

Nicolson Institute pupils brighten up the Paediatric Bay!

[Click here...](#)



Immunisation Champions!
[Page 42](#)



Farewell to Lachlan
[Page 68](#)



Long Service Awards
[Page 3](#)



Contents

[World Suicide Prevention Day - Page 6](#)

[NHS Western Isles Highlighted for Excellence - Page 9](#)

[Celebrating Summer Students - Page 12](#)

[Do you know someone with a learning disability? - Page 20](#)

[Commemorative Plaque events - Page 22](#)

[World Osteoporosis Day - Page 33](#)

[World Pharmacy Technician Day - Page 41](#)

[World Stroke Day - Page 46](#)

[Occupational Therapy finalist - Page 48](#)

[Flu activity and vaccination - Page 50](#)

[Wellbeing Boost - 54](#)

[Celebrating AHPs - Page 58](#)

[Break the silence - Page 60](#)

[Understanding microbes - Page 62](#)

[Winter Booklet - Page 76](#)

[Recruitment - Page 84](#)

Welcome to Slàinte - your local NHS news

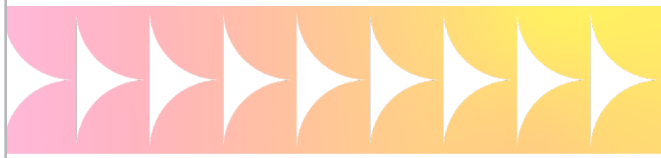
Welcome to the latest (Festive) edition of our newsletter for the local community.

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

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

Slàinte will be available on our social media pages as well as to download from our website at: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/about-us/publications/

Slàinte Mhaith



Become a Registered Nurse

Are you a Healthcare Support worker working in the NHS Highland or NHS Western Isles areas*?

Become a Registered Nurse with an Open University BSc (Hons) in Adult, Mental Health, Learning Disability or Children and Young People's Nursing Qualification.

BSc (Hons) Nursing

- 4-year part-time nursing programme
- Blend of online and practice-based learning

What do I need to apply?

- Numeracy & Literacy at SCQF level 5 or equivalent
 - Hold a permanent post in a partner Health Board/Employer in Scotland
 - and have your line manager's support.
 - Be able to work 36 hours per week whilst on clinical placement
 - 10 years in full time education including school years.
- Hold EU Settlement or Indefinite Leave to Remain status and have access to public funds.

Want to find out more? Come to an awareness session to find out how you can prepare to study nursing with the OU.

Dates available:

ONLINE SESSIONS

Monday 15th December at 3pm

OR

Monday 12th January at 3pm

Location: MS Teams

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

OR

Join using the QR Code



For further information on the programme visit:

Nursing | Open University in Scotland

NHS Western Isles launches Long Service Awards

NHS Western Isles proudly launched its Long Service Awards in November to honour staff who have dedicated more than 30 years of service to NHS Scotland.

These awards are an expression of gratitude from the Health Board to the staff who have committed decades of hard work and commitment. Their dedication is what enables NHS Western Isles to deliver an outstanding service to our patients, year after year.

The first in a series of events, was held at the Stornoway Town Hall on November 14, for staff from Lewis and Harris. Two further events took place throughout November, with additional celebrations planned for Lewis, Harris, Uist and Barra early next year.

Two of the staff receiving awards (pictured right) at the first event had each dedicated over 50 years to the NHS, Christine Macleod, Advanced Nurse Practitioner (left) and Agnes Hodgart, Medical Secretary. Christine has served 50 years and Agnes has served 52 years, and their incredible contribution was acknowledged on the day.

Staff were invited to bring a guest of their choice,



making the occasion a shared celebration. The beautifully decorated venue welcomed guests with refreshments before the ceremony began.

Each ceremony was opened with a warm welcome from Diane Macdonald, Director of Human Resources, followed by words from Chief



Pictured above: Attendees from the third event on 28th November.



Pictured above: Attendees from the first event on 14th November

Executive, Gordon Jamieson.

Each member of staff was then invited up on stage to receive a certificate and special badge, presented by NHS Western Isles Board Chair, Gillian McCannon. Mrs McCannon then closed the ceremony with a message of thanks to those in attendance.

Guests then got to enjoy an afternoon tea provided by the Western Isles Hospital Catering Department, and an opportunity to mingle with colleagues and share stories of their time in service.

NHS Western Isles Board Chair, Gillian McCannon,

said: "It was wonderful to see so many of the staff who had contributed so much to the service of NHS Western Isles. I was honoured to be able to present those staff present with their long service awards."

Diane Macdonald, Director of Human Resources & Workforce Development, NHS Western Isles, said: "NHS Western Isles is extremely fortunate to have so many long serving and committed staff. Their care, professionalism and contribution to the NHS and the community of the Western Isles is simply outstanding. To be able to provide a celebration and say thank you has been an honour and a privilege."



Pictured above: Attendees from the second event on 21st November.

Climate Hebrides expands outreach with new electric vehicle

Climate Hebrides has recently acquired a new electric vehicle to support its outreach efforts in raising awareness about climate change, thanks to a £23,000 capital grant from NHS Western Isles.

This new addition will enhance the organisation's training and public awareness sessions by allowing participants to see electric vehicles in action and even try them out. Hands-on experience is a powerful way to promote the adoption of sustainable transport, while also highlighting the associated health and environmental benefits.

During these sessions, Climate Hebrides staff cover a range of topics that support both environmental sustainability and personal wellbeing. They explain how electric vehicles help reduce pollution and improve air quality, how e-bikes offer a more accessible form of active travel for those who may struggle with traditional bicycles, and how choosing carbon-friendly foods can benefit both health and the planet.

Improving the quality and reach of Climate Hebrides' training will bring multiple benefits to the health and wellbeing of Western Isles residents. For example, better air quality from reduced vehicle emissions can lower the incidence of respiratory and cardiovascular conditions such as asthma, bronchitis, and heart disease.

E-bikes provide an inclusive way for people to engage in physical activity, supporting heart health and reducing the risk of chronic illnesses. Additionally, the organisation promotes healthy eating by raising awareness of nutritious, low-carbon food choices that can help combat obesity, improve gut health, and reduce the risk of diet-related conditions like Type 2 diabetes.



Climate Hebrides was established to lead climate action across the Outer Hebrides. Its mission is to empower communities to make sustainable choices and protect the islands for future generations.

NHS Western Isles Board Chair, Gillian McCannon recently attended a Climate Hebrides event in An Lanntair alongside First Minister, John Swinney. During this event, Mrs McCannon and members of Climate Hebrides showed the First Minister the new vehicle before meeting with members of the Climate Hub to discuss what is needed in terms of wider local action.

Mrs McCannon said: "I enjoyed meeting with the First Minister and members of Climate Hebrides. It was very interesting to hear all the work that Climate Hebrides are engaged in to help reduce the impact of climate change.

"They play an important role in supporting and educating our community around sustainability and alternative options to not only improve our environment but also our health and wellbeing. NHS Western Isles was pleased to support these initiatives."

Brian Whittington, Chief Executive, Climate Hebrides, said: "We are here to help everyone in the Outer Hebrides make the switch towards low emission transport and active travel.

"We recognise that people often need cars, so let's utilise renewable energy to power them. Where they can cycle, e-bikes are a terrific way of helping people make the switch away from car use. Thanks to NHSWI for helping people in this journey towards low emission travel."

World Suicide Prevention Day: don't delay, let's prevent suicide today

On World Suicide Prevention Day, NHS Western Isles supported Samaritans by sharing this important message: If you think someone might be suicidal, take action, interrupt their thoughts, and show them you care.

Small interruptions you make and actions you take could help someone who is suicidal. You don't have to be an expert to save someone's life.

Let's prevent suicide today. Because tomorrow's too late.

Through action, you can make a difference to someone in their darkest moments – we can all play a role in supporting those experiencing a suicidal crisis or those bereaved by suicide.

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

For more information, including real-life examples of how people's suicidal thoughts were interrupted by strangers or someone they know, visit: <https://www.samaritans.org/scotland/how-we-can-help/if-youre-worried-about-someone-else/how-to-interrupt-someones-suicidal-thoughts-guide/>

If you yourself are struggling you might be feeling so upset, angry and in pain that you believe these feelings will never end. But it's important to remember that they cannot and will not last. Like all feelings, these ones will pass. There is hope. There are people who will listen and can help.

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

- Samaritans – For immediate emotional support 24/7 and 365 days of the year call or text Samaritans for free on 116 123. You can also write to jo@samaritans.org
- Papyrus – For young people under the age of 35 or concerns a young person is thinking of suicide call Papyrus Hopeline 24/7 – 0800 068 4141 or text 07860 039967.
- NHS 111 – call NHS 111 and select the mental health option – this is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and the team will help you find the support and help you need

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

- Shout Crisis Text Line (for everyone): Text "SHOUT" to 85258
- YoungMindsCrisis Messenger (for people under 19): Text "YM" to 85258.

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

SAMARITANS

Suicidal thoughts can be interrupted

➤ Here's how you can help

If you think someone might be suicidal, take action, interrupt their thoughts and show them you care.

How to reach out to someone

Small interruptions you make and actions you take could help someone who is suicidal. There's no quick fix but in that moment, you could save their life.

➤ Start a conversation

It can be as simple as saying 'hello' or asking a question. Try not to worry about saying the wrong thing.

➤ Ask how they're feeling

Don't be afraid to ask if they're having suicidal thoughts. It gives them permission to tell you how they really feel.

➤ Be there for them in the moment

If you're worried about someone, stay with them and let them know you're there for them. **If you think it's an emergency or they've tried to harm themselves, call 999 in the UK or 112 in Ireland.**

➤ Listen without judgement

Give them a safe space to express how they feel. Try not to jump in with advice or opinions.

“ If you're worried someone is having harmful thoughts, it's better to interrupt than not. ”

Member of Samaritans' lived experience panel

Anyone can interrupt suicidal thoughts

We surveyed people with lived experience and the majority told us that their suicidal thoughts have been interrupted. Many respondents said their suicidal thoughts had been interrupted by someone close to them, while some said their suicidal thoughts had been interrupted by someone they didn't know.

For more tips visit [samaritans.org/WSPD](https://www.samaritans.org/WSPD)



Samaritans are here to listen
Call free day or night on 116 123





Helping Fuel HebMRT Rescue Operations

To support the life-saving efforts of the Hebrides Mountain Rescue Team (HebMRT), NHS Western Isles has provided a capital grant to help contribute towards the costs of a replacement operations vehicle, which has been designed as a multipurpose emergency response vehicle, capable of carrying team members, equipment, and casualties.

The donation of £25,000 allowed the team to replace the existing van that has become unreliable and no longer fit for purpose. The vehicle will house technical rescue equipment, medical first responder equipment (including a defibrillator), as well as the ability to transport up to eight team members. The new vehicle will also be equipped to carry a stretcher and casualty, providing additional capabilities for Search and Rescue (SAR) within the Western Isles.

During 2024, the team had its busiest year yet, responding to 36 incidents. The majority of these were related to high-risk missing persons, other rescues included hill walkers, animal rescues, and aerial drone searches. The team also assists

with community events, where they can provide first aid cover and event marshalling.

HebMRT is made up of 17 volunteers who give up their time to train and help those in need in urban, hill, and moorland environments. Whilst based in Stornoway, HebMRT operates throughout the whole of the Outer Hebrides. The team is trained in a broad range of skills, including advanced medical training, rigging and other mountaineering skills, search techniques and off-road driving.

Neil Barker, (HEBMRT Treasurer), said "HebMRT provides an essential emergency search and rescue service within the Western Isles. We work closely with all local emergency services to locate and provide care to those in need. We are thankful to NHS Western Isles for this donation, which will help us continue our vital role in helping with emergencies and saving lives."

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson, said: "NHS Western Isles is delighted

to have supported the purchase of the HebMRT operations vehicle to continue their efforts to rescue those in danger and helping save lives by assisting the community in emergencies."

As part of its fundraising efforts towards the replacement operations vehicle, the team has set up a JustGiving page for donations via: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/hebmrt2022raffle

This funding was made available to NHS Western Isles as capital grant funding, separate to revenue and capital core funding allocations for patient care and NHS services/staff. NHS Western Isles understands how difficult the financial situation can be for the third sector and not for profit organisations and bids for Capital Grant funding from NHS Scotland to help support these groups.

Pictured opposite with the current HebMRT van (L-R) are Gordon Jamieson, NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, with members of Hebrides Mountain Rescue Team, Neil Barker and Jacintha Kool.

NHS Western Isles Highlighted for Excellence

NHS Western Isles is delighted to announce it has been Highlighted for Excellence for excellent teaching and welcoming staff, after receiving a Letter of Commendation from the Annual Review Undergraduate Medical Education (ARUME).

Each year all medical student feedback relating to clinical placements for each of the medical programmes delivered by Scottish Medical Schools is reviewed at one time at the national ARUME. Representatives from each of the medical programmes join representatives from NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and the Directors of Medical Education (DME) group to review this feedback from many hundreds of placements.

In his congratulation letter, Professor David Kluth,

Chair of both Scottish DME and ARUME, wrote: "It was clear to the panel that there were some teams that provided an outstanding experience or had made significant positive changes to the environment which was particularly appreciated."

He continued: "I would like to congratulate and thank you yourself and the local team for their efforts and success in supporting our next generation of doctors. We appreciate that there are many challenges to regularly supporting students whilst continuing to deliver clinical service. We do not underestimate the sustained effort that is required to achieve this kind of feedback."

Dr. Sara Else, NHS Western Isles Medical Director, said: "The commendation is a credit to everyone who has worked to create and support such a welcoming and positive experience for visiting medical students. On behalf of the Board, I would like to pass on my thanks to all our staff directly involved in medical education, along with each and every individual who interacted with our future doctors to make their experience so positive. We are lucky to have you as part of our team."

Whooping cough vaccine successful in reducing hospitalisations

Findings from a paper published in the medical journal Eurosurveillance show that fully vaccinated children aged eight weeks to 17 years were 69 per cent less likely to be hospitalised with whooping cough (pertussis).

This important study clearly highlights the remarkable power of vaccinations to protect children from serious and potentially life-threatening diseases like whooping cough. Visit Public Health Scotland's [website](#) to find out more.

You can also read the full news story/blog on its website: <https://publichealthscotland.scot/news/2025/october/whooping-cough-vaccine-successful-in-reducing-hospitalisations/>



NHS Board Meetings

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

You can attend meetings online by contacting Michelle.McPhail@nhs.scot

Our full Board calendar is at www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/about-us/meet-the-board/board-calendar/

Scotland's new health and social care app: **MyCare**

[MyCare.scot](https://mycare.scot), Scotland's new health and social care online app, will be made available to everyone across Scotland from April 2026, following an initial launch in Lanarkshire in December.

The new online service will transform how people access and interact with health and social care services. Users will be provided with a secure digital identity, access to some personal information and the national service finder from NHS inform.

The initial launch in Lanarkshire will be targeted at dermatology outpatients. It will be evaluated thoroughly, with the app's development reflecting user feedback and experience before being rolled out progressively across Scotland from April.

Following initial roll-out, MyCare will be expanded to hospital-based services, before including other areas of the health and social care system, including GP practices, pharmacy, social work and social care.

Once the rollout is complete, MyCare will be the most wide-ranging app offered to patients anywhere in the UK.

Health Secretary Neil Gray said: "MyCare.scot is the single biggest digital innovation in Scotland's health and social care system and will revolutionise how people manage and receive their healthcare. The introduction of this app will be a landmark moment for Scotland and aligns with the commitments this Government has made to bringing down waiting lists, and making care more personal and closer to home.

"We have worked closely with NHS Education for Scotland and key stakeholders to develop MyCare.scot, and I want to thank everyone who has worked hard to help us reach this stage and to ensure we deliver rollout of the app across the country from April."

Be the Early Bird

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

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

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

Margaret Sherwood, 62, was diagnosed with Cholangiocarcinoma, a rare form of cancer that affects the bile ducts in the body.

It started with a persistent itch in unusual places like her hands and feet. When a rash

appeared on her midriff and she noticed her urine was discoloured, Margaret knew she needed to contact her local GP practice.

Margaret was referred and had several diagnostic tests that showed a tumour in her distal bile duct and surgery was advised as the optimal treatment.

"The whole process from the first itch to my surgery only took a matter of weeks – early detection was so important in how well everything went for me.

"My advice to others is, if it's unusual for your body, get it checked. The earlier you get diagnosed, the more options there will be for treatment.

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

For more information visit getcheckedearly.org



CELEBRATING OUR SUMMER STUDENTS!

Occupational Therapy: Lizzie Anderson

This summer, the Occupational Therapy (OT) service had the pleasure of welcoming Lizzie Anderson as a Summer Student. Lizzie had previously completed an OT practice placement with the team earlier in the year, which laid a strong foundation for her return.

During her placement, Lizzie worked closely with Megan McCartney, our Stroke and Neurology Occupational Therapist. This gave her valuable exposure to stroke and neurology care, and helped her build confidence in patient interaction, note writing, and understanding the OT scope of practice. Lizzie contributed meaningfully by following treatment plans and engaging warmly with patients.

