

Slàinte

Health update from NHS Western Isles

A bright beginning to the new year!



[Our favourite Traitor visits NHS Western Isles!](#)



[MRI Progress](#)



[Safety measures](#)



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Welcome to Slàinte

- your local NHS news

Welcome to the latest 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



World Kidney Day at the Renal Unit in Western Isles Hospital: March 12, 2026

Our Renal Unit team were at the foyer of the Western Isles Hospital on Thursday 12 March, as part of World Kidney Day.

They shared information and advice on keeping kidneys healthy - and handed out free water to remind everyone that staying hydrated helps to keep kidneys healthy!



Find out more about World Kidney Day on page 45.

Dental Treatment Access List now open on Lewis

To help improve access to dental services, NHS Western Isles has opened a Dental Treatment Access List on Lewis, recognising the challenges many people have faced in registering with General Dental Services (GDS).

A Treatment Access List is a waiting list for a one-off course of dental treatment for individuals who are not currently registered with a GDS dentist. This approach helps people - particularly in areas where routine dental registration is limited - receive essential care to stabilise their oral health.

Lewis will now follow Uist and Barra, where Treatment Access Lists are already in place. Introducing the list on Lewis will support a consistent approach across the Western Isles and also provide better insight into local demand and unmet need, as the numbers joining the list will help highlight pressure points in service capacity.

Individuals living in HS1 and HS2 who are not registered with a dentist can now add their name to the Treatment Access List for a course of treatment by calling 01851 707500.

The decision to introduce the list was discussed at a recent NHS Board meeting. At the meeting, Chief Executive Gordon Jamieson highlighted ongoing challenges in the operational delivery of dental services across the Western Isles and noted that

the full extent of unmet need is not yet clear. In terms of access, prioritisation is given to children, and Childsmile and NDIP programmes continue to be delivered to allow targeted care provision and support, as well as patients who may require priority access due to medical or social vulnerabilities e.g. patients awaiting complex medical procedures and needing to be dentally fit, patients with additional support needs or other vulnerable adults. Those who contact with a dental problem will be triaged using the Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme (SDCEP) guidelines and supported in their onward care prioritised by need.

Mr Jamieson noted that the situation on Uist remains the most challenging within the Western Isles. NHS Western Isles is currently experiencing unexpected dentist vacancies, and active recruitment is underway for both Uist and Barra. The Board recognises the significant concern within the community and sincerely regrets the difficulties this is causing. NHS Western Isles remains committed to maintaining three dentists plus support staff on Uist and is currently recruiting two Public Dental Officers and one Senior Dental Officer, with the Senior role being a new enhanced post.

Recruitment efforts are ongoing, and emergency dental cover remains in place in the interim.



Local interfaith conference success

NHS Western Isles hosted, with the kind support of Climate Hebrides, a multi faith event for Scottish Interfaith Week.

There were over 30 people in attendance in person with an additional five people attending online. The event, on **November 7, 2025** was opened by Gordon Jamieson, Chief Executive of NHS Western Isles, who reflected on the Interfaith festival theme of 'Our Future', encouraged communities to explore issues close to the hearts and minds of Scotland's youth, including education, climate, mental health, poverty and discrimination.

Since InterFaith Week 2025 coincided with Remembrance Sunday, the themes chosen ('Our Future' (youth-focused), 'Community: Together We Serve', and 'Hope and Kindness in Action') were very appropriate to reflect and build cohesive and sustainable communities.

The Interfaith festival themes were key priorities identified by thousands of young people in a recent survey by Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Scottish Interfaith Week is a catalyst for action throughout the year, and the event provided

Gordon Jamieson, Chief Executive.



the opportunity to bring people together to look at what beliefs we held in common and how we could continue to work together as neighbours throughout the year ahead.

There were a range of speakers who discussed the theme, 'Our Future', including a very inspirational talk from Alexander Macleod who joined us from the Nicolson Institute.

The other speakers were Rebecca Mahony, Project Manager for Western Isles Association for Mental Health, who spoke about what they do to support people with mental health issues on the Island.

Brian Whittington from Climate Change Outer Hebrides spoke about environmental concerns and various activities happening in the Western Isles to reduce adverse impacts, especially on those who are vulnerable.

This was followed by contributions from representatives of the Christian (Rev. Gordon Macleod), Bahá'í (Mina Sheppard), Islamic (Arshad Islam) and Hindu communities (with TK

Shadakshari, NHS Western Isles Lead Chaplain & Strategic Diversity Lead, speaking on behalf of the Hindu community). Each reflected on how their respective faiths, beliefs, teachings and practices align with and enrich this year's chosen themes. It was heartening to hear the many shared values and to see how different faith traditions offer similar guidance aimed at improving people's lives.

The overall feeling and theme of the day was captured by one of the speakers who said in his closing address:

"Dear friends, across these five issues – education, climate, poverty, discrimination and mental health – we see one thread uniting all faiths: the call to serve humanity. Islam teaches that faith without action is incomplete. The Qur'an repeatedly pairs belief with good deeds - belief with righteous action. So as people of faith, our task is not only to pray for a better world but to build it together."

We were fortunate enough to have Maureen Siar, Director of Interfaith Scotland, join us on line to provide closing remarks, she talked about her recent visit to a Primary School which saw children from across a variety of faiths come together to share their experiences, she wished the Western Isles well for the work we continue to take forward in the year ahead.



Scottish Interfaith Week
2nd – 9th November 2025

Do you know #ItsOKtoAsk?

To help you get the most out of your next healthcare appointment, there are four key questions it's worth remembering to ask. For more info visit: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/itsok-to-ask>



NHS
Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

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/

Response to Uist services publications

NHS Western Isles has compiled a detailed response to inaccurate and misleading information recently published with regard to services in Uist.

The Board's commitment to maintaining, modernising and developing clinical services is clear, even looking only at the last three years, with services enhanced clearly by the level of investment over and above the baseline service budget.

NHS Western Isles disagrees entirely with any suggestion that there is some kind of ongoing degradation of services at Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh (Uist and Barra Hospital) or in Uist generally.

The steady depopulation is of ongoing significant concern to NHS Western Isles and something we have monitored, reported and taken steps in terms of recruitment, flexible working and key worker housing to address.

You can read the full statement at: <https://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/response-to-uist-services-publications/>



Hospital children receive kind hug of teddies

Some children receiving treatment at local Emergency Departments will benefit from receiving their very own teddy bear, after a hug of bears was kindly donated to NHS Western Isles by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ross & Cromarty (PGLRC).

