



NHS Western Isles
**Director of
Public Health**
Annual
Report
2024

Acknowledgements and lists of Contributors

Thanks to the following colleagues for their contributions to this year’s report:

- Norma MacLeod
- Angela Grant
- Laura MacKay
- Alison MacDonald
- Isabell MacInnes
- Mary MacLean
- Janet MacLean
- Elaine MacKay
- Lorraine Gillies
- Isabel Steele
- Margaret Ralston

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Introduction

Public health is the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through the organised efforts of society. The 2024 Director of Public Health Annual Report for the Western Isles demonstrates how the science and art of Public Health were integrated throughout the year, to achieve the best possible population health outcomes. It describes and celebrates the work undertaken, highlighting key focus areas and deliverables. It incorporates feedback from stakeholders and the public, to showcase the benefit of this work to individuals and communities.

While much has been achieved, there is more to do. The population of the Western Isles is the oldest, and most rapidly declining, in Scotland. This poses major Public Health challenges, exacerbated by a range of geographic, social, and economic factors. Looking to the future, the NHS Western Isles Public Health Team will continue to tackle these challenges, by building on the progress so far. The journey will be neither fast nor easy, but it will undoubtedly be worthwhile.



Colum Durkan

Director of Public Health, NHS Western Isles



Smoking and Vaping

Smoking and Vaping

Overview

The Smoking Cessation Service in the Western Isles aims to reduce tobacco use, the leading cause of preventable illness and death. Smoking accounts for over 8,000 deaths and nearly 90,000 hospital admissions annually in Scotland and is a major contributor to health inequalities. ASH Scotland reports that 63,081 households could be lifted out of poverty if smoking costs were eliminated.

Recognised as vital for preventing avoidable illness, the service has evolved to address cultural shifts in nicotine use, including vaping. Local efforts focus on education, media campaigns, and face-to-face support to adapt to community needs. Aligned with Scotland's goal of a tobacco-free generation by 2034, the service promotes prevention through training, workforce health events, and raising awareness at community events.

Scope and Remit

Specialist service

The service offers free, confidential appointments with trained smoking cessation advisors. Support can be intensive over the first few weeks to build client's confidence. The Service is tailored to individual needs, incorporating different methods of communication.

Pharmacy based services: Local pharmacy services offer support to individuals wishing to stop smoking. Pharmacies are seen as key access points for support as they are convenient and accessible. They also refer individuals to the NHS specialist service.

Communications

The NHS Western Isles Communications team is responsible for managing and coordinating internal and external communications for the service. The Communications team raises awareness, runs campaigns, engages with the community and shares success stories.

Integrated Approach

Collaborating with other services, community groups and schools ensures the service integrated.

Policy Alignment

Smoking Cessation services work under the Tobacco Control Action Plan and adhere to Public Health Scotland guidelines. The Local Delivery Plan (LDP) sets annual targets such as the number of successful 12 week quits.

Behaviour Support

Evidence-based behaviour interventions are provided to support clients during their quit. These methods are based on psychological and behavioural theories. These include cognitive behaviour therapy and motivational interviewing tailored to the individual needs.

Pharmacological Support

The service provides free access to Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), Varenicline and Bupropion via GP practices to support a quit.

Equity of access

It is imperative that the service is available to everyone that requires support. An EQIA was undertaken recently leading to a clinical venue being sought for the service at the Dental Centre. This provides a suitable waiting area, ensures safety of colleagues, disposal of waste, corridor space, lighting, a lift, parking and easy access.

Challenges

Smoking rates remain higher in disadvantaged communities and among people with mental health conditions, with 31% of those with mental health issues smoking (ASH Scotland). Challenges include limited service access, smaller populations, high engagement thresholds, and weather impacts on availability. As smoking rates decline, demand for support with vaping is increasing, requiring education, behavior support, quit plans, and NRT.

Strategies to improve performance include creating culturally relevant programmes, addressing local habits, training frontline staff on Very Brief Interventions (VBI), recognising referrers, and providing smoking awareness training.

Logistical Challenges in Rural Areas

Targeted Campaigns focus on outreach to increase awareness of smoking and vaping risks and available specialist services, especially for those with limited access. Key initiatives include:

- Offering appointments at dental practices, GP surgeries, and pharmacies.
- Attending events such as cancer awareness, health days, and poverty awareness.
- Highlighting both clinical and non-clinical aspects of the service.
- Expanding service capacity through staff training to support patients and increase referrals.
- Utilising IT, such as video calls, for better accessibility.
- Enhancing local and national data collection on vaping.

Focus Area

- Efforts to raise awareness among pregnant women about the dangers of smoking during pregnancy include supporting healthcare providers in signposting women and families to the Smoking Cessation Service.
- Recent training focused on the latest evidence for supporting pregnant women in quitting smoking and maintaining cessation postpartum, considering unique challenges affecting motivation and ability to quit.

Training

- Cost of smoking training was delivered to 9 participants. This session was jointly facilitated by ASH Scotland to increase knowledge about the financial benefits of quitting smoking for the people we all support, raising confidence to raise the issue and increase awareness of where and how to signpost. It included NHS staff, UHI students and people working within the benefits sector.
- Presentation to 45 professionals on the new care packages to support patients in hospital who smoke or vape.
- Training delivered to 50 dental staff. Increased knowledge of smoking cessation facts, information on how Smoking Cessation support clients using Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), how products work and the importance of Behaviour Support.
- Training delivered to 15 dental therapy students (Year 1 Highlands and Islands UHI).
- Training delivered to 5 staff in the maternity ward.

Events attended

These events were attended to raise the awareness of the service and to update the community.

- The service attended the local Head and Neck cancer workshop. This was a wonderful opportunity to speak to healthcare professionals.
- Attended Health and Wellbeing event at the Western Isles Hospital. This was a fantastic opportunity to speak to staff about how NRT works and the referral process.
- Attended the Challenge Poverty event at Stornoway Town Hall. This was an opportunity to meet and speak to statutory as well as non-statutory agencies.
- Attended the HHP Tenancy event at Stornoway Town Hall. The event was comprised of a range of services and groups to answer questions and offer advice.

Community Drop Ins

Smoking Cessation drop ins to cover all staff shifts at BASF, a large local employer. This was very successful as it gave staff the opportunity to access information and support.

One session also included a pharmacist attending from Boots in Stornoway for education and training on the smoking cessation service.

Cearns Community—4 sessions were delivered to support local communities. They were informal drop ins with 6 people coming to see staff. This led to an increase in referrals from communities at higher risk of experiencing smoking-related harms.

Feedback

“

'I have learnt about the nicotine replacement alternatives available. Refresher sessions are always useful.'

'Very enthusiastic presentation and passionate about your job. Perfect for motivating patients looking to stop smoking.'

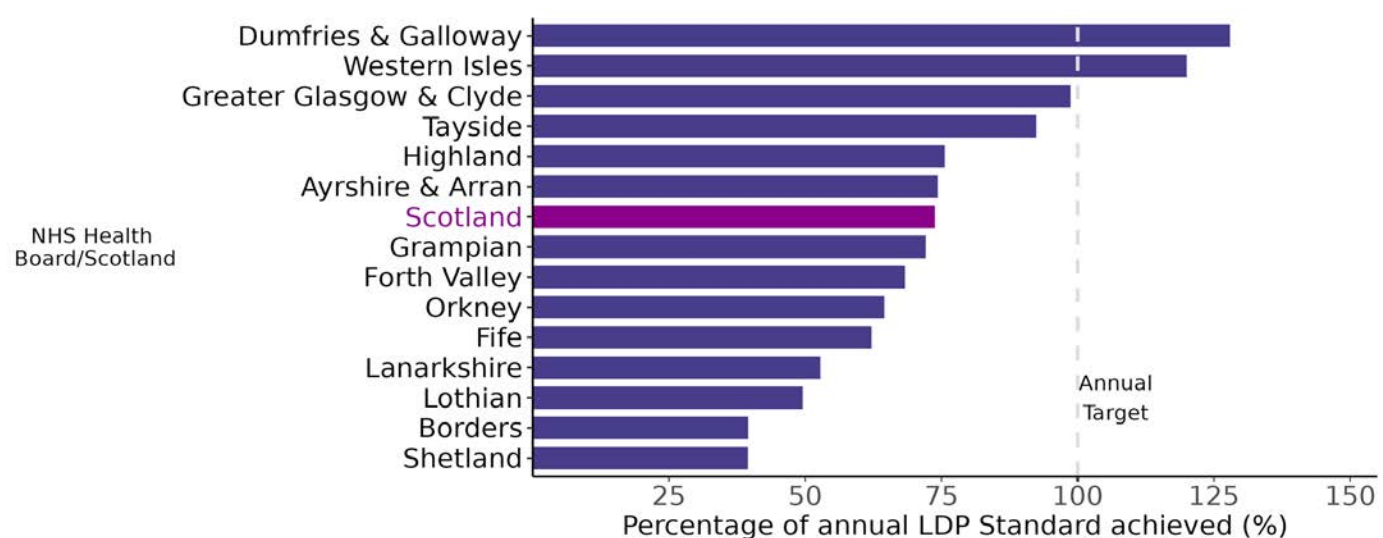
'I found the session to be very informative and helpful to further on my existing knowledge of the subject, I really enjoyed the format of the session and felt that I came away from it with lots of useful information to help me move forward in my career.'

'Firstly, so much appreciated for another great talk. You hit the nail on the head with everything. The students loved your style, enthusiasm and knowledge. So thank you.'

”

National Statistics 2024

Figure 1: Progress against Local Delivery Plan (LDP) standard for Smoking Cessation by Health Board in Scotland, 2024



Promotional Assets

Find your way

Call on: **01851 701623**
Email: **wi.hebridesquityourway@nhs.scot**

QUIT YOUR WAY
with our support

TIPS TO HELP YOU QUIT VAPING

Short-term vape use can be a really useful tool to quit smoking tobacco. But we don't know the long-term risks. If you have never smoked, don't start vaping.

Here are some tips for when you are ready to quit vaping:

- Reduce nicotine gradually
 - After 12 weeks of no tobacco at all (exclusive use of vape) reduce your usual nicotine liquid strength every 2-4 weeks, or longer as needed
 - for example: 20mg-18mg-12mg-6mg-3mg-0mg
- Reduce when you vape
 - If you normally vape every 20 mins, try waiting 40 mins
 - Only vape at certain times of the day
 - Don't constantly have your vape in your hand
- Reduce where you vape
 - Don't vape inside buildings, in the car or in front of kids
 - Only vape at work on breaks, outside
- Choose a flavour you really don't like
- Making vaping less pleasant and enjoyable

If you ever get the feeling that you want to smoke tobacco again, reach for your vape on NRT
You CAN do this!

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with our support

Contact Smoking Cessation Quit Your Way 01851 708040

Reference: www.nhs.uk/publication_support_stop_vaping.php (April 2024)

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SECONDHAND SMOKE AFFECTS PETS TOO

To protect them, either take your smoking right outside or stop smoking completely.

QUIT YOUR WAY
with our support

If you would like more advice about how secondhand smoke can affect your pets or would like free help to stop smoking (including access to free NRT), please call **01851 708040** or Email: **wi.hebridesquityourway@nhs.scot**

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), can also help you to QUIT smoking by replacing cigarettes, cigars or pipes.

NRT is available both over the counter or free on prescription from your GP or at your local pharmacy.

NRT works by releasing a small amount of nicotine, which is slowly absorbed into the body and can help to reduce cravings.

NRT Products

Nicotine Lozenges 2mg and 4mg
Nicotine Patches 24hr/16hr
Nicotine Inhalator 15mg cartridges
Nicotine Gum 2mg and 4mg
Microtabs 2mg sublingual
Mouth spray

There is also a non-Nicotine medication available on prescription that can reduce cravings called Bupropion (Zyban).

Further information on all the above products is available from Quit Your Way Hebrides.

The service is also here to support you if:

- you are going into hospital for a planned procedure and want to stop smoking.
- you are pregnant. There's never been a better time to stop smoking than now with our support. www.publichealthscotland.scot/publications/quit-stopping-smoking-when-youre-pregnant/
- you would like help to stop vaping.

Quitting smoking really does lead to a richer life. See how much money you have spent on cigarettes. Visit www.nhs.uk/scot/stopping-smoking/calculate-my-savings/

Contact Us

Quit Your Way Hebrides
Open 8.30am-5pm (Book for appointment)

Tel: 01851 708011
Email: wi.hebridesquityourway@nhs.scot
Web: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/quit-your-way-hebrides/



We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website feedback section at: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk or share your story at: careopinion.org.uk or 0800 122 31 35
- Tel: 01851 704704 (ext 2236) or 0797 770 8701 Monday - Friday between 9am - 5.30pm (answer phone available).

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Written by: Quit Your Way Hebrides, NHS Western Isles

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Quit Your Way Hebrides

A guide to the smoking cessation service in the Outer Hebrides

QUIT YOUR WAY
with our support



Health Protection and Immunisation

Health Protection

Overview

The health protection team provides advice, support and information to health professionals, the public and other bodies that play a part in protecting the public's health. The work encompasses a range of issues from communicable disease control, to environmental hazards and immunisations for infections that are preventable by immunisation.

Key Trends and Challenges

In 2024 the health protection team managed 85 cases. This involved gathering information, investigating, completing risk assessments and following through any relevant actions. Some of the cases encountered were Campylobacter, Whooping cough, salmonella and measles. The team also supported and advised on 40 situations. These involved more than one person, and the settings included care homes, hospitals, schools and nurseries, and boats. Additionally the team handled 32 general enquiries. Some of the enquiries were related to scabies, gastroenteritis, Hepatitis B, RSV, hand foot and mouth disease, Legionnaires disease, meningitis, and mumps.

Infection Prevention and Control advice was also provided, to many external agencies by the Health Protection Team including educational settings, businesses, Port Health, hotels and care homes.

As well as local issues the team link closely with Public Health Scotland, keeping informed on national and international situations. There are weekly update meetings and when required National Incident Management Team (NIMT) meetings are convened to initiate a cohesive response across Scotland. NIMTs were set up in 2024 to manage Tuberculosis, Bovine Avian Influenza, MPOX Clade 1, Measles, Legionella Longbeachae, STEC 0145 and the increased reporting of Pertussis cases. These links are vital for coordinated action, especially in situations when a rapid response is required.

The Health Protection team works in these situations to:

- Retain oversight of situation reports and surveillance, and attend briefings to ensure intelligence is cascaded to key partners.
- Provide a rapid response to incidents.
- Cascade information and guidance to key stakeholders.
- Support communications and engagement.
- Brief senior officers as required.
- Provide public health advice to colleagues and residents.
- Provide Public Health Scotland with local intelligence and Insights to support and shape communications and response plans.

Local Incident Management Teams (IMT) are set up to co-ordinate a response. Six were called in 2024 to manage outbreaks of COVID-19, Influenza, Shingles, Norovirus and Chickenpox in health and social care settings.

The Health Protection team also participated in the multi-agency delivery of several exercises to operationalise plans and protocols with partners from across the Local Resilience Forum providing assurance of emergency preparedness.