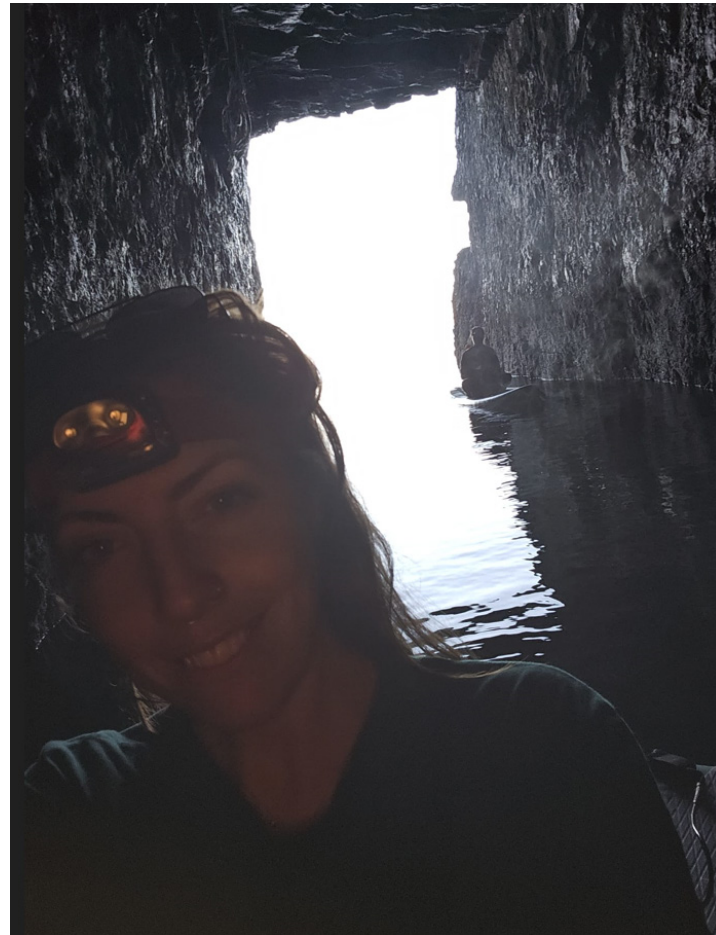
In addition to her clinical work, Lizzie took on a project to organise our historic patient file store. Her efforts transformed our OT archive into an orderly system, making it much easier to locate files—especially when responding to Data Protection Requests. Lizzie found this task particularly satisfying, knowing it made a tangible difference to the team.

She appreciated the balance between clinical and project work, and enjoyed having a small caseload where she could carry out delegated tasks. Lizzie expressed that she had many opportunities for learning, which she thoroughly enjoyed.

We are grateful for Lizzie's contribution and wish her all the best in university.

Lizzie commented: "I can't thank the OT team at NHS Western Isles enough. My experience of being their OT summer student was inspiring, giving me the opportunity to learn and work in an area of OT I had no previous experience in. I especially loved having the responsibility of managing a small caseload of patients, as this built my confidence working in a ward setting and allowed me to develop my own identity as a student OT."

"I felt nothing but support from everyone I worked with, especially Megan, who was able to make my six week experience as rich and meaningful as possible."



Finance Department: Ellie Macdonald

Ellie Macdonald (pictured right) spent the summer with the Finance Department.

Always willing to help out and quick to learn, Ellie has been a fantastic asset to the team and has got through a power of work across the department.

Having graduated with first class honours in Maths and Statistics in June, Ellie is taking some time out to go travelling, heading off to Australia in November. She will certainly be missed by the Finance team! Have a great time Ellie.

Ellie said: "I have really enjoyed my time in the finance department over the last few months."

"Everybody has been so welcoming and helpful, and I have learned valuable skills that I believe will help me in my future career."



Chief Executive Department: Cameron Mackenzie

Cameron (pictured left) has been invaluable in taking on the Covid Plaque Presentation Project. He was given a brief from Gordon Jamieson, Chief Executive, and ran with it, using his initiative and knowledge to organise a coordinated multi-agency presentation across nine sites - which was no small feat!

In addition to this, he has provided excellent day to day support to the Chief Executive's Department. An exceptionally fast learner, he picked up systems and processes quickly, and had the confidence to liaise with staff at all levels in the organisation.

Evelyn Macleod, Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive said: "I am a bit of a control freak, finding it hard to hand over responsibility, but have felt 100% comfortable in doing so with Cameron."

Cameron said: "I really enjoyed my 10-week summer student placement working as the CEO Directorate Summer Student. I felt I got a lot out of it in terms of office, and real-world experience, and got the opportunity to work with wonderfully talented people at a variety of tasks that can improve my CV for future ventures. I hope I could contribute in equal amounts to my colleagues."

Physiotherapy at Uist & Barra
Hospital: **Callum Rae**

The team’s feedback was that Callum’s friendly, easygoing manner helped him fit easily in to the team.

He picked up the necessary skills quickly and was able to adapt to working a mixture of administrative tasks and assisting on the wards. Patients appreciated his calm, patient manner and his excellent communication skills.

Callum (pictured right) said: “While working with the physiotherapy department, the main skills I built were communication and teamwork - vital skills for working in an environment like a hospital.”



Physiotherapy at Western Isles Hospital:
Aris Lundin

The team’s feedback is that Aris (pictured left) was calm, friendly and adaptable to work patterns that varied from day to day.

He assisted with group work in the sports centre and the hospital and also worked with patients on the wards as well as assisting with administrative tasks. He was quick to build a rapport with patients and staff and was always willing to go the extra mile.

The departments in Stornoway and Uist have benefitted strongly from both summer students and we hope they have got a lot out of working with us.

(Even though we’re not sure Aris will ever feel the need to try guga again, we hope both students would consider returning to the Western Isles for future work!)

Medical Staffing: **Ria Maciver**

Ria (pictured right) has been a great addition to the Medical Staffing team.

Her positive, can-do attitude will be missed. We wish her all the best for her return to university.



NHS Western Isles launches new
sustainability film for Climate Week 2025

NHS Western Isles recognises that the climate emergency is also a health emergency and launched a new short film to mark Climate Week 2025.

The film, first shown at the Outer Hebrides Climate Conference (OH-COP2) on September 30, highlights the organisation’s ongoing journey towards delivering more sustainable healthcare across the islands. The video, available here: <https://youtu.be/qy63sDBBaXk>, includes input from staff who are working to cut emissions, protect biodiversity, reduce waste and build climate resilience in our health services.

The film showcases some of the progress made so far across the organisation, including:

- Reducing emissions from anaesthetic gases and inhalers through greener clinical practices.
- Promoting walking, cycling and e-bike use among staff through a variety of active travel initiatives.
- Creating biodiverse hospital gardens and green spaces to support both wellbeing and wildlife.
- Encouraging digital consultations and local care pathways, reducing the need for patient travel.
- Providing capital grants to community groups

to support local projects, such as e-bike and trishaw schemes, climate action initiatives and community growing projects that strengthen resilience across the islands.

Colum Durkan, Director of Public Health and Executive Lead on Sustainability, said: “NHS Western Isles is committed to the delivery of sustainable healthcare. As an organisation we are proud of the wide range of initiatives we have in place to reduce our impact on the environment. The film that was launched for Climate Week 2025 highlights some of these initiatives, and features staff demonstrating the positive contribution they make to the sustainability agenda.”

The film came ahead of NHS Western Isles’ next Climate Emergency and Sustainability Report for 2024/25, which was recently published and provides more detail on progress made and the steps being taken locally to reach NHS Scotland’s net-zero targets.

NHS Western Isles remains committed to reducing its environmental footprint, building sustainable care pathways, and supporting local communities to adapt to the challenges of climate change.

The full film can be seen here: <https://youtu.be/qy63sDBBaXk>



and we have pool bikes available for staff to use



Nicolson Institute pupils brighten the Paediatric Bay at Western Isles Hospital

Pupils from the Nicolson Institute have brought colour and creativity to the Paediatric Bay at the Western Isles Hospital with their fantastic artwork.

Earlier this year, a dedicated and secure Paediatric Bay was re-established within the Medical 1 Ward in the Western Isles Hospital. This area provides a comfortable and welcoming space for families with unwell children and has recently undergone a transformation to make it more child friendly.

NHS Western Isles wished to improve the environment for the children and decided to make the décor brighter and more age appropriate. As part of this project, the Board approached the Education Department at Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar who arranged for the pupils to take part in this art project.

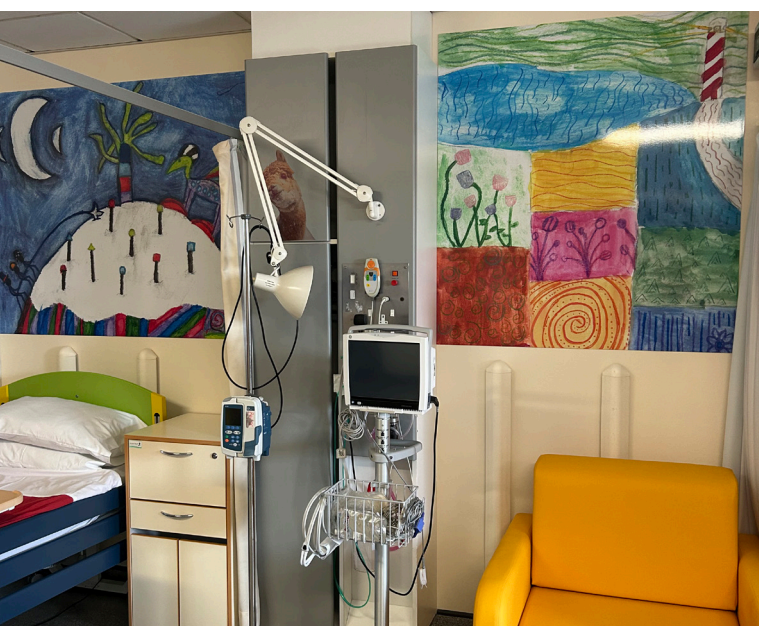
Seventeen third-year pupils from the Nicolson Institute designed artwork to be displayed around the area. The goal was to involve the community in making the area feel less clinical, believing the best

people to personalise an area for children, were young people themselves.

The pupils were given a brief to create bright, bold, and inclusive artwork—both age and gender neutral. Many of the abstract designs feature connections to local landmarks and landscapes, adding a unique and meaningful touch to the space. We are very grateful to Stornoway Media Centre, who professionally printed the designs, and to our own Works Department who carefully mounted the designs onto the walls.

Frances Roberston, Nurse and AHP Director/Chief Operating Officer, NHS Western Isles, said: “We are thrilled with the new artwork designed by the pupils, the designs are fantastic and completely met the brief we gave them. The artwork has been a big hit with both children and adults.”

Additional support from NHS Western Isles Endowments Fund has allowed the ward to purchase bright coloured armchairs which also transform into comfy beds to allow parents to stay with their children during their hospital stay. Bright linen and hospital screens are also being procured to further enhance the space.



Western Isles Hospital DINING ROOM

OPEN 24 HOURS

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



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

Featuring:

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

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

How to find us...

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

Take-away service

Available during meal service hours with the option to phone in an order prior to collection.
Phone **01851 708131** or **Ext. 2131**

LOOKING FOR A QUICK SNACK OR DRINK?

NHS
Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

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

Available 24/7

Options include:

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



Sandwiches and salad boxes are prepared freshly on site.

Western Isles Hospital VENDING SERVICES

Meal service:

Breakfast 8.00am - 11.00am

Lunch 12 noon - 2.00pm

Evening meals 5.00pm - 7.00pm

Serving fresh, quality meals at great prices.

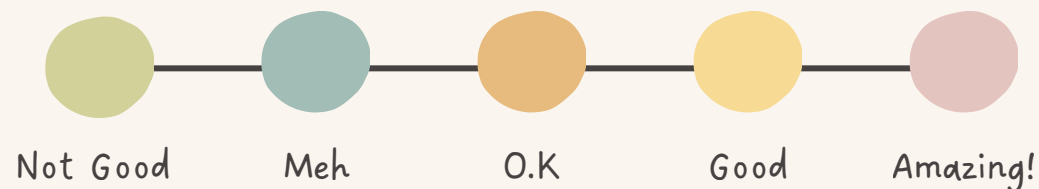
DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY?



Perhaps a family member, friend, or someone you support? If so, please let them know about the Learning Disability Annual Health Check.

Everyone aged 16+ in Scotland with a learning disability is entitled to a **FREE** Annual Health Check. These checks can help spot undiagnosed conditions early, which are then often easier to treat and may even be prevented.

How are you feeling today?



What is a Learning Disability?

A learning disability is something that affects how a person's brain works. It can make it harder to learn, understand, or do things.

People with a learning disability might:

- find it hard to understand complicated information
- need help learning new skills
- need support to live independently.

A learning disability:

- starts before adulthood
- lasts for life
- is different for everyone; some need a little help, others need more support.

For further info or to book a health check, contact Mandy Callaghan, NHS Western Isles Learning Disability Nursing Team, tel. 01871 763335 or email: mandy.callaghan@nhs.scot

Let's make sure everyone gets the care they deserve.

Do you know someone with a learning disability?

NHS Western Isles is inviting anyone with a learning disability aged 16 and over for their free Annual Health Check.

The health checks are aimed at helping spot undiagnosed conditions early, which are then often easier to treat and may even be prevented, and are open to anyone who may have difficulty accessing health care due to an intellectual disability, with or without a formal diagnosis.

The nurse will offer health checks in local areas across the Western Isles, and tailor the appointment to individual needs. The nurse will be able to help answer health-related questions before, during or after appointments, and individuals can bring someone for support, such as a friend, family member or support worker, if they wish.

A learning disability is something that affects how a person's brain works. It can make it harder to learn, understand, or do things, and starts before adulthood, although some

individuals may not receive a formal diagnosis until they are adults. A learning disability lasts for life and is different for everyone, with some individuals requiring a little help, whilst others require increased support.

People with learning disabilities may find it hard to get the healthcare they need, and the annual Health Check helps individuals to stay healthy, and you do not need to be ill to receive this check.

Everyone who is registered as having a learning disability with their GP will be invited for their Annual Health Check and, to date, over 120 learning disability health checks have already been provided across the Western Isles this year.

If you have not yet been called for your annual Health Check, or if you have any questions, please contact Mandy Callaghan, Community Learning Disability Nursing Team, NHS Western Isles, tel. 01851 763335 or email mandy.callaghan@nhs.scot



**Please
tell us about your
experience of
NHS Western Isles
services**

Scan the QR code or visit
www.careopinion.org.uk



COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE EVENTS

NHS Western Isles presented nine commemorative plaques in September, to recognise and show our gratitude to all NHS Western Isles staff and a range of organisations who stepped forward to work in partnership with the local health service in the fight against COVID-19.

NHS Western Isles recognises that there were significant contributions made by many different individuals, organisations and services throughout the Western Isles and we thank everyone for their courage, commitment and selflessness to provide services, keep people safe, and offer support during a time of such uncertainty.

To thank each and every member of NHS Western Isles staff for their tireless work during the pandemic, members of Western Isles NHS Board presented commemorative plaques to different sites across the Board area.

Every department across NHS Western Isles was affected profoundly by the pandemic, either redesigning, planning and preparing services; directly caring for patients; or being redeployed to provide new services. Some services were stopped, and many staff were redeployed to different areas as required. This sometimes meant learning new skills and adapting quickly to new ways of working.

Some examples included the role of public health staff, which was transformed to focus on COVID-19, preparing essential services such as testing arrangements, and keeping up to date with (and implementing) national requirements and legislation. Teams, such as the dental staff, were redeployed to the mass COVID testing and vaccination programmes, with the dental centre in Stornoway transformed into a COVID assessment unit and a drive-through test centre – all whilst maintaining an emergency dental service.

Hospital and community staff continued to provide the highest quality front-line patient care across the Western Isles in the most difficult circumstances, whilst facing the added challenges and fear of the pandemic for themselves and their families when caring for those with COVID-19, or with symptoms.

At the outset, we must remember that there was no vaccine or an effective means of treatment.

The added factors during the pandemic made care more challenging – including enhanced infection prevention and control (IPC) measures, the construction of temporary hospital capacity, and evolving standards of care, particularly in areas like end-of-life care, treatment escalation, and discharge planning.

In the community, staff faced extreme challenges working with people in their own homes, care homes and some of the most vulnerable in our community, and their hard work also helped to keep people safe at home and protected hospital inpatient beds for those most at need.

Clinical support service staff all stepped up to the mark during the pandemic, taking steps to plan and develop complicated new systems, processes and services and providing essential support to their clinical colleagues to ensure the delivery of patient care.

Accepting the plaque from Non-Executive Director and Whistleblowing Champion, Sheena Wright, former NHS Western Isles Hospitals Manager, Lachlan MacPherson, said: “I am proud to accept the commemorative plaque on behalf of all NHS staff across Lewis and Harris for their magnificent contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic. A crisis brings out the best in people and I saw the best of our staff and local community throughout the pandemic.”





Lizzie Bak, Senior Charge Nurse at Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh, accepted the plaque from Medical Director, Sara Else, on behalf of all NHS staff working throughout Uist. She said: “This plaque represents all NHS staff in Uist, who individually and collectively worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic. Staff within every department went above and beyond.”

Frances McNeil, former Senior Charge Nurse at St. Brendan’s, accepted the plaque from NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson, on behalf of all NHS staff in Barra and Vatersay. She said: “The plaque is a great recognition of what all our staff achieved. We worked together as one team, faced our challenges and, I am proud to say, delivered for our community.”

Accepting the plaque from Director of Finance, Debbie Bozkurt, at the Health Board Offices in Stornoway, Christina Morrison, Lead Nurse, Community, said: “It is with immense pride that I accept this plaque on behalf of all NHS Western Isles staff in non-clinical support functions. It belongs to every single member of our incredible team who stood strong, worked tirelessly, and gave so much during one of the most challenging times in our history. Let this plaque be more than a token of recognition — let it be a lasting tribute to the spirit of NHS Western Isles. A spirit that continues to inspire, to heal, and to serve.”

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar was presented with a commemorative plaque by NHS Board Chair, Gillian McCannon, in recognition of their staff’s dedication throughout the pandemic across the Western Isles. The impact of COVID-19 on residents in care homes was incredibly difficult. Both care home staff and those providing home care services demonstrated kindness, care, compassion and courage in the face of unprecedented risks.

Day services, Social Work, Advocacy and all other teams had to adapt quickly to provide their vital services during very difficult circumstances. The Caring for People group supported those most vulnerable throughout.

Education staff worked quickly and tirelessly to completely transform the delivery of education to rapidly introduce online teaching and learning and provide direct access to nursery and school provision for our key workers, to ensure that

essential services could be provided. It was a long and challenging journey, but collaboration and shared working towards a common goal was vital to protect our community.

