm) screening

Who is this for? All men aged 65

Why? 1 in 70 men will have an AAA



What is an Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm?

Aneurysms can occur in any artery but one of the more common sites is in the abdominal aorta, which is the artery that carries blood from the heart down through the chest and stomach towards the legs. As some people get older, the wall of the aorta in the abdomen can become weak and form an aneurysm.

How is it checked? A one off ultrasound scan is performed over your stomach, it's safe, quick and pain free.



Scan for more information

Occupational Therapy Week



The power of Occupational Therapy - transforming health and social care

Occupational therapy plays a vital role in health, social care and society. It enables people to manage their health and care needs and do the occupations that they want, need and like to do.

An occupation isn't just your job or activities of daily living – it's any meaningful activity that supports physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Occupational therapists consider all aspects of an individual and their environments and work with them to create a plan to reach their goals. Occupational therapy is a solution to many of the UK's health and care needs. By prioritising prevention and early intervention, occupational therapists help people manage their health and reduce the frequency and need for crisis interventions and care services.

The power of Occupational Therapy Transforming health and social care

Occupational therapy plays a vital role in health, social care and society. It enables people to manage their health and care needs and to do the occupations that they want, need and like to do. An occupation is any activity that supports physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Occupational therapy is a solution to many of the UK's health and care needs and should be positioned in communities to focus on prevention

and early intervention. By helping people manage their health, it saves money and reduces pressure on health and social care services.

Occupational therapy is key to many people's better futures and must be included in the strategic planning and allocation of resources to manage health, education, housing and care needs in the UK. Find out more about OT via: www.rcot.co.uk/aboutOT

The power of occupational therapy

Transforming health and social care

Occupational therapy

A solution to many of the UK's health and care needs

Occupational therapy is key to a better future for many people

Occupational therapy

Helping people live well for longer, saving money and reducing pressure on health and social care needs.

AIMING HIGH

In November 2025, NHS Western Isles' Hospital at Home (H@H) staff, Maggie Maclean, Laura Crockett and Dr Peter Greenstock, will be undertaking an 11-day trek to Everest Base Camp, in Nepal.

Also joining the H@H team, will be doctors Shannon Cowie & Rowan Burns, both of whom were based at the Western Isles Hospital until August this year.

Over the coming year in the run up to this trip, the team will be organising a number of fundraising events, aimed at raising awareness and support for their four chosen charities. These are:

- WIKPA (Western Isles Kidney Patient Association)
- MS Society – Scotland
- SCAA (Scotland Charity Air Ambulance)
- Shout 85258 – 24/7 digital crisis support

The trip will be undertaken on a self-funding basis, meaning 100% of monies donated will go to the

chosen charities, via their GiveWheel page: <https://givewheel.com/fundraising/5583/hospital-at-home-aiming-high-everest-base-camp-here-we-come>

Upcoming charity events include a December Bake Stall, Christmas Hampers raffle, Community Curry Night and a local concert.

The team has already raised over £400 with a quiz sheet over the summer, the winner of which was Sarah Mitchell, from Outpatients at Western Isles Hospital.

The trip will entail an 8-day ascending hike from Lukla airport, taking the team to 17,598 feet in altitude, which is just short of seven Clisham's stacked one on top of the other. Coming down takes just three days.

At Everest Base Camp, the partial pressure of oxygen is approximately half of that at sea level. We anticipate this will limit even Maggie's ability to talk!



L-R: Maggie Maclean, Dr Peter Greenstock and Laura Crockett.



Image source: Pixabay



Stomach Aches and Abdominal Pain

A stomach ache is cramps or a dull ache in the tummy (abdomen). It usually does not last long and is often not serious. Severe abdominal pain is a greater cause for concern.

Stomach cramps with bloating
Your pharmacist may be able to supply you with over the counter medication to help with this

Stomach cramps with diarrhoea
This is most likely a stomach bug (gastroenteritis) which should clear up without treatment in a couple of days

See your GP if you or your child have persistent or repeated abdominal pain.

Sudden agonising pain in your abdomen may be a sign of a serious problem. Go to the Emergency Department or call 999 if:

- you're less than 16 weeks pregnant and have severe abdominal pain
- a stomach ache came on very suddenly or is severe
- it hurts when you touch your stomach
- you're vomiting blood or your vomit looks like ground coffee
- your poo is bloody or black and sticky and extremely smelly
- you cannot pee
- you cannot poo or fart
- you cannot breathe
- you have chest pain
- you have diabetes and you're vomiting
- someone has collapsed



L-R: Dr Peter Greenstock, quiz sheet winner Sarah Mitchell, Maggie Maclean and Laura Crockett.

Fend off Falls this Winter

NHS Western Isles is launching a falls prevention campaign to share helpful tips for reducing the risk of falls, and therefore preventing injury.

One in three people over the age of 65 experiences a fall at least once a year. We can all experience a fall, at any age, but as we get older, falls can become more frequent and can end up resulting in a serious injury.

