

New interim alternative Helicopter Landing Site



Groundbreaking step forward in the provision of safe and reliable emergency services for the local community ensuring continued safe and effective air access for medical emergencies.



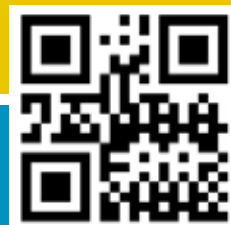
Staff News and
Updates



Accredited Living
Wage Employer



New Barra
Dentist



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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



Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

NHS Board Meetings

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



Know the symptoms of bowel cancer



Bleeding from your bottom



Blood in your poo



A change in how often you poo, or regularly having diarrhoea or constipation



Losing weight but you're not sure why



Feeling very tired all the time but you're not sure why



A pain or lump in your tummy

If you have any of these symptoms, it's important to ask your GP for an at-home test as soon as you can.

To find out more, visit bowelcanceruk.org.uk/symptoms

bowelcanceruk.org.uk  /bowelcanceruk   @bowelcanceruk



WICCI

WESTERN ISLES CANCER CARE INITIATIVE

In partnership with
MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT

What is WICCI?

WICCI has been established in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support in recognition of the specific issues faced by people affected by cancer in the Western Isles.

As a result, the WICCI Social Fund annually receives £70,000 from the funds raised for Macmillan Cancer Support in the Western Isles to help those currently going through cancer treatment.

Grants of up to £500 are available to individuals to help with the costs associated with treatment.

We also provide a range of complementary therapies and activities. At our base on Cromwell St, Stornoway, we have two treatment rooms and social space to deliver group activities and provide information and support. The services are free and available to anyone affected by cancer.

We know cancer affects so much more than the body, so WICCI is here to help you and your family through this time.

Social Fund

The Social Fund opened in 2018 and to date has funded over 1000 applications and awarded over £512,453 in grants throughout the Western Isles to people going through cancer treatment.

The Social Fund has funded:

- Travel costs associated with treatment (over what is covered by NHSWI Patient Travel)
- Assistance with extra heating costs
- Funds for new clothing
- Assistance with debt & arrears
- Household items and much more.

For more information, contact us:

**Unit 1, 87 Cromwell Street
Stornoway, Isle of Lewis
HS1 2DG**

**01851 706721
office@wicci.org.uk**

www.wicci.org.uk

Scottish Charity No SCO47153

Follow us on Social Media

@wiccioffice



Welcoming a Hogmanay baby!

NHS Western Isles would like to wish a huge congratulations to Sarah and Alasdair Macdonald, from North Uist, on the safe arrival of their beautiful baby boy, Finlay Macdonald, on New Year's Eve.

Baby Finlay was born at 1:26am on December 31, 2024, making him the last baby born in the Western Isles Hospital in 2024.

Congratulations to the proud parents.



Your Health Guide

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

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 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.

NHS Western Isles confirms new interim alternative Helicopter Landing Site

NHS Western Isles is pleased to confirm a new safe alternative Helicopter Landing Site (HLS) to serve the Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway.

This achievement follows the reclassification of the hospital's original HLS to the red list for Search and Rescue (SAR) helicopters, necessitating an urgent and innovative solution to ensure continued safe and effective air access for medical emergencies.

The new secondary landing site, the first of its kind to be put in place in the UK since the SAR helicopter review of landing sites, marks a groundbreaking step forward in the provision of safe and reliable emergency services for the local community. This project is the result of the collaborative efforts of NHS Western Isles' Chief Executive, Resilience, Western Isles Hospital Team, Coastguard, Scottish Ambulance Service, and Bristows, who have worked tirelessly to scope out and deliver a solution that meets the highest safety standards while addressing the unique challenges of the Western Isles.

Chief Executive of NHS Western Isles, Gordon Jamieson, said: "We are delighted to lead the way in creating a secondary landing site for SAR helicopters, ensuring that patients in the Western Isles continue to have access to life-saving air transport. This accomplishment reflects our recognition of how mission critical air transfer is, and our unwavering commitment to the safety and wellbeing of our community. It's a testament to the ingenuity and dedication of our hospital team and partners."

The new Mossend site has been carefully selected to adhere to the stringent operational and safety requirements set by CAP1264 and SAR operations. This ensures that critical care air transport can continue to operate without interruption, even in challenging weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances.

Western Isles Hospital has long been at the heart of healthcare delivery in the Western Isles. The establishment of this secondary HLS underscores the hospital's commitment to pioneering solutions that prioritise patient care and safety. Now operational, the site will serve as a vital link, particularly for critically ill or injured patients requiring urgent transfer to Western Isles Hospital or onward to mainland facilities.

NHS Western Isles expresses its gratitude to all parties involved in making this project a reality. The cooperation and input of Emergency Services professionals and the land owner have been instrumental in achieving this success. We have now achieved the seamless integration of the new site into its emergency response infrastructure.

As the first new secondary SAR landing site in the UK since the review of existing facilities, this initiative sets a national benchmark for innovation in healthcare accessibility and emergency preparedness. NHS Western Isles is proud to be leading this transformative change and to provide a solution that will save lives and serve the community.

While the establishment of the interim alternative HLS is a critical achievement, it is only a temporary measure. Reinstating a fully operational HLS at Western Isles Hospital remains an absolute priority for NHS Western Isles. This effort is being pursued with the full support of the HELP Appeal, whose generous assistance will play a vital role in delivering a permanent solution that meets the highest standards of safety and accessibility. NHS Western Isles is steadfast in its commitment to ensuring that the hospital is equipped with the infrastructure needed to support the long-term healthcare needs of the community.

Background

Following a tragic incident in Plymouth in March 2022, the Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB)

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. 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 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.



Celebrating a lifetime achievement: Lachlan is shortlisted for a Scottish Veteran Award!



their business and community achievements after leaving the military. They look at what the individual achieved whilst serving King/Queen and Country as well as what they have achieved since leaving the Armed Forces.

Lachlan said: “I am absolutely chuffed to have been shortlisted for this year’s Scottish Veterans Awards.”

Lachlan left the Isle of Benbecula in 1974 and travelled to Wales to join the Royal Engineers at their Engineering College. He held various roles in the Army, from electrical engineer to ski instructor. He was stationed in Germany for most of his army career and travelled all over the world, including deployment to the Falkland Islands.

has provided him with skills of coping well under pressures, being solution focused, and adaptable.”

Gordon Jamieson, Chief Executive, said: “I can’t think of anyone more humble about their personal and significant contributions, support, commitment and achievements both nationally and locally. A well-deserved nomination and I congratulate Lachlan.”

The award ceremony is due to be held at Prestonfield House on April 30, in Support of The Army Benevolent Fund Charity and Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity.

NHS Western Isles would like to wish Lachlan the very best of luck at the award ceremony!

Lachlan is pictured (left) at the Shortlisted Finalists Certificate Presentation which took place at Edinburgh Castle on March 11, to celebrate all the amazing, shortlisted finalists.



NHS Western Isles is delighted to announce that Lachlan Macpherson, Hospitals Manager, has been shortlisted for a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Scottish Veteran Awards.

The Scottish Veteran Awards recognise the Armed Forces Veterans that are doing great things and who have gone above and beyond and excelled in their relevant fields. The awards were created to highlight their achievements and success.

Lachlan was nominated by NHS Western Isles to recognise his service and recommend him for a Lifetime Achievement Award for both his military service and his loyal and unwavering commitment to NHS Scotland.

The Lifetime Achievement Award celebrates a veteran’s whole career both in the military,

Following his military service, Lachlan went into higher education and obtained two degrees – B.Eng. in Electronic Engineering and M.Sc. in Operational Research.

Lachlan then joined the NHS in 1991 and has worked for three Health Boards. During his time working within NHS Western Isles, he was worked in several departments and in various roles over the years. For the last 10 years he was worked in operational management in the role of Hospitals Manager.

Diane MacDonald, Director of Human Resources & Workforce Development, said: “Lachlan speaks of his military service with great pride and is the NHS Western Isles Armed Forces & Veterans Champion. He retains a strong interest in military service and is supportive of veterans who come to work for NHS Western Isles. His military background





Joanne honoured with community award

An island midwife who is the driving force behind a church-based baby bank supporting families in need has been honoured with an award in recognition of her service to the community.

Joanne Murray-Stewart of Uigean Manse on the west coast of Lewis is the latest recipient of the Community Award from the Scarr-Hall Memorial Fund, which was set up by international businessman Ian Scarr-Hall in memory of his late mother.

Mrs Murray-Stewart, who is married to Rev Hugh Stewart, the minister of Lochs in Bernera linked with Uig, set up the Oisean a' Chalman Banca Paisde (Doves Corner) baby bank in December 2019 with the help of a £5,000 grant from the Church of Scotland.

Oisean a' Chalman now assists dozens of families, as well as the elderly, across the Western Isles who are experiencing challenge by providing items such as clothing, shoes, winter jackets, nappies and bottles.

Support can be accessed directly or via referrals through other agencies, with many of those turning to Oisean a' Chalman being families who are working and do not meet the threshold for benefits, but still require a little help to bridge the financial gap.