The bears, part of the Teddies for Loving Care (TLC) project supported by the PGLRC, will be offered to children who may be anxious, in pain or traumatised attending hospitals across the Western Isles, helping to make their hospital experience a little easier.

Susan MacAulay, NHS Western Isles Emergency Department Manager/Emergency Nurse Practitioner, said: "We are extremely grateful for this kind donation which will enable us to provide comfort to children attending the hospital. It is hoped that the teddy bears will help us to reduce

the fear and stress of their experience, whilst also making it easier to build a bond between the children and staff."

Donnie M. MacDonald, member of PGLRC and representing the Western Isles, delivered the teddy bears on behalf of Raymond McKeddie, project coordinator.

Susan added: "Nursing staff will provide a teddy bear to a child who may be anxious, in pain or traumatised while attending, with the teddy bear also being gifted to the child to take home."

This year the TLC scheme has reached the milestone of supplying four million teddies, supplied by PSMI International, to hospitals within the UK.

Further information on the scheme can be found at teddiesforlovingcare.org.uk.

A local family's incredible donation to NHS Western Isles

Sabia and Sardar Mohammed have generously donated an incredible £32,000 to NHS Western Isles to support three vital units within the Western Isles Hospital: the High Dependency Unit (HDU), the Maternity Ward, and the Dialysis Unit.

Explaining the reason for this heartfelt donation, Sabia and Sardar shared: "We have called the Western Isles our home for more than 60 years. In that time, this island has given us not just a place to live, but a community that has stood beside us through our happiest moments and our hardest trials. From the depths of our hearts, we have chosen to donate to these units within the Western Isles Hospital that mean everything to our family."

They continued: "These units represent chapters of our lives—chapters written with courage, sorrow, hope, and gratitude. For us, these units symbolise a truth we carry in our hearts:

- HDU is saving a life.
- Dialysis is helping a life to survive.
- Maternity is bringing a life into this world and fighting for the tiniest of lives."

HDU will receive £10,000 to support the staff and patients within that ward unit. Sabia and Sardar explain why this unit means so much to them: "Our journey of thanks begins with the High Dependency Unit. Three years ago, when Sardar became gravely ill, our world felt fragile. But in that difficult time, the HDU staff became our strength. Their care, compassion, and dedication helped save his life. We will forever remember the faces and the hands that supported him, and us, when we needed it most."

Honouring a member of their wider family, they have chosen to donate £10,000 to the Dialysis Unit at the Western Isles Hospital, they said: "We have also chosen to support the Dialysis Unit, in

remembrance of our precious niece who passed away last year in Pakistan when all her organs failed. Her memory stays with us every day. By donating to the Dialysis Unit, we hope to honour her life and help others who are fighting their own battles for survival."

The couple wish to donate £10,000 to the Maternity Ward at the Western Isles Hospital to show their gratitude for the care their daughter received during difficult times, they said: "The Maternity Ward also holds a very special place in our hearts. Our daughter has experienced the heartbreak of pregnancy loss, and during those painful times the staff supported her with such kindness and compassion. The Maternity team cared for her with calm reassurance, and we offer our deepest thanks to Catherine Macdonald and all the staff at Princess Royal Maternity Hospital in Glasgow, whose steady support guided our daughter through every moment of that frightening experience."

The remaining funds will go to the staff welfare fund.

The kind donation is made from their savings, and from interest that has collected over many years. The family's faith Islam as Muslims, means that they cannot use the interest for themselves but they are able to give it away to causes that help others.

They said: "We could think of no place more deserving than the hospital that has helped our family again and again. We hope that our donation will offer support to the remarkable staff who work every day to care for our island community. And we hope that our act might inspire others – families, individuals, and local businesses – to give what they can, whether big or small."

"This island has been our home for a lifetime. Our donation is a small way of saying thank you—for

life saved, life brought into this world, and life supported through illness. It is given with love, with gratitude, and with the hope that it will help others, just as we were helped."

The family also wished to extend a special thank you to all the staff at the Group Practice for their unwavering care and attention with special mention of Dr Louise Scott, Dr Macleod, Dr Michie and Dr Simpson.

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson, said: "I am incredibly grateful and humbled by this extremely kind, and generous donation from Mr and Mrs Mohammed, which will make such a positive difference to a range of different departments and the people we serve. The reasons given by the family behind these donations are heartfelt and I would like to personally, and on behalf of the NHS Board, sincerely thank the Mohammed family for such kindness."

Kind donation for Chemotherapy unit

Chemotherapy staff at Western Isles Hospital would like to take the opportunity to give their sincere thanks to Donald (Daw) and Ann Maclean, and family and friends, for their very kind donation following a recent fundraiser.

We would also like to thank the Lewis & Harris Rangers Supporters Club which hosted the event, and bands, Uncle Ethan and Preoccupied, for providing the evening's entertainment.

An outstanding total of £3,600 was raised which will directly benefit patients attending for their Chemotherapy treatments at Western Isles Hospital.

If you are thinking of organising a fundraising event towards supporting patients, families and staff to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of the Western Isles, which are beyond the core provisions of NHS Western Isles, please visit <https://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/endowments-fund/>



NHS Western Isles patients benefiting from national Digital Dermatology Pathway

Patients across NHS Western Isles are now benefiting from an innovative national Digital Dermatology Pathway designed to speed up diagnosis, assessment of skin conditions and reduce waiting times.

This national pathway is being rolled out across NHS Scotland and is now available in all Health Boards, including NHS Western Isles. It is designed to help patients receive the right care, in the right place, and at the right time by using digital technology to support faster referral and triage.

Frances Robertson, NHS Western Isles Nurse/AHP Director & Chief Operating Officer, explains: "This is an exciting step forward for patient care in the Western Isles. Many people referred for Dermatology face long waits, and this pathway helps us make better decisions earlier - ensuring patients get the right care as quickly as possible."

The images are captured using a secure mobile app (Consultant Connect's PhotoSAF) and automatically transferred to the patient's referral via Scottish Care Information (SCI) Gateway, NHS Scotland's secure

referral system. No images or personal data are stored on the device, and the process is fully compliant with national information governance standards.

How it helps:

- urgent cases can be seen more quickly
- some patients may be discharged with advice - no appointment needed
- patients may be referred directly to minor surgery or other specialties
- fewer unnecessary appointments mean shorter waiting times for everyone.

A recent case study from Dumfries and Galloway highlights the pathway's impact. A patient who had attended their GP several times with a persistent skin rash was referred via the new digital system. Within 48 hours, the Dermatology team reviewed the images and provided tailored treatment advice - avoiding a 40-week outpatient wait.