Communications, engagement and promotion are key aspects of health protection. These involve a combination of both health-led campaigns to reflect the identity and need of the local population, and national campaigns.

- Health protection campaigns in 2024 included:
- **Winter wellness** – including winter immunisation programme.
 - **Summer safety** – including tick safety and travel immunisation.
 - **Norovirus** – raising the alert of a norovirus outbreak and the signs, symptoms and treatment of norovirus.

2024 Focus Areas

MPOX and HCID preparedness

MPOX is a zoonotic disease caused by the virus MPXV. There are two distinct Clades. Transmission of MPOX to humans can be due to zoonotic transmission or person-to-person spread. The first human case was recorded in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and since then the infection has been reported in several African countries. Prior to 2022 most cases were reported from the DRC and Nigeria. Since May 2022, human cases have been reported in multiple countries. In August 2023 cases have been reported in Europe and in October 2024 a travel-related case was reported in the UK. The health protection team prepared for managing any testing and assessments of MPOX or any other High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID).

Immunisation uptake

There have been concerns nationally about the increased reporting of immunisation preventable illness such as Measles and Pertussis, combined with the continuing reduction in uptake of immunisation across all programmes. Locally an oversight and operational group met throughout 2024 to discuss immunisation delivery. The strategies they used were targeted public awareness campaigns and community engagement; simplifying access to immunisation clinics and addressing immunisation misinformation to foster positive perceptions of immunisations.

Immunisations

Overview

NHS Western Isles offers immunisations following the Scottish routine childhood immunisation programmes. NHS Western Isles also offers adults aged over 65 years, and adults at risk aged less than 65 years, some routine immunisations. There are also specific cohorts considered at risk identified each year for the administration of Covid and Flu immunisations.

Immunisation is the most effective way of preventing disease and protecting the public against infectious diseases. Immunisation uptake refers to the proportion of the eligible population who have received the recommended doses of the relevant immunisations. Monitoring the proportion of the eligible population immunised is a key measure of the immunisation programmes’ performance. It is of concern to public health when immunisation rates decrease, as this makes the possibility of disease transmission more likely.

Key Trends and Challenges

Key trends in childhood immunisations

- The national target for uptake in the routine childhood immunisation programme is 95% and this target was not achieved in the immunisations delivered to those children aged 12 months and 24 months in the Western Isles.
- The uptake of HPV immunisation to both sexes was maintained at above 80%, achieving 82% in S1 pupils and 83% in S3 pupils.
- Uptake of the teenager boosters is also above 80%, with 80% vaccinated in S3 and 81% in S4 pupils.

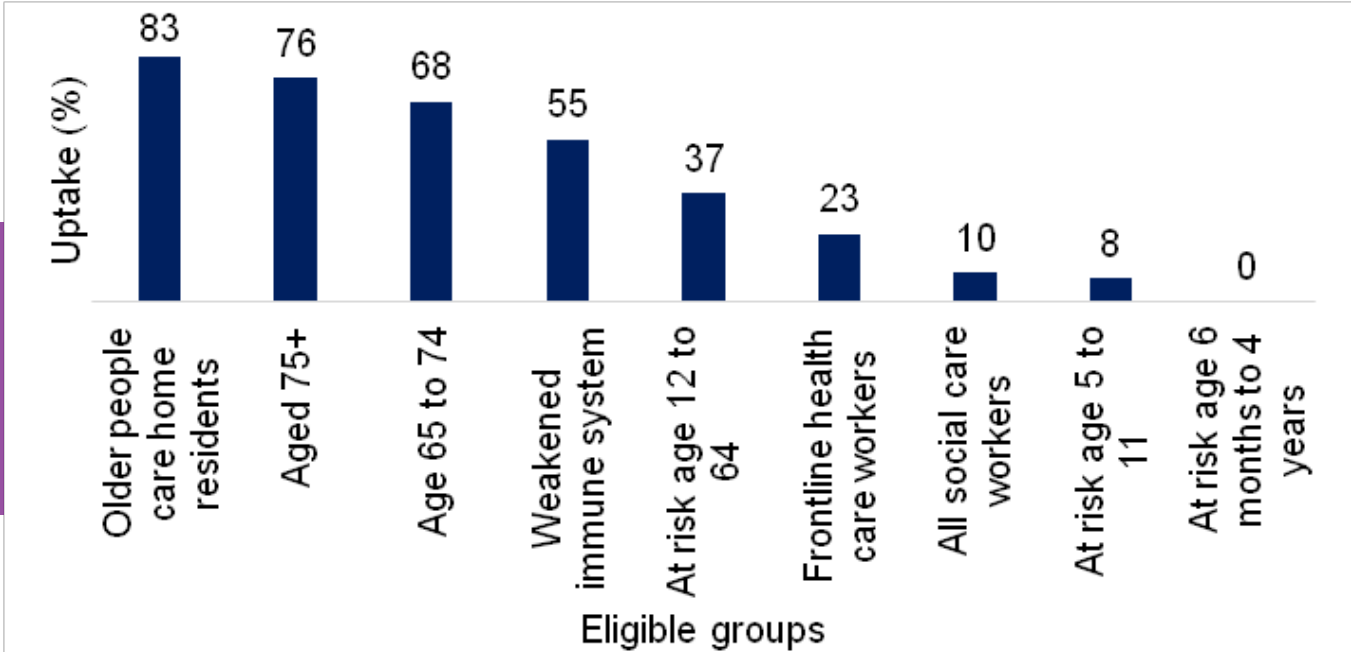
Key trends in adult routine immunisations

- Uptake of pertussis immunisation to pregnant women achieved 82%. This followed an extensive national campaign given the rise in pertussis cases being reported.
- In the adult PCV programme a 6% decrease was seen in those eligible for immunisation every five years, these are considered the most at risk from the disease.
- In the shingles immunisation programme cumulative immunisation coverage in the catch-up cohort continues to increase each year through planned and opportunistic immunisation.

Key trends in COVID-19 immunisations

- Uptake of the COVID-19 immunisation in all eligible cohorts the Western Isles was 55%, slightly below the Scottish average of 57%.
- Uptake in care home residents remained above 80%, however there was a decline in uptake of COVID-19 immunisation across some of the key cohorts including health and social care workers and those with weakened immune systems.

Figure 2: Uptake of COVID-19 immunisation across all the eligible groups in the Western Isles (2023/2024)



Key trends in Flu immunisation

- Uptake of flu immunisation in school settings in the Western Isles achieved 64% which is below the target ambition of 75%. However, it was higher than the Scottish average of 59% uptake

Figure 3: Uptake of flu immunisation in children in the Western Isles (2023/2024)

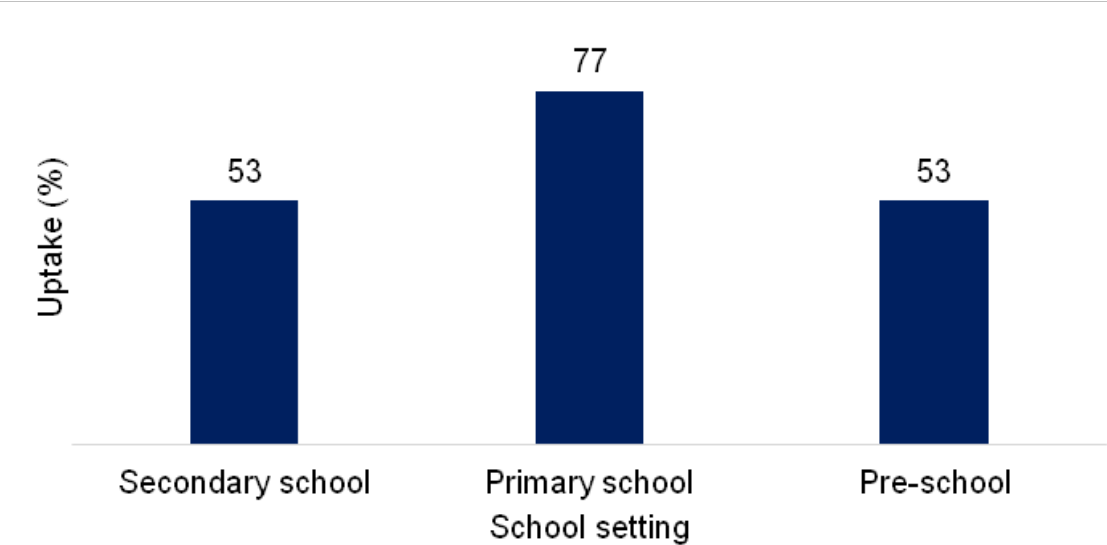
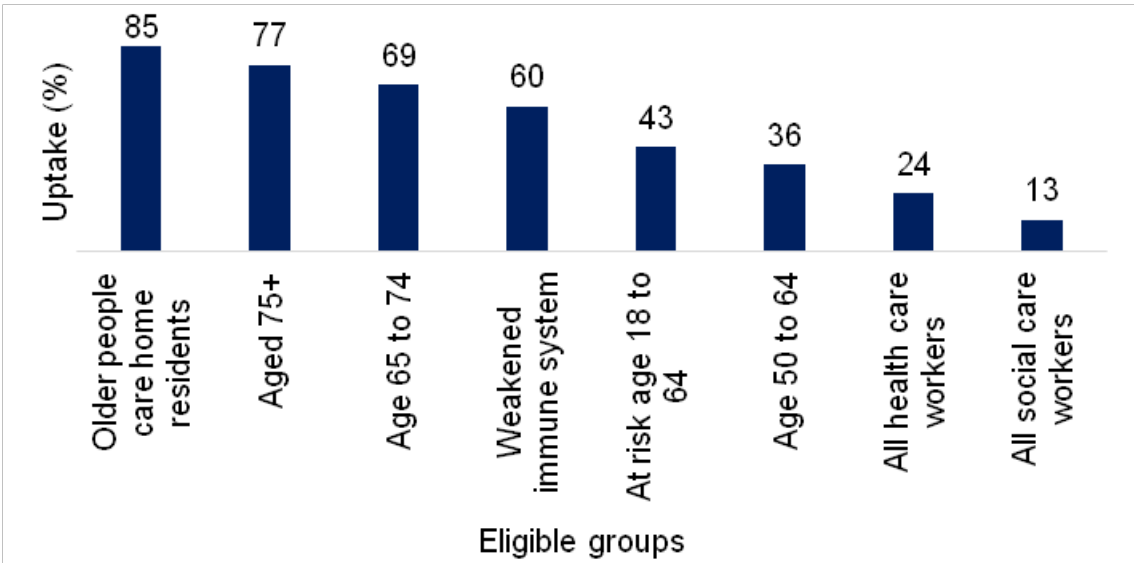


Figure 4: Uptake of flu immunisation across all eligible groups in the Western Isles (2023/2024)



Main Promotions and Projects

Pertussis

An increasing number of laboratory confirmed cases of Pertussis led to a National Incident Management response. The declines in uptake of routine childhood immunisations following the COVID-19 pandemic and a likely increase in circulating Bordetella pertussis led to a concerted effort to increase immunisation uptake. Pregnant women and healthcare workers (HCW) are at increased risk of transmitting pertussis to those at higher risk of severe or complicated infection. All pregnant women are offered a pertussis containing immunisation from week 16 of pregnancy, to protect their newborn from pertussis infection in the first few weeks of life, before they become eligible for their routine immunisations at 8 weeks of age. Uptake in the Western Isles achieved 82%. Eligibility for HCW Immunisation was determined to be those that had regular contact with pregnant women or infants.

Quarterly Uptake data for Pertussis immunisation in 2023/204 for pregnant women.

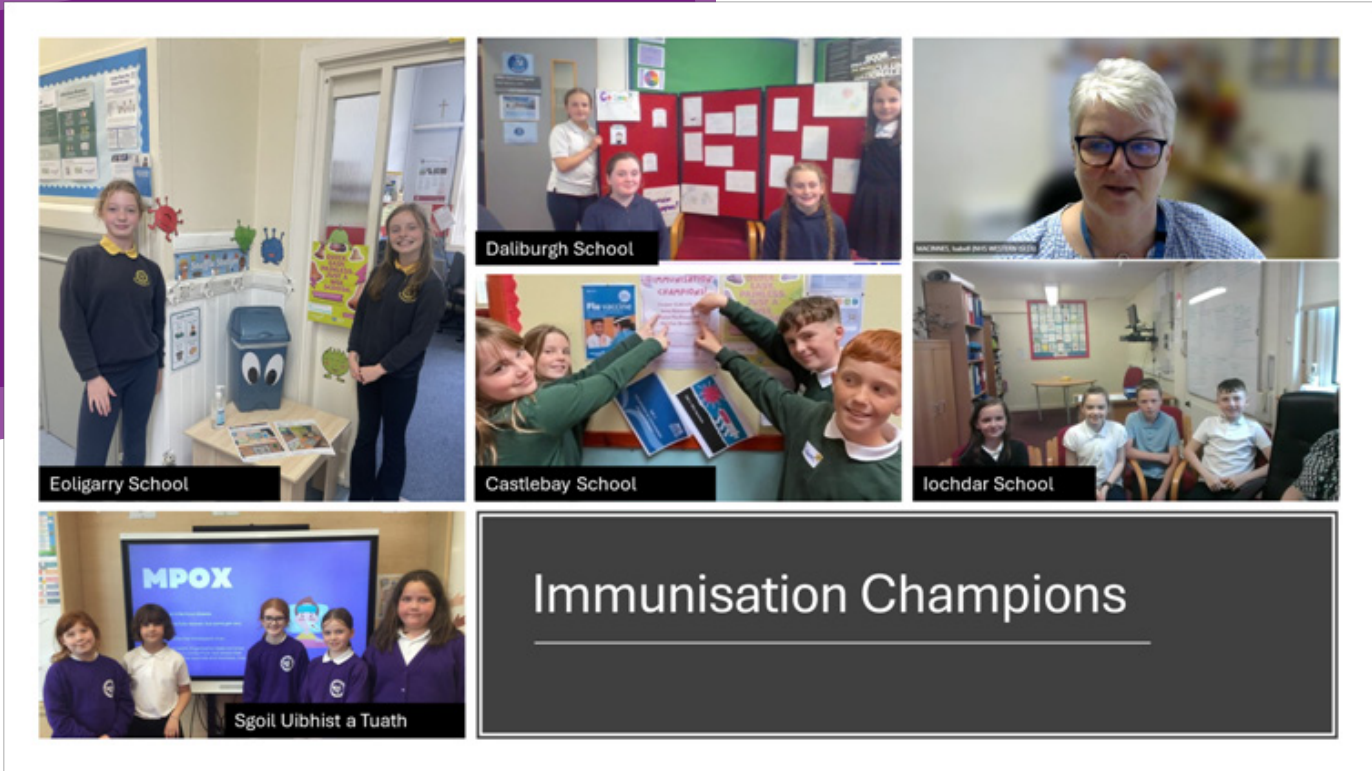
Quarter	Uptake
Q1 2023-2024	84%
Q2 2023-2024	83%
Q3 2023-2024	85%
Q4 2023-2024	77%
Total	82%

RSV
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a common cause of acute respiratory tract infections and the leading cause of acute lower respiratory tract infections in children. Premature infants, immunocompromised individuals and people aged 65 years and over are at risk of developing complications. Case notifications across Scotland were at a high level at the end of 2023. A national project board was set up to aid planning and delivery of a new RSV immunisation which commenced in August 2024. Eligibility is for those aged 75 years with a catch up for adults aged 76-79 years. Protection for infants is through maternal immunisation from 28 weeks of pregnancy.