In Mrs Murray-Stewart's nomination for the award, the Scarr-Hall Memorial Trustees commented: "She organises frequent events for the congregation, runs the Sunday Club and practically single-handedly, runs the Banca Paiste Oisean a' Chalman Baby Bank [Doves Corner Baby Bank] which provides assistance in absolute confidence to an ever-increasing number of recipients throughout the Western Isles.

"In addition to all this, she also facilitates a support group for bereaved mothers in Lewis and Harris, who have lost a child in infancy or before birth – all this while holding down her job as a midwife.

"There has never been a more worthy recipient of this award for Voluntary Community Service."

Mr Scarr-Hall has been a regular visitor to the Western Isles since the 1960s and has owned Amhuinsuidhe Castle on Harris where he now lives since 2003.

The chairman of property management services company George S Hall, which operates throughout Europe and the US, he set up the Scarr-Hall Memorial Fund in 1988.

He said: "I remember my mother as a humble, gentle Christian soul who quietly gave herself to our Lord's service all her days.

"She was a humble 'giver' continuously prioritising the needs of others.

"Today, the fund distributes awards to similar 'givers' who constantly give without seeking recognition.

"Joanne is a most worthy recipient of this award."

Uig Kirk Session echoed Mr Scarr-Hall's comments, stating: "We extend our congratulations to Joanne Stewart, on being this year's recipient of the Scarr Hall Memorial Award for voluntary service to the community.

"We sincerely thank her for her selfless service, in the Lord's name, to assist and be a blessing to others."

Photo and text from Church of Scotland Facebook 13/12/24

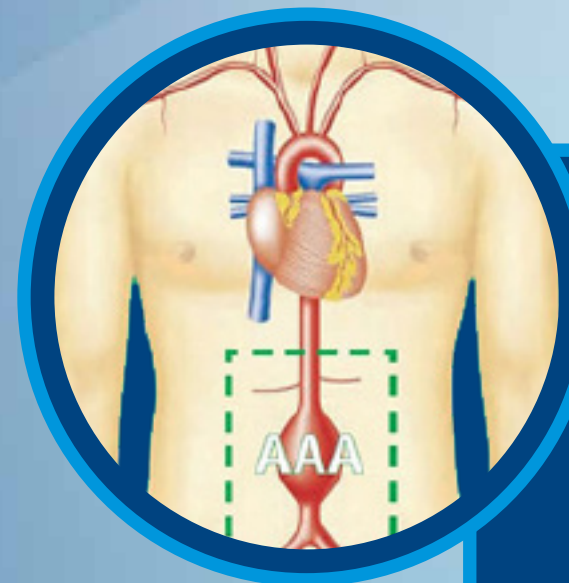
AAA (Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm) screening

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

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



Western Isles GP Practices praised for clinical placement learning

NHS Western Isles wishes to congratulate both South Harris Medical Practice and North Uist Medical Practice which were nominated to receive a letter of Commendation for Excellent Teaching and Support provided to Year 5 University of Aberdeen students over the last academic year.

Awarded in recognition of their excellent contribution to clinical placement learning, NHS Education for Scotland holds an annual review meeting of undergraduate medical education. Following this meeting, specialty teaching leads are asked to nominate staff or practice teams who have provided high quality teaching experiences to undergraduate medical students in the previous academic year.

Fiona Parker, University of Aberdeen's FRCGP and Diploma Clinical Education/Senior Clinical Lecturer GP CME Team, said: "The two Western Isles GP practices were nominated because Year 5 medical students from the University of Aberdeen provided anonymised written feedback, reporting excellent teaching skills and positive learning experiences during their seven-week GP placements."

The GP Community Medical Education team at the University of Aberdeen stated how much they appreciated practices in the Western Isles

providing GP clinical placements for senior medical students.

Dr Andrew Naylor, South Harris Medical Practice, said: "I am delighted to accept the letter of commendation on behalf of the South Harris Medical Practice. Medical student training has been an important part of the life of the Practice since 2000, and is a very rewarding aspect of my work."

Dr Gerry Wheeler, North Uist Medical Practice, said: "The Practice is very happy to have been nominated and accepting of the nomination. We believe this reflects well on our whole Practice team's efforts to look after students who undertake their placements with us."

In addition, both practices stated that it is greatly encouraging to receive such positive feedback from students, and wished them all the best in their future careers.

NHS Education for Scotland has since sent a letter of commendation to the GP practices, thanking them for their excellent contribution to clinical placement learning for medical students.

Fiona added: "Both practices should be very proud of this achievement."



NHS Western Isles kids' winter design competition winners!

Ten children from Primary 1 to Primary 7, from across the Western Isles, have been selected as winners of the NHS Western Isles Winter Health poster design competition. Children had been invited to design posters using paints, pens, pencils, glitter (or using whatever other creative materials they preferred) with the theme of 'Keeping Families Fit, Healthy and Happy'.

The competition was part of the NHS Western Isles Winter Communications Plan to encourage children to discuss health and wellbeing with their parents, carers, guardians or teachers.

This year's winners are:

- Primary 1: Mia, Pairc Primary School
- Primary 2: Jessica Rose Maciver, Stornoway Primary School & Lottie Mae MacIennan, Stornoway Primary School
- Primary 3: Lexi MacDougall, Sgoil Uibhist a Tuath
- Primary 4: Violet Daly, Castlebay School
- Primary 5: Matilda MacIennan, Leverhulme Memorial School
- Primary 6: Isla Chidgey, Castlebay School & Edith Macfarlane Macleod, Stornoway Primary School
- Primary 7: Otylia Juszczak, Laxdale School & Finlay Patterson, Castlebay School

Each winning poster has been framed and will be displayed in the child's local hospital and each winner also received a certificate and gift voucher.

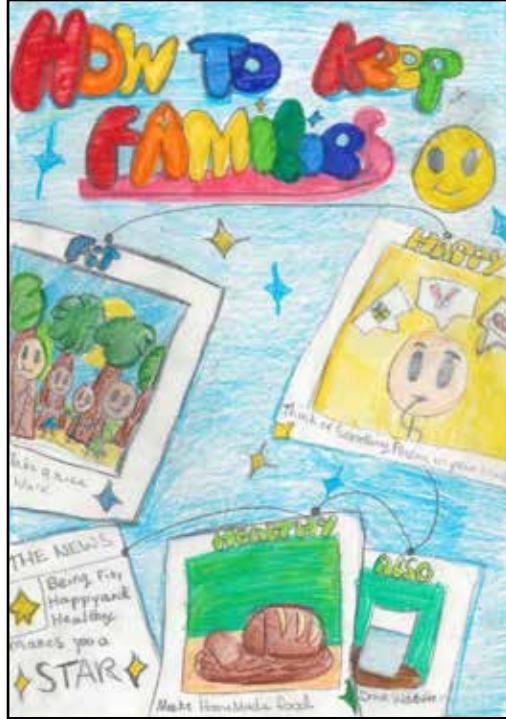
NHS Western Isles Head of Communications, Claims and Patient Information, Maggie Jamieson, said: "We received

around 80 entries to the competition this winter and there were some excellent creative designs. We'd like to thank everyone for taking the time to enter and for considering the important theme of keeping families fit, healthy and happy.

“The aim of this competition was to get children and young people involved in thinking about health and wellbeing and to share and discuss this important topic with the adults in their lives. Starting these conversations at a young age, and encouraging parents, carers and teachers to get involved, helps ensure that these important messages are well understood.”

She added: “We’d like to also thank the local Education Department for supporting us with this campaign.”

The winners have received their prizes and certificates, and the posters will be on display in local hospitals in the near future.



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

If you think you need **A&E** but it's not an emergency,
contact your **General Practice** or call **NHS24** on **111**.



**CALL 999
OR GO TO A&E
FOR
EMERGENCIES
ONLY**

**CONTACT
GENERAL PRACTICE
DURING THE DAY**

**CALL NHS 24
ON 111
DAY OR NIGHT**

**Right Care
Right Place**

For more information and practical advice visit
nhsinform.scot/right-care

Major Emergency Department refurbishment underway at Western Isles Hospital

A £1million project to refurbish and modernise the Emergency Department at Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway began in February.

The project will result in improved availability of clinical space and will increase the number of resuscitation spaces from one to three (with one of the resuscitation spaces being dual purpose and can also be used as two treatment rooms). The project will also result in improved ventilation throughout the department and will include a new nurse call system to improve safety and patient care.

The construction work commenced on February 17. It was originally expected to take around 10 weeks, ending on the week commencing April 28 - however a short project delay means that the project will take a couple of weeks longer than originally planned, with completion planned for May 9.

As a result of the construction work that will need to take place to refurbish the department, some temporary changes to service access have been put in place whilst work is ongoing.

Access to the Emergency Department

The Emergency Department has been temporarily relocated to the other side of the hospital main reception, into what was used as the Acute Assessment Unit (AAU). Appropriate signage has been installed to ensure access is clear to those needing to access the service.