Speaking at the ceremony at Taigh Shipoirt, Cllr Kenny Macleod, Convener of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, thanked NHS Western Isles for recognising the outstanding contribution of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar staff during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Cllr Macleod said: “Throughout the local response to COVID-19 the delivery of all Comhairle services relied upon the dedication and commitment of staff across services. Our social care staff were at the frontline of the local COVID-19 response. Amidst uncertainty, ever changing regulations and the constant threat of outbreaks care staff prioritised the wellbeing of residents and care users. In continuing the delivery of education, carrying out refuse collections, distributing PPE, hosting vaccination centres and adapting service delivery with digital alternatives Comhairle staff ensured the continuation of public service delivery and helped support public safety. Today was a chance to reflect on and recognise their resilience and contribution.”

At one point during the pandemic, the outlook and predictions were bleak. However, the development of the COVID-19 vaccination offered a new hope. The Western Isles was the first area in Scotland to complete wave one of the vaccination programme, with the peak of the vaccination programme seeing 1,200 vaccinations being delivered in a single day.

This would not have been possible without the efforts and dedication of NHS staff, and partner organisations. The support provided by Cala Hotels, Street Pastors, HM Coastguard (HMCG) Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in particular was mission critical and invaluable to the delivery of the mass vaccination programme.

The founder of Street Pastors, Isabel Macleod, was presented with a plaque by Director of Public Health, Colum Durkan. Ms Macleod said: “We are honoured to receive this plaque from NHS Western Isles. Helping at the vaccination clinics was quite a change of scene for us but our same principles still applied, listening, caring and helping. We were very happy to be able to help the local NHS and our community.”

Cala Hotels received a plaque for their selfless contribution to the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccination. Not only did they provide NHS Western Isles with a venue to hold the mass vaccination clinics throughout the programme, but they also allowed key workers to use their site to park and offered beds for vulnerable and sick people if it was ever required.

Stuart Beaufoy, Cala Hotels Group Manager, was presented with a plaque by Director of Human Resources and Workforce Development, Diane Macdonald. Mr Beaufoy said: “We, at Cala Hotels, are deeply proud that, in some small way, we could support this mission. It was a privilege to stand alongside our friends at NHS Western Isles and contribute to the collective effort that united communities across the county.”

At Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the plaque was presented to Group Commander for the Western Isles, Chris Smith, by Non-Executive Director, Naomi Macdonald, to thank them for their commitment and contribution to the multi-agency teamwork that cared for and protected our communities.

Mr Smith said: “This plaque is a symbol of the extraordinary service and resilience of every firefighter who stood firm during one of the most challenging chapters in recent history. It honours the spirit of collaboration as we stood shoulder to shoulder with NHS staff, Police Officers, Ambulance staff, Care Workers and Council staff.”

A plaque was presented by Nurse and AHP Director/Chief Operating Officer, Frances Robertson, to His Majesty’s Coastguard and His Majesty’s Coastguard Search and Rescue (operated by Bristows on behalf of Maritime Coastguard Agency). The Coastguard teams

worked tirelessly in partnership with NHS Western Isles, not only to enable to effective delivery of the mass vaccination programme, but also to support health service planning, hospital service delivery, support functions and by transporting patients, COVID tests and vaccinations. This invaluable support was often invisible to the public – but ensured that services and systems ran smoothly across the Western Isles.

Murdo Macaulay, Coastal and Operations Area Commander, HMCG, said: “It is a great honour for our team in the Western Isles to be presented with this plaque. Working together as part of the multi-agency response, we were able to support COVID-19 in various ways. We remember with great pride, the one-team ethos that has always been a part of the emergency response in the Western Isles, which was exemplified during this time.”

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson said: “In recognition of the loss of loved ones, friends and colleagues, we held a one-minute silence in each location as part of each ceremony. We have so many thanks to give to so many people who stepped forward immediately to respond and face the uncertainties and risks the pandemic brought.

“We have learned much from our experience, not least that which we learned from our Military Advisers, whose thinking, response, and military approach to what was indeed ‘an enemy’ will never leave us.

“The plaques are well deserved recognition of the effort, commitment and bravery of all those involved.”

not need to apply for these benefits. Scam text messages are from criminals often pretending to be Social Security Scotland or another Government department. They tell people they are missing out on financial help and ask them to click a link to update their details or to apply for benefits.

Read more [here](#).

People warned to stay aware of winter heating payment scams

Winter Heating Payment, Child Winter Heating Payment and Pension Age Winter Heating Payment are automatic payments for almost everyone who is eligible and most people do



PREPARE FOR FLOODING

With changes to our weather, flooding is happening more often. That means it's more likely you or someone you know will be affected. Flooding can affect anyone, damaging your home and disrupting your travel. [Ready Scotland](#) has advice on the steps you can take to be prepared.

Do you know whether flooding is forecast for your area? Areas at higher risk from flooding are normally in closer proximity to rivers, the sea, or prone to surface water buildup. You can check your flood risk and sign up to receive live flooding updates at [sepa.scot/flooding](#).

Severe weather can also cause power outages You can call 105 free of charge to report a power loss, or get information about power cuts in your area.

Do you or a family member need additional support in an emergency? Talk to your friends and family so that you can get the help you might need if flooding happens. Making a flood plan and an emergency flood kit is one of the ways you can



Stay safe during flooding

Avoid walking or driving through flood water - two feet of fast-flowing water is strong enough to move a car.



Prepare for flooding with Ready Scotland

Flooding is a regular occurrence in Scotland. Areas at higher risk are normally in closer proximity to rivers, the sea, or prone to surface water build-up.

be prepared for flooding. You can do this for your home or for your business.

It is your responsibility to manage your own flood risk and protect yourself, your family, property or business. There are steps you can take to be prepared and to help reduce the damage and disruption flooding can have on your home, travel and work.


You can also register for extra support from your utility companies, if you are eligible - find out more at [ready.scot/prepare/get-and-offer-support](#)

Staying informed and taking steps to prepare for flooding can help reduce the damage and disruption it can cause.

Don't forget to visit [NHS Western Isles' Resilience and Emergency Planning](#) webpage, helping islanders to 'think ahead' and be prepared for all kinds of severe weather.

- The website also provides information on
- Local Monitoring Cameras (Braighe, Barvas Moor and the Clisham)
 - Local gritting
 - Cost of Living Crisis leaflet
 - and much, much more!

Get help with free support



When I realised I was pregnant, I got help to quit smoking my way.

QuitYourWay.scot

NHS SCOTLAND

QUIT YOUR WAY with our support

New study shows long-term effectiveness of HPV vaccine

An encouraging new study by Public Health Scotland, in collaboration with the Universities of Edinburgh and Strathclyde, confirms the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine provides strong and sustained protection against cervical disease that can develop into cancer.

Data from the study, published in International Journal of Cancer, show that the HPV vaccine provides protection when administered to girls aged 18 years or less, with the greatest benefits seen in girls vaccinated at age 12-13.

Previous studies have shown that the HPV vaccine is highly effective in preventing the development of cervical pre-cancer and cancer. This study using population health data, shows that the vaccine continues to be effective more than 12 years after it was given, in women who came forward for cervical screening.

The research also shows women from Scotland's most deprived areas benefited the most from vaccination, helping to reduce health inequalities.

Pregnant?

Whether you've just found out you're expecting or further along in your pregnancy journey, the NHS Quit Your Way team will support you to quit smoking.

Tobacco dependency during pregnancy is the biggest preventable cause of harm, linked to nearly 10 per cent of newborn deaths and over 20 per cent of deaths in young children in Scotland.

For specialist support and suitable Nicotine Replacement Therapy during your pregnancy contact the local Quit Your Way Hebrides team on:

- Telephone: (01851) 708040
- Email: wi.hebridesquityourway@nhs.scot

HPV is a common virus, usually spread through sexual contact, and responsible for almost all cases of cervical cancer – the fourth-most common cause of cancer in women worldwide. Scotland's routine cervical cancer screening programme and the HPV immunisation programme, introduced in 2008, work together to both reduce the prevalence of HPV and the development of cervical pre-cancer and cancer among women.

The HPV vaccine is offered as a routine immunisation through schools to all S1 pupils in Scotland. It also helps to protect both boys and girls from genital warts and other HPV-related cancers that can develop later in life, such as some head and neck cancers, and other anogenital cancers.

Dr Kirsty Roy, Consultant in Public Health, Public Health Scotland said: "This study showcases both the effectiveness and impact of the HPV vaccine in preventing cervical disease, especially as the strong community protection demonstrated by the data may also be contributing to reductions in cervical disease among women in more deprived areas where vaccine uptake is lower.

Read more [here](#).

Organ and tissue donation.

Don't leave your loved ones in doubt.

Supporting Organ & Tissue Donation Week runs for a week every September.

People were encouraged to leave no doubt when it comes to their donation decision.

In Scotland, everyone has a choice when it comes to organ and tissue donation - to be a donor, or to opt out.

If people aged 16 and over choose to do nothing, it is assumed they agree to be a donor if they die in circumstances where donation is possible, unless they are in a group for whom the opt out system does not apply or it would be against their views.

If you've made your organ and tissue donation decision, tell your family and friends.

Because if your loved ones know your decision, it'll make it easier for them to ensure it is honoured.

Don't Leave Your Loved Ones in Doubt.

You can register your donation decision and find out more at www.organdonation.scot or call 0300 123 2323.

Key Messages

- People in Scotland aged 16 or over have the choice to be an organ and tissue donor, or to opt out.
- If you do nothing, it is assumed you agree to be a donor if you die in circumstances where donation is possible.
- Whatever your decision, make sure you record it on the NHS Organ Donor Register and tell your loved ones too.
- Knowing your decision will make it easier for family and friends to ensure it is honoured, so don't leave them in doubt.
- Organ & Tissue Donation Week coincides with National Eye Health Week (22-28 September) and spotlights the need for people to make a decision about cornea donation.



Laxdale residents are benefiting from new Games Hall flooring at their recently renovated Laxdale Hall, due to a £15,000 Capital Grant from NHS Western Isles to the Laxdale Community Association (LCA).

Previously, the LCA successfully secured over £600,000 funding from a number of sources to rebuild the old part of the Laxdale Hall to re-insulate and line the steel frame Games Hall. However, the refurbishment budget did not cover re-flooring the well-worn and uneven chipboards, limiting its potential use for hosting various community groups.

Now, as well as continuing community youth and adult sports for years to come, the upgraded floor will ensure that the facility can be used year-round for a diverse range of activities which support both physical and mental health, such as the baby and toddler group, youth club and those with physical and learning disabilities. This is in addition to its existing activities of youth club sports, dance classes, yoga and running conditioning sessions.

Dr Sara Else, Medical Director, said, "NHS Western Isles was pleased to contribute funding towards the removal, preparation and renewal of Laxdale Hall's Games Hall flooring. Physical activity has a direct link to improved mental health,

and by offering a reliable and accessible space for its activities, the Games Hall will play a vital role in promoting mental well-being across all age groups, particularly those experiencing isolation and mental health challenges."

Iain M. Macaulay, LCA Treasurer, said "We are very grateful to NHS Western Isles for their generous donation. This has enabled us to install a high-quality, non-slip sports flooring that is suitable for a wide variety of activities, including team sports, fitness classes, and rehabilitation programs. Overall, this upgrade will improve safety, reduce the risk of injury, and extend the lifespan of our community facility, ensuring it can be used by generations to come."

This funding was made available to NHS Western Isles as capital grant funding, separate to revenue and capital core funding allocations for patient care and NHS services/staff. NHS Western Isles understands how difficult the financial situation can be for the third sector and not for profit organisations and bids for Capital Grant funding from NHS Scotland to help support these groups.

Photo: Children from Laxdale School jump for joy on the new Games Hall flooring. Pictured are: Danny Maclean (GL7), Ayla Lonie (GM4), Nathan Barker (GL3), George Murray (GM5).



Pictured L-R: Nicola MacDonald, Club Secretary, Duncan Maclean, Team Captain, Sandra Macleod, Club Member, Murdo MacDonald, Team Manager, Frances Robertson, NHS Western Isles Nurse and AHP Director/Chief Operating Officer, and Finlay MacAulay, Senior Player.

Westside Football Club enhances supporter experience with new snack cabin

Supporters of Westside Football Club are now enjoying improved facilities at their home ground in Barvas, thanks to £7,500 in capital grant funding from NHS Western Isles.

Previously, the club operated a snack bar from a repurposed shipping container, transformed through voluntary labour from club members. The makeshift cabin quickly became a popular feature among fans, prompting the club to invest in a more permanent solution to better serve its growing supporter base.

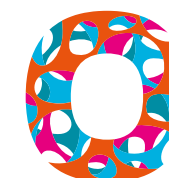
A new anti-vandal cabin, which is insulated and

internally lined, has been purchased by the Club. It benefits not only Westside supporters but also visiting fans from opposing teams.

For some spectators, especially during poor weather, access to a warm drink and a sheltered space can be the deciding factor in attending a match. The cabin includes an informal seating area, providing a welcoming spot for fans to take a break from the elements or simply enjoy a chat.

John Norman Macleod, Club Chairman said: "Many of our regular supporters are in their 70s, 80s and even 90s and attending these matches is an

World Osteoporosis Day use the risk checker today!



**Royal
Osteoporosis
Society**

Better bone health for everybody

As part of World Osteoporosis Day (held on October 20), NHS Western Isles encouraged residents to consider their risk of osteoporosis and fractures.

Osteoporosis is a common, but generally silent, condition affecting a significant percentage of people. Approximately half of all women and a fifth of men over the age of 50 will experience at least one bone fracture due to poor bone health. In many cases, a fracture is the first indication that osteoporosis is present.

With timely diagnosis and treatment of individuals at increased risk, up to 25 per cent of all hip fractures and 40 per cent of all fractures in older adults can be prevented (Royal Osteoporosis Society).

There are several known risk factors that may predispose people to Osteoporosis and increased fracture risk, including lifestyle factors, some medications, and some other medical conditions.

Individuals are encouraged to check their own fracture risk by using the free Royal Osteoporosis Society Risk Checker at: theros.org.uk/risk-checker.

The Risk Checker will signpost those at greatest risk to consult their own GP. However, patients are asked to note that they do not need a GP

appointment in the first instance to raise this with their GP – using e-consult or simply telling the GP receptionist why they are getting in touch will often enable GPs and Practice Nurses to complete a formal risk assessment and referral for bone density measurement where it is indicated.

Public Health Scotland offer particular advice on vitamin D supplementation, which is very important in reducing fracture risk: their leaflet Vitamin D and You (Important health information for everyone) can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/49cJk2u>. Vitamin D supplements are widely and cheaply available and all Western Isles residents are encouraged to take them - especially during the winter months.

Falls are a major contributor to overall fracture risk, particularly among older adults. Public Health Scotland offer practical advice on reducing the risk of falls: their booklet Up and About (Taking positive steps to avoid trips and falls) can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/3KWHOHS>.

Regular physical activity, such as walking, can also help to keep the bones strong and reduce falls risk. A simple set of strength and balance exercises can be done at home and can go a long way to reducing the incidence of fractures. Download Walking Scotland's leaflet Strength and Balance Exercises at <http://bit.ly/3JmvkbZ>.

important and enjoyable form of social interaction during the spring and summer months with young and old from within the community coming together. For some, it could be the highlight of their week – regardless of the final score."

The provision of a snack cabin supports the club's goal of encouraging spectators of all ages to engage with local football. In recent years, the club has seen a rise in younger supporters and participants via the Club's weekly Development Club which provides coaching to primary and secondary ages helping promote physical activity and reduce screen time among children.

NHS Western Isles Nurse and AHP Director/Chief

Operating Officer, Frances Robertson, said: "We're pleased to support Westside Football Club in enhancing facilities for their spectators. Providing a dedicated space for comfort and connection helps foster healthy outdoor social interaction across the community and age groups."

This funding was made available to NHS Western Isles as capital grant funding, separate to revenue and capital core funding allocations for patient care and NHS services/staff. NHS Western Isles understands how difficult the financial situation can be for the third sector and not for profit organisations and bids for Capital Grant funding from NHS Scotland to help support these groups.

Assisting Harris Football Club's journey to glory

Junior players of the Harris Football Club were heartened to receive funding towards the purchase and installation of two youth-sized football goals, plus a donation to the Club's new Community Minibus, due to a £15,700 Capital Grant provided by NHS Western Isles.

Previously, the Club's facilities only included senior football goals, which are unsuitable for younger players and limit their ability to train and compete effectively. The funding allocation now enables the Club to cater specifically to the needs of its young players, providing them with a safe, age-appropriate environment for skill development and match play.

Football provides a much-needed opportunity for children and teenagers to engage in outdoor activities, promoting physical activity in a natural setting. It encourages them to step away from sedentary behaviours like gaming and excessive screen time, which are increasingly linked to negative health outcomes.

It is expected that the Club will also be able to increase its youth training sessions and

tournaments, whilst encouraging more young people to participate in football. This will not only help improve their physical health but also promote teamwork, confidence, and mental well-being among young people in the local community.

In addition, with travel costs recognised as being the Club's biggest outgoing, a portion of the Capital Grant donation assisted the Club to purchase its very own minibus, in addition to securing additional monies through fundraising and a GoFundMe page. The Community Minibus is expected to benefit the wider Harris community, as the Club has made it available for use by the local community groups who also travel to events, throughout the Hebrides and beyond.

NHS Western Isles Chair, Gillian McCannon, said: "NHS Western Isles was happy to support the purchase of the youth goals and contribute to the Community Minibus. For young people, grassroots football offers immense physical and mental health benefits. Regular participation enhances cardiovascular fitness, strengthens bones and muscles, improves coordination and agility, and fosters overall physical well-being. Beyond benefits



for youth, football plays a vital role in connecting families and supporters across Harris. The use of the minibus will also create opportunities for social inclusion, as well as help combat isolation and strengthens community bonds."

Kenny Morrison, Chair of Harris Football Club, said "The Club is very appreciative towards NHS Western Isles for its funding award. We believe these upgrades and the purchase of the Community Minibus will make a significant difference in the sporting opportunities available to young people on the island, and we are excited about the positive impact this project will have. This will enable our young players with

opportunities to develop their skills, experience healthy competition, as well as build pride in the Harris community. The use of the minibus will also create opportunities for social inclusion, as well as help combat isolation and strengthen our unique community bonds."