School Immunisation champions
The pilot project offered all Western Isles schools the opportunity to nominate pupils to become 'Immunisation Champions'.

The pupils attended four online training sessions led by a Health Protection and Screening Nurse Specialist. The pupils developed their understanding of how disease's spread, the history of immunisations, the incidence of immunisation preventable diseases and the uptake of immunisation across Scotland. The sessions also discussed the importance of consent and confidentiality. The project led to positive experiences and outcomes across health and wellbeing, sciences and social studies within the curriculum for excellence.

The Champions researched and gave a one-minute presentation on a disease, which was enthusiastically received by pupils. Presentations were given about Rabies, Measles, MPOX, Smallpox, Flu, Malaria and Polio. The Champions in each school put up information displays in the schools and helped with getting consent packs to all pupils. They also supported the school nursing teams when they delivered the flu immunisation.



Positive Public Health Scotland Visit

Five members of the national immunisation team from Public Health Scotland visited **NHS Western Isles in November 2024**. They thoroughly enjoyed the experience. They were particularly impressed by the uptake of childhood immunisation in the Western Isles, which has consistently been ahead of the national figure and that in most other health boards. They appreciated hearing about the innovative approaches to improve immunisation awareness and uptake locally, including the immunisation champions programme in primary and secondary schools, and the recent social media posts on the impact of covid and flu on healthcare staff.



Focus Area

Uptake of Immunisations

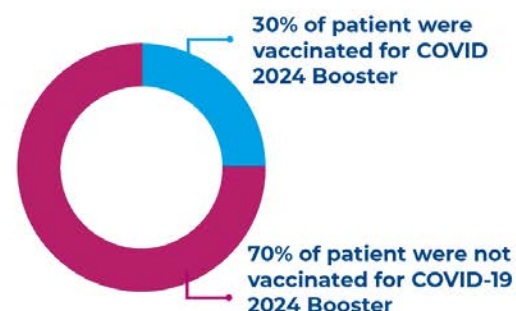
The concerning reduction in uptake across child and adult programmes and HCW uptake of Flu and Covid immunisation.

The strategies used were targeted public awareness campaigns and community engagement; simplifying access to immunisation clinics and addressing immunisation misinformation to foster positive perceptions of immunisation.

Promotional Assets

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

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



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

Vaccination reduces the spread of viruses in the community

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

Encourage people to attend their vaccination appointment

Protect the most vulnerable in our community- Get vaccinated

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SHIELD YOUR IMMUNITY THIS WINTER

get your Flu vaccine & COVID-19 Booster

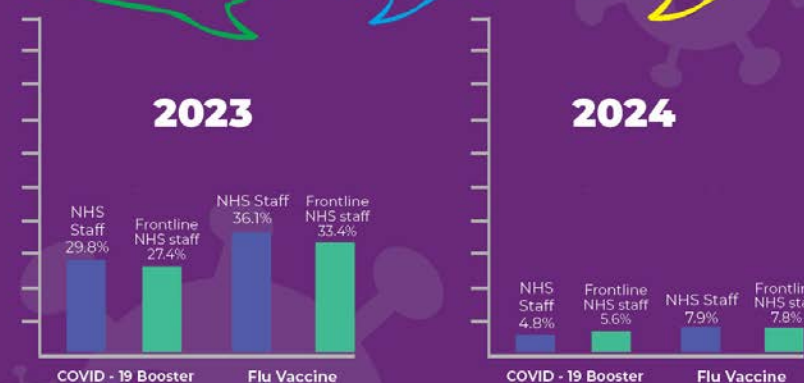
it protects more than just you

Staff Vaccination Uptake

All frontline health and social care workers should be encouraged to get the free flu/covid vaccine.

Vaccines are the best protection we have against these viruses

Patients will access health and social care services with viruses that can spread to staff



Vaccination reduces the spread of viruses among staff and the people you care for.

Staff absence impacts service delivery, from 1st September until 18th October 2024 staff absence due to covid/flu =245 days

Having these vaccines will help to protect you, your family, and the people you care for.

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SHIELD YOUR IMMUNITY THIS WINTER

Get your Flu vaccine & COVID-19 Booster

it protects more than just you



Children

Children

Scope and Remit

The aim is for every child, regardless of their circumstances, to get the best start in life. While overall responsibility for children’s services planning rests with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and NHS Western Isles. The Children and Young People’s Planning Partnership (CYPPP) works collaboratively and constructively with other members of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), as well as with children, young people and their families to inform the development of childrens services.

The Public Health team is committed to aligning its efforts with the aspirations of Scotland’s Promise, recognising that a fundamental shift is required in how decisions are made regarding children and families. It acknowledges the necessity of transforming the way support is provided to help families stay together. The primary objective is to ensure that any action taken to address needs occurs at the earliest appropriate time and, where possible, is implemented as a preventative measure to stop needs from arising.

All children, particularly for those who are most vulnerable in the community, and those who require additional supports to keep them safe, should have their needs met.

Key Trends and Challenges

Data highlights:

Births in the Western Isles:

Year	Number of births
2018	206
2019	200
2020	183
2021	181
2022	182
2023	174

- School rolls in the western Isles dropped by 6.53% in the period from 2013 to 2023
- In 2023, the number of Looked After Children (LAC) was 31.
- In 2023, 19 children were on the Child Protection Register which was a increase from 17 registrations the previous year.
- Schools across the Western Isles had the sixth highest attendance rates in Scotland at 93.7%.
- 154 families accessed Free School Meals and the Clothing Grant. 9 families accessed the Clothing Grant only.
- The 2023 exclusion rate per 1000 pupils is 27, which was higher than the Scotland average of 17 pupils.

Moving On

In 2023

- 98.3% of school leavers entered a positive destination.
- 97.6% of 16-19 year-olds were deemed to be participating for the purpose of learning, training, volunteering, or work.
- 96.8% of ASN school leavers entered a positive destination which was the third highest in Scotland.

Pupil Wellbeing

A Wellbeing Service is provided across all secondary schools to support pupils with their wellbeing, managing anxiety, low mood, exam stress and conflict with friends.

- Primary and secondary schools in Lewis and Harris have an established Youth Mentoring Service providing 1:1 support to pupils of all ages.

2024 Focus Areas

Reducing anti-social behaviour by young people in the community continues to be a priority for the CYPPP. A recent increase in the number of children referred to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) for reasons of offence was observed. However, a greater number of children were referred for care and protection.

Public Health Outputs in 2024

HENRY training

- NHS Western Isles have been delivering the HENRY programme in the community for several years. HENRY adopts a unique and highly effective way of working with parents which support them to change family lifestyle habits and behaviours providing a healthy start in life for children.
- The HENRY programme aims to inform and raise awareness with new parents and carers. HENRY sessions took place in all toddler groups throughout Uist and Barra. Parents tended to prefer informal sessions when the one-off inputs were delivered, this was done in partnership with nurseries. Parents could focus on the information being passed on, could ask questions and have discussions with other parents.
- The HENRY 8 week programme was delivered online in partnership with Shetland. 6 families participated from Shetland, Orkney and the Western Isles.

PPP parenting programme

The Triple P-Positive Parenting Programme is one of the most effective evidence-based parenting programmes in the world, backed up by more than 35 years of ongoing research. Triple P gives parents simple and practical strategies to help them build strong, healthy relationships, confidently manage their children's behavior and prevent problems developing.

- Group and individual sessions took place across Uist and Barra.

Healthy Hebridean Kids

- Healthy Hebridean Kids is a website aimed at helping local families and carers of children from pregnancy to pre-school to be healthier and happier through making healthy lifestyle choices. The site aims to be a safe route to information for parents.
- Following a poster campaign, the website was updated with input from dietetics, health visiting, maternity and the early years sector.

Maternal and Infant Nutrition group

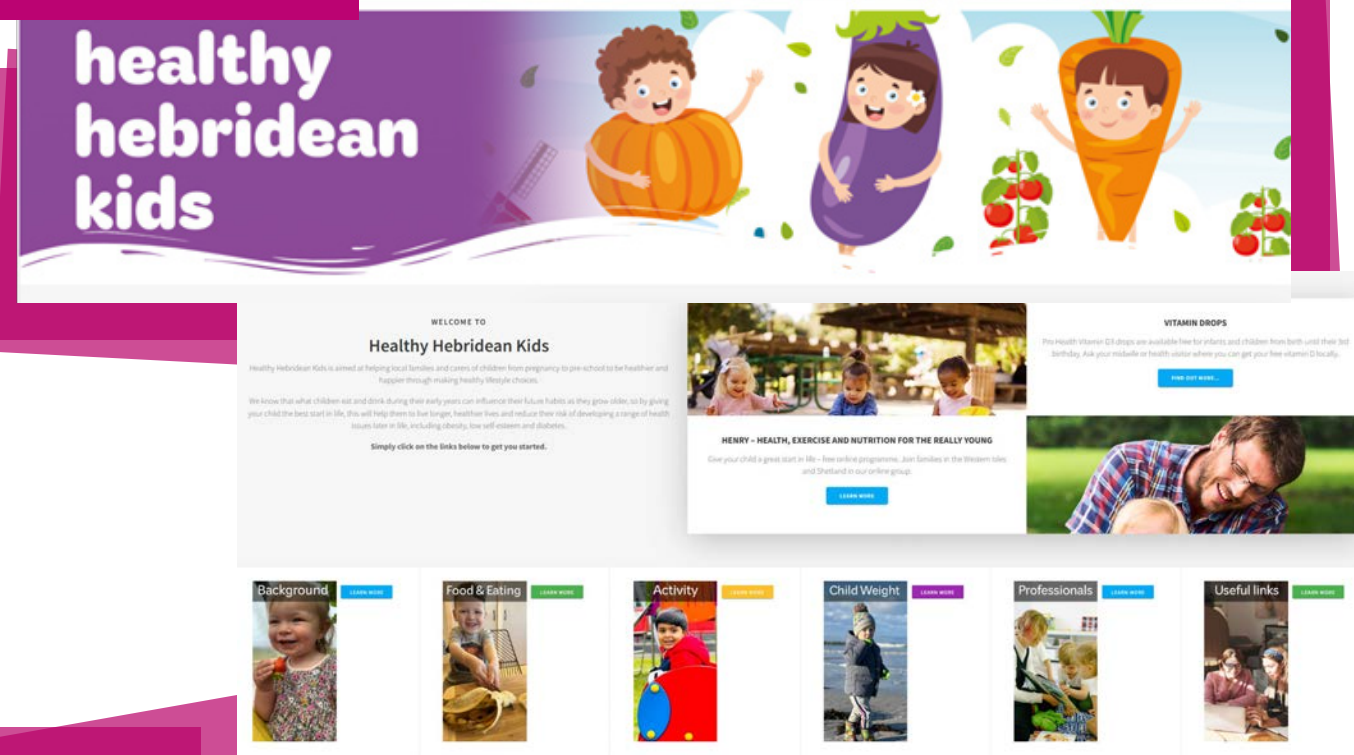
- Improving Maternal and Infant Nutrition (MIN) cannot be achieved in isolation; it must be seen in the broader context of improving health and wellbeing across the whole population. In the Western Isles the Maternal and infant nutrition group met regularly and discuss and action improvement to areas such as breastfeeding, nutrition, distribution of vitamins and other factors that sit within the MIN framework.

Bairns' Hoose

The Outer Hebrides was successful in its bid to be one of the six pathfinder locations for the Bairns' Hoose. The Bairns' Hoose offers holistic, child-centered support to those who have been victims or witnesses of abuse and to children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused harm. The model connects services around the needs of the child by collaborating across agencies and disciplines. The four rooms approach does this by bringing together child protection, health, justice, and recovery services in one setting. It is important to reduce the number of times children are asked to retell their stories as this can be difficult and re-traumatising. Instead, trauma-informed practice is prioritised to support the child's recovery in a safe, respectful, friendly and welcoming environment.



New Website launched



Activity

There are many ways that your child and family can be more active, in ways that best suit you and your budget. This includes activities from being creative in the home and outdoors to joining groups and classes at your local sports centre or community hall.

But do you know the recommended amount your child should be physically active?

- Pre-school children (1-5 years) are recommended to be active for **180 minutes a day**
- Children and young people (5-18 years) are recommended to be active for at least **60 minutes per day**

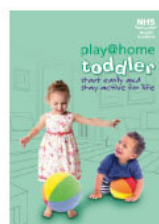
Play@Home

Your family will receive three free books by our Health Visitor offering a wide range of play activities for babies and young children.

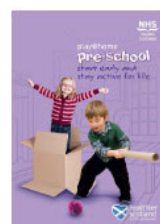
The first seven years of a child's life are the most influential for their overall development. Play is essential for health as well as the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of children.



An easy-to-follow guide to a beneficial, suitable and safe baby exercise programme to be used daily with babies from birth to 1 year.



An easy-to-follow guide to a beneficial, suitable and safe toddler exercise programme for 1- to 3-year-olds.



An easy-to-follow guide to a beneficial, suitable and safe child exercise programme for 3- to 5-year-olds.

Bookbug

Discover the benefits of sharing stories, songs and rhymes with babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers to give them the

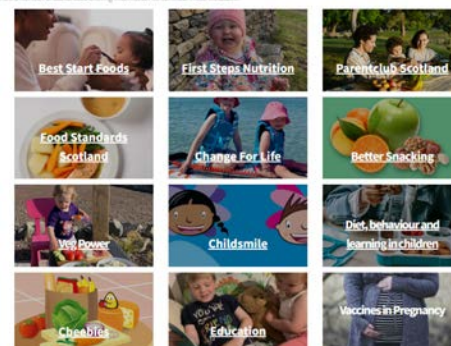
[Find out more](#)

The HENRY Approach

The message: a healthy lifestyle	The messenger: creating conditions for change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting skills • Healthy family routines • Balanced diet • Physical activity and sleep • Emotional wellbeing • Breastfeeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships based on trust and respect • Working in partnership with families • Empathy • Strengths-based • Solution-focused • Building motivation for change

Useful Links

There are a number of useful sites offering information for families. These include...



Anchors and Workplace Health

Anchors

Scope and Remit

Anchor institutions is a term used to describe large and locally rooted organisations like NHS boards, colleges, universities, police and local authorities. They employ many people, spend substantial amounts of money, own and manage land and assets and often deliver crucial services. As a result they have a huge influence on local communities and economies. There are 5 ways in which NHS organisations act as anchor institutions identified by the Health Foundation (2019) and these have influenced public health anchor guidance. NHS Western Isles can act as an anchor institution through: employment, procurement and commissioning, capital and estate (environment, sustainability and assets), service design and delivery (including environmental impact) and working in partnership.