Access to the Acute Assessment Unit

The Acute Assessment Unit has temporarily relocated to a bay in the Day Surgery Unit (level 3) in Western

Isles Hospital. Again, signage is clear to ensure those accessing AAU will be aware of the change.

Parking arrangements

There are **important changes to the parking arrangements** at the hospital for the duration of the project.

The parking spaces directly outside AAU are strictly reserved for emergency ambulances transferring patients to the relocated Emergency Department. Members of the public **must not** park in this area, which has been clearly cordoned off and signposted for ambulance transport only.

Stewards were on site for periods during the initial phase of construction to assist with access and to ensure this area is kept clear for ambulances.

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson, said: "This is an exciting time for us as an organisation and for the wider community, as we take steps to improve and modernise facilities for the local community. The design of the new facility was developed in partnership with staff who manage and work within this department on a daily basis so that it is absolutely fit for purpose for the services that are delivered there. We look forward to an improved facility in the spring.

"In the interim period, while construction is underway, there will clearly be unavoidable disruption for those attending the hospital. We would apologise in advance for this disruption and thank everyone for their cooperation, patience and understanding in the meantime."

Emergency Department Refurbishment Works

Work on the Emergency Department at the Western Isles Hospital is progressing very well. Below are some of the photos of the refurbishment since the work started.

Work is expected to continue through April and into early May.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their patience and cooperation during this time.



February 20, 2025.



March 17, 2025.



March 17, 2025.



February 20, 2025.



Emergency Department Manager, Susan Macaulay, March 19, 2025.



Emergency Department Manager, Susan Macaulay, with the architect, Robert Fraser: March 19, 2025.

World Cancer Day 2025

Sharing information on local services that can offer support to those affected by cancer

A day in the life of Mairi Smith, Macmillan Advanced Nurse Clinical Specialist/Team Lead Lewis & Harris:

I always start the day with the team we discuss what everyone's work plans are for the day. We are lone workers so it is important that we know where our colleagues are travelling to and when they expect to return.

After replying to messages left on the phone and responding to some emails it is time to join our weekly meeting with our colleagues in the Cancer Tracking team. They make us aware of any patients who have been referred as an urgent suspected cancer so that we can contact them to offer support and make sure they get through the diagnostic pathway quickly. This time can be very challenging for patients and their families and may involve several journeys to mainland centres for investigations.

I then go to check on a couple of my patients who have been admitted to hospital and I have discussion with the medical teams who are treating them. Effective multidisciplinary collaboration is vital for cancer patients with complex needs. We agree on a change of medication which I discuss with the patient and then prescribe before returning to the office to prepare to go out on community visits.

Often, we have to drive a considerable distance to see our patients but today all my visits are in the Broadbay area so not too much driving. Working in the community is a favourite part of my role. Being able to care for patients and support them and their families in their own homes is person centred care at its best. Following one of my visits, I make a call to Roxburghe House in Aberdeen to ask advice on changing my patient's medication. The Consultant takes my call and we agree on a plan. When I have seen all my patients I return to the hospital to document all their care and usually make phone calls or send emails to other health care professionals updating them. There will usually also be phone calls from patients to respond to.



Mairi Smith, Macmillan Advanced Nurse Clinical Specialist/Team Lead, Lewis & Harris

I then go to outpatients to attend a Near Me appointment with a patient and her family. The appointment is with the Oncologist to discuss starting chemotherapy for a recently diagnosed cancer. There is a lot of complex information regarding the diagnosis and treatment so, following the appointment, I spend time with the patient helping them understand their diagnosis and treatment plan, supporting them and their family and answering any questions that they have. Following a cancer diagnosis, we help patients and their families understand their diagnosis and cope with complex treatments, symptoms, side effects and coordinate their care.

After this, I update the Chemotherapy team regarding our new patient. The chemotherapy unit is located in Ambulatory Care providing vital treatments and invaluable care that allows cancer patients to be treated close to home.

At the end of the day I have a Teams call with my colleague Mary Buchanan who is the Team Lead for Uist and Barra where we discuss any issues or concerns and check on each other. Although we live and work on separate islands we are very much one team. Every day is different and brings varied challenges, but we keep the patient at the centre of everything we do.

A day in the life of Alison MacDonald, Senior Health Promotion Officer:

Within my role I cover a few different health improvement topics but today I have a focus on cancer.

I attend a local bowel screening co-ordinating group meeting which takes place twice a year. Within the meeting I feedback what promotion I have done over the past 6 months and let the group know what is planned for the next 6 months and why, they can then feed into the plans with any suggestions, ideas or issues that have been raised with them.

The promotion is based on information gathered locally and nationally which includes uptake across the Western Isles, identified gaps or barriers to people accessing services.

The group also discusses various topics from waiting lists, issues with attendance at clinics and any information the bowel screening co-ordinator has to pass on from the national meeting she attends on behalf of NHS Western Isles.

An issue that has come up a few times at the national meeting is people completing their bowel screening test, but forgetting to label it, so the centre doesn't know whose it is. The national centre is organising awareness of this issue across Scotland which we will support. The group tries to ensure we are tailoring the work for what's needed within our community.

I then have a call with a colleague in another rural NHS Board who created some cancer screening training for NHS staff, which I will be promoting to staff across the Western Isles. As the colleague also works in a rural setting we discuss promotional issues we have and how we engage in different communities.

During the afternoon, to monitor and review services delivered to people in the Western Isles,



Alison MacDonald, Senior Health Promotion Officer

I look at the results of a recent survey which was promoted to all those who were invited for breast screening in 2023/24 across the Islands. NHS Western Isles had good uptake for attendance, but we know we can always improve. We had a really good response to the survey and it has given us several areas to work on so an action plan is formed and I will be taking my suggestions to the next breast screening meeting.

Later I pop into a local organisation which is working with our Healthy Working Lives Coordinator to promote staff health and wellbeing. They have asked for support at an event they are holding to raise awareness of cancer signs and symptoms. Following a previous chat, I am checking they are happy with the resources I have provided and seeing if there is any further support they need.

A day in the life of Sandra Mackinnon, Improving the Cancer Journey Link Worker:

I start the day by checking my emails to see if there are any new referrals. I also check my diary for any appointments I might have.

I have a new referral in my emails from the local Macmillan Nursing Team. I also have two referrals.



Sandra Mackinnon, Improving the Cancer Journey Link Worker

After I have read all the information on the referral, I call the clients, and we have an informal chat about their current circumstances. One client has requested a paper copy, rather than an online version, of the Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA) to be sent out. I will post that out today. The rest are happy with doing their HNA online so I email out the link and information on how to return it to me when completed.

I also have a completed care and support plan ready to discuss with a referral from last week so call and chat about a time we can meet up to discuss the next steps together.

I have a catch up with a current client on Barra. A wee check in to see how they are getting on. There are a couple of concerns I have picked up from our conversation – anxiety due to mounting rent and council tax arrears and also shoulder pain and fatigue. I have asked for consent from the client to refer them to the Macmillan Benefits Advice officer, Kay Mackinnon, and also if I can speak with our local housing association to discuss my client's situation.

I have suggested a session with our therapist for an oncology massage for their shoulder pain, but they should firstly contact their GP and Macmillan nurse with any new symptoms. The client agreed

to all that was discussed. We ended our online session with a plan in place, and to have our next appointment in the diary to meet face to face (weather and ferry dependent!)

I then have a look at ferry timings and weather forecast for 2 weeks time and get in touch with the local University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) Office to book a room to meet with people that date, then book the ferry. After that I contact our other Barra clients to arrange catchup appointments, either home visits, or in the relaxed space booked at the local UHI Campus.

A lady popped into the Western Isles Cancer Care Initiative (WICCI) office with money raised for WICCI. Her family has benefited from support at WICCI. I made her a cuppa and we had a chat about how she was getting on. During our chat it became obvious that she is emotionally and physically exhausted, she was the sole carer for her husband through his cancer journey. I suggested a relaxation session with one of our wonderful complementary therapists to help her have some time out from her caring responsibilities. I also suggested joining our local befriending service and an online community that she can join to help her. WICCI is not only for the Cancer Patient – we are here for their families and carers too.

I contacted the therapists to make appointments and made all the relevant referrals to outside agencies. We are so fortunate to have an amazing directory of Therapists and Agencies to help support our clients.

In the afternoon, I had an online meeting with my colleague in Lewis, Aoife, and also all the Improving the Cancer Journey (ICJ) Link Workers from Shetland and Orkney. These meetings are so helpful, it's good to link in with our fellow Islanders.

A day in the life of Kay Mackinnon, Macmillan Benefits Adviser:

It is recognised that for many people living with a cancer diagnosis, money worries are a major cause of stress. My role is to support people affected by cancer, and/or their families and carers navigate the UK benefits system. I am here to provide information, guidance and assess their entitlement to Scottish Government, UK Government and Local Authority benefits,

charitable grants, and their eligibility for help from any other organisations that I work closely with e.g. Tighean Innse Gall and Home Energy Scotland.