The Digital Dermatology Pathway is supported by the Centre for Sustainable Delivery (CfSD) and funded by the Scottish Government through the ANIA programme. It is now live in NHS Western Isles and available across all NHS Boards in Scotland.

existing face-to-face services.

Access to these iPads is expected to deliver long-term health benefits for individuals, while also offering time and cost efficiencies for WICCI. These counselling sessions significantly improve the mental health and wellbeing of individuals and families affected by cancer at a period of their life where they need some professional intervention to work through a wide range of traumatic stages.

Feedback from those who have received counselling sessions has been overwhelmingly positive, with every client disclosing that it has helped them at that time to process either their diagnosis or the loss of a loved one.

In addition to cancer-related support, these sessions can also be used for prehabilitation (psychological support before treatment) and rehabilitation (support after treatment). They are also beneficial for clients with other long-term conditions and comorbidities, offering holistic care tailored to individual needs.

Caroline Maciver, Manager of Western Isles Cancer Care Initiative, said: "Having IT equipment for digital connectivity will ensure that WICCI can provide consistent and reliable counselling services across the Western Isles. Thanks to this funding we were able to purchase iPads that will be available to use when there are transport delays or cancellations preventing face to face appointments, this will guarantee we can continue to provide support when and where it is needed the most."

NHS Western Isles Board Chair, Gillian McCannon, said: "I was delighted that we were able to support WICCI to purchase iPads to help enable their ability to extend their outreach services to the people of our islands who depend on WICCI for additional support. Having the ability to access remotely additional support can help people across the islands feel connected to those who support they need the most during challenging periods of their life."

iPads to enhance cancer support service across the Western Isles

Funding from the NHS Western Isles Endowment Fund has provided Western Isles Cancer Care Initiative (WICCI) with £2,500 to purchase iPads to strengthen the support available to services users across the Western Isles.

WICCI has two fully qualified counsellors who provide services throughout the Western Isles, from the Butt to Barra. Since 2019, WICCI has offered counselling to individuals and families affected by cancer, addressing a wide range of mental health and wellbeing concerns, including:

- initial diagnosis and treatment,
- terminal diagnosis,
- anxiety,
- necessary and often permanent lifestyle and relationship changes,
- stress,
- carer & family support,

- bereavement and loss.

Due to the remote and rural nature of the Western Isles, unpredictable weather and transport challenges, WICCI often find it challenging and expensive to maintain consistent face-to-face services across all areas.

To help overcome these barriers, NHS Western Isles Endowment Fund has provided funding to allow WICCI to purchase five iPads to support their important work. The purpose of the Endowment Funds is to provide services and amenities to patients and staff, which are beyond the core provisions of NHS Western Isles.

These devices will be loaned to service users, enabling WICCI to offer regular and reliable therapeutic support remotely, enhancing the



Pictured (left) L-R: Caroline Maciver, WICCI Manager, Catherine Barron, Counsellor, WICCI, Gillian McCannon, NHS Western Isles Board Chair, and Helen Kirkman, Counsellor, WICCI.

Work begins on new training and recreation space at Carloway Football Club's home ground with support from NHS Western Isles



Pictured L-R: Andrew Macleod, CalMax Ltd representative, Gordon Jamieson, Chief Executive, NHS Western Isles, Calum Macleod, Club Chair, Carloway FC, Iain "Dougie" Maclean, Club Vice Chair, Derek Macleod, Committee Member Carloway FC, and Allan Cox, Committee Member, Carloway FC.

Carloway Football Club has begun to transform an unused, overgrown area adjacent to its main football pitch into a vibrant training and recreation space, thanks to capital grant funding from NHS Western Isles.

£22,000 in capital grant funding will allow the club to develop a green space which will provide the club and wider community with a high-quality area for football training, small-sided games, and a range of other recreational activities.

Designed to be flexible and inclusive, the space will be open to all age groups and will encourage participation in physical activity, skill development and social interaction.

The additional grassed area will complement the existing main football pitch and will offer a safe environment for young spectators who often enjoy kicking a ball around during the matches. This new dedicated space will also provide an alternative warm-up area for the teams, helping to protect and extend the life of the main pitch.

To ensure durability, the area will be made stockproof, preventing damage from deer and maintaining the quality of the grass.

The development reflects the club's commitment

to promoting health, fitness and community engagement through sport.

Calum 'Cobby' Macleod, Club Chair, Carloway Football Club, said: "Carloway FC are extremely pleased to have received this funding from NHS Western Isles and are very excited with the possibilities of the new training and recreational area. The upgraded facility will significantly benefit our junior and senior teams – including our newly created over 40 team – and will also provide a safe place for the numerous youngsters who attend our games to play on."

Gordon Jamieson, Chief Executive, NHS Western Isles, said: "We are delighted to support Carloway Football Club in creating this fantastic new training space for the community. Encouraging physical activity and providing safe, accessible areas for people of all ages is a key part of improving health and wellbeing across the Western Isles."

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.

FIRST BABY OF 2026!

A beautiful baby girl was the first baby born in the Western Isles in 2026.

Proud parents, Chanelle Divers and Donnie Macleod from the village of Tong in Lewis, welcomed their first child into the world at 7.45pm on January 1, 2026, in Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway.

Baby Holly Chirsty Macleod Divers was a healthy 7lb 7oz.

Congratulations also to the grandparents, Mary and Tony Divers, and Chirsty and John Macleod.

Chanelle and Donnie paid tribute to their two midwives, Lyn Macdonald and Joan Aitken, for being 'absolutely amazing'.

All at NHS Western Isles would like to congratulate the family on their beautiful new arrival.

Pictured opposite: (front) are proud parents, Donnie and Chanelle with baby Holly. Also pictured are Midwives, Lyn Macdonald and Joan Aitken.

Below: Theatre staff who were on shift for the birth of the New Year baby.



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.

Positive report for Western Isles Hospital on patient care, staff training and the hospital environment

Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) has published its follow-up inspection report for Western Isles Hospital, carried out in October 2025. The report reflects substantial progress since the previous inspection, with inspectors reporting positively on patient care, staff training, and the hospital environment.

In the latest inspection, the hospital environment was found to be clean and well maintained, staff were observed delivering person-centred, compassionate care, and all patients and families spoke highly of care received.

The inspection also confirmed enhanced compliance with critical training requirements, including paediatric and adult life support, child and adult protection, and fire safety. Governance processes and incident reporting systems have also strengthened, supporting a safer and more responsive care environment.