Key Trends and Challenges

Data highlights: To understand the current position in NHS Western Isles as an anchor institution, a questionnaire from “Harnessing the Power of Anchor Institutions: A Progression Framework for Scottish Organisations (2023)” was distributed to key staff in relevant areas. The results were used to give an overview of the NHS Western Isles performance against the five ways in which an NHS Board can act as an anchor institution and detailed in NHS Western Isles Anchors Strategy 2023–2026.

Emerging challenges: There are challenges to being a successful anchor institution, such as tackling staffing challenges, staff shortages, and having to source staff off island to fill vacancies. These could be addressed by looking medium and long term solutions, such as investing in local training and development and introducing innovating approaches to attract new talent by working with local partners.

2024 Focus Areas

Main projects: Employment, Procurement and Commissioning, Capital and Estates, Service design and delivery and Working in partnership.

Strategic goals:

- To increase fair work and develop local labour markets
- To maximise community benefit through procurement, commissioning and shorter supply chains
- To contribute to the environment, sustainability and assets
- To increase service delivery and reach to benefit diverse and disadvantaged communities
- To become an exemplar anchor institution through leadership and working more closely with local partners

Public Health Outputs in 2024

• Employment

- Led on promoting and enhancing the availability of active travel options available for travelling between NHS Western Isles sites
- Attended School career fairs
- Supported the Mentors in Violence protection programme with secondary school pupils
- Supported volunteer event during Volunteer Week in June
- Created a leaflet produced for tenants of Hebridean Housing Partnership and employers
- Created gentle exercise leaflet for members of the public
- Created useful info links for clients attending the local Job Centre
- Worked with NHS Credit Union to introduce scheme for staff and their families
- Undertook the roles of Mental Health Champions and Confidential Contacts
- Developed Work-life policies for NHS staff
- Delivered interview skills training

• Procurement and Commissioning

- Public health staff sourced funding from HITRANS to complete purchase and installation of Bike Shelter project for NHS premises
- Involved in tender process via Public Contracts Scotland portal for Sustrans Places for Everyone Fund to appoint an agency for walking, wheeling and cycling routes around the three main hospital sites
- Local suppliers used for a wide range of non-clinical supplies and services. All contract opportunities above the regulatory threshold of £50K value are advertised on the public contracts Scotland portal
- Division into lots so as not to geographically disadvantage suppliers was considered for all contracts issued by the Procurement team

• Capital and estates (Environment, Sustainability and Assets)

Service design and delivery

- Delivered awareness training sessions on the women’s health plan, inequalities and sexual health
- Held discussions with Rotary Club volunteers and NHS staff on the promotion of Western Isles hospital gardens for staff and members of the public as a place to relax
- Delivered training sessions on mental health, alcohol and drugs, menopause, walking, and strength and balance
- Explored an asset based approach to physical ctivity.
- Worked in partnership with Public Health Scotland and Sportscotland facilitating a workshop for partners raising awareness of an asset based approach to physical activity
- Public health staff sourced funding from UCI Legacy Fund for pool bikes for NHS staff to promote active travel
- Supported the outreach for Safe Space tent at the Hebridean Celtic Festival
- Worked with ICJ to improve cancer journey for patients
- Co-ordinated a breast screening online survey to identify potential service improvements
- Established a local pathway for specialised menopause support for medical practitioners

Working in Partnership to become an exemplar anchor institution

- NHS Western Isles worked in partnership with Public Health Scotland to carry out a qualitative community assessment utilising the place standard tool
- Worked in partnership to gather information from community assessments and use of online tool
- Worked with the community planning partnership climate change working group to work towards island wide mitigation and adaptation strategies to combat the climate emergency
- Worked with the community planning partnership on an Anti Poverty Strategy
- Finalised the draft locality report for North Uist and Benbecula following attendance at Community Planning Partnership meetings
- Gathered Information and data to populate an updated Stornoway West locality plan.



Workplace Health

Scope and remit

Workplace Health is promoting and managing the health and wellbeing of staff. It includes managing sickness absence, and presenteeism where a person physically at work, but unproductive. Workplace health interventions include activities undertaken within the workplace by an employer or others to address these issues, and action to address health and safety risks.

Key Trends and Challenges

Data highlights:

Scotland’s health and social care system is being severely undermined by the demands created by preventable workplace health issues. However the causal connections and associations are not being made. One in 3 Scottish workers has their mental health worsened by work. Scotland has the worst workplace mental ill health prevalence in the UK. Scotland has the highest incidence rates of Musculoskeletal disorders in the UK. The pain caused by musculoskeletal disorders impacts sleep and mental health.

Emerging challenges:

- People in Scotland die younger than in any other Western European country.
- The number of people dying early is increasing.
- People are spending more of their life in ill health.
- the gap in life expectancy between the poorest and the wealthiest is growing.

Public Health Outputs in 2024

- **Training and awareness sessions delivered**
 - 24 mental health training sessions delivered to a total of 190 participants.
 - Menopause sessions delivered to a total of 17 participants.
 - 1 financial session delivered to a total of 11 participants.
- **Behavior change:** Employers were supported to provide mental health awareness for staff, and training for managers and supervisors. Staff are now able to identify areas of stress within their work area and are aware of coping mechanisms. Staff are discussing the menopause openly and reviewing work practices. Staff are using pool bikes during the working day rather than their driving between sites. Opportunities now exist for staff to save through payroll deduction from their wages.

2024 Focus Areas

Main projects

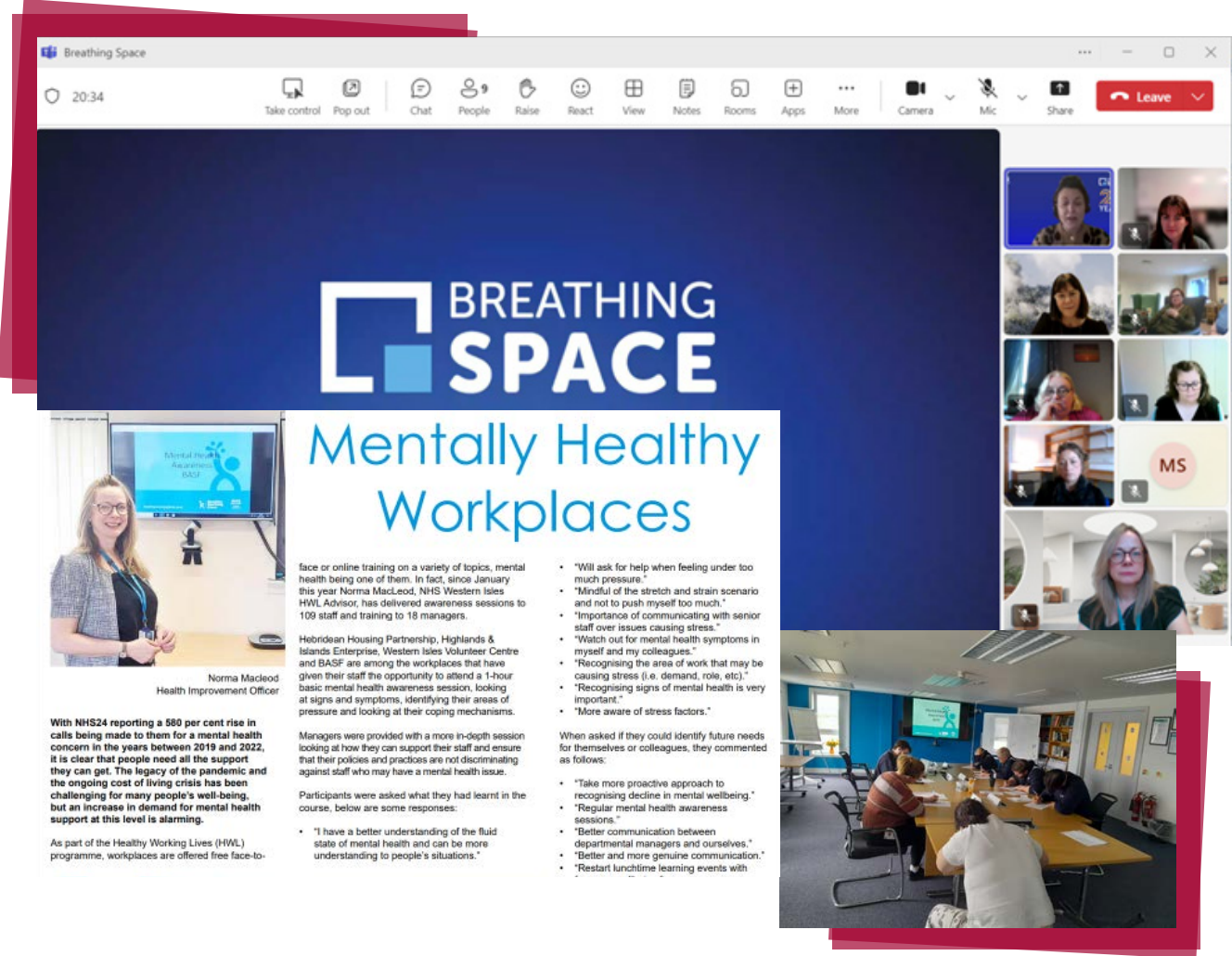
- Mental health training.
- Active travel and physical activity
- Cost of Living and menopause.

Strategic goals

Increase skills and knowledge and active travel opportunities.

Training Delivered in 2024

Training sessions	Organisation or Group
Mental health awareness	Street Pastors
Mental health awareness	Alzeimhers Scotland
Mental health awareness	Hebridean Housing Partnership
Mental health awareness	Volunteer Centre
Mental health awareness	BASF
Mental health Manager training	BASF
Mental health awareness	Harland and Wolff
Mental health awareness	Physiotherapy department, NHS Western Isles
Breathing Space awareness	Group of employers
Menopause	Group of employers
Credit Union	NHS staff



Promotional Assets



Promotional Assets

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK 13 - 19 May 2024

NHS
Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

BASF MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS SESSION

20th May 11.00a.m. - 12.00p.m

22nd May 10.00a.m. - 11.00a.m

24th May 9.30a.m. - 10.30a.m

3rd June 1.00p.m. - 2.00p.m

1st July 11.00a.m. - 12.00p.m

These sessions will help participants to think about their mental health, and recognise signs and symptoms of stress and mental health.

#MomentsForMovement
#MentalHealthAwarenessWeek

Feedback

“

Feedback from Mental Health awareness sessions

'very good session that gives a good awareness of your own mental health'

'Well delivered, and content helped to think more widely about where stresses may be coming from'

'Session was a good introduction to mental health'

'Very good session, glad it happened'

Feedback from Menopause awareness sessions

'I am at present dealing with this at work and found it very informative. It is good that it is being acknowledged'

'Thought the delivery drew the group together and relaxed all into the discussion'

'I found it informative and the mix of different dustries/ages increased the potential for different experiences/perceptions and understanding of the menopause'

”

Screening

Screening

Scope and Remit

Screening is a process of identifying apparently healthy people who may be at increased risk of a disease or condition. Screening tests are not compulsory but are offered to help people make informed choices about their health. Screening can find serious conditions early, before any symptoms appear. There are six national population screening programmes in Scotland:

AAA

Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening looks for aneurysms which are, bulges in blood vessels.. Treating an AAA early greatly reduces the chance of it causing serious problems. In Scotland, all men and people who were assigned male at birth (AMAB) are invited to attend AAA screening when they turn 65.

Bowel screening

Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in Scotland. Around 4,000 people in Scotland get bowel cancer every year. People are invited to complete the bowel screening test if they are 50 to 74 years old, are living in Scotland and haven't been screened in the last 2 years. If they're 75 or over, they'll no longer be invited to take a bowel screening test. However if they choose to, they can still take a bowel screening test every 2 years.

Breast screening

In Scotland, breast screening is routinely offered to those who are female, are between 50 and 70 years old and have not had breast screening in the last 3 years. Breast screening is also offered to non-binary people who were assigned female at birth (AFAB), and haven't had breast removal surgery, trans women who are taking hormones and trans men who haven't had breast removal surgery. The breast screening unit visited the Western Isles from August 2023 and was here until February 2024. It visits every 3 years.

Cervical screening

Cervical screening is offered to women and anyone with a cervix who lives in Scotland and is aged between 25 and 64. Some people who have changes that need to be monitored will be offered screening until they're 70. These changes will have been detected at a previous screening appointment.

Diabetic eye screening

In Scotland, diabetic eye screening is offered to people aged 12 and over with type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

Pregnancy and Newborn

All expectant parents are offered screening during pregnancy, and all new parents will be offered screening for their child after birth.

NHS Western Isles is accountable for providing screening to their own population. As a small NHS board some screening programmes are delivered in collaboration with bigger NHS boards. NHS Highland provides the call and recall service for AAA and breast screening. NHS Highland breast screening Centre provides the screening service for NHS Western Isles. NHS Tayside provides the call and recall service for bowel screening.

Key Trends and Challenges

Data highlights:

Screening uptake in the Western Isles compares favorably against the Scottish average for all screening programmes.

- AAA Screening: Overall a positive picture with uptake increasing year on year and achieving above the Scottish average,
- Bowel screening, Uptake in the Western Isles compares favourably with the national uptake
- Breast screening: For the last 5 years the Western Isles has consistently performed better than national average. The mobile unit from NHS Highland was in WI from August 2023 to March 2024. It started off in Barra and Uist and worked its way up to Harris and Lewis.
- Cervical screening: uptake has been steady for cervical screening in the Western Isles since 2019
- Diabetic Eye Screening: Screening uptake has declined slightly in the Western Isles. This is in keeping with the rest of the Scottish health boards.

Challenges

Travel is one of the biggest challenges for screening in the Western Isles, this includes staff travelling to other locations to carry out screening programmes and patients having to travel to access screening. The weather can cause travel disruption which can have an impact of screening delivery and access to screening services.

Public Health Outputs in 2024


- General resources promoting all 6 screening campaigns. These were widely distributed. Screening promotion included awareness sessions for carers.
- AAA, new resource to raise awareness of the screening programme. Distributed widely around the Western Isles
- Promotion of bowel screening continued, using national resources and more personal stories to raise awareness of the importance of the test. National awareness week consisted of promotion using personal stories and online awareness sessions. There were events to show the bowel screening kit to people and how to use it.
- Breast screening. Health protection called all first timers who had mobile numbers available to ask if they had any questions before attendance. Following the unit being in the Western Isles there was a survey to inform work on improving the service.
- Promotion throughout cervical cancer prevention week highlighted the national resources provided by Jo's Trust. This consisted of personal stories, advice from a practice nurse as well as advice from the Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist.
- The Head and Neck event organised by the local dental team included an awareness talk on HPV.
- New resource to raise awareness of the DES programme, including DES glasses.

	AAA	Bowel	Breast	Cervical	DES
NHS WI	85	70	80	72	78
Scotland	71	68	76		68

- | Pregnancy and Newborn Screening | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Haemoglobinopathies | Down syndrome and Fetal anomalies | Communicable diseases | Newborn Blood spot | Newborn Hearing |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 131 cards | 100 |

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Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

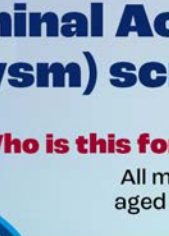
AAA (Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm) screening

Who is this for?