This funding was made available to NHS Western Isles as capital grant funding, separate to revenue and capital core funding allocations for patient care and NHS services/staff. NHS Western Isles understands how difficult the financial situation can be for the third sector and not for profit organisations and bids for Capital Grant funding from NHS Scotland to help support these groups.



VAPING
ADDICTION
SOON TAKES
HOLD OF
THEM

NHS
SCOTLAND

Healthier
Scotland
Scottish
Government





Recognising the importance of having a

Power of Attorney

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



New instruments boost learning for Lewis and Harris Youth Musicians



Diane MacDonald (centre) with members of the Lewis and Harris Youth Concert Band

The Lewis and Harris Youth Concert Band was deeply grateful to receive £25,000 in capital grant funding from NHS Western Isles to replace some of their old, worn-out instruments.

Some of the instruments were over 25 years old and were no longer fit for purpose. In some cases, the life span of the instruments had exceeded their expected life span of 15 years and were so worn out that they were difficult to play.

The replacement of these instruments has significantly enhanced the learning experience for students in the Lewis and Harris Youth Concert Band. The band operates three ensembles, supporting wind, brass, and percussion players up to the age of 25 who reside in Lewis and Harris.

Music plays a vital role in enhancing the health and wellbeing of the members of the band in many ways.

Playing an instrument engages several areas of the brain, improving memory, processing speed and cognitive function. The mental engagement helps to keep the mind sharp and reduces stress by lowering cortisol levels, the hormone associated with anxiety.

Musical training promotes emotional regulation and expression, offering a therapeutic outlet that can decrease anxiety and agitation. Making music and participating in rehearsals provides students with means to relieve stress and transform negative thoughts into positive, joyful experiences.

Diane Macdonald, Director of Human Resources & Workforce Development, NHS Western Isles, said: "We are delighted to hear that the funding has had such a positive impact on the students in the Lewis and Harris Youth Concert Band. Learning and playing an instrument can benefit these young people physically, cognitively, emotionally

and socially."

Terry Ovenstone, Chairperson, Lewis and Harris Youth Concert Band, said: "The new instruments have transformed the experience for our young musicians, giving them the chance to play at their best and feel proud of their sound. This has lifted confidence within the group and created a real buzz in rehearsals, while at the same time raising the quality of performances we can share with the wider community.

"These improvements mean that our members, who live in a geographically remote area, can enjoy opportunities that would otherwise be limited—whether that's working with partner bands in the Highlands and Central Belt, competing at a national level, or performing for local audiences. The benefits are felt not only by our players but also by families and the community, who take pride in seeing young people achieve and enjoy music together."

Ask Why: Islander helps raise awareness of child sexual abuse and mental health

Brave local survivor, Hamish Duncan, has recently completed a personal challenge of walking the Butt to Barra route, to raise awareness of child sexual abuse and mental health, as well as helping raise funds for Counselling & Family Mediation Western Isles, who he credits as helping him at a time when he was at his lowest.

Hamish, 61, who lives in Stornoway, has worked with NHS Western Isles as a Hospital Porter for 13 years, and had been struggling with depression and suicidal thoughts for years, before things came to a head one evening whilst at work.

"I was at a dangerously low point and didn't feel I could go on. I just thought my family would be better off without me."

"I contacted my line manager who was very supportive, who told me to leave my shift and helped me seek immediate staff counselling support, which was available through the NHS. After attending the sessions that were available, my wife encouraged me to seek support from Counselling & Family Mediation Western Isles, which I found better suited me."

It was during these sessions that Hamish recounted painful memories from his childhood, having been sexually abused when he was between 6-11 years old, which he had kept hidden from everyone, except his wife Morag of almost 32 years.

"As a child, I experienced sexual abuse" explained Hamish, "and in later life this contributed to mental health difficulties. With time, professional help, and the encouragement of those close to me, I've been able to make progress, though the journey is ongoing. I believe it is vital to break the silence that too often surrounds issues of abuse and mental health. No child should ever feel ashamed of speaking out, and no child should have to suffer

in silence. Childhood is precious, and every child deserves to feel safe."

He continued, "I am so thankful for Counselling & Family Mediation Western Isles, but it was so difficult to go through and recount. I then had to inform my family and my siblings, which was a very hard thing to do. I found telling my kids was the hardest – but they just hugged me without any words; it was a very powerful moment and one I am truly thankful to them for."

Hamish said he also found his local Church was very supportive; so much so it enabled him to speak at its 2024 suicide awareness event 'Leave a Light On' service about his personal experience.

"I felt completely drained afterwards, but I'm so glad I did it. The event inspired me to share my story; I just want to help stop any other child going through what I went through. Afterwards I was approached by individuals, who stated in confidence to me that they also had been sexually abused."

Hamish added that he has also contacted the Presbytery about speaking to their congregation to encourage others to have the confidence to seek support and be listened to without judgement, but, at this time, has yet to hear back. In fact, it was whilst out walking that the thought of raising awareness from walking the Butt to Barra was borne.

Sexual abuse is usually hidden from view. A child is sexually abused when they are forced, enticed or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. It isn't always physical contact, and nowadays also happens online. Sometimes the child won't understand that it is abuse.

According to The University of Edinburgh and Heriot Watt University (Data-Driven Innovation), child sexual exploitation and abuse is growing at an alarming rate, experts say. It is thought

around 1 in 20 children in the UK have been sexually abused. Disturbingly, NSPCC Scotland reports that the latest crime figures show reports of online child sexual abuse and exploitation in Scotland have increased by 21 per cent between 1 April, 2023 and 31 March, 2024.

Adults in the child or young person's life may not recognise the signs of sexual abuse and the child may be too young, too scared or too ashamed to tell anyone what is happening to them. Child sexual abuse repercussions are damaging and can last a lifetime, ruining relationships, health and long-term wellbeing.

Hamish began his walking challenge on 8th September, undertaking it in stages over 12 consecutive days, along with his walking poles and companion, 11-year-old Collie Bréagha. However, he almost had to stop on the first day after going over his ankle, but thankfully, and after a day's rest, he was able to continue his challenge; crediting his job that can see him walking 12 miles a day, depending on shift patterns.

Not wanting to shy away from the subject, Hamish had printed the words 'ASK WHY' on the reverse of his hi-vis waistcoat, which had the desired effect with people stopping him to find out, and in turn donating monies.

Even whilst taking a well-earned break onboard the Caledonian MacBrayne vessels between islands, passengers approached him to hear his story, with Hamish particularly recounting one individual who had been sitting quietly nearby, approach him as they disembarked silently giving him a donation.

Asked what he enjoyed the most, Hamish joked "A good soak in the bath! But on a serious note, I would sincerely like to thank Western Isles Hospital's Orthopaedic Consultant, Mr. Andre Van Niekerk, as I wouldn't have been able to undertake this walk without the two new knees I received in recent years – he even encouraged



Pictured: Hamish with Bréagha

me to do the challenge when I asked his opinion."

If you have been affected by Hamish's story, Wellbeing Scotland works with children and adults whose lives have been impacted by trauma resulting from child abuse. For further information tel. 01324 630100 or visit [wellbeingScotland.org](https://www.wellbeingScotland.org)

In recent years, Police Scotland developed a campaign reminding abusers and potential abusers that they alone are responsible for their actions, and it is up to them to take action and seek help to stop, or get caught. Visit www.lucyfathfull.org.uk/gethelpscotland

If you are concerned about a child, please contact Police Scotland (tel. 101 for non-emergencies or 999 for emergencies) or the local Children and Families Social Work Team (tel. 01851 822749 or out-of-hours 01851 701702). You can also visit the NHS Western Isles Public Protection Team at www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/our-services/public-protection-protecting-people

Funding secures the future of Aline Woodland Walkway

The popular Aline Woodland Walkway has been saved from potential closure thanks to essential repairs funded by a £10,000 capital grant from NHS Western Isles.

The boardwalks and tracks are very well used daily by the public and form the largest accessible woodland outside of Stornoway. The woodland walkway is a unique asset allowing people of all abilities to walk in the forest and enjoy the unique scenery.

Located around 20 miles between Stornoway on Lewis and Tarbert on Harris, Aline Community Woodland offers accessible boardwalks, both wheelchair and buggy friendly, a picnic area with tables and benches, and a children’s playground – making it an ideal destination for a family day out.

Donnie Morrison, Chairman, Aline Community Woodland, said: “We are extremely grateful to have received £10,000 in capital grant funding from NHS Western Isles allowing us to undertake essential repairs to boardwalks and paths in the woodland.

“In the last year we were faced with the possible closure of the walkways due to the deteriorating structure of the popular decking walks. The funding

has allowed us to undertake a comprehensive program of deck replacement and ensure that the walkways have remained accessible all year.”

Aline Community Woodland is a community project supported by volunteers who ensure the cabins and playpark area are well kept. The team supporting the woodland have recently undertaken a twenty-year review and are now recruiting new volunteers and developing plans for a wide range of future developments.

Diane Macdonald, Director of Human Resources & Workforce Development, NHS Western Isles, said: “NHS Western Isles is delighted to have supported the repairs at Aline Woodland Walkway. This space offers a safe, free, and inclusive environment where people of all ages and abilities can enjoy the benefits of walking – one of the best ways to boost physical health and mental wellbeing.”

This funding was made available to NHS Western Isles as capital grant funding, separate to revenue and capital core funding allocations for patient care and NHS services/staff. NHS Western Isles understands how difficult the financial situation can be for the third sector and not for profit organisations and bids for Capital Grant funding from NHS Scotland to help support these groups.

World Pharmacy Technician Day



Pictured L-R: Rebekah Murray, Beenie Mackenzie, Craig Cameron, Karen Moore, Jacqueline Daly, and Lucy Petrie.

World Pharmacy Technician Day is a day to recognise, appreciate, and celebrate the vital contributions that pharmacy technicians make every single day. This year it was celebrated on October 21.

While others might see you as “just a tech,” we know you are so much more. You are the unsung heroes of healthcare - supporting pharmacists,

protecting patients, and keeping the entire system running smoothly.

This year, NHS Western Isles continues our mission to shift the narrative. For too long, pharmacy technicians have been overlooked or undervalued. But your work is essential, your impact is undeniable, and your role deserves the spotlight.



Pictured: Diane Macdonald with Donnie Morrison and members from the Aline Community Woodland.

ANTIBIOTIC AMNESTY

Antibiotics should never be saved for later or shared with others.



Hand in your old or unused antibiotics at any local pharmacy.



Immunisation Champions in Primary Schools

Following the success of last year’s pilot project in Uist and Barra primary schools, the School Immunisation Champions initiative was expanded this year to include schools in Lewis and Harris.

The project, created by Isabell MacInnes, Health Protection and Screening Nurse Specialist, aims to inspire and empower school communities to support childhood vaccinations through fun and educational activities. It also helps pupils meet key learning outcomes across health and wellbeing, science, and social studies within the Curriculum for Excellence.

Pupils took part in four online training sessions where they learned about how diseases spread, the history of vaccines, and the impact of vaccine-preventable illnesses. The sessions also covered important topics like consent and confidentiality.

In their schools, the Immunisation Champions played an active role—setting up information displays, helping to distribute consent packs, and supporting School Nursing teams on vaccination day.

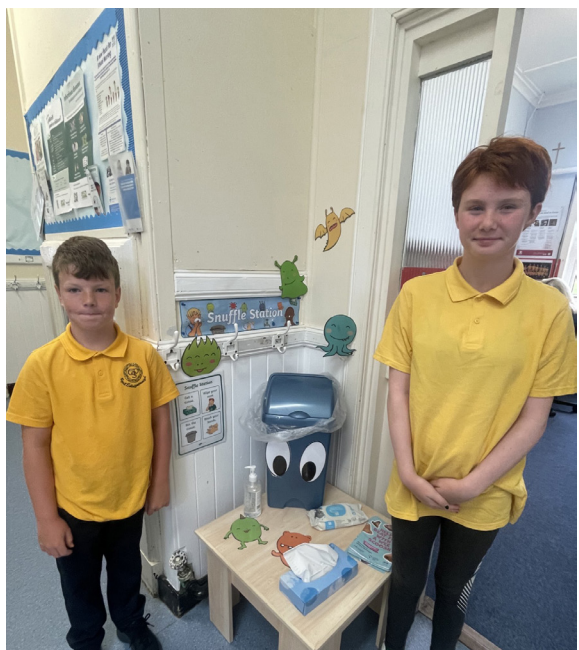
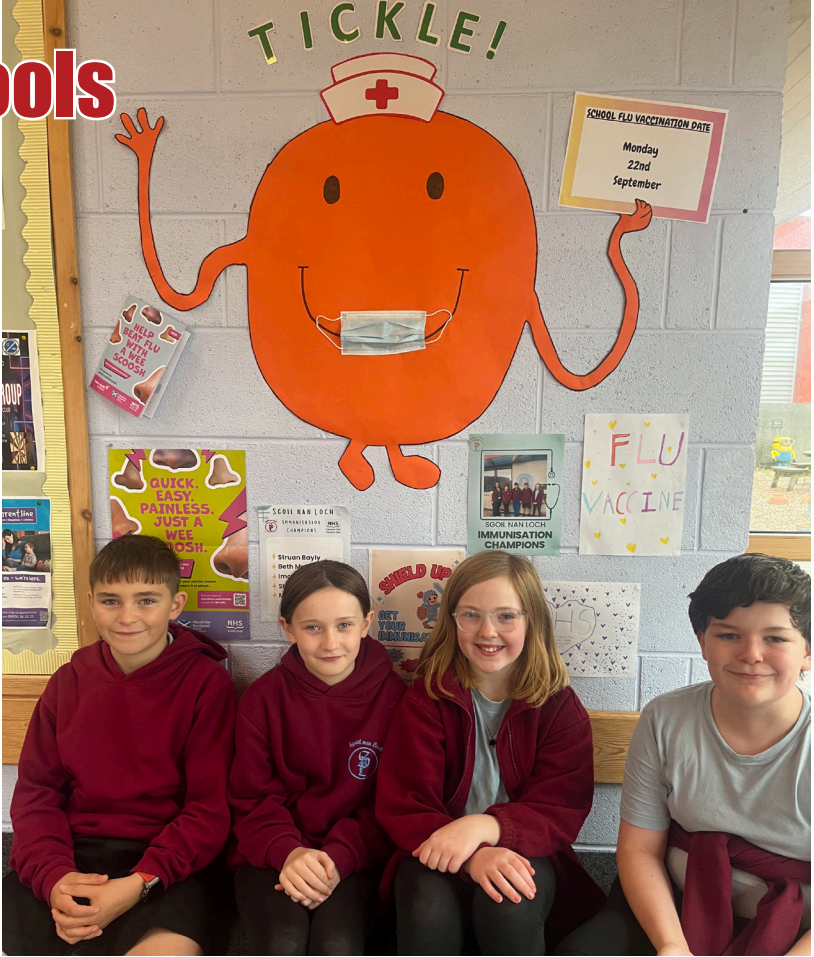
Each group also researched and delivered a one-minute presentation on a disease. These were enthusiastically received and delivered in both English and Gaelic, covering topics like MPOX, Measles, HPV, Influenza, Pertussis, Meningitis, Polio, Typhoid, and Rabies.

In November, all the champions will come together to share feedback on their experiences. Those who complete an evaluation form will be entered into a prize draw for a £15 voucher—kindly donated by NHS Western Isles.

Thank you to all the young champions for your amazing work in helping keep your communities healthy!

Pictured are photos of the Immunisation Champions from each school with their information displays

Clockwise from top left: Castlebay, Sgoil nan Loch, Balivanich, Stornoway Primary, Breasclete, Eoligarry, Sgoil Uibhist a Thuath, Iochdar. Centre photo Daliburgh.



ONLY GO TO THE **EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (ED)** IF YOU NEED URGENT MEDICAL CARE FOR A **CRITICAL EMERGENCY**

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



CALL 999 OR
GO TO ED FOR
EMERGENCIES

ONLY

CONTACT
GENERAL PRACTICE
DURING THE DAY

CALL NHS 24
ON 111
DAY OR NIGHT

**Right Care
Right Place**

For more information and practical advice visit
[nhsinform.scot /right- care](https://nhsinform.scot/right-care)

You're eligible for a **free flu vaccine** if you're:

- a poultry worker
- involved in culling and/or cleaning at confirmed bird flu outbreak premises
- involved in handling dead or unwell birds

The vaccine does not protect against avian (bird) flu, but it can lower the risk of a new flu virus forming if you're exposed to both human flu and bird flu at the same time.

Scan the QR code or
visit nhsinform.scot/flu
to book an appointment.



World Stroke Day 2025

This year, World Stroke Day took place on October 29.

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS) uses this opportunity to raise public awareness of stroke symptoms and promote the importance of acting quickly to call 999. Click on the sections below to find out more about CHSS or visit: www.chss.org.uk

FAST: THE KEY TO RECOGNISING STROKE SYMPTOMS

It's essential that people recognise a stroke when it's happening and call 999.

By calling 999 when you see stroke symptoms you can help someone reach hospital more quickly and receive the emergency medical care and specialist treatment they need.

Acting F.A.S.T saves lives and gives stroke survivors the best chance of recovery. Delay can result in death or major long-term disabilities.



up to **40,000** stroke survivors could be missing out on rehab in Scotland



almost **Two thirds** of stroke survivors leave hospital with a disability



136,000 people are living with the impact of a stroke



almost **11,000** people in Scotland have a stroke every year

Every day in Scotland

More people than ever before are living with chest, heart and stroke conditions.

Right now, One in Five of Scotland's population is living with a chest, heart or stroke condition and Long Covid.

Every day in Scotland...

- **31 people** will have a **stroke**
- **32 people** will have a **heart attack**
- **16 people** will be diagnosed with **heart failure**
- **16 people** will be diagnosed with **coronary heart disease**
- **41 people** will be admitted to hospital because of **chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)**

Strokes and TIAs

Find out more about what a stroke is, how it can affect you and how it can be treated or managed. You'll also find information about transient ischaemic attacks, also known as TIAs or mini-strokes.

Strokes and TIAs



Living with a stroke condition

A stroke can have a huge impact on your life, affecting everything from your mobility to your speech. Read more about how to manage your condition and take small steps towards living life to the full once again.