HIS conducts inspections of all acute hospitals across NHS Scotland to focus on the safe delivery of care. An unannounced inspection of Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway was undertaken in September 2024. At that point, whilst areas of good practice were highlighted, there were also 22 requirements for improvement.

Follow-up inspections of all Boards previously inspected were undertaken from August 2025, with the Western Isles Hospital follow-up taking place on October 13 and 14, 2025.

The summary of findings for the latest inspection stated: “We observed staff working collaboratively to provide compassionate and responsive care. Inspectors found the hospital environment was clean and well maintained. We found improvements in compliance rates of staff trained in paediatric and adult immediate life support. Additionally, we observed improved staff training figures relating to child and adult support and protection and regarding fire training compliance.

“Previously we raised concerns regarding governance processes, in relation to the
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development and review of policies and procedures. We found all acute policies and procedures were current, ratified and up to date. Other areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection included the completion of patient documentation, and the safe storage of medication and cleaning products.

During this inspection we found all medicines stored securely. However, there continued to be inconsistencies with completion of documentation, and cleaning products were not stored securely.”

While inspectors acknowledged significant progress has been made by NHS Western Isles, some areas for improvement remain, such as the completion of patient care documentation, maintenance of patient dignity (access to showers), and the safe storage of cleaning products.

NHS Western Isles has already implemented a comprehensive improvement action plan to address these requirements. Actions include the rollout of revised documentation processes, enhanced staffing systems, and a business case for ward refurbishment to improve patient facilities. In terms of access to shower facilities, NHS Western Isles has made it clear to HIS that the Board is committed to the full refurbishment of Medical Ward 2 – but that this will require capital investment (a business case for which has not yet been approved by Scottish Government) as well as a suitable decant facility for a prolonged period. In the meantime, an additional shower was reinstated in Medical Ward 2 in February 2025 and patients continue to be supported to use showering facilities in Erisort Ward.

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson, said: “We welcome the findings of Healthcare Improvement Scotland’s follow-up inspection and are pleased that the significant improvements made at Western Isles Hospital have been recognised. The report highlights the dedication and professionalism of our staff in delivering safe, compassionate, person-centred care, and in strengthening governance and training compliance. We acknowledge that some areas still

require attention, we are committed to addressing these as part of our ongoing improvement plan. Our priority remains ensuring the highest standards of care for our patients and supporting our staff to deliver this objective.”

Speaking of the report, Donna Maclean, Chief Inspector, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, said: “During this follow-up inspection we found improvements in compliance rates of staff trained in paediatric and adult immediate life support. There were also improved staff training figures relating to child and adult support and protection and fire training compliance.

“We saw staff working collaboratively to provide compassionate and responsive care and the hospital was clean and well maintained.

“All acute policies and procedures were current, ratified and up to date and all medicines were

stored securely. However, there continued to be inconsistencies with completion of documentation, and cleaning products were not stored securely.

“Whilst significant progress has been made by NHS Western Isles, some areas of improvement remain, such as the completion of patient care documentation, maintenance of patient dignity and the safe storage of cleaning products”.

This follow-up inspection resulted in three areas of good practice, no recommendations and five new or updated requirements. Six previous requirements from the September 2024 inspection were not met and have been carried over.

The full inspection report is available to view at: <https://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.scot/publications/western-isles-hospital-unannounced-follow-up-inspection-report-october-2025/>



Support for people who have provided or witnessed CPR

If you've performed CPR on someone or witnessed someone receiving CPR, you may find yourself struggling to process what has happened.

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland's free, confidential Advice Line offers support to help people process what they've been through – whether it happened yesterday or years ago.

Their Advice Line Professionals, who are trained health care professionals, are there to listen and help you process what you've experienced and provide advice, support and a friendly, listening ear.

Call freephone 0808 801 0899, text ADVICE to 66777 or email adviceline@chss.org.uk

You can also visit their website for more information: <https://www.chss.org.uk/services/ohca-advice-line-support-service/>

"Did I do the right thing?"

If you have ever witnessed or performed CPR, we're here for you.

📞 0808 801 0899

📱 ADVICE to 66777

✉️ adviceline@chss.org.uk

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland



Western Isles Maternity staff delivering 'compassionate, person-centred care'

Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) has published its unannounced maternity services inspection report for Western Isles Hospital, which found that staff are delivering compassionate, person-centred care to women and families, supported by strong multidisciplinary teamwork.

The inspection visit was carried out on October 13 and 14, 2025. The report highlights nine areas of good practice, one recommendation, and 11 requirements.

Inspectors found that midwives, obstetricians and maternity care staff demonstrate a high standard of compassionate, person-centred care, with women and families describing positive interactions and feeling well supported throughout their maternity journey. Senior midwifery and obstetric leaders were observed to be visible, approachable and actively involved in day-to-day care.

Good teamwork, respectful communication and supportive senior leadership were highlighted throughout the report. Staff described feeling able to raise concerns and confident in the support offered by senior managers. Families also reported they would recommend Western Isles maternity

services to others, and the maternity unit was found to be clean and well maintained.

The inspection identified several areas where action is required, including bereavement care training, ensuring a clear system is in place on clinical risk assessment for transfers, ensuring all policies are up to date (although inspectors found that all acute policies and procedures were up to date), improving documentation standards, ensuring protected leadership time, and ensuring fire safety training compliance.

NHS Western Isles has produced a detailed Improvement Action Plan setting out measurable actions, timelines and responsibilities. Many actions are already underway or complete.