Although falls are more likely as we get older, they are not inevitable, and there are several things we can do to stay steady on our feet and reduce the risk of falls.

The 'Fend of Falls' campaign which launches in December, will promote the following helpful advice:

Staying Active:

Being active can help you maintain your strength, balance and coordination, which can help to prevent falls. This doesn't mean you have to undertake vigorous exercise. NHS Western Isles has Gentle Exercise Classes available both in person and online, for more information contact Marion Matheson, marion.matheson1@nhs.scot.

Check Your Eyesight:

Eyesight changes as we age and can lead to a trip or loss of balance. Get your eyes and glasses checked regularly – at least every two years. This will detect any vision problems early, before they cause you to lose your balance and coordination.

Look After Your Feet:

Problems with your feet can affect your balance and increase your risk of tripping or falling. Neglecting foot problems can lead to reduced mobility, consequently there is reduced muscle

strength which results in less stability when walking, increasing your falls risk. If you have problems with your feet, contact the Podiatry department on 01851708285.

Wear Suitable Footwear:

Footwear is an important factor in the consideration of walking and mobility. Inappropriate footwear can increase the risk of falls. Poor footwear may impair the ability of the foot to balance and adjust position appropriately and quickly, this is important for walking especially on uneven surfaces.

Qualities of a good shoe are:

- Comfortable for you and deep enough to accommodate an insole (if required)
- Have a secure fastening over the top of the foot e.g. lace or Velcro.
- Are wide enough and not tight across the foot.
- Are long enough, there should be a gap of about 1cm between the big toe and the end of your shoe when you are standing.
- Have a firm support at the back of the heel.
- Have a thick sole for cushioning and shock absorption.
- Have a removable insole if possible.
- Have a broad base of support.
- Avoid totally flat shoes – ideally look for a 'drop' of about 10mm.
- Consider re-lacing so that you miss out the eyelets over a painful area.
- Avoid shoes which narrow towards the toes – choose a squarer-fronted style.
- If buying walking boots, you may need to go up a size to accommodate the walking socks.

Remember to tie the laces – ensure your heel is right in the back of the shoe before tying laces.

Using and Maintaining Walking Aids:

- Make sure it has been chosen and fitted especially for you. A stick or frame that's the wrong height can make your walking, balance and posture worse.
- Keep it clean and in good working order, and check the rubber stoppers or wheels for wear. Your local pharmacy or physiotherapy department should be able to help you replace worn down rubber stoppers.

Home Modifications:

- Modifications to the home can improve safety and help prevent accidents, especially for individuals with limited mobility, visual or balance issues. Here are some modifications to consider:
- Enhance lighting by using brighter bulbs, motion sensor lights and night lights
- Reduce trip hazards such as loose rugs
- Clear walkways of clutter
- Reorganise frequently used items to minimize the need to bend or reach
- Install handrails and grab bars
- Use items like non-slip mats, shower chairs and handheld showerhead in the bathroom
- Ensure any stair coverings are secure and non-slip
- Make flooring safer by changing to a low-pile carpet or hard flooring

- Adjust furniture height to make getting up and down from sitting easier
- Avoid furniture with sharp edges to reduce the risk of injury
- Consider a community alarm system
- Keep a phone in easy-to-reach locations
- Set up an emergency contact list beside the phone

Tips on Avoiding a Fall at Home:

- Organise your home to keep climbing, stretching and bending to a minimum and to avoid bumping into furniture
- In the kitchen, move crockery and heavier items that you use regularly to a waist-high shelf
- Mop up spillages straight away so there is no risk of slipping
- Take care when getting up in the night to go to the bathroom. Have a lamp with a switch nearby to light your way.
- Remove trip hazards like clutter, trailing wires, frayed carpet and remove rugs
- Use non-slip mats, or put a carpet grip underneath
- Avoid long, trailing clothes that might trip you up
- Wear well-fitting slippers and shoes in good condition that support the ankle and have a good grip
- Avoid walking on slippery floors in socks or tights.



NHS STAFF NEWS

Wedding Bells

Megan and Tom

A huge congratulations to Megan Morrison, Maternity Admin Support, who married Tom Skinner in Durness on 16th August. They are pictured below with their Best Dog, Rufus.

Everyone at NHS Western Isles wishes you every happiness.



Laura and Chris

A huge congratulations to Laura and Chris Mackay (pictured left) who were married at Nissi Beach Resort, Cyprus, on 17th October.

Laura is employed with the Health Promotion Department as a Health Improvement Practitioner.

Everyone at NHS Western Isles wishes you every happiness.

Mairi and Stephen

A huge congratulations to Mairi and Stephen Macdonald (pictured below with their adorable dog Dougal), who were married in October at the Lews Castle in Stornoway.

Mairi works as a Clinical Support Nurse at the Western Isles Hospital. Everyone at NHS Western Isles wishes you every happiness.