Living With a Stroke Condition

Looking after yourself

It's important to look after yourself following a stroke, helping you to manage your condition and improve your overall health and wellbeing. Visit our Living Well section to find out more about everything from mental wellbeing and physical activity to stopping smoking and healthy eating.

Looking after yourself



We vow to be there for more people who need us!

Our new refreshed No Life Half Lived strategy is to ensure that we can be there for anyone who needs us. Our vision is to help shape a Scotland where people with our conditions can live their lives well. Full lives, with the right support, at the right time, and in the right place.

Discover how we are working to deliver this vision and expanding our partnerships across Scotland.

No Life Half Lived Strategy 23-28

Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar
NHS Western Isles

Who is the Stroke Liaison Nurse?

The Stroke Liaison Nurse is an experienced Registered Nurse.

Their role is to provide support to patients and their families following discharge from hospital after a stroke. They will also liaise with other professionals as needed.

Stroke Liaison Nurse

STROKE?

Think FAST & save a life
CALL 999

FACE – Can they smile? Does one side droop?
ARM – Can they lift both arms? Is one weak?
SPEECH – Is their speech slurred or muddled?
TIME – To call 999.

If you see these signs call 999 FAST.
www.thinkFAST.org.uk

Role of the Stroke Liaison Nurse

The role of the Stroke Liaison Nurse is to:

- give advice, information and support to the patient and their relatives
- raise awareness of risk factors
- encourage appropriate lifestyle changes to help minimise the risk of further Stroke
- facilitate a smooth transition from hospital back into the community or long term care
- offer assistance and advice to assist patients with reintegration back to their home and community
- assist patients and their relatives to adjust to changes that may have occurred as a result of a Stroke
- provide follow up in person, by virtual appointment, or over the phone
- be involved with patients who have experienced new strokes and Transient Ischaemic Attacks (TIAs) for up to a year
- make five follow up appointments following your discharge from hospital.

Follow up appointments

The Stroke

1st point:	2 weeks post discharge
2nd point:	6 weeks post discharge
3rd point:	3 months post discharge
4th point:	6 months post discharge
5th point:	9-12 months post discharge

Further appointments may be arranged as/ if required.

Speak to your Stroke Liaison Nurse to arrange these.

If you are experiencing difficulties

Any problems experienced or encountered between visits can be identified to your Stroke Liaison Nurse by contacting:

Lewis & Harris
Tel. 01851 704704 ext. 2404
0781 420 7158 (mobile)
Email: dolina.macleod@nhs.scot

Uists & Barra
Tel. 01851 704704 ext. 2404
0781 406 5334(mobile)
Email: flona.wood8@nhs.scot

Stroke Liaison Nurse Service

Find out more about the role of and support offered by our local Stroke Liaison Nurse Service by visiting their [webpage](#) or view their leaflet by clicking [here](#).

NHS Western Isles Occupational Therapist named as a finalist in Scotland's Health Awards

NHS Western Isles is very proud of Amber MacVicar, Occupational Therapist, who was shortlisted for the Young Achiever Award in this year's Scotland's Health Awards - an annual celebration of the hard work and dedication of people working in healthcare across Scotland.

The Young Achiever Award recognises individuals aged 30 years or younger, who have demonstrated outstanding achievement as part of their working life. Amber's nomination is a testament to her commitment, compassion, and impact within her field.

Reflecting on the moment she discovered she had been shortlisted, Amber said: "I feel incredibly honoured to be nominated and selected as a finalist for the Young Achiever Award at the Scotland's Health Awards. To receive this recognition is so early in my career is truly humbling, and I'm especially grateful to my colleagues for their nomination - their supportive guidance means more to me than they'll ever know."

"Being shortlisted is a huge honour, but most of all, I'm just grateful to be part of a service that makes a difference in our community and helps people live meaningful and independent lives. Thank you to the patients for letting me be a part of their journey."

In her role, Amber plays a vital part in supporting patients to regain independence during their hospital stay. From assessing daily living skills to providing rehabilitation, equipment, and discharge planning, Occupational Therapy ensures patients are safe, supported, and prepared for life beyond the ward. Amber also promotes mental wellbeing and meaningful activity—making recovery personal and empowering.

Her collaborative approach and professionalism have made a significant impact, particularly in building strong relationships with the wider multi-disciplinary team—an essential component of a smooth patient journey.

Sonja Smit, Occupational Therapy Services Manager/AHP Mental Health Lead, NHS Western Isles, said: "I was absolutely delighted to hear that Amber was nominated for the Young Achiever Award. It's incredibly gratifying to see her talents and dedication being recognised. Our team is proud of her, and we're thrilled to support her in this well-deserved recognition."

"She demonstrates positive leadership in her daily work, guiding and collaborating with our OT Support Worker and OT Technical Instructor to ensure patients receive consistent, high-quality care throughout their rehabilitation."

Amber expressed her heartfelt thanks to her colleagues: "I'd like to sincerely thank not only the OT team but the wider hospital team - their encouragement, teamwork and shared commitment to patient care has made all the difference. Their support has allowed me to grow in confidence and capability and to explore the role in how OT can play a key role in improving patient journeys."



Elizabeth Fowler, Quality Improvement Coordinator, was one of the people who nominated Amber for this well-deserved recognition.

She said: "I first met Amber at a Discharge Multidisciplinary Team meeting back in April this year. I was really impressed by her evident compassion and kindness for her patients, and how proactive she was, looking for solutions, and supporting other team members to help bring about good outcomes for all. This powerful first impression has not changed over the intervening months!"

"Amber has chaired these meetings at short notice on a couple of occasions and done a professional job; she is usually one of the youngest people in the room, but her calm demeanour never falters, and she has brought order and structure into a very busy meeting. Her professionalism, enthusiasm and commitment are always right to the fore. She is a credit to the Occupational Therapy team, and to NHS Western Isles. She is always smiling, kind, compassionate and very professional and deserves to be recognised for the huge contribution she is making."

The Awards took place on 6th November and while Amber was pipped at the post by Aimie Holland from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, we are very proud of her achievement in making it to the shortlist.



Early and ‘unusually high’ influenza activity reported in Scotland

The UK could be facing its worst flu season in recent years and NHS Western Isles is strongly encouraging anyone eligible to get the flu vaccine when invited.

Early and unusually high influenza activity has been reported in Scotland, especially among school-age children, aged between 5-14 years.

Meanwhile, data from Public Health Scotland is already showing an increase in hospital admissions in Scotland, reflecting an earlier increase in influenza activity.

Every year in Scotland, thousands of people are hospitalised with flu. It can be serious and life threatening and getting vaccinated is the safest and most effective way to protect yourself.

Recent data from Australia, which has experienced its most significant flu outbreak in seven years, suggests that the UK may encounter similar levels of infection this winter, meaning that our NHS

services could be facing increased pressures this winter season, and individuals, particularly those with certain underlying conditions, could become very unwell.

Unlike the common cold, flu hits fast and hard. It’s caused by a different group of viruses and can leave you feeling wiped out for days, or even weeks. And while you can catch flu at any point, it is more common in the winter months.

The vaccine is your best protection against flu. If you do get flu and have been vaccinated, the symptoms are likely to be milder and not last as long. This will reduce your risk of needing to go to hospital with serious flu illness.

The flu vaccine doesn’t just protect you from flu, it also helps to reduce the spread of flu and may protect those around you from getting ill. This is especially important for vulnerable people who may not be able to fight flu off as easily.



Visitors asked to wear masks in hospital as cases of flu increase

NHS Western Isles is requesting that all individuals visiting patients in hospitals across the Western Isles wear a face mask. This precautionary measure is being introduced to reduce the risk of infection and safeguard the health of both patients and visitors, in light of the increasing levels of influenza currently circulating within the community.

The decision has also been made to introduce masks into all wards for staff in Western Isles hospitals and for patients in the waiting area of Emergency Departments. This is to help prevent the spread of any acute viral infections within the clinical environment.

As seasonal infections rise, NHS Western Isles is also requesting that anyone with flu-like symptoms or feeling unwell avoids visiting hospital patients and care home residents, to avoid putting vulnerable people and local healthcare services at risk. Every year in Scotland, thousands of people are hospitalised with flu. Cases of flu in the Western Isles are now increasing at pace, reflecting the national picture.

Flu can be serious and life threatening and

getting vaccinated is the safest and most effective way to protect yourself. Those with chronic conditions should ensure they are immunised again with this year’s vaccine as it remains the best defence against the virus.

This year’s local flu vaccination programme is already well underway, with those eligible being invited to attend their local clinic (see eligibility criteria at www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/vaccination-service).

However, if you are eligible and have not yet received an appointment, please contact the Western Isles Vaccination helpline on 01851 448 567 (phoneline open Monday to Friday: 9am-5pm) or attend one of our drop-in clinics: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/vaccination-clinics/ We would also request that if you need to amend or cancel your appointment, to contact the helpline or email wi.vaccination@nhs.scot as soon as possible to ensure your appointment can be offered to another patient.

Useful information on illnesses, symptoms and self-help, including flu and norovirus, is available from NHS Inform at www.nhsinform.scot/symptoms-and-self-help



Lead Nurse Urges Flu Vaccination After Festive Season 2024 Wiped Out by Virus

NHS Western Isles Lead Nurse, Murray Graham, is urging everyone eligible to get the flu vaccine this year, after his experience of the virus ruined his festive season last year and led to him feeling ‘an unwell as he’s ever felt as an adult’.

Murray, who does routinely get the vaccine, explained that he just didn’t get round to getting his flu vaccination last year.

“It was an extremely busy time both inside and outside of work which didn’t help and whilst I intended to get the vaccine, in the end I didn’t get round to it,” he explained.

“I was well until December the 23rd and then began to develop a sore throat and felt generally tired,” he recalled. “It absolutely floored me. I felt as unwell as I had ever felt as an adult with a really high temperature and associated sweats with intermittent shivering. I barely left my room for 48hrs. Day 3 was Christmas day and whilst I managed some dinner, the day was a washout as I lacked any energy and still felt extremely run down.

“I’d never had the flu before that, that I am aware of, and certainly nothing close to my symptoms during this episode.”

Murray was off work on December 23 and Christmas Eve and spent the public holidays recovering. He described Christmas as a ‘complete washout’ and his planned festivities with family coming round had to be cancelled unfortunately.

Not only did Murray suffer the ill effects of the flu, his five-year-old daughter, Lyla also became unwell at the same time, which compounded the impact on the family.

As one of the first in line for his vaccine this year, Murray kindly shared his experience with us, to help make colleagues aware of the impact of flu and the importance of getting the vaccine.

“The clinical data suggests the flu vaccine is providing very good protection against this year’s flu variants and those who take it are around 40 per cent less likely to need hospital treatment,” he shared. “I would also suggest taking the vaccine improves your chances of getting to enjoy your Christmas dinner and all the trimmings too!”



BE ON YOUR GUARD AGAINST FRAUD

Criminals are experts at impersonating people, organisations and the police. They spend hours researching you for their scams, hoping you’ll let your guard down for just a moment. **Stop and think.** It could protect you and your money.

STOP

Take a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information. It could keep you safe from criminals.

CHALLENGE

Could it be fake? It’s ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

PROTECT

Contact your bank immediately if you think you’ve been scammed and report it to Police Scotland directly by calling **101** or Advice Direct Scotland on **0808 164 6000**.





Isles workplaces receive wellbeing boost!

NHS Western Isles is delighted to announce that workplaces across the Outer Hebrides are now better equipped to support mental health and wellbeing, thanks to 23 newly trained Mental Health First Aiders, who have completed training over recent months.

The training was made possible through an NHS Western Isles initiative, which offered funded places for local workplaces to send staff on a two-day Mental Health First Aid course in Stornoway.

Norma Macleod from the Public Health Division delivered the course, which gives participants the skills and confidence to recognise when someone may be struggling with their mental health and to offer initial support - whether that's a colleague, friend, or family member.

By building this growing network of trained Mental Health First Aiders, workplaces can help create environments where people feel safe to talk, seek help early, and reduce the stigma often associated with mental health difficulties.

Colum Durkan, Public Health Director for NHS

Page 54

Western Isles, said: "We're delighted to see so many people across the islands take up this opportunity. Having trained Mental Health First Aiders in workplaces makes a real difference - it means there's always someone ready to listen and offer support when it's needed most."

The programme forms part of a wider package of wellbeing services offered by the NHS Western Isles Public Health Department. It also ties in with the department's upcoming "Mental Health Accreditation Award", which will soon enter its pilot phase. The award aims to recognise and celebrate workplaces that are taking active steps to promote good mental health.

These initiatives reflect NHS Western Isles' ongoing commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for people living and working across the islands.

If you are interested in further information regarding the training or would like to be involved in the Mental Health Accreditation scheme pilot, contact Norma Macleod via emailing: norma.macleod1@nhs.scot



Photos: opposite page: participants at July session, above: October participants in class, and below: participants at October session.



New building improvements at Hillcrest House

Capital grant funding from NHS Western Isles has enabled Action for Children to replace external doors and windows at Hillcrest House in Stornoway.

Hillcrest is a five-bedroom residential home based in Stornoway for care experienced children and young people who are unable to stay at home. The service also offers short breaks for those with additional support needs who may benefit from some time away from home.

The charity’s work supports children and young people to improve relationships and participate in community life, with access to a wide range of agencies including health, advocacy and education.

Hillcrest provides a safe and nurturing environment where children and young people from across the Western Isles can feel valued and supported. To maintain this vital service, the building must serve the high-quality care delivered reflecting the needs of those it supports.

An extension was added to Hillcrest in the late 1990s and the building has faced the harsh Hebridean weather during that time making the replacement an important step.

NHS Western Isles awarded Action for Children £25,000 in capital grant funding to replace the previous windows with modern UPVC alternatives. This investment will help ensure the continued safety and comfortable environment for the children and young people who use the service.

Debbie Bozkurt, NHS Western Isles Director of Finance and Procurement/ Chief Finance Officer of the Integrated Joint Board, NHS Western Isles, said: “The children and young people who benefit from the services at Hillcrest House need a warm and loving home. We are pleased to support these



important improvements and know they will help make their time at the service more comfortable.”

Valerie Russell, Children’s Services Manager, Action for Children, said: “We’re delighted the new windows are now fitted and look fabulous. The rooms seem brighter and the windows are a great improvement.

“It will really benefit the children and young people who use our service. It’s been lovely hearing visitors commenting on the difference including those who call Hillcrest their home.”

Volunteering with Action for Children is a meaningful way to help some of the most vulnerable children and families in the Western Isles, if you would like to find out more visit: <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/support-us/volunteer-with-us/>

This funding was made available to NHS Western Isles as capital grant funding, separate to revenue and capital core funding allocations for patient care and NHS services/staff. NHS Western Isles understands how difficult the financial situation can be for the third sector and not for profit organisations and bids for Capital Grant funding from NHS Scotland to help support these groups.

Note. NHS Western Isles receives a revenue allocation from NHS Scotland for the delivery of patient care and services for 25/26 this will equate to £128m. The Board will also receive Capital allocation from NHS Scotland for the purchase and maintenance of NHS Western Isles assets, which can include medical equipment, etc, for 25/26 this will equate to £2.2m.

MENTAL WELLBEING



www.mentalwellbeing.wihb.scot.nhs.uk

Information, tools and resources
to help you look after your
mental health & wellbeing

Positive Mental Health & Wellbeing



Speech and Language Therapy



Occupational Therapy



Community Equipment Service

National Allied Health Professionals Day: Celebrating all AHP Staff in the Western Isles

National Allied Health Professionals Day took place on October 14, 2025, as a day to recognise the diverse work and expertise of all 14 AHP professionals in Scotland.

Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) Day celebrates the unique contributions and vital role that AHPs make within health and social care teams to improve people's lives.

AHPs are registered professions with the Health and Care Professions Council. In addition, they have experienced and skilled support workers who assist with the rehabilitation of patients.

From prevention and early intervention to rehabilitation and healthy lifestyle support, they provide specialist assessment, treatment and interventions that enable better lives for people of all ages living with a wide range of conditions.

They work in partnership with patients, parents, carers as well as professionals in health, social care and education to deliver comprehensive care that adds quality to everyday life.

Our wonderful AHPs consist of:

- Physiotherapy
- Nutrition and Dietetics
- Radiology
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Radiology
- Occupational Therapy and Community Equipment Service
- Podiatry.



Occupational Therapy



Physiotherapy



Speech and Language Therapy



Radiology



Podiatry



Radiology



Nutrition and Dietetics

Help break the silence, because... what if?

Just why do victims stay with their abusers? It's a question many of us have asked ourselves when we listen to the news or read a story; many of us simply cannot understand why anyone could stay with a person who deliberately harms them, whether it's physical, sexual, emotional, or financial. It would never happen to us, we say defiantly, we would never let it... but, what if the situation arose, what if? What if it was your parent, child, sibling, or friend? How could you help?

Regardless of sex, race, colour or religion, abuse does not discriminate, and when someone treats their partner with disrespect, violence, cruelty, harm, or force, this is called an abusive relationship.

Abusers count on their victims not being able to share what is happening to them; they may have honed their skills over years and previous relationships, grinding their victim down into believing they are not enough, that their voice is not worth hearing, that they won't manage without them, that they have nowhere else to go, and, worse still, that no one will believe them.

There are many forms that abuse can take; and whether it's physical, sexual, emotional, or financial, or even some or all of these. Abuse, in any form, can be gradual and repetitive, the abuser using subtle and increasing their tactics over an extended period, to control their victim.

Unlike physical abuse, emotional (psychological) abuse leaves no visible signs and can go unnoticed for years, sometimes decades. Common signs of emotional abuse are isolation, verbal abuse, manipulation,

constant criticism, controlling behaviour, gaslighting (making the victim doubt their feelings or instincts, or the abuser lying about their behaviour and shifting blame), and threats, whether towards the victim, or suggesting they may harm themselves and imply it's the victim's fault.

At this point, you may be feeling angry and disgusted that an abuser could treat another person like this. This is a completely normal reaction.