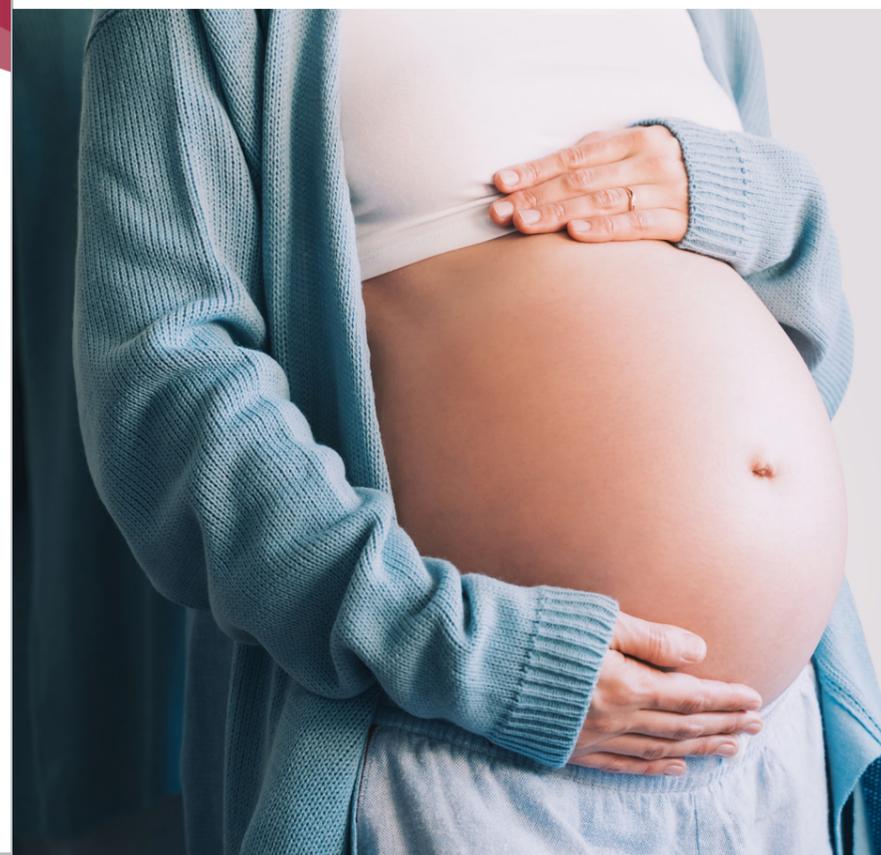
NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson, said: "The Health Board welcomes the publication of this very positive report and has taken immediate steps to address the findings of this inspection. We were particularly encouraged to see that inspectors noted that women and families they spoke to were complimentary of the care they received and would be happy to recommend NHS Western Isles maternity services to family and friends.

"We welcome the recognition of our staff's dedication and compassion, and we remain fully committed to delivering the highest standards of safe, person-centred maternity care for women and families across the Western Isles."



Please tell us about your experience of NHS Western Isles services

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



Did you know
high blood pressure
is the **biggest risk**
factor for **stroke?**

Stroke
Association

Finding **strength**
through **support**



This **#StrokePreventionDay**, check your blood pressure and take action to lower your risk of stroke.

Find out more: stroke.org.uk/SPD26

Scan the
QR code below



IN 2526-288.1

NHS Western Isles helps Point skate towards success

To support Knock Youth Club and Cafe's project to create a skateboard and outdoor play area, NHS Western Isles has provided a capital grant to meet the group's financial shortfall and help benefit the health of local children within the Point district.

A donation of £18,901 has enabled the group to meet the cost of almost £108,000 required for surfacing work, asphalt and concrete ramps, safety fencing and an enhanced, safe off-road play area.

The new area, which is beside the recently refurbished Knock Hall, will be the first of its kind in the district and, together with the hall, will provide a multi-faceted resource for local children from primary levels upward. The work includes 517m² of surfacing work, asphalt and concrete ramps suitable for skateboards, bicycles and scooters. Safety fencing is also included. This will be added to with an enhanced safe off-road play area.

Bethany Finlayson, Chair of Point Youth Community Council, said: "This multi-functional outdoor space will be used for a wide range of outdoor activities that our young people have requested, such as developing skateboard skills and a safe space for riding scooters and bikes.

"We also intend to focus on intergenerational and life skills, using both indoor and outdoor spaces, for intergenerational activities such as bike maintenance, woodwork, growing plants and vegetables, sewing and baking."

Additional funding towards the skateboard and outdoor play area has been received from Point & Sandwick Trust, Crown Estates, the National Lottery, Point councillors, Western Isles Development Trust and CLLD.

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson, said: "NHS Western Isles is delighted to have been able to support this project, which will help promote social skills, outdoor activities, opportunities for sports and activities that improve physical skills, and helps improve mental health.

"Physical activity is a vital part of a child's development, contributing to their physical and mental wellbeing, academic success, and social skills, and encouraging children to be active can have long-lasting positive effects on their health and life. Congratulations to the Knock Youth Club and Café for developing this excellent resource for children and young people."



NHS Western Isles introduces new security and safety initiatives to protect its staff and patients

NHS Western Isles is trialling a new range of safety measures to help protect staff, patients and visitors. These include Personal Safety Alarms for staff, Emergency Kits for vehicles, Body Worn Cameras for Emergency Department staff, and enhanced electronic access control in specific clinical areas.



More than 120 'MySOS' personal safety alarms, supplied by Peoplesafe, have been issued to staff, mainly for lone workers working within community settings. These devices, fitted with fall and crash detection, can pinpoint

the location of an individual and automatically escalate to relevant parties.

When the 'SOS' button is pressed, an alarm centre operator answers and can contact a staff member's manager or the emergency services if required. You may notice these devices on our staff with lights flashing. Please note that these devices have no camera, no recording ability and no internal memory. A connection is only made when the SOS button is pressed or a fall is detected.

With winter underway, Emergency Kits have been placed in every NHS Western Isles fleet vehicle, as well as being distributed to some colleagues working in the most remote areas of our

community. These kits include everything required to maintain comfort and visibility in cold or remote environments including:



- long-life emergency food rations,
- drinking water,
- first aid kit,
- reflective vest,
- foil thermal blankets,
- mini folding shovel,
- hand warmers,
- de-icer spray,
- wind-up torch,
- light sticks,
- whistle,
- ice scraper.

Body Worn Cameras (BWC) are being piloted in the Emergency Department at the Western Isles Hospital following a significant rise of violence & aggression on-site, affecting staff, patients and visitors.

You may see some of our staff equipped with a BWC during a visit within the hospital. These devices do not automatically record audio and video, recording will begin when activated manually if a



situation escalates. Clear signage is displayed throughout the hospital, and staff will always verbally notify individuals when a camera is being activated and explain why.

In response to increasing episodes of violence and aggression, electronic access control locks have been installed in the High Dependency Unit and all ward areas. To access these areas, you will need to press the bell button at the entrance and ward staff will facilitate entry. In the event of a fire alarm these locks will release automatically.



These measures are part of a wider campaign to reduce violence in the workplace and demonstrate NHS Western Isles' commitment staff safety and wellbeing. We continue to work closely with Police Scotland in support of these initiatives.

Gordon Jamieson, Chief Executive, NHS Western Isles, said: "Whilst we continue to live in a relatively safe environment, it is fair to say that we are seeing an increase in security related incidents, and violence and aggression towards our staff. I trust the public will understand that, in response, we have introduced the measures outlined which are necessary to protect our staff and patients in our care. I would like to thank all our health and safety, security, information, IT, estates, and resilience advisers for delivering this important work."