I tend to start off the day by finalising any applications outstanding and writing up case files for the people that I contacted the previous afternoon.

I then manage my caseload by reviewing outstanding new referrals and prioritising based on urgency.

I will then contact a new client to assess their entitlement to benefits, charitable grants or any help available via any other agency I feel will be beneficial to the client. The assessment may require me to make a number of calculations to determine entitlement based on their household

and circumstances. I will then discuss eligibility and complete the relevant applications with the client. Part of my day is also to call clients that I have already dealt with. I like to catch up with them to see how they are and whether they have had any response from applications I made on their behalf. If they have had a response on an application we made to the UK or Scottish benefits agencies, and it is not what I had anticipated the client to be entitled to, where possible I will then go onto contact the agency to discuss, and if required, complete the relevant paperwork to rectify this.

Throughout the course of the day, I am answering phone calls and responding to emails from clients and various agencies and organisations.

I attend regular meetings and training to stay updated on new regulations and benefit policy

CANCER - WHO CAN HELP ME?

Macmillan Nursing team – The Macmillan Team offers a single point of contact for those who have been referred as an urgent suspected cancer, and ongoing support through the cancer pathway. The Macmillan Team is made up of specialist nurses who can help with your cancer diagnosis and all aspects of care required, including prehabilitation. This involves supporting patients to actively prepare for cancer surgery or treatment physically, emotionally, and nutritionally, as well as in practical ways. They can also tell you about other support available and refer to other colleagues. This may include information about social care, benefits advice, and local support groups. Lewis & Harris 01851 704704 / Uist & Barra 01870 603010 or email: wi.macmillannurses@nhs.scot

Macmillan Benefits Service - Our service aims to help people affected by cancer, their families, and carers throughout the Western Isles. We complete a benefit check to ensure you receive any UK Government, Scottish Government, Local Authority benefits and grants that you are entitled to. We complete all relevant applications for you. We advise on any local or national support available to help with issues such as debt, heating costs and upgrades etc. We can signpost to other Macmillan support services as required. Tel: 01851 822 644 or email: macmillan.benefits@cne-siar.gov.uk

Macmillan Improving the Cancer Journey - Macmillan Improving the Cancer Journey (ICJ) offers everyone affected by cancer (including families and carers) the chance to have a conversation with a dedicated practitioner to discuss what matters most to you and to help you access tailored information and support. You might have concerns that are practical, financial, physical, or emotional. As a

holistic service, we are here to help you find support for any non-clinical concerns you might have. Phone 01851 706721 or email: icjwesternisles@wicci.org.uk

Western Isles Cancer Care Initiative (WICCI) – WICCI offers a wide range of support for anyone affected by cancer in the Western Isles. We have office bases in Stornoway and Balivanich, where people are welcome to drop in anytime for a cuppa and a chat. We can provide support, information and a listening ear. We have a range of complementary therapies available along with support groups, group activities and counselling. We have a social fund which can help provide financial support of up to £500 for some of the costs involved incurred at this time. WICCI also has a care box scheme where you can gift a box of comforting and practical items to someone going through cancer treatment. WICCI is also the base for the Improving the Cancer Journey (ICJ) Link workers. Phone 01851 706721 or email office@wicci.org.uk

NHS Western Isles Health Promotion - Health Promotion aims to raise awareness of cancer signs and symptoms and encourage uptake of screening programmes so people can access treatment from as early a stage as possible. We also help people improve lifestyle choices including smoking cessation as well as wider issues that impact health. If you would like support to raise awareness and promote within your community or organisation. call 01851 708033 or email: wi.publichealth@nhs.scot



WESTERN ISLES CANCER CARE INITIATIVE





New Dentist to bring sparkling smiles to Barra!

NHS Western Isles is delighted to announce that following a successful recruitment process, a new Dental Officer will shortly be starting work in the Barra Dental Clinic.

Dr Krishna Pillai has demonstrated a real passion for working in a community, through providing treatment and encouraging prevention. He has expressed that his desire is to achieve a high standard of oral health and better outcomes for all residents, especially the young and future generations.

Dr Pillai expressed his delight on taking on his new role. "I first came to South Uist on holiday ten years ago and instantly fell in love with these islands; the breathtaking scenery, nature, people, culture and way of life," he said. "We have returned once or twice every year since 2015. I dreamt of being able to retire here one day and integrate into island life and somehow contribute to the local community. Over the last ten years we have made many friends on Uist and Barra and a few years ago I was fortunate enough to purchase a small property on the island.

"When the vacancy for a dentist arose on Barra, I felt that this was an opportunity not to be missed. What better way to get to know everyone and give something back to the community that I hope to be part of. Having served the North Yorkshire town of Selby since 1995, my patients have become close friends over the years and although it was a very tough decision to gradually move on, I am excited by the prospect of forming a similar relationship with my patients on Barra."

Explaining his excitement at the new opportunity, he said: "I am extremely grateful to Joanne Bark for all her patience, help and support during the recruitment process. Although a bit nervous, I am really excited about joining the dental team on Barra, living and working in a region that I love and making a valuable contribution to the community. Also, despite the weather I am hoping to coach and get Barra Cricket Club off the ground!"

In preparation for Krishna's arrival, the Barra Dental Team has been working hard in the background to ensure the facilities have been upgraded and are fit for purpose so that services can be up and running on arrival.

Our Dental Nurses, Christina Nicholson and Christine MacInnes (pictured below on opposite page), are very excited for the arrival of our new Dental Officer. Following an initial induction period in Stornoway, it is hoped that Dr Pillai will be settled in Barra by mid-April.

Locum and emergency provision is still available until the service resumes, and we continue to ask the public that if they have a dental or oral concern, that they contact the clinic on 01871 810400 for triaging and treatment as appropriate.

Whilst the aim is to resume routine service as soon as possible, there will be a waiting list in place initially.

Priority will continue to be given for groups, including, but not restricted to children, vulnerable adults and medically compromised patients. If you feel you, or someone you care for, should be prioritised, please ensure our staff are made aware of this when you contact them.

To add yourself to the waiting list, please email the Barra Dental Clinic on wi.barradentalclinic@nhs.scot or phone 01871 810400.

NHS Western Isles would like to thank the public for their patience during the recruitment process and we very much look forward to welcoming Krishna to the Dental Team and to the community.

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>

Local staff win the ACM HEALTH 2021 Best Paper Award!

Congratulations to Martin Malcolm, Head of Public Health Intelligence and Information Services, and Alison Robertson, former NHS Western Isles Psychologist, who, as part of a collaborative paper, achieved the award for 'Research with the most significant contributions and impacts in the field of computing for healthcare'.

The award (pictured below) relates to a research paper Martin and Alison contributed to as part of the outputs of the previous ChatPal EU project on developing and trialling mental wellbeing chatbots.

In addition, a massive well done to Martin on his Churchill Fellowship Award received by Lord Soames recently, on the topic of 'Technology for Seniors: Tackling Social Isolation in Canada and New Zealand'.

Martin's work was supported during this time by Dr. Maggie Watts, former Director of Public Health, and he has since completed the final Churchill Fellowship report, published on the Churchill Fellowship website. [Click here to view the report.](#)



Martin Malcolm receiving his award.



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2021 BEST PAPER AWARD

is presented by the ACM Transactions on
Computing for Healthcare to

Colm Sweeney, Courtney Potts, Edel Ennis, Raymond Bond, Maurice D. Mulvenna, Siobhan O'Neill, Martin Malcolm, Lauri Kuosmanen, Catrine Kostenius, Alex Vakaloudis, Gavin Mcconvey, Robin Turkington, David Hanna, Heidi Nieminen, Anna-Kaisa Vartiainen, Alison Robertson, and Michael F. Mctear
for their paper, *"Can Chatbots Help Support a Person's Mental Health? Perceptions and Views from Mental Healthcare Professionals and Experts"*

Signed by:
Devika Subramanian
679CA0C3347E455

Devika Subramanian
Best Paper Award
Committee Co-Chair



Signed by:
Jiayu Zhou
4710B9BA890C487

Jiayu Zhou
Best Paper Award
Committee Co-Chair





Donald Nicholson and Angus Macleod.



Dora Talosi.



L-R: Kimberley Murray, Cathie Matheson, Peggy Macleod and Donald Nicholson (WIKPA).



Jenny Macleod and Elaine Nicolson, Renal Dialysis staff.



L-R: Kimberley Murray, Cathie Matheson, Sam MacAulay and Peggy Macleod.

World Kidney Day was held on Thursday, March 13, and the Renal Dialysis team used display boards to promote both World Kidney Day and WIKPA (Western Isles Kidney Patient Association).

This year's World Kidney Day theme was "Are Your Kidneys OK? Detect early, protect kidney health" and aimed to raise awareness about the risk factors for kidney disease and emphasize the importance of early detection.

In addition, a Bake Sale was held at Western Isles Hospital to raise money for WIKPA, with free water bottles also on offer to promote good hydration.

A huge thank you to those who contributed baking and to those who donated so generously. The total amount raised for WIKPA was £712.