Erica and Andrew

A huge congratulations to Erica Morrison and Andrew Macquarrie, who were married on 15th November at the Glen Mhor Hotel in Inverness.

Erica works as Administrator for the Cardiac Specialist Nursing Team, and the couple are pictured with the team who attended the wedding. Everyone at NHS Western Isles wishes you every happiness.



Beautiful Babies



It's a Boy!

A huge congratulations to Staff Nurse, Ann-Mairi Macleod, husband Ewan, and daughter Annabelle, who welcomed gorgeous baby boy, Peter Malcolm Macleod, (pictured right with his big sister Annabelle) into their family on 5th August 2024.

Peter weighed in at a healthy 8lb 12oz and Annabelle is proving a fantastic big sister and loving her wee brother lots.



Baby Boom for Maternity Team

A huge congratulations to the Maternity Department Mums - five babies were born to Maternity staff within three weeks of each other. There are (L-R):

- Marion Murray, Midwife, with baby Isaiah, born 17th June
- Claire Macaulay, Midwife, with baby Roen, born 17th July
- Karen Macleod, Midwife, with baby Dan, Born 10th September
- Beckee Matheson, Maternity Care Assistant, with baby Seumas, born 6th September
- Rachel Dunn, Midwife Sonographer, with baby Carys, born 14th June.



It's a Girl!

A huge congratulations to Staff Nurse Lorraine (Emergency Department & Acute Assessment Unit) and her husband Sean Macleod on the birth of their daughter Mollie Grace Macleod (pictured left), who was born on 26th August 2024.



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.

Try Daylight and start feeling better today

trydaylight.com/nhs >



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.

1 DECEMBER 2024

WORLD AIDS DAY



"I'm going to do a sponsored challenge in memory of my birth parents" Maggie

HOW WILL YOU HELP END HIV STIGMA?

worldaidsday.org



Registered charity no. 297977

We can work together to end HIV transmissions in Scotland by 2030 and support people living with HIV and other blood-borne viruses (BBVs).

HIV treatment has changed. People living with HIV can live full and healthy lives. Effective treatment means the virus cannot be passed on to others.

A lack of information and negative attitudes can mean that stigma is more harmful than HIV. Stigma, and fear of a negative diagnosis, can prevent people from getting tested. A delay in

diagnosis can lead to poorer health outcomes, and the risk of HIV being unknowingly passed on.

Stigma means that people living with HIV can face hostility, verbal or physical abuse, and barriers to participating. People can experience stigma in any areas of their life: from friends and family, at work, and from services.

Learn the facts about HIV by visiting <https://hivstigma.scot/>

Recruitment

Job Vacancy	Closing Date	Band	Job Ref
Community Nurse OUAB	18.12.2024	5	203110
Information Technology Technical Officer	18.12.2024	5	202283
Bank Chef Cook OUAB	23.12.2024	3	203415
Specialist Clinical Pharmacist	31.12.2024	7	203522
Procurement Officer	31.12.2024	4	203485
RMN Staff Nurse	02.01.2025	5	203818
Cook/Chef	03.01.2024	3	202726
Consultant General Surgery	06.01.2024	Cons	203075
Consultant General Adult Psychiatry	06.01.2024	Cons	203339
MRI Modality Lead Radiographer	10.01.2025	7	203011
Specialist Generalist Podiatrist	11.01.2025	6	204038
Physiotherapist START	15.01.2024	6	203515

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

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

Work With Us

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

Accessing the right Mental Health care

Anyone can experience mental health issues, at any point in their life. You do not have to deal with these problems alone. NHS 24 mental health services are available to everyone in Scotland. The services we offer include listening, offering advice, and guiding you to further help if required.



Go to nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing for

- advice on dealing with low mood, anxiety, phobias, and stress
- free courses to improve your wellbeing, sleep, stress or anger
- video stories from people who share their own experiences
- where to get help



If you are experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety, contact Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87 or the webchat service at breathingspace.scot

- 24 hours at weekends (6pm Friday to 6am Monday)
- 6pm to 2am on weekdays (Monday to Thursday)
- 16 years and up, living in Scotland



Psychological therapy - after an assessment you could be offered a short series of telephone appointments with a therapist

- call Living Life on 0800 328 9655
- Monday - Friday: 1pm to 9pm.
- 16 years and up, living in Scotland



Your General Practice can support and treat mental health. They may offer talking therapies, local services or prescribed medicines. Online courses may also be offered. They may refer you to another professional.

111

For urgent mental health support, phone 111, day or night. If you are feeling distress, despair, or suicidal, specially trained advisors or our mental health nurses can support you and refer you to other services if needed. No age limit.



If a life is at risk, call 999 or go to A&E

If you are unsure what to do, find out at nhsinform.scot/mental-health-support. To find local services, go to nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory

Meet the Board



Gillian McCannon
Board Chair



Gordon Jamieson
Chief Executive

Executive and Non-Executive Directors



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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

"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.