Inspector Euan Cowan, Police Scotland, said: "No one expects to go to their work and be assaulted or verbally abused. Our NHS colleagues do an excellent job in hospital, community medical centre, and home care settings and Police Scotland fully supports initiatives such as this to ensure their safety. We continue to maintain a zero-tolerance approach to crimes perpetrated against Emergency Workers."



Supporting the refurbishment of Penumbra's Stornoway base

In support of essential local mental health services, NHS Western Isles has awarded £18,000 in capital grant funding to Penumbra Mental Health to refurbish their base in Stornoway.

Penumbra Mental Health is a pioneering charity that provides dedicated services for individuals experiencing mild to severe and enduring mental health challenges. The base in Stornoway serves as a vital hub to deliver in-person support for people experiencing poor mental health and wellbeing.

Penumbra works with people living with both short and long-term mental health challenges, offering personalised, recovery-focused support that promotes meaningful activity, builds resilience, fosters independence, and inspires hope. Support is delivered through one-to-one coaching with a strength-based approach. They value and advocate for the importance of peer support and use group workshops as a method of bringing people together with shared experiences to focus on specific issues impacting on wellbeing.

Urgent maintenance was required to prevent structural damage to the property. Inadequate access had become a barrier for those Penumbra aims to support, limiting the ways in which services could be delivered. The outdoor garden area was inaccessible and hazardous, representing a missed opportunity to enhance creative wellbeing activities for the community.

The refurbishment project aims to ensure safe access to the building and maximise the usability of both internal and external spaces. This will increase the availability of current services and enable the introduction of new support activities, amplifying the impact of the service and positioning the building as a valuable community asset. By developing a demand-driven community hub, the team will be better equipped to accommodate different groups of people within the premises.

The capital grant funding will allow safe access from point of entry and throughout the levels of the building, create more usable space within the building for 1:1 and group support, and reach more people in need of mental health support. will provide a resource for developing life skills, while improvements to the outdoor space will broaden the range of support activities available.

Gillian McCannon, Board Chair, NHS Western Isles, said: "We're thrilled to be able to support the refurbishment work at Penumbra's Stornoway base. Maintaining the condition of the building will ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all



L-R: Sonia Smith, Mental Health & Wellbeing Practitioner; Gillian McCannon, NHSWI Chair, and David Alldred, Team Leader (Peer)

service users. The refurbishment will help Penumbra achieve the aspirations that have been set out to further enhance the support given to help improve mental health and wellbeing to the people who access this service, Penumbra plays an important role in supporting our community."

Shaun Macaulay-Davidson, Head of Programmes, Penumbra, said: "We greatly appreciate the grant monies awarded by NHS Western Isles. As a not-for-profit charity, every penny we receive really can make a difference to the support we can offer. We are delighted to use these funds to help open up access to our Stornoway base so that it is easier for people to come together in a and connect with mental health and wellbeing support.

He continued, "Now that the works are complete, please watch this space for a programme of Workshops on Wellbeing where we can explore topics that affect our mental wellbeing, in a safe and comfortable place at the heart of the community."

The Bayhead base also houses the Western Isles Association for Mental Health (WIAMH), which delivers the Catch 23 service. Catch 23 works with adults experiencing mental health issues, neurodiversity and people with physical health conditions and disabilities. The refurbishment will significantly benefit their service as well, positively impacting the wider Western Isles community.

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.



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Capital funding grant supports resilience centre in South Uist

Significant improvement work has been completed at Stoneybridge Community Hall to allow it to function as a dedicated resilience centre in South Uist, thanks to capital funding awarded by NHS Western Isles.

The funding has enabled essential upgrades to allow the hall to operate as a safe and reliable community hub during emergencies. A generator - which was purchased prior to the COVID 19 pandemic but left unconnected due to rising cost - has now been installed, ensuring the building can remain fully functional during power outages. The work also includes important accessibility enhancements, such as new threshold ramps and

a designated disabled parking bay, making the hall more accessible to people with reduced mobility.

Stoneybridge Hall will serve as a central hub during emergencies, offering a safe, warm space where residents can gather, access hot food, and remain for as long as needed during extended power outages or severe weather events. This support will be particularly valuable for elderly and isolated individuals, who



Pictured: Attendees at the 'Sunday Social' at the hall on Sunday 1st February



often face the greatest challenges during storms and prolonged disruptions.

South Uist is frequently battered by severe winter storms, with windspeeds sometimes exceeding 100mph. These storms are frequently accompanied by high tides, leading to flooding on coastal roads and causeways. These causeways are vital for accessing medical services but are often closed for safety by Emergency Planning Services. As a result, essential services such as doctors, nurses, ambulances, and fire crews can be cut off from parts of the island.

The centre will also support the efforts of NHS Western Isles and partner agencies such as Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, HM Coastguard, the Scottish Ambulance Service, and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in managing local emergencies.

Debbie Bozkurt, Director of Finance and Procurement, NHS Western Isles, said: "We are pleased to support the Stoneybridge resilience centre, which will provide a safe space for the community during emergencies. The

accessibility improvements will also make a real difference for residents with reduced mobility."

Over the past few years, the hall has been running winter warm hubs, also known as Sunday Social events, which gives people of all ages the chance to come together in a warm, welcoming space to enjoy soup, sandwiches and home baking, all kindly provided by local volunteers. The Sunday Socials are made possible through a partnership between the local church, third sector organisations via UCVO, and volunteers from the community, showing what can happen when everyone works together.

Isabell MacInnes, a volunteer at Stoneybridge Hall, welcomed the generous support from NHS Western Isles, she said: "The hall committee is grateful for the funding to help make the necessary improvements. The hall is so important to the local community, as a key meeting place. This is clearly shown by the strong turnout at the Sunday Socials. Holding these types of events will also help people see the important role the hall could play in an emergency."

MRI UPDATE



Construction moves forward on new MRI facility at Western Isles Hospital

NHS Western Isles is pleased to provide an update on progress with the development of the new MRI service at the Western Isles Hospital.

The project has now successfully moved from the design phase into the main construction phase. This marks a major milestone towards enhancing diagnostic services for patients across the Western Isles.

Following a competitive tendering process, the contract to deliver the MRI suite shell was awarded to local contractor, Lewis Builders. Progress to date has been positive and remains on track. Lewis Builders bring a wealth of experience, including previous NHS projects, and have been an excellent partner in delivering this key development for our community.