However, for others reading this, they may feel fear or shame, recognising what they are living with on a daily basis, and trying hard not to show they have been affected by these words. They may even have tried to ask for help or are unsure how to - which is why right now is the ideal opportunity to ask your family members, friends and colleagues the simple question, "Is everything ok?" and listen to what they say, or are trying to say.

Silence enables abusers to carry on their twisted campaign against the victim and we need to be comfortable speaking about this openly, to encourage those being abused to speak up and know they will be listened to and be supported, whether or not they feel they can leave their abuser at that time, or at some point in the future.

Whilst many believe the Western Isles Rape Crisis Centre (WIRCC) only provides support, information and advocacy to those affected by Rape or in Crisis situations, this is actually only one aspect of what the free and confidential service offers to those living and working throughout the Outer Hebrides.

Angela MacLennan, WIRCC Manager, said: "We offer advice, support and information to anyone who has been affected by any form of sexual violence. Sexual violence is any kind of sexual activity or act (including online) that was unwanted or involved any of the following: pressure, manipulation, bullying, intimidation, threats, deception or force. In other words, any kind of sexual activity or act that took place without consent. We offer crisis and longer-term support, by phone, video call or in-person, wherever you live in the Western Isles. Individuals can also get in touch if they are worried about their child, someone in their family or someone they know. We also have a service for survivors of Childhood trauma."

WIRCC also offer women's support groups and other events focused on well-being, creative arts and other activities, all aimed at creating safe spaces for women to come and enjoy time together, reduce social isolation and have an opportunity to find out more about our services.

In addition, the service has hosted local youth events, encouraging students and young people to visit and relax in the cosy art and meeting area, and hope to offer further groups in the future.

Angela continued: "You can contact our service if something is happening in your life now, or if something has happened in the past. We will never tell you what to do or judge your actions, and you don't have to talk about anything you don't want to."

In addition, their Advocacy Support Project can provide support and information at every stage of the criminal justice system, from just thinking about reporting, through to the resolution of a court case.

Angela added: "We will listen first and



provide you with the information you need to make informed decisions, and we are on your side and will stand by your choices. We can provide practical support, such as attending criminal justice related meetings and appointments with you, getting updates on your case, attending court with you and communicating with services on your behalf, if you wish."

The WIRCC Helpline is open Monday to Friday from 9am-4pm on 01851 709965 (if there is no answer, please leave a message and they will get back to you as soon as possible). In addition, their support email address is support@wircc.org.uk

For further information about domestic abuse and additional local and national support services, please visit NHS Western Isles' website at www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk (Our Services, Public Protection section).

In an emergency situation dial 999, non-emergencies dial 101. To report crime anonymously call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Understanding Microbes and Staying Healthy: A Fun Afternoon with Stornoway Primary's P7s

This November, Emer Friel, Antimicrobial Pharmacist, had the pleasure of spending time with the Primary 7 pupils at Stornoway Primary School as part of World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW).

WAAW takes place from November 18 - 24 each year and is led globally by the World Health Organization (WHO). It aims to increase awareness of global antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and to encourage best practice among the public, health workers and policy makers to avoid the further emergence and spread of drug-resistant infections.

Emer said: "As the Antimicrobial Pharmacist at Western Isles Hospital, part of my role is providing education to colleagues, so it was a new experience to try and inspire curiosity and share knowledge with a lively classrooms of young learners."

Emer kicked off the session by explaining what antimicrobials are. The pupils were quick to shout out answers like "antibiotics" and "bleach," and they talked about how these substances stop or inhibit microorganisms from growing. From brass doorknobs to antiseptic creams, the children were fascinated to learn that even metals like copper and silver have antimicrobial properties! Next, they went on to discuss the world of microbes - tiny living organisms that have been around for billions of years. They covered

bacteria, viruses and fungi. The pupils were amazed to discover that microbes are everywhere: on our skin, in our gut, and that we need them to make some of our favourite foods like cheese, chocolate and pizza. They discussed the difference between helpful microbes and harmful ones, and why good hygiene matters.

Other topics included in the discussion were:

- Hand hygiene - why washing with soap is better than just using sanitiser.
- Respiratory hygiene - how to "catch it, bin it, kill it" when sneezing or coughing.
- Food hygiene - how handling, preparation, storing and cooking all effect food safety.
- Animal care - how to enjoy pets and animals safely.

And how to protect themselves covering:

- Our immune systems - how to look after our bodies.
- Vaccinations - protecting ourselves and the people we care about.
- Antibiotics - using them appropriately and only when we need them.

The pupils had lots of interesting questions and were hopefully reassured that most microbes do us no harm and indeed we need them to survive and thrive. Emer talked about why antibiotics don't work on viruses so there's no point in having

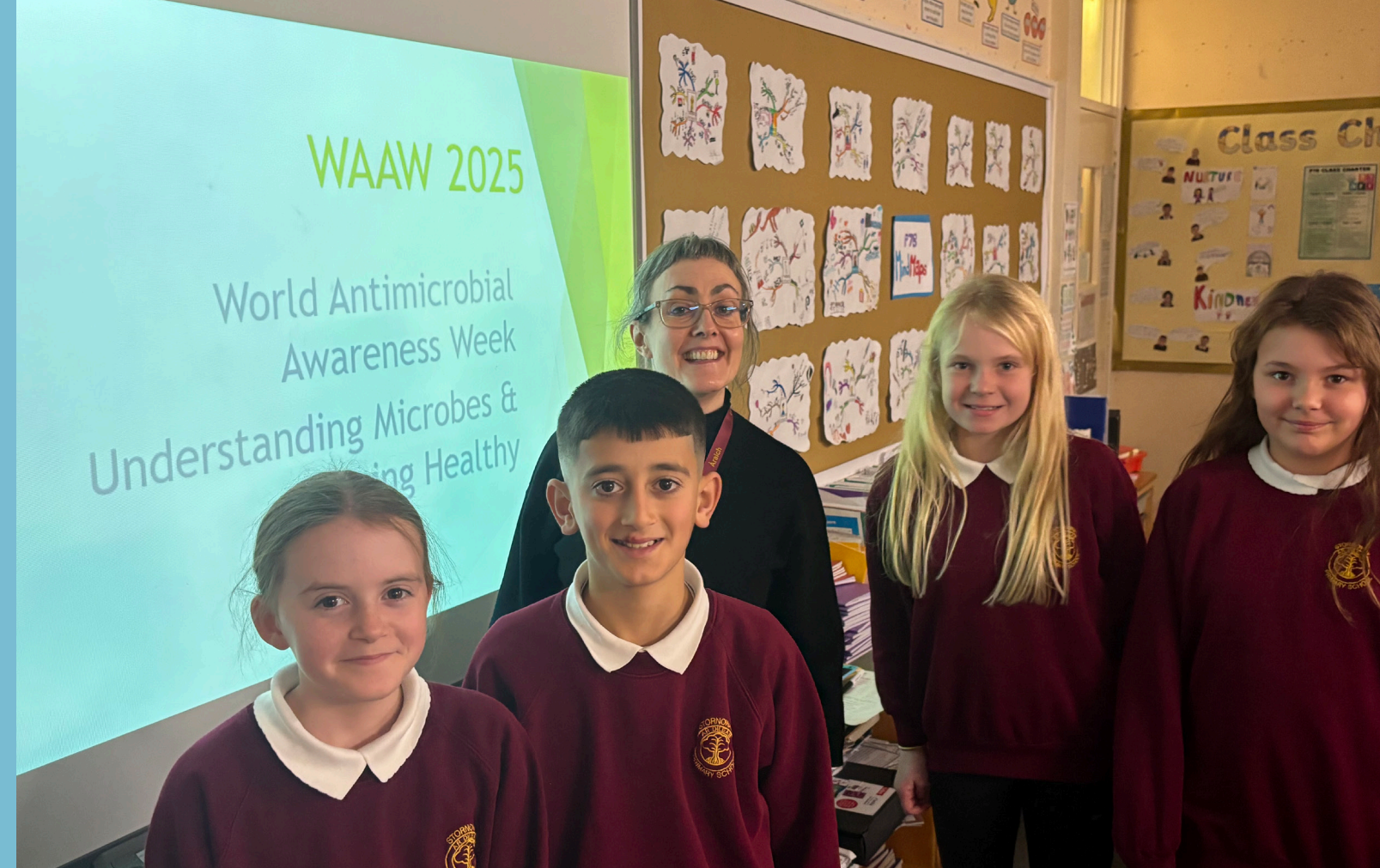
them for most common colds and coughs. Also, why taking them as prescribed by your Doctor is so important to prevent antimicrobial resistance—a topic that's vital for the future of healthcare.

Emer added: "This was an amazing opportunity to connect with the next generation and spark their interest in science and health. Their enthusiasm was infectious (in the best way!), and I really enjoyed their curiosity and energy. Sharing these messages early helps build lifelong habits that protect not only individual health but entire communities."

"I thoroughly enjoyed my afternoon with the P7s. Their eagerness to learn and their thoughtful questions reminded me why education is such a powerful tool in the fight against antimicrobial resistance. If even one pupil goes home and reminds their family to wash their hands properly or not to misuse antibiotics, then we've made a real difference. Hopefully the message about closing toilet lids before flushing will have hit home too coming into Norovirus season!"

"A special shout out to the P7 Immunisation Champions who are doing a great job encouraging their peers to get vaccinated."

Pictured on opposite page are the Immunisation Champions with Emer.



Screen time and use **ParentClub**

Whether your child is taking their first steps into the online world or using it quite a lot, talking to them about navigating the internet safely is one of the most important things you can do to help keep them safer. The more you talk to them about how they use technology like their mobile or games console, the more likely they are to understand your concerns. And the more likely they are to come to you if they feel like something isn't right.

These days it's almost impossible to get through a day without looking at a screen. And it certainly helps to have something to keep the kids quiet when we need to get on with things. But screen use (whether it's smartphones, tablets, laptops, computers, games consoles or TV) can also cause parents a lot of confusion. Is it harmful? How much is too much? Should we all be cutting down on our screen use? ParentClub has looked at the pros and cons, and offer lots of tips for making the most of screen time together and keeping a healthy balance between screen use and other activities.

They has produced a range of safety tools available on their website and include:

- [Setting parental controls](#)
- [Screen use for toddlers aged 2-4](#)
- [Your guide to screen time for school aged children](#)
- [Tips to help parents reduce their screen time](#)
- [Introducing online safety for young children](#)





Leverburgh turns gym aspiration into achievement

A successful £20,000 NHS Capital Funding grant has enabled the Leverhulme Community Hub to turn an aspiration into an achievement, by providing funding towards gym equipment to open its own community gym.

The new equipment, consisting of cardio equipment, free weights, kettlebells and appropriate weight training benches, all from Technogym, are now regularly being used by local residents and visitors alike, once they have completed their induction to make the most of the gym facilities on offer.

Nigel Bruce, Project Manager of the Leverhulme Community Hub (LCH), said: “We wish to thank NHS Western Isles for choosing to support us; we were thrilled to hear we had been successful in attaining a Capital Grant. With the nearest gym 25 miles away, operating our own has always been an aspiration for Leverburgh and South Harris Community, and whilst a space was set aside for this purpose, until recently it just has not been possible.”

In previous years, the Hub was donated some already well-used equipment from the Harris Sports Centre but, after being held in a storage container until the gym room was ready, the equipment was found to require substantial work to upgrade and repair for use.

Stephen added: “In addition, with supplier Technogym supporting all the Lewis and Harris local authority gyms, this means that their travel costs towards any future equipment service/maintenance costs, can be shared with other local facilities. It’s definitely a win-win for our community.”

NHS Western Isles Medical Director Dr Sara Else, said: “NHS Western Isles was delighted to have been able to support the Leverburgh community in achieving its very own gym. Access to a well-equipped gym provides users with opportunities to exercise in a supportive environment, fostering a sense of community and helps reduce social isolation. Regular exercise also reduces the risk of chronic diseases, improves sleep quality, and boosts energy levels, as well as encouraging healthier lifestyles across all age groups.”

LCH already boasts a popular café and Aosh’ is Ur charity shop, local historical society, launderette and a community room/multi-functional space. It is hoped the new gym will lead to further widespread benefits, becoming the cornerstone for a more healthier and connected community.

Photo: LCB Board members photographed in the gym.

Accessing the right Mental Health care



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



- Go to nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing for
- advice on dealing with low mood, anxiety, phobias, and stress
 - free courses to improve your wellbeing, sleep, stress or anger
 - video stories from people who share their own experiences
 - where to get help



- If you are experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety, contact Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87 or the webchat service at breathingspace.scot
- 24 hours at weekends (6pm Friday to 6am Monday)
 - 6pm to 2am on weekdays (Monday to Thursday)
 - 16 years and up, living in Scotland



- Psychological therapy - after an assessment you could be offered a short series of telephone appointments with a therapist
- call Living Life on 0800 328 9655
 - Monday - Friday: 1pm to 9pm.
 - 16 years and up, living in Scotland



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



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



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

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

Lachie hangs up the Harris Tweed jacket as he bids farewell to colleagues

People are any organisation’s most important asset, and when you have to say goodbye to someone who has been part of the work family for a long time and played such an important part in the working lives of so many colleagues, it’s a difficult goodbye.

As Lachlan Mac Pherson (fondly known to many of us as ‘Lachie’) hangs up his famous Harris Tweed jacket and shuts down his emails for the last time as Hospitals Manager, we are taking the time to look back on an impressive career, an unwavering dedication to the NHS and a character who has fondly become part of the furniture of NHS Western Isles.

Having chatted to Lachie about his career and many achievements over the decades, what is always so apparent is his positive nature and calm demeanour. Lachie never loses his temper and doesn’t get stressed. He stays calm in situations that would ruffle the feathers of many. That’s why Lachie was, for many of us, our ‘go to’ person in a crisis – calming the waters and helping to de-escalate stressful situations.

When asked about his early years, Lachie is proud that he was ‘born in the croft in Lionacleit’ back in the days when there were lots of home births.

“I had to leave home at the age of 12 to go to secondary school,” he explains. “In those days, if you passed the 11-plus, you had to leave home to start going to lodgings miles away in South Uist! So I thought it was the end of the world, going from Benbecula to South Uist – I had to go there Monday to Friday.

“There was no link between Uist and Lewis then, as Benbecula was part of Inverness-shire. So, if you were doing 5th and 6th year, you went to Lochaber. After my O-Levels in Daliburgh, however, I went to Wales.”

Sports and Forces

Colleagues may be surprised to learn that Lachie, as a young lad was a very keen and competent sportsman and wanted to travel.

“I joined the Forces in 1974,” he recalls. “I went down to Wales to the Engineering College, where I became an Electrical Engineer. After that I went to London to do Military Engineering training and following that I went to Germany for about six years, where I worked as an Electrical Engineer and did a lot of sport! I probably did more sport than electrical engineering.

“I returned to the UK after that and my last posting was down in the Falklands as an Engineer working in power stations and generators, etc. I was very lucky because I loved sport and I did a lot of football, a lot of skiing and a lot of running and orienteering, and badminton. I played with the local German football team - I’ve actually got one of these German football association cards with my picture on it!” (A gold star for any colleague able to get their hands on a Lachlan Mac Pherson football card – a top collectors’ item!)

After a period in the army, Lachie was encouraged by his fiancée to leave and go into further education, and he achieved a Degree in Electrical Engineering and a Master of Science in Operational Research.

He explains: “As part of the Master of Science you got to do a placement, so I applied to go to India for three months. When the university sent the paperwork out, it said I was going to be working on remote mountain areas to improve water supply. They said, ‘where you are, there’s no bottled water: the first two weeks, you will be very ill, because you’re going to drink the local water; the next two weeks you’ll be not great, but by week five, you’ll have adapted’. My wife said, ‘you’re



not going to India to be sick on top of the mountains! So that was that.

“My second choice was working in British Aerospace in Prestwick. At the last minute, the girl who was going to work for Glasgow Health Board fell out with her boyfriend and she asked if anyone would swap as she didn’t want to be in Glasgow, and nobody would swap. I thought ‘well, Prestwick is a good project but it’s a fair drive and the roads aren’t that good’, so I swapped.”

After completing his Masters degree, Lachie was offered the opportunity to complete a doctorate.

“It would probably have been the easiest doctorate in the world,” he laughs. “All I had to do was work with a professor on his project, and at the end of the year, they’d take my MSc off me and replace it with a doctorate.

“I’d said to my wife after my degree, ‘one more year and I’ll get my Masters’. Then I said to her after my Masters, ‘if I do one more year, I’ll get a doctorate...’. She said, ‘you said that last year - it’s time you went out and got a job’.”

A move to the NHS

Lachie’s first stint in the NHS was in Glasgow Health Board for three months, before getting a permanent post in Argyll and Clyde. He then returned to Glasgow Health Board to do research for them, following which, he became Medical Audit Officer in Argyll and Clyde, He then returned to Glasgow to do Clinical Audit in the Southern General.

“A job then came up for Contracts Information Manager at the Board here,” says Lachie. “I thought I’d like to move back home at some stage but thought it just depends on when jobs come up. So, I applied for that job and got it in February 1993. I was Head of Information next and I’m actually the guy who brought Microsoft Office to the Health Board!

“When I arrived, the Health Board had a thing called Smart software, which wasn’t great, but the guy before me liked Smart software. We were the only place in Scotland to use Smart software, but the staff had learned how to use it and were used to it. People don’t like change, so when I went to change, it didn’t go down well. I was a monster to bring in Microsoft, but after a few months people thought ‘oh this mouse does actually make things a bit easier!’.

Lachie then moved to Public Health as the Public Health Specialist Epidemiologist; a role he describes as ‘fun’. He then became Hospitals Manager, before being seconded to the local authority as Community Planning Partnership Coordinator for two years.

Lachie returned to NHS Western Isles to help improve waiting times around 2005, working on planning and performance, before becoming Hospitals Manager again in 2014.

Without hesitation, Lachie describes the biggest change he’s seen over his years in the NHS as technology.