NHS Western Isles has become an accredited Living Wage employer



NHS Western Isles provides a complete and comprehensive range of healthcare services to the population of the Outer Hebrides. It is one of the largest employers in the Western Isles, employing over 1,000 people.

Our Living Wage commitment will see everyone working at the NHS board, including regular workers employed through third-party suppliers, receive at least the real Living Wage of £12.60 per hour. This rate is higher than the government minimum for over 21s, which currently stands at £11.44 per hour.

Diane Macdonald, Director of Human Resources and Workforce Development, NHS Western Isles, said: "NHS Western Isles is committed to ensuring staff are treated fairly and are paid the real Living Wage. Being a Living Wage employer is the right thing to do and shows our commitment to the financial wellbeing of our staff. Our staff go above and beyond every day to care for people in our community and deserve to be recompensed fairly."

In Scotland, 91 per cent of all jobs pay at least the real Living Wage, this is higher than any other UK nation. Despite this, nearly one in 10 jobs still pay less than the real Living Wage which equates to 234,000 jobs.

The real Living Wage is the only UK wage rate calculated according to the costs of living. Employers choose to pay the real Living Wage on a voluntary basis, recognising the value of their workers and ensuring that a hard day's work receives a fair day's pay.

Since 2011 the Living Wage movement has delivered a pay rise to over 68,000 people in Scotland and put over £600 million extra into the pockets of low paid Scottish workers.

Lynn Anderson, Living Wage Scotland Manager, said: "We're delighted that NHS Western Isles has become an accredited Living Wage employer. They join a growing movement of employers in Scotland who recognise that the security of a real Living Wage can help create a happier, healthier and more motivated workforce."

"Our Living Wage network includes employers from across all sectors and industries, and we hope to see many more join NHS Western Isles in becoming accredited."

BACKGROUND

What about the Government's national living wage?

In July 2015 the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the UK Government would introduce

a compulsory 'national living wage'. It was introduced in April 2016, originally applying for all workers over the age of 25 and is currently £11.44 (from 1 April 2024) an hour and applies to workers over the age of 21. The rate is different to the Living Wage rates calculated by the Living Wage Foundation. The government rate is based on median earnings while the Living Wage Foundation rates are calculated according to the cost of living in London and the UK.

About the real Living Wage

The real Living Wage is the only rate calculated according to what people need to make ends meet. It provides a voluntary benchmark for employers that choose to ensure their staff earn a wage that meets the costs and pressures they face in their everyday lives.

The UK Living Wage is currently £12.60 per hour. There is a separate London Living Wage rate of £13.85 per hour. Living Wage accredited employers have six months to implement the rate.

These figures are announced each year by the Living Wage Foundation. The rates are calculated annually by the Resolution Foundation and overseen by the Living Wage Commission, based on the best available evidence on living standards in London and the UK.

The Living Wage Foundation is the organisation at the heart of the UK movement of businesses, organisations

and individuals who campaign for the simple idea that a hard day's work deserves a fair day's pay.

About Living Wage Scotland & The Poverty Alliance

Living Wage Scotland was established in April 2014 by the Poverty Alliance with the aim of increasing the number of employers in Scotland who are recognised for paying their staff the real Living Wage.

Living Wage Scotland is a partnership with the Living Wage Foundation and is funded by the Scottish Government.

The Poverty Alliance is the national anti-poverty network in Scotland with a long track record in working with individuals and communities affected by poverty to take action, and in providing support to influence policies solutions in Scotland.

Accredited Living Wage employers in Scotland span private, public and third sectors. SMEs make up 75% of the total number of employers and more than half of Scotland's local councils are accredited.

[Find out more here](#)

NO SMOKING DAY

NHS
Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

QUIT YOUR WAY
with our support



Local resident Adam Hill is now 1 month, 24 days and 13 hours smoke free!

Adam said, "With the help of Smoking Cessation I have become not only smoke free but nicotine free as well, I cannot thank them enough for all the assistance they have given me on this journey."

Becoming smoke free is not easy and it is a big deal, Smoking Cessation were there with me at every step of my journey and if you need help then they can help you too."

Get support to quit today:
wi.hebridesquityourway@nhs.scot
01851 708040

Gaelic Careers Fair



NHS Western Isles hosted a table at the recent Gaelic Careers Fair, held in the Nicolson Institute, Stornoway, on February 11. The tables were attended by Murdo Macleod, Operational Diversity Lead & Volunteer Service Co-ordinator, and Amber Macvicar, Occupational Therapist, who helped share with pupils that having Gaelic can be a hugely helpful tool in the armoury of both clinical and non-clinical members of staff at NHS Western Isles.



healthy hebridean kids

The Healthy Hebridean Kids website helps parents with healthy lifestyle choices for children, offering tips on meals, activity, and useful links.



The site is hosted by **NHS Western Isles Maternal & Infant Nutrition Group**, a partnership group whose aim is to improve the health of families.

healthyhebrideankids.scot.nhs.uk

A new chapter for Medical Director, Frank McAuley

“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.” (Frank McAuley)

NHS Western Isles has bid a fond farewell to Dr Frank McAuley, who has held the role of Medical Director for five years, joining the organisation in March 2020, just three weeks before lockdown.

Dr McAuley, MB ChB BMedBiol (Hons) FRCA FFICM, who worked as a medic in the NHS for 37 years, came to the Western Isles from Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust, where he was a Consultant Anaesthetist/Associate Medical Director.

Born and schooled in Belfast, Dr McAuley qualified from Aberdeen University Medical School in 1988 and then spent 10 years in northeast England and southeast Scotland, training in anaesthetics and intensive care.

He was appointed Consultant with Gateshead Health in 1998, based at Queen Elizabeth Gateshead, a District General Hospital serving a population of around 230,000 with around 500 inpatient beds. He was initially appointed to lead on perioperative care of upper GI cancers and as part of a new intensive care consultant team. Dr McAuley maintained an interest in critical care, but his anaesthetic commitments involve emergency, trauma and high risk surgery.

Management roles began early in Dr McAuley's career. He became a Clinical Director in 2000, and since then, his roles have included Divisional Director, Clinical Head of Service and Associate Medical Director.

Portfolios include anaesthetics, critical care and theatres along with the non bed holding specialities; including pharmacy/medicines management, AHPs, radiology, pathology and related support services.

Since joining NHS Western Isles, Dr McAuley has made an invaluable contribution to the pandemic response, 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 continued: “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.

“Where we live, we live on the west side of Lewis so we see the Atlantic and we have neighbours who are all lovely but there is space around us. For us, the move has been really good. We have three young adults who don't live with us but enjoy coming up.”

Whilst the move to the Western Isles was the right decision for Dr McAuley, he recalled that the timing was difficult, as within three weeks of starting in post, there was lockdown because of COVID.

“For that reason it was a hugely steep learning curve, but I have never felt isolated or alone, he explained. “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.

“What I've found so positive is that here 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.

“The high point for me has been watching teams and individuals grow. My main high point has been the evolution, or revolution, in urgent and unscheduled care across the island chain. That has just been brilliant and it's so good seeing



people having ideas and being able to help them put those ideas into operation and actually seeing the advantages for the local residents. That's been a real high point.”

In terms of plans for his retirement, Dr McAuley shared that he would be looking forward to switching off and not having to check emails every day.

He added: “I've spent more than 20 years with always some part of my head in work. My family has been really great and acknowledged that and supported it, so just being able to completely switch off and being able to take my Irish doodle for a walk every morning will be the plan.”

The public Board meeting on February 27 was Dr McAuley's last day at work.



Board Chair, Gillian McCannon, took the opportunity to thank Dr McAuley for everything he has done for the organisation and population. She highlighted key areas of work that Dr McAuley had a significant impact on, including unscheduled care and the improvement in the out of hours service; the MRI project; cancer and chemotherapy care; vascular care; Hospital at Home; and the labs.

She added: "We will miss you. To have worked with you over last five years has been a joy and a pleasure. I wish on behalf of the Board all the very best in your retirement."

Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson, stated: "Frank joined us at the onset of the pandemic and stood with us, and with patients, through some of the most challenging times the NHS has ever faced. It is clear that island life means a lot to Frank and his family and now is the time to further explore and explore all that the islands have to offer.

"I thank Frank personally, and on behalf of the organisation, for his dedicated years of service and achievements across the services."

Whilst Dr McAuley did not have an official leaving event (preferring to gracefully leave with no fuss), we were inundated with donations for gifts and

wonderful written farewells!

He was gifted The Wild Geese art piece (pictured on previous page). This was chosen after a suggestion from Megan in Medical Staffing for the meaning behind the piece:

However far they travel, wild geese carry with them a sense of belonging, a memory of home and a knowledge of how to go back there. As with the wild geese, so with us.

In Irish history, the Wild Geese is often used to describe the story of the Irish military diaspora. To this day wild geese can remind us of the many Irish people who have physically left these shores but emotionally never will.

Dr McAuley's favourite restaurant to attend with his lovely wife, Helen, is The Boat Shed. A voucher for a meal out was gifted to treat themselves and to celebrate his retirement.