This significant phase of works includes:

- Installation of a new power supply.
- Removal of part of the existing hospital roof and walls.
- Construction of a purpose-built structure to house the MRI service.
- Installation of specialist cooling and ventilation systems.

The construction area has been fully isolated from the rest of the hospital to ensure safety and to minimise disruption. Existing building services have been successfully disconnected, and the former air-handling plant has been removed.

While contractors have been diligent in minimising disruption to surrounding areas, some noise for

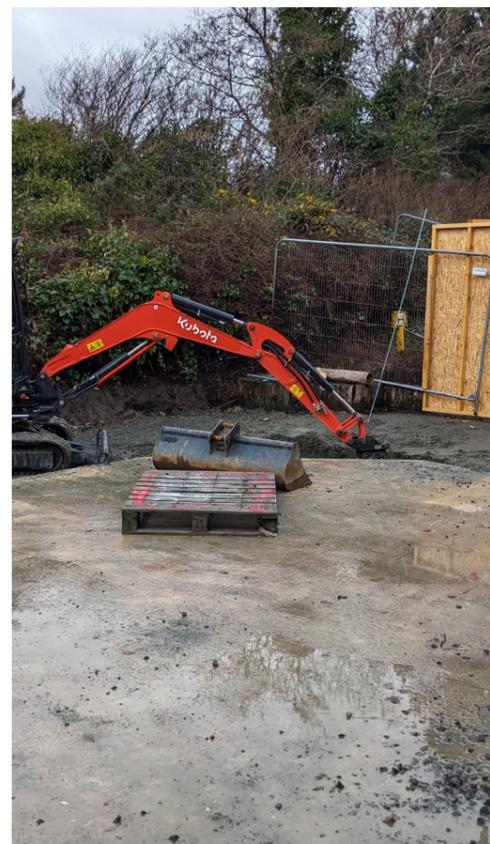
example is unfortunately unavoidable. We would like to thank staff, patients and visitors for their continued patience and understanding during this period.

Further to the construction works, Philips has been awarded the contract to provide and install the MRI scanner itself. In selecting Philips as supplier, particular emphasis has been placed on maximising patient comfort and experience. The scanner will include a wide-bore design to help reduce feelings of claustrophobia, along with value-added features such as ambient lighting to create a more calming and reassuring environment for patients.

Alongside the construction and equipment installation, work is ongoing to scope and refine clinical patient pathways. This will help ensure a streamlined and smooth transition when the new local MRI service becomes operational, improving access to diagnostic services closer to home.

Throughout the project to date, NHS Western Isles has received valuable support and advice from other NHS Boards who have generously shared their expertise. This collaboration is greatly appreciated and continues to strengthen delivery of this important service development.

Construction works are expected to take approximately 34 weeks in total, with completion anticipated in summer 2026. Once operational, the new MRI service will improve patient pathways, support faster diagnosis and reduce waiting times for all patients across the Western Isles.





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



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From Stornoway to stardom: Stephen Libby's mum reflects on his remarkable journey to victory!

There's no hiding from the hype and excitement around the recent series of *The Traitors*, and there's no community prouder than the Western Isles, where our winner (and the nation's favourite Traitor), Stephen Libby, hails from.

Many staff will know that Stephen's Mum, Nicola Libby, has worked for NHS Western Isles for many years and is currently our Surgical Arthroplasty Practitioner. Nicola is not only the mum of one of Britain's most well-known and loved current celebrities, but she's also our organisational star - regularly appearing in our own promotional materials as one of the friendly faces of NHS Western Isles.



And whilst Stephen is well and truly in the national spotlight and enjoying every well-deserved second of his fame after jointly winning the show and gaining country-wide respect for his choice to split the prize with his fellow Traitor; Nicola is loving celebrating the success of her boy, justifiably proud of his *Traitors* journey and his reputation as the nicest Traitor of all time!

So, we wanted to hear from Nicola about what it's like to be the mum of the Lewisman who has hands down won the nation's hearts. How Stephen kept TV's biggest secret from his mum, if Nicola thought Stephen would keep the 'Celtic pact' when it came to the final, and what Nicola really thought of her son's deception skills...

Nicola, who has always been a fan of *The Traitors*, firstly shares that she was aware that Stephen was applying for the latest series, but admits that she never thought he would get through selection.

She explains: "When he did his application, he told us that he was applying because we wouldn't be able to speak to him while he was there, and I speak to him every day. Honestly, though, I never thought he would get in because it's a really big show."

After getting over the shock of him being selected, Nicola said that she was very excited for him.

"I was so excited because I knew that no matter what Stephen does, he does it well and he's such a likeable person, that I knew he would come across well," she confirms. "We never for a minute thought that he would be a Traitor though!"

"I think that sort of did keep him going in there, his likable personality. Because everybody spoke about how kind he was in there and I think that probably got him through a little further in the beginning - because his face gave him away every time!"

Despite knowing he was going into the famous castle, Nicola kept the secret from friends and family (even though she heard Stephen's voice over and over again advertising the series before it was aired, and she thought the game was up!).

"I think, because we knew he was in it, I don't think he found it too difficult to keep from us that he was a Traitor and that he had won the show," Nicola shares. "But in the same token, we didn't ask any questions, which probably made it easier for Stephen."

"I didn't want to know what was happening as I wanted to watch it through, although on the day that we went to watch the final, I did say to him that I wish I had known, because I couldn't eat anything that day, my stomach was doing somersaults, and I just felt that I wanted it to be over because I did actually find the final really stressful in that respect where my emotions were just all consuming."

Nicola also chose not to give Stephen any advice before going into the castle.

"There was nothing that I could have said to Stephen that would have impacted his journey in the programme because you just don't know how things are going to go," she admits. "But from the very first moment that we saw him on the TV he was absolutely as he is at home. There was nothing put on with Stephen whilst he was there."

Nicola confirms that Stephen genuinely wanted to be chosen as a Traitor on the show, but that she was instantly worried for him when he got the tap on the shoulder (to confirm he was a Traitor) as he's never been good at lying.

"Oh my goodness," says Nicola. "I was fortunate enough to be able to go down to London and watch the first three episodes with Stephen. So we were sitting in his flat with about 20 friends and family and when he got the tap on the shoulder, I was honestly worried for him because

I didn't know how he was going to lie his way through the programme because he's not good at telling a lie - I can immediately tell when he's lying!

"But honestly I was delighted actually because there are only three Traitors, and I thought 'wow, she's chosen him'."

She continues: "Initially watching him the first few episodes, I didn't think he would cope with the deception, but the more he got into it, the



more he sort of settled down and he sort of came into his own after the first few episodes. But you could see, he was totally giving signals, his eyes and his expressions! He sort of tripped himself up at the Round Table one night but he did so well, I was so proud.