“We used to send memos when I arrived,” he remembers. “Memos were typed and then physically circulated. Every Monday morning, lorry-loads of paperwork would arrive from the Scottish Government. Hundreds of copies of documents would arrive and we’d have to feed them out to departments. Now everything is on email and things can be sent and received straight away. The speed of everything is so much quicker. And now it’s just one email, and that’s it.”

One of the events that stands out for Lachie in his career is the pandemic. And whilst it was the most challenging time many of us have faced in our careers, Lachie focuses on the positive aspects of the staff response.

He shares: “It was so impressive how everybody worked together. I remember the relief when we had the two wards ready for Covid, Erisort and Clisham. The



modelling for what was going to happen to us was so bad, we were expecting the worst. We had Erisort and Clisham set up for the worst-case scenario – we were so well prepared, but the Minch and travel restrictions gave us time, so we were ready for it. That was everybody working together. We also had the local Sandwick Hall set up, we had O’Mac and DRs in straight away supporting us, it was a massive team effort.”

Having enjoyed every role in his career, Lachie found it difficult to pinpoint the highlight:

“Accepting that my four children will always be my number one achievement, my second is working with amazing, dedicated colleagues in all roles in the Forces and health service,” he says.

“I have so many memories to be proud of – from building radar stations in the Falklands in challenging circumstances, to introducing Microsoft Office into the Health Board!

“When you finish projects like A&E and the Uist and Barra refurbishment, it’s always satisfying when things are finished well and you get to see the impact of the work.

“I am also very proud of our work (with special mention for Alasdair Finlayson and Ronnie Murray) across several disciplines in meeting Treatment Time Guarantee targets. NHS Western Isles was the only Board in Scotland with no breachers till Covid service constraints were imposed.

“But the best bit of the job in the NHS has definitely

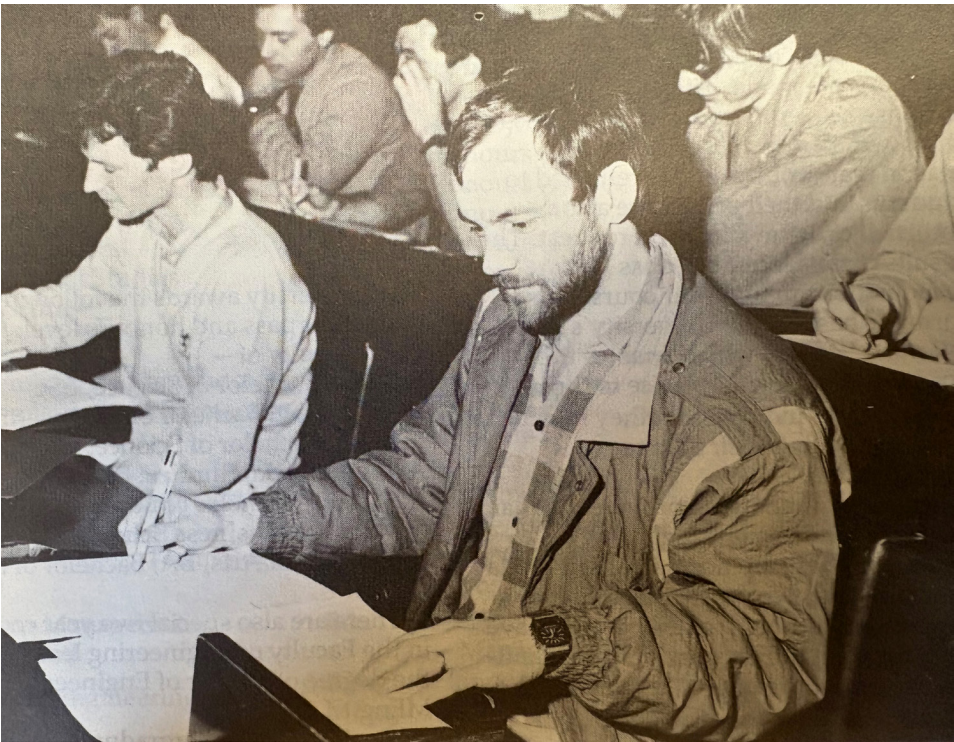
been working with all these people. Amazing people. Dedicated people. I’ll really miss that – the interaction with all the staff.”

And as for his favourite role, Lachie found it hard to choose, but admits: “Although I have enjoyed all my roles throughout my career, the A+ special role will have to be ski instructor in Norway, with incredible scenery and perfect dry snow for skiing!

“The thing is, I’ve enjoyed every role and every stage. I loved school - I didn’t really want to leave school. I loved college, then I had a hard time leaving the Forces, as I loved that too. I really felt like I was leaving a family. I loved university – if I’d stayed on to do my doctorate, I’d probably have stayed forever as staff.

“Every role is different, that’s the thing. I really did enjoy all my roles from Electrical Engineer, Clinical Audit Facilitator, Senior Analyst, Contracts & Information Manager, Head of Information, Public Health Specialist (Epidemiology), Community Planning Co-ordinator, Capacity Planning & Performance Manager, and finally Hospitals Manager.

“When you sort a patient’s problems, that’s really rewarding. But when there’s a crisis I enjoy working on the solution and I know we’ll sort things out. I like chaos and crisis – I work well in a crisis. In the Falklands, we worked 18-hour days for seven day weeks (it should be noted that we were rewarded financially for these long hours - 50p per day), and any problem that came up, we fixed it.”





Whilst Lachie’s background in the Army is perhaps a feature in his ability to solve problems, it’s his warm personality that has made him extremely popular with colleagues, with his 24/7 ‘open door policy’ and invitation to staff to pop in at any time with any issues. Lachie has always put work first: spending more time in the office than he really should and ready and willing to assist anyone with any issue at a moment’s notice. (Many colleagues have commented about seeing Lachie returning to his office long after the working day has ended, armed with a bottle or two of Pepsi Max and the obligatory armful of chocolate bars!). If ever a person was truly devoted to their job, it was Lachie, and NHS Western Isles is fortunate to have had his committed service for such a long period.

Whilst we are sad to see Lachie leave the NHS Western Isles family (and cannot quite believe he has gone) we are all thankful to Lachie for his dedicated contribution to local healthcare and we are delighted for him and his family that he is now taking time to focus on a more relaxed lifestyle.

Lachie’s first plan for retirement was a trip to Germany to visit his son, Sascha, and he also plans to spend a lot of time visiting the mainland to see his youngest daughter, Daisy, who is now in university, as well as his other children, Mischa and Ruari who are also based off-island.

Other than that, he will spend time on things he enjoys doing, like going to concerts and walking in the Castle Grounds (when he’s not busy doing DIY or decluttering!).

“When I was younger I always thought I’d retire at 60. I’ve gone a bit past that, and I did think of working for another three or four years. But I thought, I’ve known so many people my age who have had health problems recently. I decided that I should go when I’m reasonably fit and do things (still working on what ‘things’ will be).

“I’ll really miss the comradeship, working with the colleagues,” he adds. “There’s a lot of good people here.”

As we bid farewell to a ‘one of a kind’ character and friend, we wish Lachie all the very best.

So whether you’ll remember Lachie as king of the quizzes, a general knowledge wizard, our proud Veterans Champion, the world’s greatest fan of Pepsi Max, a chocaholic, the calm in a storm, a friendly face, or the man with the Harris Tweed jacket – we will all miss your knowledge, your presence, and your contagious laugh.

But there’s nobody that deserves time to themselves more than you.



Lachie and Ronnie Murray, Planning & Performance Manager



Lachie with Gordon Jamieson, NHSWI Chief Executive



Lachie and Paul Kedar, Senior Health Intelligence Analyst



One of Lachie's fond and proud memories was when his team won the trophy in Social Group Quiz, pipping Health Promotion to the top prize!

The Core Team (Mary McDowall, Chris Anne Campbell, Lorraine Mackay, Richard Galloway and Lachlan Mac Pherson) from Western Isles Hospital won the summer Social Group Quiz on a tiebreaker with Health Promotion!

The tiebreaker question asked for estimates of distance from London to New York. Chris Ryan said 4,000 for Health Promotion, and Lachlan said 3,400 for the Core Team. The answer of 3,447 gave the Core Team the trophy. Although happy with the result, Lachlan was annoyed that his calculation of distance through Concorde flight path and flight speeds was 47 miles out, as he had calculated an error of plus or minus 25 miles...



Quiz Night Win!

Lachie with Dental team; Eric Macdonald, George Macleod and John Lyon.

THE BALLAD OF LACHIE MACPHERSON

From Benbecula’s shores he set off one fine day,
To join the Royal Engineers and make his own way,
From wiring and fixing to teaching on skis,
There wasn’t a challenge he couldn’t achieve.

Most years were in Germany – busy and grand,
Then back into study – degrees got out of hand!
“Just one more year”, he’d say with a grin,
Till an MSc later, he finally gave in.

Then in came the NHS – his next great quest,
Where thirty-three years saw him give his best.
Ten as a manager, steady and wise,
With patience and humour that never dies.

Old school with notepads – a mountain, no less,
His handwriting legendary, his desk in distress!
You’d pop by for seconds, a question or two,
And leave half an hour later – enlightened anew.

With Pepsi Max fizzing and ice cream on call,
And KFC dinners – he’s sampled them all.
A dancer, a joker, a ceilidh floor star,
He even made Hogmanay telly by far!

He loves his debates, his history too,
And somehow still finds a good laugh to pursue.
So here’s to you, Lachie – our leader, our friend,
Whose humour and kindness knew no end.

You’ve earned your rest, your time, your cheer –
No “one more year”, Lachie –
you’ve done your years here!

NHS Western Isles Climate Emergency and Sustainability update report 2024/25

NHS Western Isles has published its 2024/25 Climate Emergency and Sustainability Report, detailing continued progress toward national targets for reducing carbon emissions, strengthening climate resilience, cutting waste and embedding sustainable healthcare practices across its services and estate.

This year's report highlights both achievements and challenges as the organisation works to deliver high-quality care to remote and island communities while responding to the escalating climate emergency. In the last year, NHS Western Isles has achieved meaningful reductions in several key emission areas.

Some of the achievements made by NHS Western Isles between April 2024 and March 2025 are:

- A 47% reduction in emissions from medical gases, following the withdrawal of some anaesthetic gases with a high global warming potential.
- A 13% reduction in fleet emissions, supported by reduced mileage and the ongoing transition to electric vehicles.
- Implementation of national Green Theatres actions, to reduce waste associated with surgery.
- Pharmacy-led reductions in medicine waste, inhaler emissions, printing, and travel-related emissions.
- Staff pool bikes, including e-bikes, are now available, with new bike shelters and secure storage.
- Enhanced greenspace and biodiversity through Our Hospital Garden and the Jubilee Rose Garden at Western Isles Hospital.
- GP practice-led initiatives such as Broadbay Medical Practice's courtyard transformation, which now provides habitat for pollinators and a place of calm for patients and staff.
- Awarding capital grants to improve community e-bike access, support sustainable festival infrastructure, improve paths for mobility and increase resilience in community facilities.
- Distribution of Wonderbags, which support energy-efficient cooking for households most in need.

Colum Durkan, Director of Public Health and Chair of the NHS Western Isles Sustainability Steering Group, said: "NHS Western Isles understands the importance of the climate emergency. As an organisation we are committed to working on a wide range of initiatives to minimise our impact on the environment, and to promoting ways that patients and staff can contribute to this. This report highlights achievements to date, and the dedication of those involved in delivering positive change. I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who has made a contribution, there is so much to be proud of."

NHS Western Isles remains committed to expanding and improving its environmental actions by supporting continued investment, innovation and collaboration to build a greener, more resilient health service for future generations.

The report can be accessed at: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/about-us/publications (Annual Climate and Sustainability Report). For more information, contact wi.sustainability@nhs.scot



Western Isles Health Services Rank Among Scotland's Best for Quality and Patient Respect

The quality of health services in the Western Isles has come up amongst the very best in Scotland according to the latest Scottish Household Survey.

A total of 77 per cent of respondents to the survey said they were satisfied with the quality of local health services, against a national average of 61 per cent.

Meanwhile 96 per cent of respondents agreed that they were treated with dignity and respect by health service staff in the Western Isles, against a national average of 89 per cent.

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon

Jamieson, said: “Despite the increasing challenges faced by our staff on a daily basis, they rise to the challenge and continue to provide gold standard services for the population. Our entire organisation and systems of care are focussed on doing the best we can for our population, learning and improving from their experiences and feedback.

“These survey results are testament to the systems of care we have and the dedication, care and compassion of the staff who provide local healthcare services and I would like to thank them on behalf of our communities for all they do.”

Did you know?

It has been estimated that there is between £12-18m worth of avoidable medicinal waste in Scotland. Reasons attributed to this have included repeat prescribing and over-ordering by patients. (2020)

HELP US REDUCE MEDICINE WASTE

The most expensive medicine is the one that you don't use.

It is up to all of us to be more responsible about ordering and using repeat prescriptions. Unused medicines cannot be recycled. If you aren't taking your medication, tell your GP or make an appointment with the Primary Care Pharmacy team.

Remember to check what medicines you have at home before re-ordering to ensure you are only ordering what you need.



healthy hebridean kids

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

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



healthyhebrideankids.scot.nhs.uk

your health guide

NHS
Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

Winter 2025/26

Welcome to your 4-page pull-out winter guide from NHS Western Isles!

This useful guide offers help and guidance for you (and your household) to ensure you get the right care in the right place this winter, as well as helping you to keep safe, well and warm.

Emergency contacts



NHS 24 111

NHS Inform 0800 224488
Helpline (for questions about your health or health service)

Electric (power cuts) 105

Water 0800 0778 778

Gas 0800 111 999

Police (Emergency) 999

Police (Non-emergency) 101

Faire Alarm 01851 701702
Service

NHS Western Isles 01851 704704

Western Isles Women's Aid 01851 704750

British Red Cross 01851 702897

For winter travel advice (safe driving, gritting and road monitoring cameras for the Braighe, Barvas moor, the Clisham and Castlebay) visit the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES) website at: <https://cne-siar.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-monitoring-cameras>

Keep healthy this winter

The colder winter months can have a significant impact on your health and wellbeing. 'Self care' is about looking after your health and covers your physical, mental and emotional health.

- **Vaccination:** one of the most important things you can do to help you avoid winter illness is getting any vaccinations you are eligible for. Winter vaccines help protect you from flu and COVID-19. Find out about what vaccines you are eligible for and our local vaccination schedule at: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/vaccination-services. To amend or cancel a scheduled vaccination appointment, please call 01851 448 567.

- **Maintaining a well stocked medicine cabinet** means you'll receive the right treatment immediately. Make sure you have some over-the-counter (OTC) remedies for common seasonal illnesses in your medicine cabinet. That could include paracetamol and ibuprofen for pain relief; anti-histamines to help allergies; anti-diarrhoeals and oral rehydration sachets for diarrhoea; indigestion remedies such as an antacid; mild laxative for constipation; a first aid kit; and medicines specifically for children (your pharmacist can advise on the most suitable ones to keep in the house).

Remember that medicines go out of date, so don't overstock your medicine cabinet. Always follow the advice on the pack, and if your symptoms continue (or are severe) get further advice by:

- calling your GP
- visiting your local Pharmacist
- visiting NHS Inform: www.nhsinform.scot
- calling NHS 24 on 111.

- **Recognising symptoms and getting the correct treatment** is important to ensure your health doesn't deteriorate during the winter months. NHS Inform offers a wealth of information on illnesses and conditions, including cancer, heart, diabetes, injuries and muscle, blood and lymph, bone and joints. Find out more at: www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions.

- **Ensure you practice good hand and respiratory hygiene** by washing or hand sanitising regularly - and if you cough or sneeze trap it in a tissue and dispose of the tissue immediately in a bin (or cough/sneeze into your elbow). This helps to prevent the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19 as well as the winter vomiting bug. Find out more about winter illnesses at: www.nhsinform.scot/winter-illness

Do:

- ✓ speak to your local pharmacy for advice about minor illnesses, treatments and medication
- ✓ contact your local optician if you have an eye problem
- ✓ contact your GP practice, optician or dentist by phone or online first
- ✓ arrive on time for healthcare appointments and notify the service at the earliest opportunity if you are unable to attend.

Getting the Right Care for You

If you have an urgent condition that is not life threatening, you should contact NHS24 free day or night on 111. Alternatively, you can contact your GP for urgent advice and treatment during normal working hours. This helps protect our hospital Emergency Departments so that those with life threatening conditions receive the care they need.

NHS 24 111 Service

The 111 service provides urgent care and advice (that isn't a life threatening situation) when your GP, pharmacy or dental practice is closed. The service can also help if you are in mental distress.

As well as English, the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) on the 111 service is available in various languages: Arabic, Mandarin, Polish, Spanish, Romanian, Sorani and Ukrainian.

BSL users can also communicate with Contact Scotland BSL, and people with hearing and speech difficulties can use Relay UK (Previously Next Generation Text) to call the phone-based services.

If it's not a medical emergency and you're unsure about what to do, you can also check your symptoms using NHS24's quick self-help guides at www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides

NHS Inform's self-help guides suggest steps to deal with your health situation. Tailored guidance on common ailments and treatments include abdominal pain, diarrhoea, earache, fevers, back pain, rashes, urinary infections, and sore throats.

You can also visit www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/right-care-right-place

In an emergency dial 999.

Walking on ice

Stay safe during icy conditions by doing the penguin walk when walking on ice to help avoid winter slips and broken bones!



The Penguin Walk

- Bend slightly and keep your knees loose
- Point your feet out slightly
- Extend your arms to your sides
- Walk flat footed, taking short slow steps
- Keep your centre of gravity over your feet.

Try to avoid carrying a heavy bag as this will cause your weight to shift unevenly.

It's also important to watch where you're stepping and be aware of your surroundings. If you do go out when weather is wintry, remember to dress warmly, wear sensible shoes with a good grip.

Substance Use



The festive season is a period that we all tend to indulge ourselves and many of us give in to excess. For someone dealing with a substance misuse problem, this can be a dangerous path.

The Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership (OHADP) promotes the dangers of alcohol misuse and treatment available.

If you are worried about your (or someone else's) drug taking, view the OHADP Recovery Support Services Directory, which offers a wide range of local and national support contacts.