We wish him all the best in this new chapter of his life.

His dedication and hard work have left an indelible mark on NHS Western Isles. Here's to a well-deserved retirement filled with joy, relaxation, and many more delightful moments.



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



THE HERBERT PROTOCOL

- Do you have a loved one with Dementia or Alzheimer's
- Are they at risk of going missing?
- **The Herbert Protocol** is an information gathering tool to assist the police to find a person, living with dementia who has been reported missing, as quickly as possible.
- Download the Herbert form by scanning the QR code
- Or visit your local GP practice



POLICE SCOTLAND

Celebrating an incredible nursing career, as retirement beckons for Fiona...



This month marks 46 years since Fiona Mackenzie, our Nurse/AHP Director and Chief Operating Officer, started on her nursing pathway. And the excitement she felt as she walked down Byres Road in Glasgow with friends all ready to embark on their first day of nurse training on March 15, 1979, is mirrored today as Fiona looks ahead with some excitement and nervousness to her well-deserved retirement, after a career that's seen her caring for patients all over the world.

And despite having worked in incredible locations including South Africa and Australia, she defines her proudest moment as becoming Nurse/AHP Director and Chief Operating Officer in the Western Isles and ending her impressive career in a place that she loves.

Like many who go into nursing, Fiona explains that she had always wanted to be a nurse.

"I had an aunt who was a nurse and I'd just always wanted to be a nurse," she recalls. "When I was leaving school, I had vague notions of going to university and becoming a teacher, and then I realised that if I went into nursing, I could do nursing and teaching, because I could teach nurses eventually, so that's why I decided to become a nurse. I was 17 and a half when I started nursing."

Fiona started her training on March 15, 1979, in the Western Infirmary and Gartnavel General Hospitals also known as the Glasgow Western District College of Nursing and Midwifery.

"I remember walking down Byres

Road in Glasgow that day with a group of friends all excited because we were starting our nurse training," Fiona recalls. "I did three years, and in those days, you did a bit of everything – psychiatry, midwifery, paediatrics, geriatrics and district nursing. You got the whole gamut of nursing and from that you could then decide."

Fiona qualified in 1982 and completed a period of working in an acute medical ward, before looking for a new challenge and

“I remember walking down Byres Road in Glasgow that day with a group of friends all excited because we were starting our nurse training.”

moving to South Africa for around a year.

"When I was there I had to work in paediatrics, because I had only done around eight weeks of paediatrics in my training, but in South Africa you needed three months," Fiona explains. "The challenge for me was that I was working in an area that was predominantly Afrikaans, and the kids didn't go to school until they were seven, so I had to learn very quickly the basics of Afrikaans, which is a bit like Dutch. That was very interesting, and it was interesting to see it from the perspective of Apartheid. I have to say, thankfully, I didn't

experience any issues."

Fiona's next chapter was back in Scotland where she got a post in an eye ward in Glasgow. She decided at that point that she would do ophthalmology, and she completed a diploma in ophthalmic nursing.

Always keen for a new challenge, Fiona wanted to experience life and work in a completely different location, and she moved to Melbourne, Australia, in 1985 to work in the eye hospital there.

Scotland called her back home after a 12 month period, when Fiona was offered her first Sister's post in 1987, in Canniesburn Hospital in Glasgow.

Fiona's passion for ophthalmology then took her to England the following year where she got a post in an eye unit to work with a very well known ophthalmologist, before moving to the Royal Surrey County Hospital in Guildford.

It was in Guildford that Fiona started her promotion, progressing from a 'G' to 'H' Grade, where she managed a number of ward areas.

Fiona returned back to Scotland, this time to Aberdeen, in 1997, to work in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary as the Directorate Nurse Manager for Surgical, before achieving the role of Assistant Director of Nursing.

Expanding her experience, Fiona accepted a secondment in 2000 to work in primary care, where she was an Acting General Manager for a local healthcare

Braemar, which she describes as a 'beautiful part of the world'. Fiona subsequently returned to ophthalmology to manage the service there and then became Head of Nursing for Acute Services in 2006 – equivalent to the Director of Nursing for Acute Services.

"I was then seconded in 2010 to Scottish Government and I managed the nursing and midwifery workload and workforce planning tools, explains Fiona. "I was there for five years. I managed the programme and supported the mandating of the workload tools - mandating their use to set the staffing establishments in ward areas."

A promotion was on the cards for Fiona, as well as a move back to Australia, when in 2015, she was appointed to a Nurse Director post in one of the Adelaide Hospitals

"I spent a couple of years there and then went up to Queensland to work," says Fiona. "I returned to Scotland in 2018 and went to work in education to fulfil my dream of teaching again, that was at Edinburgh Napier University, and two years after that I was lucky enough to be offered the job here in the Western Isles, starting in June 2021."

Fiona has clearly had an exciting and fulfilling career, but she describes that having been Nurse and AHP Director and Chief Operating Officer in the Western Isles means that she is ending her career on a high.

She explains: "I've done a lot in

my career but being here has been a fantastic way to end my career – it's given me a great sense of achievement working with the people that I have, and having been given the opportunities that I have. The fact that the Chief Executive is a nurse and understands care is such a benefit. It's been a great clinical team at the top."

Fiona has many achievements to be proud of during her extensive career, and she acknowledges that she's been 'really lucky to have been in places where there have been opportunities'.



She recalls: "In Grampian, one of the proudest moments I had was developing and supporting the development of the first community glaucoma scheme. That was the very first one and the scheme running now is based on the work done in Grampian.

"I guess I am just proud of the people that I have been fortunate enough to manage or lead. I thought Covid was over by the time I came here but it wasn't, it was still very real for people, but I think the folk that work in the Health Service in the Western Isles have a real

sense of community – they want to do the best for their community. I would be very happy to come back and be looked after by the staff here."

Fiona describes the pinnacle of her career as becoming Nurse/AHP Director and Chief Operating Officer in the Western Isles.

"The added benefit for me coming here was the fact that it was a joint Nurse Director role with a Chief Operating Officer part, says Fiona. "The two things I really loved were nursing and redesign/ reorganisation, so I could combine my passions in this role, and that's been the highlight of my career, which is why it's been difficult to let go. For me right now it's really difficult. I have really enjoyed it."

Having holidayed in the Western Isles before taking up the permanent role here, Fiona joked that she knew that she 'would never have any garment of clothing without a hood', but she was attracted by the 'lovely place, the fresh air, the unspoilt scenery, and the lack of pollution'.

What she's come to love is having met so many lovely people and that people 'work so hard to make things right for patients'.

She continues: "For me what has been nice about here is that everybody knows your name. That sounds like a cliché, but it's true. The fact that you don't have to go through layers of bureaucracy to get



to the top. The flat structure means that the results of your labours are very visible, for example the work that we did to amalgamate the theatre timetable, and the reduction in waiting times in arthroplasty. You're much closer to that than you are in other Boards. You're closer to the benefits and you can see how people going into new posts flourish, and that's special to witness."

Without hesitation, Fiona admits that what she will miss the most is the people.

"I've been very fortunate wherever I've gone to work, I've made some great friends," she says. "The thing about the people here is everybody has a 'can do' attitude. I'd like to say a huge, big thank you to colleagues. It's a fantastic place and never let any bigger systems make you feel

anything less than what you are, which is amazing."

In terms of retirement plans, Fiona is planning on unwinding for a few months and doing some renovations to her home in Aberdeen. She enjoys travel and is pictured (left) on one of her holidays.

"Honestly, I can't see myself not working," she admits. "I don't know what I'll do whether it's working in an animal rescue centre or a whisky shop, who knows, but just for a few months I'm going to stop and relax."

For now, for all of us in NHS Western Isles, it's a difficult and sad farewell to Fiona, who will be hugely missed by colleagues who count Fiona as a friend as well as a knowledgeable, respected and approachable leader. We hope to see you again soon, Fiona, on your trips back to the Western Isles. Never be a stranger...

Wishing Fiona a happy retirement, Board Chair, Gillian McCannon, commented: "Fiona has been an integral part of NHS Western Isles for the past four years. During that time Fiona has played an active role in supporting and developing the Acute Assessment Unit, together with collaborating with colleagues to transform the Unscheduled Care pathway.

"Her passion is patient care, and she always puts the patient at the forefront of any service redesign, supporting that is her interest in developing a sustainable workforce for the future.

"On behalf of NHS Western Isles Health Board, I would like to thank Fiona for all her hard work, and we wish her a happy retirement."

Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson, added: "Fiona has made a tremendous contribution to all our healthcare services here in the Western Isles, always focused and working to do more things and better things for patients.

"As Nurse/AHP Director and Chief Operating Officer, she should be proud of her role in getting us to the high performing position we are in as a Board: no mean feat, but a huge achievement.

"I thank Fiona most sincerely personally, and on behalf of Western Isles NHS Board, and I wish her all the very best for her retirement and the years ahead."



Radiology equipment upgrade at Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh

A radiology equipment upgrade project has begun at Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh this week and is estimated to last until mid-May.