All men
aged 65

Why?

1 in 70 men will
have an AAA

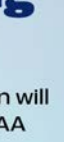


What is an Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm?

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





Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

DIABETIC EYE SCREENING

Who is this for?

Everyone with diabetes aged 12+

What causes it?

Diabetic retinopathy means that the small blood vessels at the back of your eye (called the retina) are damaged. Untreated diabetic retinopathy can cause sight loss. When it's found early enough, treatment can reduce or prevent damage to your sight.

Why?

Screening is an important part of your diabetes care. When the condition is caught early, treatment can stop damage to your eyesight.

How is the test done?

Using a special camera, a bright photo is taken of the back of your eye. It is safe, quick and pain free.

Which vision would you rather have?








For more information
[www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/
screening/diabetic-eye-screening-des/](http://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/screening/diabetic-eye-screening-des/)

Image produced using the Camidge vision Impairment Simulator software, which is freely available from ced-tools



Breast Screening survey




Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

NHS Western Isles recently held Breast Screening across the Islands

We would like to hear from those who received an appointment letter, even if you didn't attend. There are 11 questions and the survey is anonymous.

It will close on the 21st June 2024. Thank you

Scan the QR Code to access the survey or follow the link below



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZQFTTLM>



Physical Activity

Physical Activity

Scope and Remit

Increasing physical activity is in line with Scotland's Public Health Priority 6—"A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active" and Public Health Scotland's "A systems-based approach to physical activity in Scotland" framework for action at a national and local level.

Key Trends and Challenges

Data highlights:

The UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines recommended:

- adults aged 19–64 should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity (MPA); or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity (VPA); or even shorter durations of very vigorous intensity activity; or a combination of moderate, vigorous and very vigorous intensity activity. (Surveys that ask about physical activity often consider both MPA and VPA, known as moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, or MVP.
- adults do muscle strengthening and balance training activities at least two times a week and minimise sedentary time.
- children should engage in an average of at least 60 minutes per day of MVPA, and minimise sedentary time

The Scottish Health Survey 2022 found:

- 67% of adults in the Western Isles met the recommendations, compared to a 65% national average.
- A significantly lower 19% in the Western Isles meet the moderate to vigorous physical activity and muscle strengthening recommendations; compared with a 30% national average.
- 22% of adults in Scotland reported very low levels of physical activity (under 30 minutes per week).

The "Estimating the burden of disease attributable to Physical Inactivity in Scotland" study noted that more than 80% of the 3,000 deaths attributable to inactivity occur amongst those undertaking very low levels of activity.

Emerging challenges: What are the significant challenges or barriers in this area?

The Western Isles has an ageing population, with 26.6% of the population aged 65 and over. Those who report very low levels of activity are most often older adults, people living in more deprived communities and those with disabilities or long-term conditions.

2024 Focus Areas

Main projects: Walk on Hebrides (Health Walks, Cascade Training: Walk Leader, Dementia Friendly Walk Leader Training, and Strength and Balance Training), Big Step Challenge, Gentle Movement classes, Staff Pool Bikes, NHS Active Travel Consultation.

Main Projects	Target Audience	Lead	Outcome
Leadership of a Western Isles “system-based approach to physical activity” working group	Multi-stakeholder participation; primarily Local Authority and NHS	Head of Health Improvement/ Health Improvement Advisor	Increased collaboration and connected thinking, fostering a strategic approach to empowering our communities to be more physically active.
“Walk on Hebrides” Health Walks - To provide an opportunity for inactive adults to become more active.	Inactive adults across the Outer Hebrides.	Health Improvement Practitioners	Previously inactive adults are more active.
“Walk on Hebrides” Cancer Friendly Health Walks - To provide an opportunity for people living with cancer to be more active, through walking.	Adults living with cancer across the Outer Hebrides.	Health Improvement Practitioners	People living with cancer are more active.
“Walk on Hebrides” Dementia Friendly Health Walks - To provide an opportunity for people living well with dementia, and carers, to be more active, through walking.	Adults living well with dementia, and carers, across the Outer Hebrides.	Health Improvement Practitioners	People living well with dementia, and carers, are more active.
“Walk on Hebrides” Strength and Balance Exercises - To provide inactive adults with an opportunity to increase activity and reduce the risk of falls.	Inactive adults across the Outer Hebrides over 65.	Health Improvement Practitioners	Inactive adults are more active, have improved strength and balance and reduce their risk of falls.
Gentle Movement - To provide an opportunity for adults living with cancer, long-term conditions and older adults to increase their physical activity, strength and balance.	Adults living with cancer, long-term conditions and older adults.	Health Improvement Practitioners	Adults living with cancer, long-term conditions and older adults have increased physical activity and improved strength and balance.
Body Boosting Bingo - To provide an opportunity for older adults to improve strength and balance.	Older adults across the Outer Hebrides.	Health Improvement Practitioners	Older adults have improved strength and balance.
Intergenerational activity - Provide physical activity programmes for older adults living in Care Homes.	Older adults living in Care Homes across the Outer Hebrides.	Health Improvement Practitioners	Older adults have increased their physical activity and improved strength and balance.
Step count challenge - Provide an opportunity for inactive adults to increase their physical activity through a step count challenge.	Inactive adults across the Outer Hebrides.	Health Improvement Practitioners	Inactive adults are more active.
Achieve the Cycle Friendly Employer Award for NHS Western Isles	NHS Western Isles staff.	Health Improvement Practitioners	Staff will use alternative transport to carbon emitting vehicles, reduction in number of journeys between NHS sites made by cars. Increased use of bike park use, uptake of cycle scheme and use of pool bikes
Bike Week & Cycle-to-Work day, linking with Cycling UK: An opportunity for people across the Western Isles to increase their physical activity by taking part in national cycling events.	Western Isles population and Workplaces across the Western Isles	Health Improvement Practitioners	Opportunity for people to celebrate cycling, try something new, and increase their physical activity.
Sustrans Active Travel Consultation	NHS Western Isles Staff across three sites	Health Improvement Advisor	Increased opportunities to choose active travel over carbon emitting vehicles, more people becoming active.

Strategic goals

- People of all ages and abilities are meeting their physical activity recommendations
- Minimise the burden of disease to the physically inactive, those who are active for less than 30 minutes per week.
- Increased Active Travel by walking, wheeling and cycling
- Population educated on the benefits of physical activity to health

Public Health Outputs in 2024

Funding: The department secured funding from several sources to support the projects and strategic goals:

Funder	Grant Programme	Amount Awarded	Outcome
Cycling Scotland		£80000	Secure cycle storage at 3 NHS WI sites
HITRANS	People and Place Programme	£50000	Cycling Infrastructure at a further 2 NHS WI sites.
Sustrans	Places for Everyone	£50000	A consultation reviewing the ground around 3 NHS Western Isles hospital sites for more active travel options -open until 2025
Cycling UK	Rural connections UCI Legacy Fund 2023-24	£17933	Purchase 10 staff pool bikes (6 manual and 4 electric)
HITRANS	People and Place Programme	£3100	Population based Step-Count challenge using the Big Step Challenge App
Paths for All	Walking for Health	£5466	Grant to Support the Walk on Hebrides Project deliver training and Health Walk

Training and education

Walk on Hebrides Project

Course	Area	No of Sessions	No of people Trained
Walk Leader	Lewis	2	7
Walk Leader	Uist	1	2
Walk Leader	Barra	1	3
Dementia Friendly Walk Leader	Lewis	2	5
Strength and Balance	Lewis	1	4

Gentle Movement Classes

Organisation	Area	Mode of Delivery	No of Sessions	Approx no. attending per session
Trianad	North Uist	In-person	45	8
Sacred Heart House	South Uist	In-person	45	4
Ardseileach Centre	Lewis	Online	40	3
Solas Centre	Lewis	Online	90 (2 per week)	4
Blar Buidhe Care Home	Lewis	Online	45	8
St Brendans	Barra	Online	30	3

Programme participation

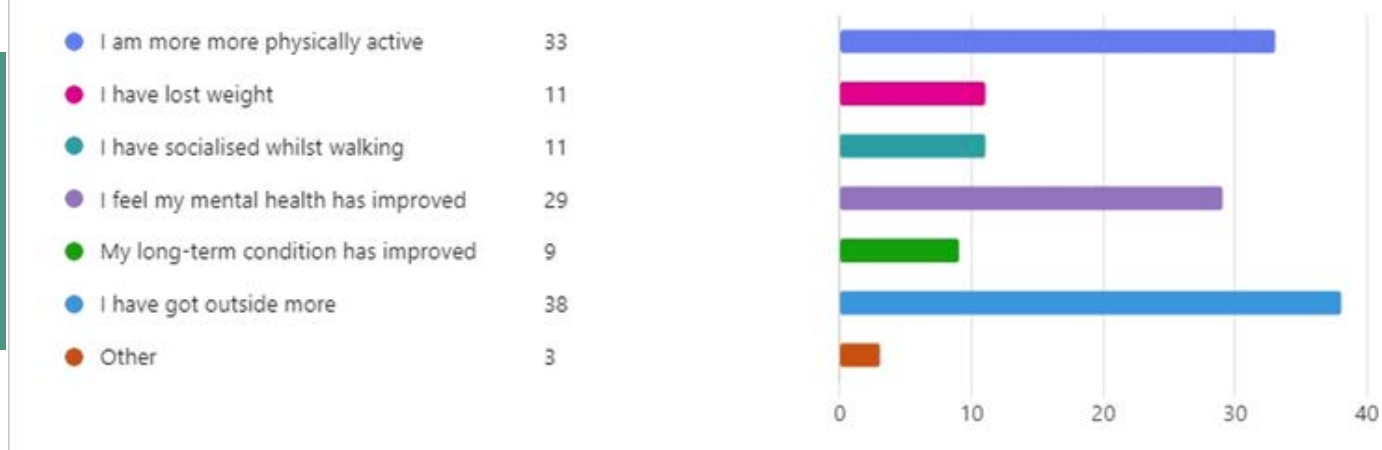
- 173 participants in the Big Step Challenge across Lewis, Harris, Uist and Barra
- 11 Active Health Walks, happening weekly across the Western Isles
- 6 care homes and day centre's engaging with gentle movement exercises

Behaviour change

- 67% of participants of the Big Step Challenge reported increased participation in Walking, increased participation in Strength and Balance exercises.
- 15 NHS Staff inducted onto the Staff Pool Bike scheme
- Gentle Movement Classes increased physical activity by approximately 30 minutes per week—in line with the recommendations to target those with very low activity

Data Presentation

Figure 5: Data from a survey of participants of the NHS Western Isles and HITRANS Big Step Challenge from October to December 2024.



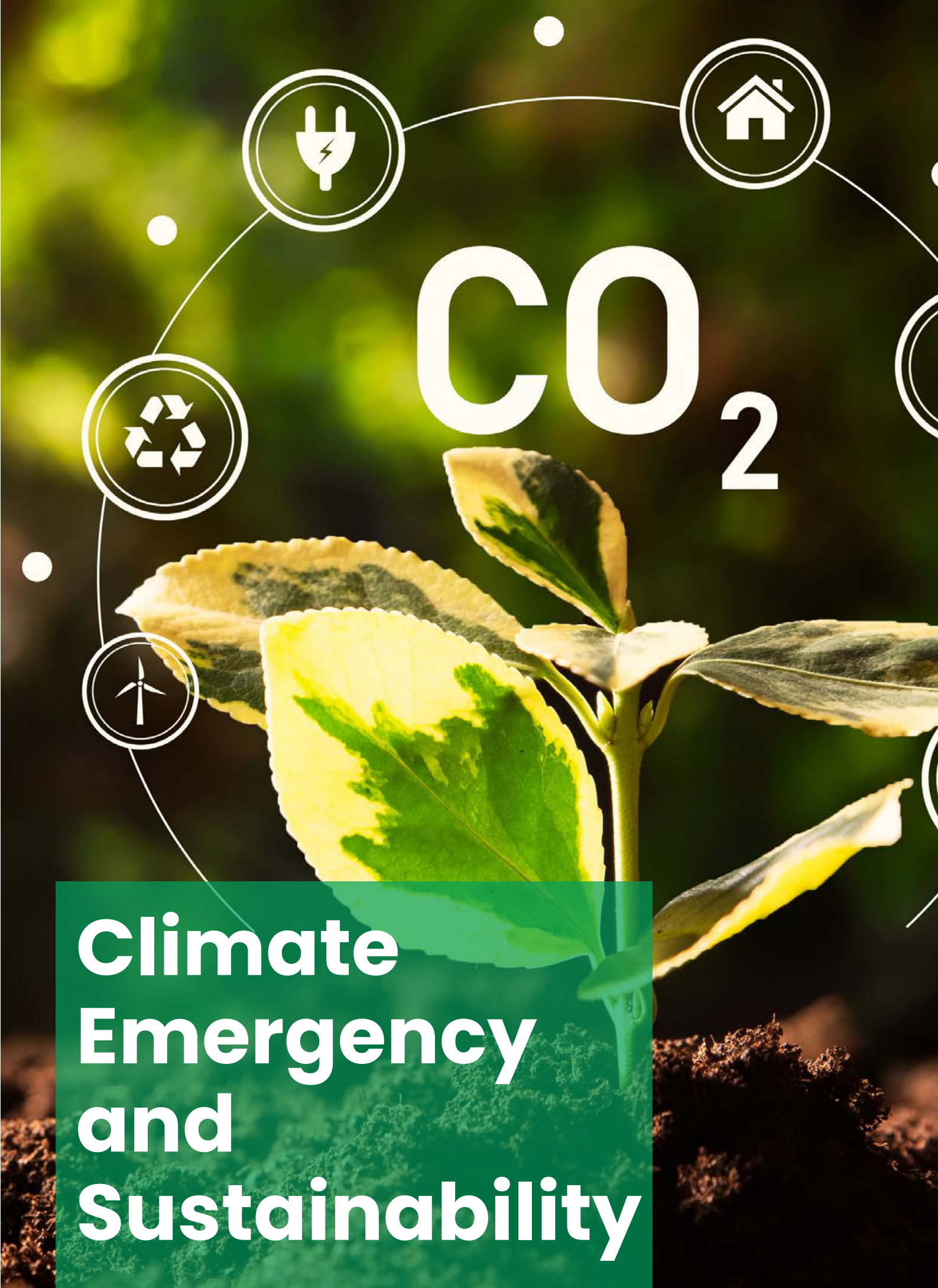
Promotional Assets



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CO₂

**Climate
Emergency
and
Sustainability**

Climate Emergency and Sustainability

Scope and remit

The NHS Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy (2022–26) and DL 38 (2021) set out aims and associated targets for Boards to respond to the global climate emergency. The strategy focuses on addressing the healthcare sector’s environmental impact and developing a comprehensive approach to reducing carbon emissions, promoting and ensuring sustainable healthcare practices, and mitigating climate change risks.