- Outer Hebrides Alcohol & Drug Partnership: www.outerhebadp.com

- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk or tel. 0800 9177650.

- Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs www.sfad.org.uk or tel. 08080 101011

Naloxone is used to reverse the effects of an overdose from drugs such as Heroin, Methadone, Buprenorphine and Oxycodone, as well as other illicit and prescribed opiate-based medications. You can request a Naloxone kit by post - either pre-filled injection or nasal spray. Free training is also provided. Contact Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs (SFAD) on their secure online portal at: www.sfad.org.uk/support-services/take-home-naloxone

Mental health: you're not alone

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. The festive season can affect our mental health in lots of different ways. This could be if Christmas is part of your life, or if it's happening around you. It's a time of year that often puts extra pressure on us. Many people find this time of year particularly tough for a variety of reasons.

Stress and Anxiety

Stress and anxiety are normal emotions and reactions, but at times they can become overwhelming. If you're experiencing stress or anxiety, there are a range of resources and support on NHS Inform.

You may want to limit how much time you spend on social media or watching the news, too much of either can make you feel anxious or overwhelmed, and can negatively impact our wellbeing.

It helps to talk to friends and family, don't cut off from those you love and trust, even if you feel really fed up – try and pick up the phone and actually have a conversation with someone.

Depression

It's normal for some experiences to leave you feeling low. But, if the negative feelings don't go away, or are stopping you carrying on with normal life, support is available.

Symptoms of depression can be very different from person to person. As a general rule,

if you are depressed you feel hopeless, sad and lacking interest in things that used to make you feel happy. Depression symptoms are bad enough to interfere with work, social life and family life, and can persist for weeks or months, or even longer.

Remember that the NHS wants to hear from you if you have health problems – please do not leave them. If you have a healthcare appointment, please try to keep it. You shouldn't put off contacting a doctor about your mental health: the earlier you seek help, the better.

If the festive season is hard for you, it is important to remember you are not alone.

Things to help could include keeping physically active when you can; eating well – include plenty of warm drinks and at least one hot meal each day; and maintaining social connections with friends and family online or by phone if you're unable to get out and about.

There are Anxiety, Depression and Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) Self Help Guides at NHS Inform: www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides

Local Mental Wellbeing Website

The site offers support and advice on how to strengthen your mental health. Visit www.mentalwellbeing.wihb.scot.nhs.uk

National and local support

Samaritans

Available 24/7. Freephone 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org Visit www.samaritans.org/scotland

Breathing Space

Phone and web-based service for low mood, depression or anxiety. Freephone 0800 838587

Kooth

Safe and anonymous support for young people 11-25 years. Visit www.kooth.com

If you feel unable to keep yourself safe, it's a mental health emergency. If you feel like you might attempt suicide, or may have seriously harmed yourself, you need urgent medical help. Please either call 999 or go to the Emergency Department.

Catch 23 Drop-in Centre

Drop-in service Monday-Friday from 12 noon-4pm, and Saturdays from 11am-3pm (excluding public holidays), at 23 Bayhead, Stornoway.

Uist Drop-in Service

Warm hub cafe every Wednesday (excluding public holidays) from 11am - 2.30pm. An-Caladh, East Camp, Balivanich, Benbecula.

Mental health emergencies are serious. You're not wasting anyone's time.

Emergency contraception



Emergency contraception can be obtained free of charge from local Emergency Departments, all pharmacists or dispensing GP Practices.

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

Longer-lasting contraception is more effective and could be better suited to your lifestyle. Once fitted it can last from 3 to 10 years and you can stop using it whenever you like. Longer-lasting contraception gives you more choice. However a condom should also be used to help protect against Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

For advice and access on the long-term contraception method right for you, contact your local Family Planning Clinic or GP Practice or visit www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/our-services/sexual-health-services



To make sure you access the care you need in the right place, visit:
www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/right-care-right-place

Power of Attorney

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

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

A PoA is a vital legal document that everyone over 16 years, irrespective of their current health and fitness, should have in place. It grants someone that you know and trust, the authority to take action or make decisions on your behalf, when you no longer have capacity to do so.

In fact, put simply, without a PoA any future decisions taken for you may instead be taken by a

doctor, the local authority or the court. This includes you receiving medical treatment, your home and living situation, and managing your financial affairs. Your family/named person would then have to apply to the Court for a Guardianship or Intervention Order for them to manage your affairs, which can be a long and expensive process.

Many also assume that by having a Will in place, that the Will will suffice. However, it is incredibly important to note the difference between a Will and a Power of Attorney - a Will only applies **after** your death, whereas a Power of Attorney applies while you are still alive. For further information, or to find out if you are eligible for Legal Aid to help you set up a free Power of Attorney, visit the My Power of Attorney website at: mypowerofattorney.org.uk

In partnership with local solicitors, NHS Western Isles has produced a number of short films about the importance of having a Power of Attorney. View these at: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/our-services/home-care

Fever in Children

It can be extremely worrying if your child has a high temperature, but it's very common and often clears up by itself without treatment. A quick and easy way to find out whether your child has a fever is to take their temperature using a thermometer.

Causes of a high temperature
Most fevers are caused by infections or other illnesses. The high body temperature makes it more difficult for the bacteria and viruses that cause infections to survive. Common conditions that can cause fevers include upper respiratory tract infections (RTIs), flu, ear infections, roseola – a virus that causes a temperature and a rash and tonsillitis. Your child's temperature can also be raised after vaccinations, or if they overheat because of too much bedding or clothing.

Contact your GP if your child:

- is under 3 months and has a temperature of 38°C (101°F) or above
- is over 3 months and has a temperature of 39°C (102°F) or above
- has other signs of illness, such as a rash, as well as a high temperature



- has a high temperature that's lasted for 5 days or more
- has persistent vomiting
- doesn't want to eat, or isn't their usual self and you're worried
- has a high temperature that does not come down with paracetamol
- is dehydrated – such as nappies that are not very wet, sunken eyes, and no tears when they're crying.

If your GP is closed, phone 111.

Phone 999 or attend the Emergency Department if your child:

- has a stiff neck
- has a rash that does not fade when you press a glass against it (use the 'glass test' from Meningitis Now)
- is bothered by light
- has a fit (febrile seizure) for the first time (they cannot stop shaking)
- has unusually cold hands and feet

Other warning signs can be found within NHS Inform's Fever in Children section at: www.nhsinform.scot

Repeat Prescriptions

In advance of the public holidays during the festive period, NHS Western Isles is reminding our communities to put a note in their diaries/calendars to order their repeat medications well in advance of planned closures - BUT only if these medications are needed.



Remember that unused medications cannot be recycled, so are not able to be reissued to another person. Even if you never open them, once medicines have left the pharmacy, they cannot be recycled or reused by anyone else. Should you have any queries about a prescribed medication you are taking, please contact your GP or Pharmacist.

Those with quantities of out-of-date or no longer used prescribed medications, are encouraged to safely dispose them by returning them to their GP Practice or local pharmacy. Please do not bin or flush unwanted prescribed medications, as these can harm the local environment, cause risk to other people, and also cause household toilet/water contamination.

Hospital at Home

The 'Hospital at Home' service provides care in the community, which is equivalent to the care provided within hospital. Patients are referred to Hospital at Home by a clinician. It is used where a patient would normally require admission to hospital but care at home is deemed more medically appropriate, whilst ensuring appropriate and safe patient care.

Patients are treated in their own place of residence (their own home, a relative's home or a care/nursing home) rather than receiving care in hospital. The range of conditions that could be managed through Hospital at Home includes a wide range of conditions such as infections needing intravenous antibiotics, respiratory patients needing short term oxygen therapy and those requiring intravenous fluids for dehydration.

The service is managed by a dedicated NHS Western Isles clinical team and can be used to support discharge from hospital, or to avoid hospital admission. Patients remain under the care of a hospital consultant and are monitored on a 'virtual ward' within the hospital's electronic systems.

Keep warm this winter

You should heat your home to a temperature that is comfortable for you. Low indoor temperatures can have a serious impact on your health, especially if you have medical conditions or are older.

Simple changes can help to keep you and your home warm including:

- heating rooms you spend a lot of time in, such as the living room or bedroom, to at least 18°C
- trying to reduce draughts; you can fit draft excluders around doors cheaply
- keeping your bedroom windows closed at night
- wearing several layers of thinner clothing; this could keep you warmer than one thicker layer.

Anyone who would like more information on energy advice can contact The Energy Advisory Service (TEAS) by telephoning (01851) 706121 or emailing: info@tighean.co.uk

Read our section opposite on the safe use of hot water bottles, if you plan on using hot water bottles this winter.

Cost of Living Support

The Cost of Living Support Scotland website provides information on the wide range of advice and financial support.

The website includes information on help available for households to meet rising energy, housing and other costs. It also provides details on accessing Scottish and UK social security payments, including online benefit calculators, as well as wider health and wellbeing information.

Visit: <http://gov.scot/costoflivingsupport>
However, if you do not have internet access, you can ask your local library staff to help; this is a free service and staff are happy to help.



Are you a carer?

A carer is a person of any age who provides unpaid care and support to a family member, friend or neighbour who is disabled, has an illness or long-term condition, or who needs extra help as they grow older.

Carers may be stretched to the limit – juggling care with work and family life, struggling to make ends meet and often battling with poor health themselves. Carers Scotland offers expert financial and practical information and guidance, championing your rights and supporting you in finding new ways to manage at home, at work, or wherever you are.

Carers of all ages are encouraged to find out about the Carer Support Payment, benefits for carers, help with health, care and household costs, and dealing with debt. Contact Carers Scotland by telephoning 0141 378 1065, emailing advice@carersuk.org or visiting www.carersuk.org/scotland

Remember unpaid and young carers are eligible for free flu vaccination. For further details visit www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/vaccination-services

Hot water bottle safety

With temperatures dropping and the cost of living rising, many opt to use hot water bottles. To avoid burns and scalds, follow these safety tips:

- never fill a hot water bottle with boiling water- it will degrade the edges
- always use a cover for your hot water bottle
- don't fill the bottle more than two thirds and be careful when squeezing air out
- check the daisy wheel on the neck of the

Food Bank support

Sadly, some people have to choose between either paying bills or feeding themselves and/ or their families. Illness, benefit delay, domestic violence, debt, redundancy, family breakdown, and extra or unexpected bills are just some of the reasons why people go without food.

Food Bank support is for anybody who needs short-term food support. This can include those who are homeless, unemployed or employed, but their pay is insufficient to meet their needs.

If you, or someone you know is struggling, view the list of Food Banks available in the Western Isles at: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/cost-of-living-support

Elder Abuse

Christmas can be a wonderful time of the year, however things may not necessarily be so cheerful for some of our older and most vulnerable citizens.

Regardless of our age, we should be able to live safely, free from abuse and neglect. Sometimes, though, you may feel at risk, or you may be concerned about another person.

If this happens, there are people you can speak to and there is help available. Abuse can come in various forms, including domestic, physical, psychological, financial, and sexual.

If you feel unsafe or are worried about someone else, please tell someone about it. This may feel difficult, especially if the person abusing you is a close friend or relative, but abuse and neglect are never acceptable.

You don't have to put up with it, and there is help available for you.

For advice or support contact Hourglass Scotland, tel. 0808 808 8141 or free text 078 6005 2906, or the Age UK Advice Line on 0800 678 1602.

bottle for when it was manufactured - it's best not to use hot water bottles older than 3 years.

In the event of a serious burn or scald take the following steps:

- remove or cut off any clothing covering the area
- place the burn under cool running water for 20 minutes, but keep the rest of the person warm
- call 999 in an emergency
- cover the burn loosely with cling film.

Can Self-directed Support help you?

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

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

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

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

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

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

For further information contact Advocacy Western Isles, which offers Self Directed Support Services to support you, even if you have been assessed as not eligible for care input from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

Contact Advocacy Western Isles by emailing: office@advocacywi.co.uk or tel. 01851 701755. Additional information can be found at: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/our-services/home-care

Supporting others

If you have vulnerable neighbours, relatives or know someone with heart or breathing problems, as we approach the winter months, it's important that you check in with them to make sure they:

- are feeling well
- are warm enough at home
- have enough food and medicine if they're unable to go out in bad weather.

If you're concerned that someone isn't coping, contact Comhairle nan Eilean Siar or the Age Scotland helpline. This is available on 0800 12 44 222, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

NHS STAFF NEWS

Well Done Graduates!



Another huge congratulations to Karen and Colin who welcomed their daughter Nina Mae Smith on 8th October (pictured above left). They would like to thank Dr Maclean and the wonderful NHSWI Midwifery team for their compassion and the exceptional care that helped them to bring Nina safely into the world.

Karen is employed as a Specialist Speech and Language Therapist, as well as volunteering with the Stornoway Coastguard Rescue Team.

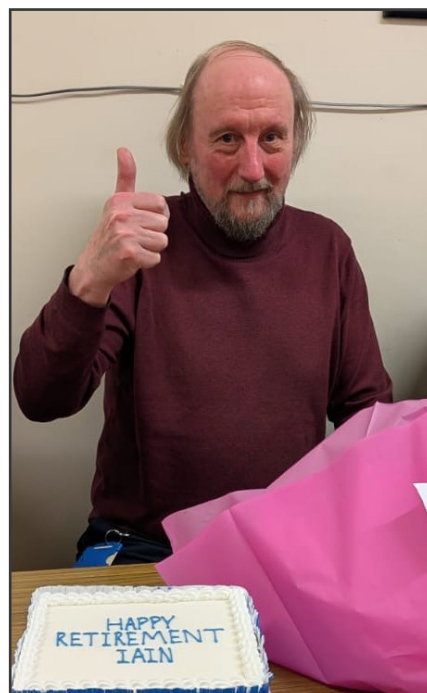
Baby News!

A huge congratulations to Mairi Morrison, HCA Maternity, pictured above right with her baby Ayla Morrison, who was born on October 10.

Also pictured is her colleague, Midwife Naomi Macphail.

Happy Retirement Iain and Donald!

The Works Department have said a fond farewell to two valued members of the Department. Iain Macleod (pictured left), Database Co-ordinator, and Donald Fraser (pictured right), Maintenance Assistant, both recently retired. The Works Department said: "We will miss them both very much and wish them both a happy and healthy retirement."



Congratulations to Elaine MacKay and Janet MacLean from the Public Health team on their graduations.

Elaine and Janet (pictured right) both graduated with a Postgraduate Certificate in Infection Prevention and Control from the University of the Highlands and Islands North, West and Hebrides.

Their graduation ceremony was held at Stornoway Town Hall on October 31.



Congratulations to Annabelle Lamont (Urgent Care), Fiona Toor (Hospital@Home) and Amanda Macdonald (Urgent Care) who all graduated with a Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Nursing Practice.

Belle, Mandy and Fiona (pictured below) have demonstrated their dedication to improving patient care and enhancing the front door services.

Janette Murray, Clinical Lead / Service Manager Urgent & Unscheduled Care said: "We are all very proud of their achievement, and wish them every success in progressing their



Congratulations to Chloe Nicoll (pictured above) who recently graduated as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner.

Chloe works with the CSN team at the Western Isles Hospital, who are extremely proud of her achievements!



Know Who to Turn To

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

Emergency Department

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



NHS Inform

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

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



Local GP Practice

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



NHS 24

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



Community Pharmacy

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





Think Western Isles

Think Wellbeing



Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

Want a healthier work-life balance?

Seeking to escape the stressful hustle and bustle?

Looking for improved job satisfaction?

Wide range of development opportunities



A life like no other,
in a place like no other

www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/vacancies



www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/vacancies

Recruitment



Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

Job Vacancy	Closing Date	Band	Job Ref
Maintenance Assistant	12.12.2025	2	233564
Integrated Front Door Service Frailty Practitioner	12.12.2025	7	233653
Integrated Front Door Service Frailty Practitioner	12.12.2025	7	233662
Specialist Clinical Pharmacist Integrated Front Door Service Frailty Practitioner	12.12.2025	7	233684
Integrated Front Door Service Specialist Nurse	12.12.2025	6	233689
Healthcare Support Worker	12.12.2025	3	233694
Radiology Clerical Officer	12.12.2025	2	232004
Medical Ward 2 Healthcare Assistant	12.12.2025	3	233345
Bank Cook	16.12.2025	3	233757
Advanced Practitioner Physiotherapist in Primary Care	17.12.2025	7	233320
Clinical Practice Trainer Simulation Focus	17.12.2025	6	233394
Dental Receptionist	17.12.2025	2	233534
Dental Receptionist	17.12.2025	2	233543
Locum Consultant Psychiatrist CAMHS	17.12.2025	Con	233830
Senior Charge Nurse Uist Community Nursing	18.12.2025	7	233940
Domestic Supervisor (Uist)	24.12.2025	3	234424
Senior Staff Nurses x3 (Barra)	24.12.2025	6	233791
Community Dementia Nurse	24.12.2025	5	233752
Practice Education Lead	28.12.2025	7	233518
Recruitment and HR Systems Team Leader	05.01.2026	6	233905
Specialist Clinical Pharmacists x2	30.01.2025	7	234431

NHS Western Isles

Meet the Board



Eileanan Siar
Western Isles



Gillian McCannon

Board Chair



Gordon Jamieson

Chief Executive

Executive and Non-Executive Directors



Colum Durkan

Director of Public Health



Debbie Bozkurt

Director of Finance & Procurement / IJB Chief Finance officer



Dr Sara Else

Medical Director



Frances Robertson

Nurse/AHP Director & Chief Operating Officer



Diane MacDonald

Director of Human Resources & Workforce Development



Sheena Wright

Non-Executive Director / Whistleblowing Champion



Julia Higginbottom

Non-Executive Director / Sustainability Champion



Jane Bain

Non-Executive Director / Employee Director



Karen France

Non-Executive Director / Chair of Area Clinical Forum



Paul Steele

Non-Executive Director / Comhairle Representative



Annetta Smith

Non-Executive Director



Naomi MacDonald

Non-Executive Director



Paul MacAskill

Non-Executive Director



Ian McCorquodale

Non-Executive Director



Eileanan Siar
Western Isles



Work With Us

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

“The best at what we do”

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