The current general x-ray equipment in the radiology department in Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh is over 12 years old and is due to be upgraded.

Over £300,000 is being spent on this upgrade project which has been funded by additional capital allocation received from the Scottish Government. The new upgrade will improve the x-ray service in Uist & Barra by enabling a wider range of movement of the x-ray machine and also by enhancing the radiation safety for patients.

During the upgrade, there may be some disruption to the service, and this may mean that waiting times for routine x-rays will be slightly longer than normal. Urgent x-ray appointments will still go ahead as normal. This upgrade will not affect ultrasound appointments.

Jane Macdonald, Radiology Manager, NHS Western Isles said: "We are very excited to be upgrading this x-ray equipment in Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh.

"The new equipment has many advanced features which will enhance radiation safety and overall patient experience. This is a significant investment by Scottish Government and will future proof the hospital radiology service."

NHS Western Isles Begins Phase 2 Consultation on Active Travel Improvements for Hospital Sites

Following the successful completion of the initial consultation in November 2024, NHS Western Isles has launched the second phase of public engagement for its Active Travel Feasibility Study, which aims to enhance walking, wheeling, and cycling access across three key hospital sites: Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway, Uist and Barra Hospital in Benbecula, and St. Brendan's Hospital in Barra.

With continued support from the Sustrans Places for Everyone programme, this project seeks to develop practical, safe, and accessible active travel options for patients, staff, and the wider community. The study is part of a broader effort to improve the connectivity and sustainability of healthcare sites by making active travel a more viable choice for all users.

The phase 2 consultation, which began on 10th March 2025, will build upon the feedback gathered during the initial engagement phase and present early-stage design proposals for consideration. The insights provided by local residents, hospital staff, and visitors will help shape the final recommendations for infrastructure improvements, ensuring that any changes meet the needs of the communities they serve.

To maximise public participation, Active Travel Specialists visited Western Isles Hospital on Thursday 20th March to discuss the project, answer questions, and gather further input from the community.

Questions can also be submitted digitally, which will be addressed as part of an online presentation that will be available to view from Monday 17th March. Details on how to participate in this are included on the consultation hub.

We encouraged members of the public to get involved by reviewing the proposals and sharing their views through an updated consultation survey. Your feedback is invaluable in shaping the future of safer, more accessible hospital sites that support active travel for all.

To find out more and take part in the survey, please visit: ethos.govocal.com/en-GB/projects/nhswi-active-travel.

For further information, please contact Ethos: info@ethosconsultants.co.uk



NHS Western Isles Active Travel Study Phase 2 Consultation

About

Thank you to everyone who participated in the initial active travel consultation for the NHS Western Isles that was held last year. Your feedback has been crucial in the development of proposed active travel infrastructure. The prioritised options are now ready to share with you as part of the second consultation.

Please go to the website below, or scan the QR code to the right to find out more on the project and respond to a survey. It should take no more than 5 minutes to complete.

Consultation will close on 31 March 2025.



Visit Our Website

ethos.govocal.com/en-GB/projects/nhswi-active-travel



SCAN ME



NHS Staff News



Mark and Zoe Jade Trussler's beautiful baby girl Athena Rose (pictured right) was born on the 27th of January 2025.

Mark and Zoe Jade both work at Benbecula Medical Practice.



Lorna Mellow, Clinical Support Technician at Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh (OUAB), and her partner, Jamie, welcomed their beautiful daughter, Kayla Rhona Christine Macleod, on January 8, 2025. Kayla was born at OUAB five weeks early and was delivered in 90 minutes weighing 5lbs 5oz.

Lorna would like to thank all the staff who helped with Kayla's unexpected early arrival.

Kayla is pictured with her parents and her siblings, Ragnar and Thalia.



Three beautiful babies for Westside Community Nursing Team

Sarah and Ally Macdonald welcomed their beautiful baby boy Finlay on December 31, 2024. Finlay was the last baby born in the Western Isles in 2024. Finlay is pictured right.



Paula and Calum Iain MacLeod's beautiful baby boy, Calum Finlay, was born on November 28, 2024.

Calum is pictured left with his big sister Joni.

Emily Macneil and Levi welcomed their beautiful baby boy, Harris, on January 24, 2025.

Harris is pictured, right, with his big brother Logan.



A huge congratulations to you all!



RETIREMENTS

Colin Gilmour, Health Promotion

It was with much sadness that we bid farewell to Colin Gilmour, Health Improvement Manager, who retired on November 28, 2024, after working 31 years within NHS Western Isles.

It was whilst he was holidaying on Lewis, with his wife Meg in 1993, that he took the opportunity to visit Western Isles Health Board. Fortunately, he met with the then Health Promotion Manager, Brian Chaplin, where he learnt by chance about the role of Project Officer (Drugs, Alcohol, HIV). Due to his previous work with substance misuse in the Glasgow area, he applied and was successful in attaining the post.

He later climbed the ladder to become Assistant Health Promotion Manager, progressing to Health Improvement Manager after Brian's departure.

During his career, Colin also took on the opportunity as Assistant Chief Operating Officer for two years, before returning to the Health Promotion Department in 2015.

During this time with the organisation, he worked on a wide range of national and local groups and was influential in the introduction of many health initiatives across the Western Isles. This included topics such as anti-poverty, cardiovascular health, smoking cessation, healthy weight for children and adults, screening, sexual health and cancer.

He was an active member of the Community Planning Partnership, Local Employability Partnership and



many more groups, working with all of the local agencies at one time throughout his career, and making friends along the way.

He will be missed for his vast contributions to the organisation, and support he provided to colleagues, many of whom became personal friends.

We would like to wish Colin all the very best for his retirement and we are sure he will enjoy a busy retirement between family, golf and holidays abroad.

Colin is pictured above with wife Meg and grandchildren Kyle and James.

Joan Tilley, CAMHS

Joan Tilley, CAHMS Manager, retired after a career dedicated to improving the mental health of children and young people

After 35 years of working as a Registered Mental Health Nurse, Joan Tilley is heading off for a very well-deserved retirement.

Joan's NHS career began in 1990, when she first worked at Woodilee Hospital in Lenzie as a Care Plan Coordinator, before returning to the Western Isles in 1994. Her colleagues at Woodilee Hospital spoke very highly of Joan, some examples of what her previous employer said about her include:

"A very pleasant nature, well thought of by patients and colleagues alike. A well-motivated and fully committed nurse, we will all miss her."

"She is a very caring, mature person who has proved over the years that she is more than capable of carrying out any duties assigned to her in a professional manner."

Joan has worked for NHS Western Isles for 31 years, firstly joining the organisation as the Acute Psychiatric Unit (APU) Manager in January 1994. During her time within this role she worked alongside Dr Ian Clark, who was the Consultant Psychiatrist/Medical Director at the time, to carry out couples therapy and family therapy.

Whilst simultaneously managing the demands of the APU manager role, Joan worked tirelessly to complete the requisite training to develop the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), based at the Stornoway Health Centre on Springfield Road.

It was down to Joan's leadership and visionary ambitions for the children and young people of the Western Isles that we now have the CAMHS service that we have today, which has continued to grow and develop to meet the increasing challenges our local young people are dealing with.



The CAMHS service received positive feedback from the Health Minister in 2024, who, in particular, mentioned Joan's leadership in designing and developing a workforce profile in response to national and regional workforce challenges.

Colleagues today view Joan in the same light as her previous employer – she is a driven and passionate individual who will do all she can to strive for what is best for the service, patients, staff and colleagues.

Joan was a regular contributor to regional meetings, representing NHS Western Isles in a professional manner. Her intention to retire has brought in many messages from regional leads, clinicians and from Health Improvement Scotland, who all recognised her valuable contribution to children and young people's services in the Western Isles, and across the region.

She is going to be missed dearly, and her absence will be noticed by many close to the CAMHS' families, and by all staff working within the mental health services in the Western Isles.

On behalf of NHS Western Isles, we wish Joan a long, happy and healthy retirement.

Clare appointed as Associate Medical Director, Primary Care & GP Appraiser

We are delighted to welcome Dr Clare Carolan, who was recently appointed as Associate Medical Director and GP Appraiser.

Clare, who has worked in the NHS for nearly 34 years, was born and bred in Kilmarnock, before moving to Dundee at the age of 17 to study Medicine at the University of Dundee in 1986.

After qualifying in 1991, she moved to North Wales and worked in a variety of roles; first in General Medicine in Ysbyty Gwynedd in Bangor before shifting to General Practice. During this time, she obtained her MRCP and MRCGP qualifications. She worked as a GP partner in Llanfairfechan for 11 years and was an undergraduate tutor for Cardiff University. During this time, she also worked in St David's Hospice in Llandudno.

Clare moved up to Lewis with her husband and two children in 2008 and became increasingly interested in healthcare education and research. She was appointed as a GP appraiser for NHS Western Isles in 2009 and served as the Primary Care Appraisal Lead from 2016-2021.