Key areas covered are:

- Carbon reduction and energy efficiency, reducing emissions from healthcare practices, including energy use, transport and waste management.
- Sustainable healthcare, incorporating sustainable clinical and procurement practices.
- Climate resilience by planning adaptation and mitigation measures.
- Improving biodiversity in all owned or leased properties.
- Community engagement and using the Anchor Organisation status to collaborate with staff, patients, community and partner agencies to enhance environmental health.
- Policy and compliance, aligning with international, national and local net-zero goals.

Key Trends and Challenges

Data highlights:

- The NHS is responsible for 4–5% of the nation’s carbon emissions, a figure that is reflected in global healthcare provision. Climate change has been described as the biggest global health threat of the 21st century, but also, tackling the effects of climate change offers the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century.

Figure 6: Source of carbon emissions in the NHS

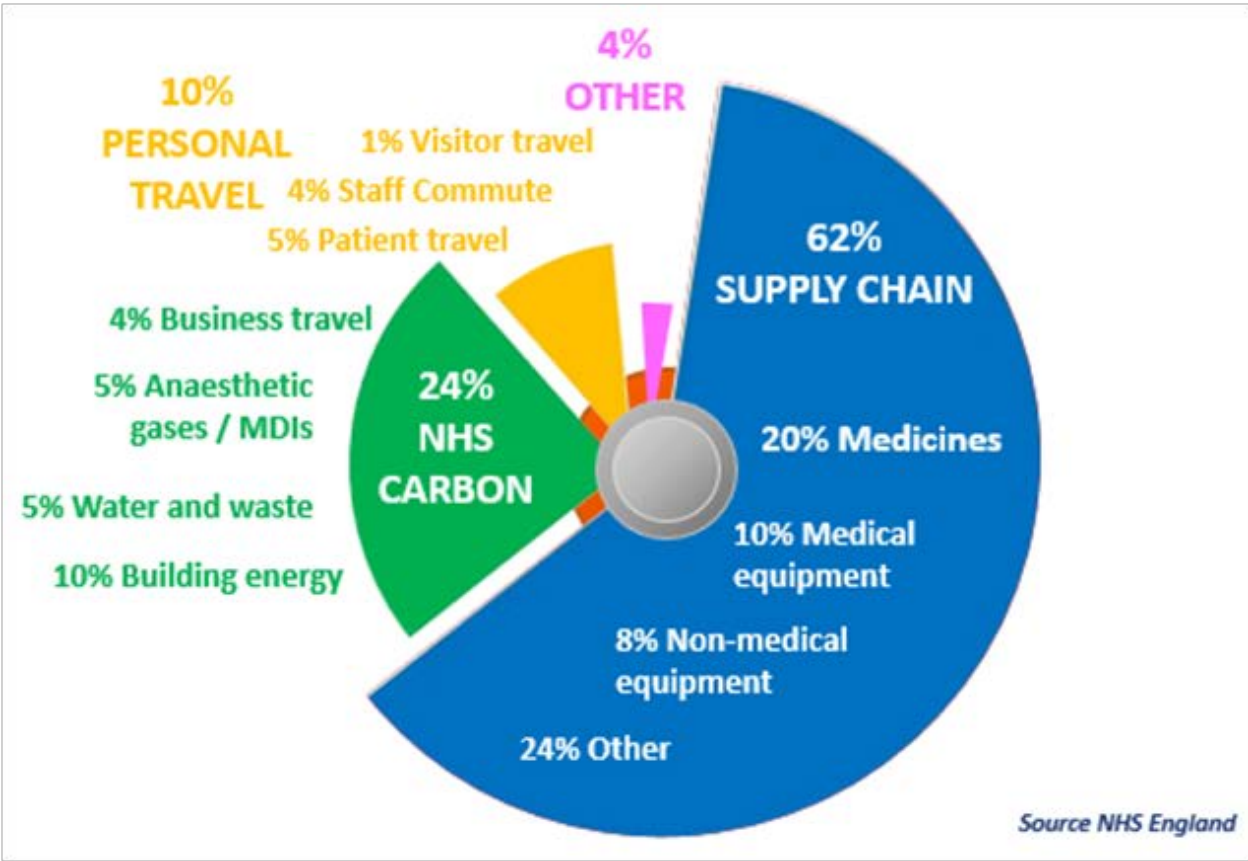
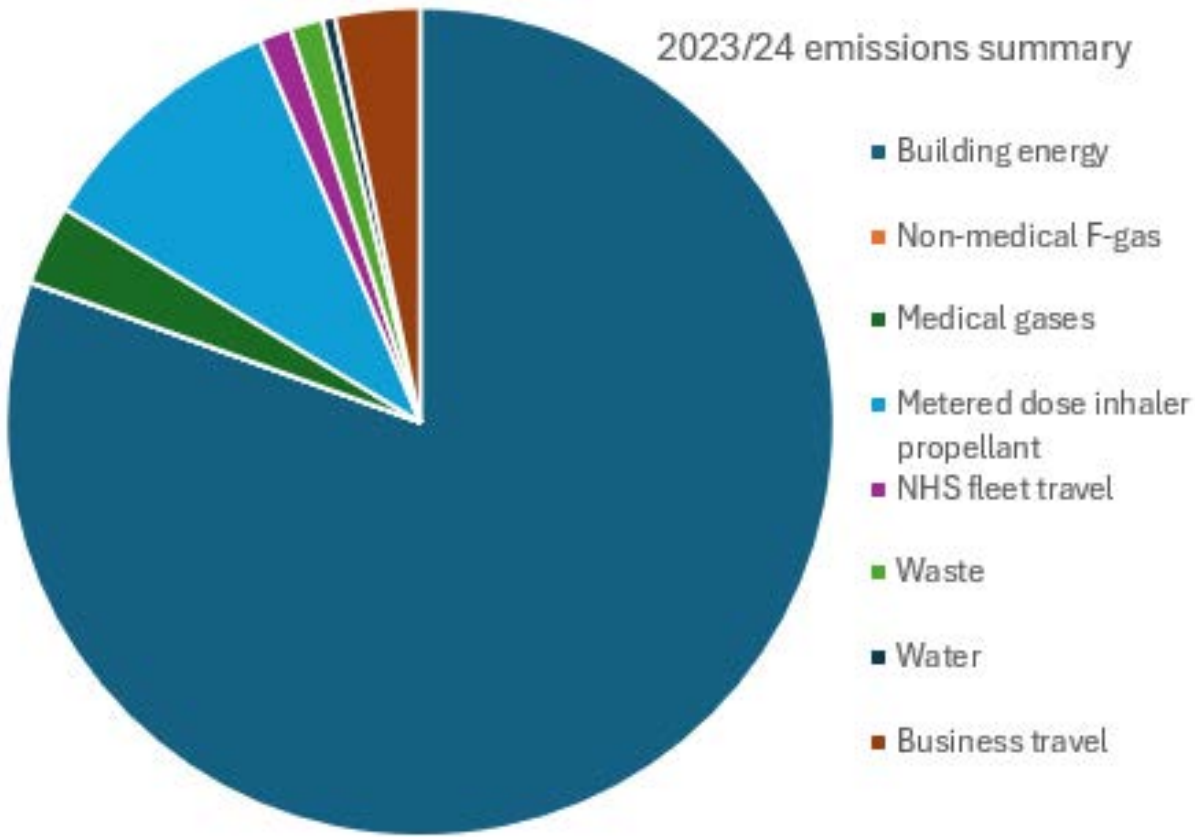


Figure 7: NHS Western Isles known direct emissions summary for 2023/24



The challenges and barriers to reducing carbon emissions within NHS Western Isles are:

- **Financial:** high upfront costs to implement sustainable technologies or practices, combined with competing healthcare costs and limited external grant funding.
- **Workforce skills and capacity limitations:** staff with high workloads facing additional tasks, often without the education and training to deliver. Training can mitigate some of these pressures.
- **Supply chain limitations:** national procurement contracts can restrict the ability to source local, more sustainable alternatives.
- **Behaviour change:** ingrained practices creating resistance to change.
- **Competing healthcare compliance requirements:** there are often conflicts between sustainability goals and clinical compliance requirements.

2024 Focus Areas

- Pursued two feasibility studies into transitioning properties from gas oil to air source heat pumps.
- Began to develop action plans and a local strategy to meet national targets.
- Continued to expand and promote Active Travel initiatives, including the staff pool bikes; the Sustrans walk, wheel and cycle paths at the three hospital sites, and working towards more Cycling Friendly Employer Awards.
- Started conducting departmental waste audits.
- Reviewed transitioning patients to Powder Dose Inhalers, which are more environmentally friendly, and continuing to promote appropriate inhaler recycling.
- Began recruitment for a network of Staff Green Champions who will be advocates for sustainable practices and initiatives in their own areas and share knowledge with Green Champions in other areas.
- Agreed to include healthcare and sustainability in the Corporate Induction

- Programme, with content ready to be uploaded.

 - Reviewed the use of one-use takeaway cups in the hospital dining area with the intention of implementing a fee for use, with a free reusable cup offered to all staff.
 - Continued to work with partner agencies through the CPP Climate Change Working Subgroup to progress island-wide adaptation and mitigation measures.

These will impact the following public health strategic goals:

- Environmental health and climate mitigation, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants which mitigate linked respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.
- Promoting physical activity through Active Travel initiatives, lowering the risk of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, as well as improving mental health.
- Education and awareness of how healthcare provision contributes to the climate emergency and how embedding sustainable practices in staff can reduce this. This encourages behaviour change towards healthier and more sustainable practices.
- Reflecting key Anchor Organisation principles by demonstrating change and leadership in carbon reduction and sustainable initiatives and creating systemic change, as well as promoting community health and wellbeing.

Public Health Outputs in 2024

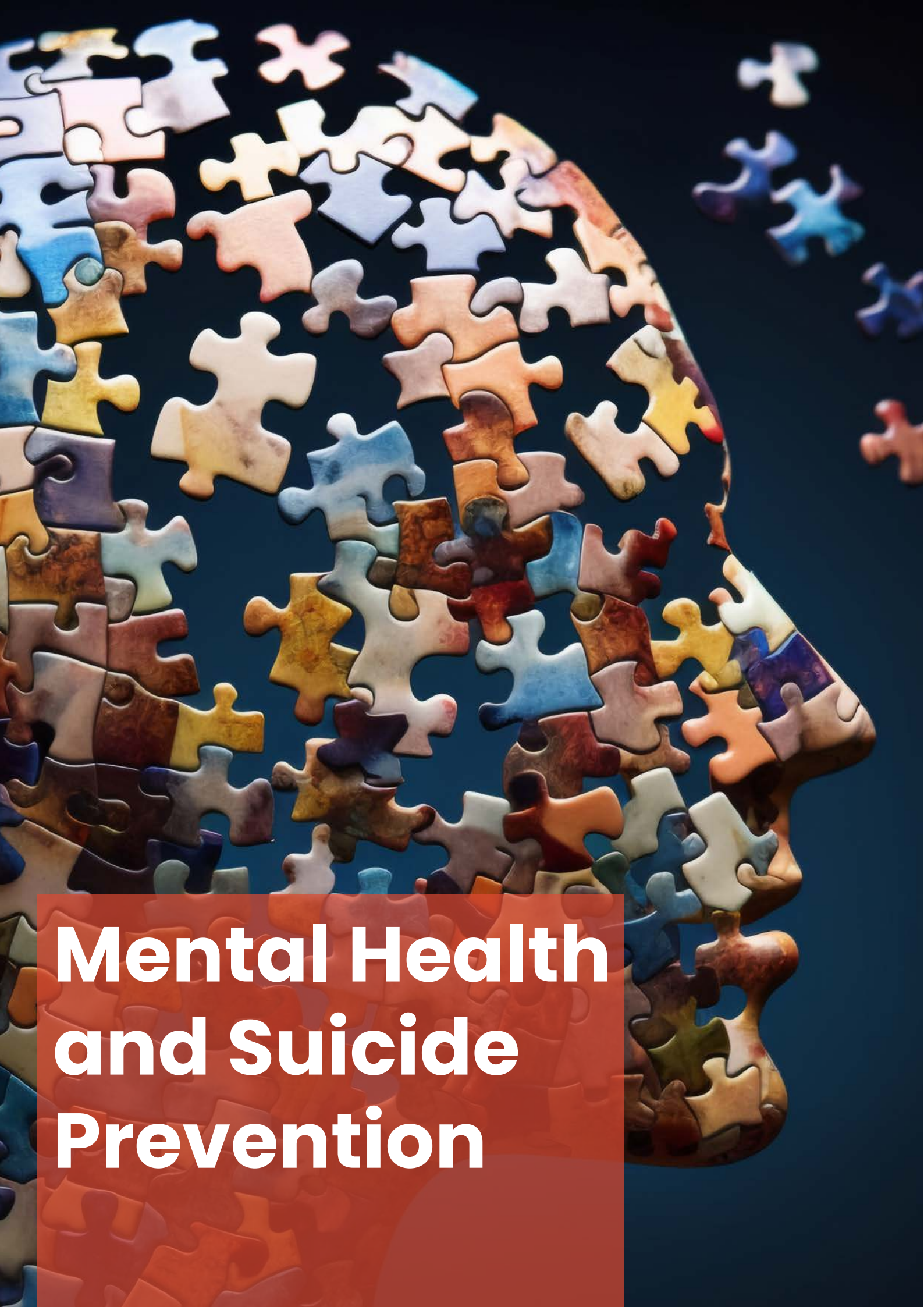
Training, education and awareness raising outputs included:

- Earth Day 2024 social media campaign** 22nd April 2024. The theme was planet versus plastic. There was one post per day on the three days leading up to Clean Air Day and five social media posts posted throughout the day, including information on gloves and clinical waste to educate and encourage less wasteful practices. It was accompanied by a Team Brief article.
- Clean Air Day, tied in with Active Travel initiatives** 20th June 2024. Three posts on social media in the run up to the week and four on the day. NHSWI tied the pollution message in with encouraging people to undertake active travel. This included highlighting benefits to NHSWI staff, such as being able to claim business cycling mileage on eExpenses, the Cycle to Work financial scheme and information on the new pool bikes. It was accompanied by a Team Brief article.
- Environmental Management System (EMS) training** Having an EMS in place provides a framework that helps to achieve environmental goals through consistent review, evaluation, and improvement of environmental performance. Relevant staff were identified and trained in the systems use to ensure compliance. Progress is expected to be gradual due to limited staff availability.
- The first Outer Hebrides COP (OH COP1)** NHS Western Isles was an active participant in the very first Outer Hebrides COP 1, planned for 24th September 2024. This was organised through the OH CPP CCWG, led by one of its member agencies, Climate Hebrides, and brought together key decision-makers, frontline staff, local organisations, students, businesses, local community groups, and members of the public. During the day, the specific climate issues faced by the islands communities were addressed, fostering collaboration to combat the effects of climate change. There were over 80 in-person attendees and more than 35 via livestream.
- Inclusion of sustainability and the NHS in the staff Corporate Induction Programme** This will provide all incoming new staff members with an understanding of the issues, and how they can make a positive impact to address them, as they begin employment with NHSWI.
- Started recruitment of Staff Green Champions.** Recruitment of staff green champions began in December 2024. They will be advocates for sustainable practices, identifying and promoting waste reduction and sustainable initiatives within their own work areas and sharing knowledge and practices with Champions in other areas.

- Team Brief Articles on:**
 - Car sharing
 - Safe disposal of inhalers
 - The NHSWI Annual Climate Emergency and Sustainability report 2023/24

Key greenhouse gas emissions 2022–2023 and 2023–2024, tonnes CO2 equivalent			
Source	2022/23 emissions	2023/24 emissions	Percentage change – 2022/23 to 2023/24
Building energy	3,632	3,435	–5.4 %
Non-medical F-gas	0	0	0
Medical gases	175	133	–24.2 %
Metered dose inhaler propellant	423	430	+1.7 %
NHS fleet travel		53.6	
Waste	64.5	54.7	–15.2 %
Water	15.4	20.7	+34.8 %
Business travel	96.1	141.0	n/a
Total emissions		4,300	

Key resources used			
Source	2022/23 Use	2023/24 Use	Percentage change – 2022/23 to 2023/24
Building energy (kWh)	12,544,846	11,771,515	–6.2 %
NHS fleet travel (km travelled)		315,255	
Waste (tonnes)	189	160	– 15.2 %
Water (cubic metres)	37,741	56,324	+49.2 %
Business travel (km travelled)	611,200	721,800	+18 %



Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

Mental Health

Scope and remit

Mental health is as important as physical health for overall health and wellbeing. It underpins the ability to build strong relationships, to do well at school or at work, and shapes how people interact with the world. Good mental health often leads to better physical health as well as a longer life expectancy.

People in the Western Isles generally enjoy higher levels of good mental health and wellbeing compared with the Scottish average. However, good mental health is not experienced by everyone, and many experience periods of poor mental health during their life. Fortunately, there are things to improve and protect mental health. There are also actions that schools and organisations can take to support the mental health of those who live, learn and work across the Western Isles.

2024 Focus Areas

- Improving access to mental health services, so more people can make a full recovery if they are provided with the appropriate treatment and support at the earliest possible stage.
- Introducing early intervention services such as distress brief intervention that support people who may be experiencing poor well-being for the first time or episodic symptoms of poor mental wellbeing.
- Building capacity in universal services to respond sensitively to mental health issues.
- Targeted delivery of training on suicide prevention and follow up support.

Public Health Outputs in 2024

- Public health staff created a series of social media posts over Christmas and New Year which encouraged positive mental health and awareness over what can be a difficult time for some. Messages focussed on grief, depression anxiety and stress.
- Public health worked on creating a mental health website for mild to moderate symptoms which will highlight the self-help guides from NHS Inform as well as the NHS approved services people can use themselves, the document is in draft form with testing starting in early 2025. The site will also hold information on the training that is available in the Western Isles and a service directory for organisations which support mental health in the area.
- Public health regularly met with Breathing Space representatives to discuss plans and promotions that take place.

Developing Priorities

An increased focus on the prevention of mental health problems and the promotion of wellbeing for all should draw on the expertise of people with lived experience of mental health problems, and the wider community, to identify solutions.

Public Health work collaboratively across organisational boundaries, disciplines and sectors, to continue to build and harness the assets of local communities which impact positively on mental health. This ensures that place based initiatives and activities that already exist, as well as newly developed interventions, are sustainable and continue to benefit local communities' mental wellbeing.

Frontline staff have the appropriate levels of knowledge and skill to enable them to provide the best support and signposting. Consider community approaches which develop links between primary care and mental health services and reduce the need for people to attend primary care settings in order to access services.

Promotional Assets



Suicide Prevention

Scope and Remit

Suicide is an important Public Health issue. As deaths from suicide often occur in younger people, the number of years of life lost compared to average life expectancy at the time of death were five times higher for suicide than for road traffic accidents. The Western Isles Multi Agency Suicide Advisory Group acknowledges that communities can play a critical role in suicide prevention. They can provide social support to vulnerable individuals and engage in follow-up care, fight stigma and support those bereaved by suicide. They can help give individuals a sense of belonging and a feeling of connectedness by being part of a community. Lastly, communities can also implement specific suicide prevention strategies relevant to their situation.

2024 Focus Areas

- Continued promotion of face-to-face and online Suicide prevention programmes including the following modules—Responding to people at risk of stress and distress; Responding to people at risk of suicide and self harm.
- Implement Suicide Real –Time data collection process with Police Scotland to early identify 'clustering' that would inform prevention and postvention planning.
- Link with third sector services providing bereavement support and review learning from this group with Police to develop enhanced responses and services for those bereaved by suicide.
- Western Isles – wide approach to communication and awareness campaigns including World Suicide Prevention Day and World Mental Health Day, with a focus on promoting support services and encouraging people to seek help.

Public Health Outputs in 2024

- Targeted training, support, capacity and pathways for support to those in need
- Clear links to suicidal ideation and attendance at A&E and wider services (Alcohol and Drug Recovery Services, Criminal Justice services)
- Collective clarity of pathways and connections via out of hours services including link to Urgent Care agenda.

Data Presentation

NHS Western Isles trained over 150 people from local communities and workplaces in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) in the past year. With over 2,000 people trained through NHS Western Isles Public Health Division, ASIST teaches suicide first aid—helping those at risk stay safe and seek support. It trains people to recognise signs, reach out, assess risk, apply intervention skills, and connect individuals to community resources.

Feedback

Feedback from ASIST training participants include:

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

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



Community Development and Poverty

Community Development

Scope and Remit

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places a responsibility on Community Planning Partnerships to produce two types of plan, outlining local priorities, required actions and timescales. The first is the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP), which encompasses the entire local authority area. The second type is a Locality Plan and covers smaller areas, usually focusing on the areas requiring most improvement. Each CPP will produce at least one Locality Plan although some produce a few; there is no limit on how many can be produced. As the main aim is to address local needs and ambitions, it is important the views of the community are heard and incorporated into any plans. The Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP) have agreed two priority areas, one of which is Stornoway West – with a particular focus on the Cearns, who have the poorest health outcomes to be overseen by the Stornoway West Locality Group made up of NHS and local authority officers as well as community representatives.

North Uist and Benbecula was identified as an area that was ‘vulnerable’ and the ‘least improved’ which instigated the creation of the North Uist and Benbecula Locality Partnership group. The group, made up of many partners within the locality work on identified areas following community consultation.

Key Trends and Challenges

Data highlights:

Based on indicators for child poverty, attainment, participation rates, out of work benefits, crime rates, emergency admissions, early mortality and depopulation Stornoway West was considered one of the most vulnerable, having the poorest outcomes in the Outer Hebrides and improving at a slower rate than other areas. These measures are especially relevant to the North Manor area, which covers the Cearns social housing estate. Public Health alongside Community Learning and Development (CLD) and the Uist TSI organisations, promoted the Place Standard Tool within communities and held session to engage with schools, community groups and the general population.

Emerging challenges:

- Lack of participation
- High benefit area
- Cost of living crises
- Fuel poverty
- Lack of resources in the area
- Poor health outcomes
- Lack of employment
- Poor education-to-work transition figures
- Lack of transport
- Lack of childcare
- Limited play and recreation facilities
- Climate change

2024 Focus Areas

- The main focus was ensuring there is a visible presence in the stornoway west area; therefore, an NHS officer worked from the Cearns Resource Centre for two days a week.
- Monthly outreach surgeries were put in place including Smoking Cessation, Financial Inclusion, HHP and Tighean Innse Gall drop-ins
- Empowering community volunteers by transferring ownership of their groups to themselves—the Women's Health Group and the Spring Chickens older peoples group and the gardening group.
- Support for the 'Grow your Own' project.
- Support the Community Fridge in Stornoway.
- The primary focus for the partnership in Uist and Benbecual was local Transport, Care and Maintenance, Childcare, Play and recreation, Anti-poverty and wellbeing, and the Climate. Group members also fed into other strategic groups already formed to support any work in the North Uist and Benbecula area.
- Within the Childcare topic, a group was formed and lead by HIE. Public Health are a partner in the group where the groups aim is raise awareness of the availability and build of the gaps as well as lobbying for better choice locality for parents so we can keep a stable workforce.

Public Health Outputs in 2024

Public Health led the development of the Stornoway West Locality Plan and its subsequent updates. The Plan was brought to CPP meetings where Public Health is also represented.

Public Health provided funding for community members to undertake food hygiene training with a view to providing catering opportunities in the future, allowing them to generate an income for the Community Association. They were also provided with training and support in their 'Grow Your Own' project, which encouraged people to grow their own fruit and vegetables with surplus produce used in the Stornoway West Community Fridge, located in the Cearns Taigh Ceilidh and run by local volunteers.

Public Health was a key member of the North Uist and Benbecula locality group who work alongside partners to drive local work. The North Uist and Benbecula Locality Plan update 2024 was produced and highlights the work of the group as a whole.

Feedback

“Absolutely amazing! If it wasn't for this place I wouldn't bother to eat! I have soup when I'm here and take one home with me for the next day...I only have a microwave!” (Male, age 64 talking about the Community Fridge)

‘Love coming here! It's company for me. I live on my own and don't meet many people. The volunteers are lovely and the soup is the best in Stornoway!’ (Male, age 46, Community Fridge)

‘It's so good knowing that there is someone in the Resource Centre who will help you out. I wish she was there more than 2 days, but even now there's a buzz about the place just knowing things are happening!’ (Young mum of one year old)

‘The importance of coordinated work across all sectors has never been more important, with stretched public finance it is imperative that we plan and coordinate our activities to improve the lives and wellbeing of people in our community. That isn't always easy to do but the planning and actions identified through this partnership as well as the activities carried out, as highlighted in this report, show that it can be done and done well.’ (Councillor Paul Steele—Leader of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Chair of Outer Hebrides community Planning Partnership)

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Promotional Assets





Poverty

Scope and Remit

The Outer Hebrides is an economically fragile area with wages lower than Scottish average. Added to this are the number of households in fuel poverty demonstrating low levels of energy efficiency. Eilean Siar has no 'data zones' or geographical areas within what are defined as Scotland's most economically deprived. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is used to target interventions and tackle the effects of socio-economic inequalities in communities across Scotland. However, there are difficulties in using the SIMD in rural areas. Areas such as the Western Isles are sparsely populated, socially heterogeneous and less sensitive to area-based measures such as SIMD. This can lead to a situation where households in rural areas are omitted from policy and targeting by national interventions designed to address poverty and inequalities.

Key Trends and Challenges

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 places a duty on Western Isles Health Board and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to prepare and publish an annual, joint Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) which sits alongside the wider Western Isles Anti-Poverty Strategy 2019-24. The LCPAR reports on the activity being undertaken locally to mitigate the drivers of child poverty and suggests actions to carry forward over the next year, which will inform the new Western Isles Anti-Poverty Strategy 2024 -2029, which is currently in development. This report raises awareness of the multitude of services and support available across the islands by Health Board, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Third Sector and volunteers within the wider community, and to share the ambition for the forthcoming year.

Emerging challenges:

- Securing affordable and insulated housing as demand outstrips the available supply with the average rents rising by 10.1% from 2020-24 for a 2-bed rental; the rise in Airbnb rentals also contributes to the shortage.
- Challenges seeking and accessing support in close-knit communities especially for people who live out with Stornoway and rely on adequate transport.
- Worries around stigma in a small community where support is required from people known to them especially accessing foodbanks.
- People feel they are better off accessing benefits instead of employment.
- The cost of living tends to be significantly higher in remote, rural and island communities, but this can be masked by some poverty statistics which emphasise income over outgoings. The Scottish Affairs Committee conducted an enquiry and presented a report on the Cost of Living: Impact on Rural Communities in Scotland to parliament (2024), which highlighted the increased costs for populations living in rural and island communities in Scotland. In particular, the report highlighted:
 - increased energy costs, energy challenges and subsequent increase in fuel poverty,
 - how food insecurity and food poverty disproportionately impact rural communities as food shopping prices are already more expensive than Scottish mainland, and
 - the challenges in accessing public transport within these communities, the higher costs of fuel impacting on drivers, and connections to mainland Scotland via ferry and air travel.

2024 Focus Areas

- Continued with Get Heard Hebrides (GHH) community consultation to gather data on lived experiences of poverty and input to Local Child Poverty Action Plan and CPP Anti-poverty strategy.
- Delivered Poverty Sensitive Practice training workshops to front line staff.
- Support National Challenge Poverty Week to raise awareness of the issues relating to poverty.
- Showcased examples of food and diets from various cultures living on the Island.
- Exploring alternatives to traditional cooking methods, i.e. the Wonder Bag, which acts as a slow cooker, but does not require electricity.
- Developed Winter campaign-Healthy eating over winter.
- Continued to develop and deliver Health Literacy training to front line staff throughout the Western Isles.
- Continued to work in partnership with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and other partners to develop the relevant strategies relating to poverty on the Islands, ensuring communities have a voice and their lived experience is recorded and contributes to policy development.

Strategic goal

To work in partnership with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and other partners to develop the relevant strategies relating to poverty on the Islands, ensuring communities have a voice and their lived experience is recorded and contributes to policy development. This was achieved through the Get Heard Hebrides project and the continuous interviewing of people in the community. Public Health also had representation on the Anti-Poverty Steering Group as well as the Anti-poverty operational group, and were part of a number of national anti-poverty groups.

Public Health Outputs in 2024

- The Poverty sensitive practice training was piloted with 6 members of the CNES Adult Learning Shop, 2 Community Learning and Development staff and 6 members of the community. Although initially targeting front line workers it was also adapted for the community volunteers who had expressed an interest.
- Place standard workshops were held in primary schools throughout the Western Isles and facilitated in partnership with Community Learning and Development who are now collating the information.
- A Health Literacy training video was developed in partnership with Adult Learning and distributed to all GP surgeries throughout the Western Isles.
- The Get Heard Hebrides initiative consulted with 48 individuals from the community to gather information on their lived experience during the cost-of-living crisis. This information was subsequently used to populate the LCPAR and other relevant strategies.

Feedback on Poverty Week Event 2024

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

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

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

'The positive feedback from both agencies and the public indicated a desire for this to become a yearly event in Stornoway with a similar event run in Uist and Barra during the same week. Also involving the different cultures was so well received that planning has begun to host a cultural event in 2025, which will focus on food, music and dance. Food will be used as a vehicle for community engagement and encourage integration as well as providing Public Health with the opportunity to identify the health needs of the many cultures living throughout the Western Isles.'

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Alcohol and Drugs

Alcohol and Drugs

Scope and Remit

The Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership(ADP) is responsible for the allocation of Scottish Government funding to support the delivery of locally based alcohol and drug services in line with local and national priorities and identified needs. Its vision is that

“The Outer Hebrides is a respectful healthy community where individuals, families and communities have the right to health and life free from the harms of alcohol and drugs, where recovery is fully supported by all within the community.”

Members are drawn from a wide range of agencies and groups and include representatives from NHS Western Isles; Police Scotland; Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; Integrated Joint Board; third sector and lay members.

The cross cutting priorities between national government, ADPs and third sector partners work towards reducing drug deaths and improving the lives of those impacted by drugs and alcohol in Scotland.