She completed a Masters in Palliative Care in 2011 from Edinburgh Napier University and completed her PhD in 2018 from the University of Stirling. Since 2011, she worked in healthcare education and research working first as a Clinical Academic Fellow for the University of Stirling, and then a senior lecturer for the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) delivering undergraduate nurse and postgraduate healthcare education locally in Stornoway. Importantly, this supported expansion of the advanced clinical practitioner role and the launch in 2023 of a dedicated programme for the MSc in Rural Advanced Practice.

She left the UHI in 2024 to take up the role of Associate Medical Director, although she still maintains relationships with colleagues in UHI through various research projects and PhD student supervision. She is also an external examiner for the MSc Remote and Rural Medicine /



Dr Clare Carolan

MSc Urgent Care at the University of Central Lancashire. Clare's medical career to date has been varied, with an eclectic mixture of clinical, educational, research and leadership roles.

Having lived in Lewis for the last 17 years, she is passionate about remote and rural healthcare - and her new post offers her the opportunity to use her accumulated knowledge, skills and experience to work with our committed local health and social care teams to continue to innovate and deliver excellence in care.

Clare explained: "The remit of my new post is wide, but centres on providing professional and clinical advice on key primary and community care issues and delegated services. Ensuring that our local systems and processes are aligned to enable delivery of national policy and guidance is a key part of my role.

"My key priority is supporting the continued delivery of safe and effective high-quality person-centred care. During this next year, my aims are to strengthen relationships between primary and secondary care, to provide on-going support for GPs and their practice teams, and to implement a national project to improve the care of people living with frailty."improve the care of people living with frailty."

Associate Medical Director, Acute Services, role for Lizzie

NHS Western Isles is delighted to confirm that Dr Lizzie Beattie, Consultant Anaesthetist, has taken on the role of Associate Medical Director, Acute Services.

Lizzie completed her specialist training in the West of Scotland, which included a year working in Perth, Western Australia, in a tertiary Obstetrics and Gynaecology centre.

She subsequently worked for almost five years at Forth Valley Royal Hospital as an Anaesthetic Consultant, taking the lead for Morbidity and Mortality (M&M) for the Theatre Department. Lizzie also had a role undertaking the SAER (Serious Adverse Events Reviews) process for more than three years in Forth Valley.

Lizzie has a special interest in peri-operative medicine, supervising senior anaesthetic trainee specialist blocks, as well as being Educational Supervisor to more junior Anaesthetic trainees. She is a long established and now Executive member of the Scottish Society of Anaesthetists, West of Scotland Society of Obstetric Anaesthetists, Scottish Paediatric Anaesthetic Network, and more recently the Scottish Perioperative Medicine Society.

It was in February 2023 that Lizzie moved to the Western Isles, at that point on a six-month secondment as a Consultant Anaesthetist, following which she was appointed as a substantive member of the department in October 2023.

In terms of what attracted Lizzie to the post of Associate Medical Director, Acute Services, she explained: "I was in search of a work life balance, the ability to affect change, care for my patients, and develop meaningful relationships with the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) around us. I want to deliver patient-centred care to everyone who presents themselves to me, whilst remembering realistic medicine.



Dr Lizzie Beattie

"The new post offers me the ability to grow both personally and professionally. To learn from those more experienced in managerial posts around me, but also, I hope to contribute to the care that the Western Isles Hospital delivers under, at times, very challenging financial and geographical constraints. My established network of colleagues both here and in other centres within Scotland, I hope, will make this a realistic goal."

Lizzie will continue to contribute to full time on call and elective Anaesthetic and Critical Care work in Western Isles Hospital.



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New Nurse/AHP Director & Chief Operating Officer

Frances Robertson, former Associate Nurse/ AHP Director and Chief Operating Officer, has recently taken over as Nurse and AHP Director/Chief Operating Officer.

Frances takes over from Fiona Mackenzie, who has retired after almost four years in post.

Frances has almost 30 years of nursing experience in a range of different roles. Having been born and brought up on Lewis, she left in 1995 at the age of 17 to undertake her nursing training in Aberdeen's Foresterhill College, graduating from Robert Gordon's University in March 1998.

Frances continued to work for NHS Grampian for 15 years in a variety of nursing roles, predominately within a Surgical/ High Dependency setting, although she also spent some time working in renal medicine and the Emergency Department at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. Her last post in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary was Senior Charge Nurse in a Cardiothoracic High Dependency Unit.

Frances has also been committed to continuing her education and completed post registration qualifications at Robert Gordon's University, Napier University and the University of the West of Scotland.

Frances moved back to the Western Isles in 2013. She explained: "I made the decision to move back home to Lewis mainly for family reasons and started working as the Senior Charge Nurse in the Surgical Ward and Day Surgery Unit in Western Isles Hospital in January 2013 which I thoroughly enjoyed. I undertook the role of Interim Lead Nurse Acute Services at NHS Western Isles in December 2021 following the retiral of my predecessor and secured the post permanently in June 2022. Last year I took on the role of Associate Nurse/ AHP Director and Chief Operating Officer working closely with the Executive Nurse/AHP Director and Chief Operating Officer as well as the wider senior management team.



Frances Robertson

"I am excited to begin my new journey as Executive Nurse/AHP Director and Chief Operating Officer at NHS Western Isles and I am committed to working closely with the senior management team and staff across the organisation to ensure the services provided to the communities across the Western Isles are of the highest standard. The care and compassion staff across NHS Western Isles show to their patients, and the desire to evolve and develop services, is to be commended and I look forward to supporting staff to ensure that NHS Western Isles continues to be 'the best at what we do'."

Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson, commented: "I'm delighted to welcome Frances to the Executive Team and know that her skills, knowledge, experience and commitment will be of great benefit to both the services we deliver for patients and the senior leadership team."

Interim Lead Nurse Acute Services appointed

Congratulations to Murray Angus Graham who has been appointed to the role of Interim Lead Nurse Acute Services for Western Isles Hospital, for a six month period.

Murray, who previously held the role of Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) at Western Isles Hospital, qualified as a Registered Nurse in 1999, commencing his training in Stornoway, and completing the second half of training at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness.

He has accumulated a wealth of diverse nursing knowledge and skills, spending four years in Renal Dialysis, four years in ICU, as well as taking on placements in Medical Admissions and Critical Care Unit (CCU). In addition, in 2008 he trained as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP), and worked in the Hospital at Night Team at Raigmore Hospital for five years.

Working in the Ambulatory Emergency Care Unit, and latterly as a Senior ANP in Acute Medicine at Raigmore Hospital until 2021, he then decided to move back to Lewis in June 2023 to take on the position of an ANP, working alongside the Clinical Support Nursing (CSN) team until now.

Originally from Stornoway, but whose family hails



Murray Graham

between both North Tolsta and Tolsta Chaolais, Murray believes this to be the best of both worlds!

Murray said: "I'm looking forward to helping develop the role of nurses within acute care and am excited by the opportunities available to us on the island."

Murray also intends to maintain some clinical involvement within his new role, particularly in relation to procedures, as he is trained in Lumbar puncture, ascitic drainage, PICC and midline insertions, chest drains, and Point of Care ultrasound, as well as bedside echo.

We wish Murray all the best in his new role.



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.

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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.

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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 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.



Recruitment

Job Vacancy	Closing Date	Band	Job Ref
Alcohol and Drug Partnership Development Officer	25.03.2025	5	207938
Public Health Administration Support Assistant	25.03.2025	3	210018
Senior Physiotherapist (Uist)	26.03.2025	6	210349
Cook/Chef (Uist)	26.03.2025	3	210291
Catering Assistant (22.5hrs)	26.03.2025	2	210007
Principal Management Accountant	28.03.2025	7	210401
Catering Assistant	28.03.2025	2	209824
Healthcare Support Worker	31.03.2025	3	209035
Healthcare Assistant	31.03.2025	3	209621
Healthcare Assistant	31.03.2025	3	209748
Senior MSK Physiotherapist Outpatients	01.04.2025	6	210641
Bank Senior MSK Physiotherapist	01.04.2025	6	210645
Domestic Assistant	02.04.2025	2	210539
Bank Catering Assistant	03.04.2025	2	210998
Specialist Clinical Pharmacist	11.04.2025		
MRI Lead Modality Radiographer	09.05.2025	7	209887

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

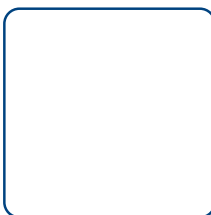
Executive and Non-Executive Directors



Colum Durkan
Director of
Public Health



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



Vacant
Medical
Director



Frances Robertson
Nurse/AHP Director
& Chief Operating
Officer



Diane MacDonald
Director of Human
Resources & Workforce
Development



Sheena Wright
Non-Executive Director /
Whistleblowing
Champion



Julia Higginbottom
Non-Executive Director /
Sustainability
Champion



Jane Bain
Non-Executive Director /
Employee
Director



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



Paul Steele
Non-Executive Director /
Comhairle
Representative



Annetta Smith
Non-Executive
Director



Naomi MacDonald
Non-Executive
Director



Paul MacAskill
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.