- Rights Respect and Recovery Strategy 2018 – Rights, respect and recovery: alcohol and drug treatment strategy – gov.scot
- Alcohol Framework 2018–Preventing Harm–Alcohol Framework 2018 – gov.scot
- National Mission Outcomes Framework – National mission is to reduce drug deaths and improve lives. Drugs strategy national outcomes framework – GOV.UK
- Drug and Alcohol Services–Improving Holistic Family Support: a Framework for holistic whole family approaches and family inclusive practice 2021 (chapter 11) Drug and alcohol services – improving holistic family support – gov.scot
- MAT Standards 2021–Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) standards: access, choice, support – gov.scot

Key Trends and Challenges

Data highlights:

Scotland is facing a public health challenge with the highest level of alcohol related deaths in the UK, with 1,277 people who died of alcohol specific causes in 2023. This is the highest number since 2008. In 2023, there were 1,172 deaths caused by drug misuse in Scotland. This is an increase of 121 deaths compared with 2022. Opiates and opioids, including heroin, morphine and methadone were implicated in 80% of those deaths with street benzodiazepines linked to 572.

Emerging challenges:

- Problematic drug use in Scotland affects poverty, homelessness, trauma, and stigma. Tackling Scotland’s drug and alcohol crisis requires to address the underlying social determinants of health.
- Sustaining services through short-term ring-fenced funding, where staff may look for more permanent employment.
- Vacancies across health, social care and third sector can impact on service delivery.
- National threat of a dynamic and increasing illicit drug and alcohol supply filtering into local communities.

2024 Focus Areas

Main projects:

- Co-ordinated the National Mission Programme for Government. As part of National Mission, OHADP will review Residential Rehabilitation pathways and action plan in partnership with national support team. The plan will include pre-rehab programme, co-producing plans for exit/post rehab and standardised protocols for harm reduction. The Support Team will continue to support, assess and monitor the local residential provision and report locally and nationally.
- Co-ordinated the local implementation of the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards. Participating in monthly MATSIN meetings which is a forum for discussion and consultation between the MAT Implementation Support Team (MIST), Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) including clinicians, Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCP) representatives and delivery partners. MATSIN members advise on work to implement standards, collect evidence for success, provide feedback on methods and suggest improvements to working practices.
- Services commissioned to ensure all people have access to independent advocacy and social support for housing, welfare and income needs and support through their recovery journey.
- Worked with locally commissioned service and Scottish Recovery Consortium to design and develop Lived and Living Experience Strategy and Island wide LLE Panels that fits with the remote and rural aspect to ensure accessible and inclusive ways for people to be involved in decision making, inclusive of recovery groups/ cafes. This will allow people with lived and living experience and families to have the choice to participate and be involved in feedback of delivery, planning and development of services. This will be monitored through evaluation of each funded service.
- As part of Ministerial priorities, undertook a review of identified local drug related deaths (DRDs). The purpose of the group is to determine whether any preventative actions or lessons can be learned from partner agencies to reduce the likelihood of drug-related deaths in the future; monitor the levels of drug related deaths and near death occurrences and better inform service planning including enforcement.
- Whole families and Family Inclusive Practice – Recovery Development Co-ordinator post (LandH) with remit including whole families and lived experience was funded by the ADP and funding was provided to the service in Uist and Barra for Recovery Support for whole families that is accessible, consistent, sustainable and inclusive. Service Level Agreements prepared and implemented with the services.
- Complied with national drug and alcohol waiting times and Drug and Alcohol Information System, ABI HEAT reporting, Needle Exchange and Naloxone.
- Undertook two yearly service reviews and evaluations were undertaken to ensure adherence to service level agreements and quality improvement with all funded services.
- Training needs survey undertaken. Workforce Plan 2024-26 and comprehensive annual OHADP Workforce Training Programme prepared. Training includes cocaine and psychostimulants; benzos, cannabis and alcohol awareness; drugs and mental health; harm reduction; HIV; Hep B and C; Injecting Equipment Provision. Negotiated core and specialist training with SDF and other organisations.
- Trauma Informed training and Psychological Therapies Interventions training offered to staff working in substance misuse services within the NHS, social services and third sector. Offering Trauma Informed Training and Motivational Interviewing training along with links to National online courses and TURAS free learning workshops and resources.

Public Health Outputs in 2024

Training and education

- Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) 2 day training workshops delivered to 21 people working in the field of addictions and services who support families affected by alcohol and drugs. This will ensure Whole families and Family Inclusive Practice mechanisms are in place.
- A total of 24 Western Isles alcohol and drug staff have undertaken the Human Rights Based Approaches to Advocacy Training.
- Funded services attended Trauma Awareness sessions and taking a trauma informed approach.
- Alcohol and drug awareness evening session delivered to Stornoway Street Pastors.
- Alcohol and Drug Resource table was present at the Head and Neck Cancer Workshop.
- Annual campaign calendar for prevention, promotion and awareness raising including Foetal Alcohol Spectrum disorder (FASD) Awareness Day; Summer Safety, Winter Campaign; Spiking, raising awareness to public and professionals.
- Two third sector agencies were successful in their OHADP Small Project bid to deliver alcohol and drug preventative inputs to young people in primary and secondary schools.

Programme participation

- ADP provided funding to support two third sector organisations to upgrade their IT and telephone access. This supported staff to participate online in training, events, supervision and to meet with colleagues in partner agencies. They were also able to link with and support service users across the Western Isles.
- Funding was provided to improve transport in a rural community to ensure service users can access facilities, particularly those who are lonely and socially isolated. This will allow the service to offer more opportunities for evening sessions and attending events.
- Partnership approach to staff Safe Space welfare tent by experienced and supportive staff and volunteers trained to manage risks to festival goers. The area provides a monitored rest and recovery area for those that may have taken too much alcohol or substances or may just be feeling anxious and needs some emotional and practical support and provides advice and guidance on substances.
- OHADP funded recovery groups from Lewis and Harris and Uist and Barra to attend the Scottish Recovery Walk on Glasgow Green where they represented the flag for Western Isles.
- Drug and Alcohol Education Substance Awareness lesson plans for early to senior level in line with CfE health and wellbeing passed onto Education Department for all Western Isles schools. Provides staff and partners with materials and advice to support substance misuse education. Allowing children and young people to develop knowledge, understanding, values and attitudes towards substance misuse.

Poster and images for Alcohol, Spiking Campaign and Heb Celt 2024





Feedback

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CRAFT Training

'The training was very informative and enjoyable and good fun.'

'It was very worthwhile course and very well delivered and enjoyable.'

'The most enjoyable training i have been on to date. Honest, emotional and very informative.'

Spiking Campaign

'Positive and grateful'

'Majority thought it was great we were getting involved in such a scheme'

”

Sexual Health

Young Mums

Scope and Remit

The Scottish Government has a vision for everyone in Scotland to have good sexual health and wellbeing, and, that high quality, innovative, Blood Borne Virus (BBV) prevention, care and support is available to those who need it, in a timely manner and irrespective of age, sex, gender, sexual identity, background or location. We continue to work towards a society which considers good sexual wellbeing to be an integral part of an individual's overall wellbeing and an indicator of health equity.

For many children and young people, RSHP education forms the building blocks of their sexual health and wellbeing learning. RSHP is a vital part of ensuring young people have the learning, skills and resilience needed to have safe, healthy, and fulfilling relationships so that when sexual encounters occur, they have the tools and strategies to ensure these are safe and consensual.

Pointers Young Mums group is a support group for local young mothers and their children who don't feel able to attend other parent groups due to their age, social issues and cultural attitudes. The mums group is held in pointers youth café which is a venue that young women already feel comfortable attending as they were familiar with it whilst previously attending events when in school. Already knowing that the staff are friendly, welcoming and non-judgmental is a major supportive factor for them attending the mums group.

Key Trends and Challenges

- Young mothers feeling excluded and unable to attend supportive parenting groups and opportunities for social interaction for both them and their children
- Lack of opportunities for informal learning for young mums
- Feelings of mistrust towards outside agencies.

Local Activities

- Weekly 3 hour group sessions provided for 9 mums under the age of 25 with 11 children under the age of 5
- Regular programme of activities provided for creating opportunities to talk, share and learn
- Every third week childcare is provided to allow for additional time and opportunities for mums to fully engage in learning activities of their choice.

Public Health Outputs in 2024

Young mums has improved health and wellbeing outcomes for mums and children by:

- Providing meaningful engagements with support services
- Ensuring mums and children are gaining social interactions
- Providing education and awareness on emotional wellbeing
- providing informative workshops on relevant topics such as sexual health, contraception options, Sexually Transmitted Infection's and relationships

The work will contribute to reducing unintended pregnancies and breaking the cycle of future unintended pregnancies. Education and information will also be provided on maternal health issues, mental and physical wellbeing and child development to support and nurture healthy lifestyle choices where possible. This will also develop and improve parenting skills and encourage positive communications at various life stages between adults and children.

Educational and information sessions were also be provided for the mums to increase their personal skills and experiences to improve their life chances and work opportunities. These included communication skills, negotiation skills conflict resolution and other relevant topics identified by the mums. Half of these sessions had child care provided to ensure the women could participate fully without distraction. This also provided a stimulating play experience for the children.

This could work with local partners ensured the needs of socially excluded young mums and their children were met. It supported better access to health and social support services and assisted in educating staff on the barriers faced by the young women when attending services for both themselves and their children.

By establishing a peer support network for those mums who feel isolated and socially excluded because of social circumstances, wellbeing will improve. The group provided an opportunity for mums to share experiences and seek advice and support when required.

2024 Focus Areas

- Improving access to sexual health information and education for young people
- Build workforce capacity within the NHS and local partners to address sexual wellbeing, BBV and relationship issues
- Developing support mechanisms for young parents to help them prepare for the birth of their child , build skills for positive parenting and support them to enhance their life choices to reach their full potential.
- Gatherhering information on the views and knowledge of young people around all aspects of their sexual health.
- Implementing peer education programmes in secondary schools aimed at reducing violence against women and girls.
- Building capacity in substance misuse and partner services to address sexual wellbeing and BBV issues affected by substances.



Sexual Health and Substances

Scope and Remit

To increase the number of staff providing opportunistic sexual health interventions, and provide a training opportunity for partnership staff to learn about drugs and substances, look at why people use drugs and get a greater understanding of how drug use can impact on sexual wellbeing.

Key Trends and Challenges

- Missed opportunities for sexual wellbeing interventions
- Lack of knowledge amongst staff on drug use and the impact on sexual wellbeing.

Public Health Outputs in 2024

3 training events were provided in Lewis, Uist and in Barra with 32 members of staff from health, police, education, ambulance and third sector participating in learning more about young people's drug use and the impact it can have on their sexual and reproductive health.

Feedback

“Feedback from the training was extremely positive with all participants stating that they were more informed about drug use and the impact on sexual health. Staff also stated that they had an increased confidence for speaking with young people about their drug use and know how best to support them to access sexual health services.”

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Relationships, sexual health and parenthood (RSHP)

Scope and Remit

Increase the skills, knowledge and confidence of secondary school staff to deliver relationships, sexual health and parenting education programmes.

Key Trends and Challenges

Young people have identified inconsistencies and gaps in the delivery and quality of RSHP education and teachers have reported not feeling confident around delivering education due to the sensitivities around the topic within the cultural of the Islands.

2024 Focus Area

RSHP training within the curriculum for excellence, for young people of secondary school age.

Public Health Outputs in 2024

A 2 day training event for 12 members of staff was held. This led to:

- New ways of delivering effective sexual health and relationship education in the secondary school.
- Increased knowledge of the RSHP aspects of curriculum for excellence and local policy.
- More awareness of local young people's knowledge, practices and attitudes towards sexual health and relationships.
- Awareness of how values and attitudes are formed in terms of sexual health.
- Increased knowledge on sexual wellbeing support services available to young people locally and how to sign post into services
- Increased knowledge of where to gain help and support to deliver an effective RSHP programme.

The training was also supported by police Scotland who provided a digital cyber safety input raising awareness of issues such as the sharing of sexual images and exploitation. 12 members of staff attended the training and provided extremely positive evaluations of the two days. Pictured below are those attending along with multi agencies representatives who attended one aspect of the training.



NHS
Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

Sexual Health and Relationships Education Training for School Staff in the Western Isles

on 30th & 31st of January at e-sgoil building, Stornoway

Two day training event for secondary school teachers and staff who support the delivery of sexual health and relationship education programmes in schools.

Training Aim:
To give participants new skills, increased confidence, and a clear understanding of sex and relationships education, within the curriculum for excellence, for young people of secondary school age.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the training participants will:

- Considered ways of delivering effective sexual health and relationship education in the secondary school.
- Have increased knowledge of the RSHP aspects of curriculum for excellence and local policy.
- Be more aware of local young people's knowledge, practices and attitudes towards sexual health and relationships
- Have explored how values and attitudes are formed in terms of sexual health.
- Have increased knowledge on sexual wellbeing support services available to young people locally and how to sign post into services.
- Have a clear definition and understanding of sexual wellbeing.
- Have experienced a sample of methodologies and activities used in the provision of RSHP
- Know where to gain help and support to deliver effective RSHP program

Training Facilitators: Adrienne Hannah & Isabel Steele

Places are limited and if you would like to attend or require more information please contact Isabel Steele at Isabel.steele@nhs.scot

This course is provided in partnership by NHS Western Isles and CNES education Department and is free of charge. Participants must be able to attend both training days.

Health Promotion Department

References

- <https://ashscotland.org.uk/briefing/smoking-mental-health/>
- <https://www.publications.scot.nhs.uk/files/pca2017-p-07.pdf> - 2017
- <https://www.healthscotland.scot/publications/a-guide-to-smoking-cessation-in-scotland> - Planning and providing specialist smoking cessation services is a 2017 document which outlines / describes specialist smoking cessation services (NHS services).
- <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/publications/review-of-smoking-cessation-services-in-scotland/review-of-smoking-cessation-services-in-scotland-advisory-group-report/> -
- <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng209>
- <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng209/resources>
- <https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/ncsct-standard-treatment-programme> - NCSCCT
- <https://publichealthscotland.scot/publications/nhs-stop-smoking-services-quarterly/nhs-stop-smoking-services-local-delivery-plan-standard-202324-quarter-3/>
- <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/>
- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/pupil-census-supplementary-statistics/>
- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2022-23-looked-after-children/pages/looked-after-children/>
- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2022-23-child-protection/>
- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-public-health-priorities/pages/9/>
- <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/media/16184/a-systems-based-approach-to-physical-activity-in-scotland.pdf>
- <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d839543ed915d52428dc134/uk-chief-medical-officers-physical-activity-guidelines.pdf>
- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2022-volume-1-main-report/>
- <https://publichealthscotland.scot/publications/estimating-the-burden-of-disease-attributable-to-physical-inactivity-in-scotland/estimating-the-burden-of-disease-attributable-to-physical-inactivity-in-scotland-17-september-2024/>
- <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/atlas/choropleth/population/age/age-6-cat-65-plus/aged-65-and-over?lad=S12000013>

NHS Western Isles

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