"I think being a Traitor was challenging for him as you have to think about everything you say and do. You're playing two roles where you're playing a Traitor, but you're also playing at being a Faithful, because you don't want to be found out."

And what were Nicola's thoughts of Stephen's fellow contestants?

"They were a really, really nice group and actually having met them since he came out, they're so nice they're such a close group," she shares.

"It is really intense, but you know they've been so well looked after by each other and it was a really nice group, and there are no bad feelings about anyone getting murdered or banished as they are all clear it's just a game."

With the family connections in the latest series (a mum and daughter went in together, as well as a couple), Nicola shared that she'd have never even have contemplated going into the show with Stephen.

"There's no way I would have," she laughs. "I would have slipped up in the very first minute I saw Stephen: 'hi darling, how are you doing?'. I wouldn't have been good at all, but they actually thought Fiona was his mum at one point!"

Nicola was also pleased about the bond Stephen formed with Rachel Duffy, who jointly won the show with Stephen.

Nicola shares: "He really needed Rachel the first few episodes and she needed him more towards the end.

"The last couple of episodes where they appeared to be against each other, you didn't know what way it was going to go, but since they had made the 'Celtic pact', that they would never write each other's names down at the round table, they stuck to that. I knew Stephen would never ever go back on his word because it's just not him and he would probably never have slept a night if he had taken all the money for himself."

Nicola shares that Stephen got close to everyone in the castle, and had a real bond with Fiona, as well as Jack, who reached the final with Stephen.

"He found it really difficult writing Jack's name on the slate," says Nicola. "To the point where he's actually said that he wrote him a letter just to explain the reasons behind why he did what he did."

In terms of the challenges that the contestants faced on each episode, Nicola shares that she knew he'd be fine with the challenges (even the nail-biting abseil on the last episode).

"I knew he'd be fine with the challenges, that's the type of thing he enjoys, he throws everything into a challenge," she shares. "He was fine with the abseiling – I would actually happily do that too. I think that's one of the ways we are similar. I would give anything a go and he's exactly the same."

What Nicola found really challenging to watch was the Round Table where contestants gather for tense nightly discussions to debate and vote on who they suspect is a Traitor, leading to a



'banishment' (elimination) from the game.

"The Round Tables for me were full-on," Nicola admits. "They were really bad. I could feel my heart going, because I felt that it was at that time that they were going to say things about Stephen, that as a mum you maybe didn't want to hear. They were really stressful, but he survived all of them, so it was fine."

Despite some close shaves at the Round Table, when Stephen came under a bit of suspicion, but escaped banishment, Nicola and her husband, Donald, did think there was a chance that Stephen could win.

"Probably before it even started, we thought that Stephen was the sort of person that could go far in this," she explains. "Then when I watched the first few episodes, I thought 'oh heck you know maybe he's not going to do it'. But then once he settled into it, it felt like a possibility. The longer you stay in the more you wish that they're going to get to the end."

And of course, Stephen did reach the end, and Nicola had the incredible experience of watching the final at the BBC Studios in London with Stephen and the cast of The Traitors.

She recalls: "I sat watching it next to Stephen and Jack was on the other side of me with his fiancée so we were all sitting together, all the finalists and their families. It was honestly so emotional, and because I heard Stephen's voice quiver on screen it made me very emotional as well. I could see how he was feeling in the final decisions on the show and I could see how difficult it was for him to make the decision to vote Jack off. He knew that if he didn't vote Jack off, if he had voted for Rachel, he would have taken all the money and Jack would have had nothing. But by voting for Jack, he got to split the money as he'd intended with Rachel.

"When he won, I was delighted. So delighted and so proud of him for sticking to his pact. I never doubted that he wouldn't do that."

Since winning, Stephen's feet haven't touched the ground, attending awards ceremonies, taking on countless interviews and even making his presenting debut on TV show, This Morning. He's given up his job as a Cyber Security Consultant



Nicola with Traitors host, Claudia.

to see what happens next.

"He is an absolute credit to us because of the way he handles himself," says Nicola. "I was working last week and I was having to catch up on all these interviews and everything. It's just amazing listening to him. He's just sitting talking to people as if he's been doing it all his life like with a microphone in front of him. He's loving it as well."

She adds: "It was so funny the other day when I went home from work, Donald said to me, 'there's a letter there for Stephen'. It was just an envelope with 'Stephen Libby, Traitor, Isle of Lewis' on the front, and it had arrived at the house – his first fan mail!"

Stephen's connection with the Western Isles remains strong, and Nicola shares that Stornoway remains his home and he's very proud his island roots.

"When your family move away, you think that they're moving away because maybe they don't like the island," explains Nicola. "But when they do move away, they realise how much they do actually love the island and, if the island was a

place where they could base themselves for work, they absolutely would. But it's only because the opportunities take them away that they go.

“Stephen's still got a very distinctive island accent, for somebody that's moved away (Stephen went to university in Glasgow at 18 and has never lived back on the islands since then, and he's 33 now). He's so proud of where he comes from and he's said that being Hebridean is his 'super-power'. That's exactly how he feels, he's so proud to be from here and still comes home three or four times a year.”

Stephen's first visit back to Lewis since the final was screened will be a busy visit for him for sure, and there will be a queue or two for selfies! In the meantime, he's getting used to the limelight where he stays in London.

Nicola shares: “When Donald and I were in London for the final, we went out with Stephen for a walk on the Sunday and he actually cannot walk 20 yards without somebody stopping him for a selfie. He honestly doesn't mind, he knew what he was getting into when he entered The Traitors.

“Donald's granny used to live in London and his dad was brought up for a few years there and then he went back to work in London in his 20s. While we were in London, Donald wanted to go back and take a picture of his old flat, as it's actually just about a 10 minute walk from where Stephen lives in Hackney. So we were walking

up the road and there was this lady in one of the houses at the window with her hair in a towel, wearing a dressing gown. She stared banging on the window when she saw Stephen and came running out. She said she was having a birthday party for her daughter and asked if she could take a picture with her daughter. So we went into the flat, down to the basement. She had the Traitors logo sprayed on the window and it was a Traitors themed birthday party set out for her daughter who was 10 that day! It was bizarre, and she shared with us that her partner was actually from North Tolsta! That was fine and they had their picture taken and then off we went and we were away for a few hours and we were coming back down the same road and the next thing we heard was all these wee girls screaming. So they all came running out with the mother and father again and Stephen had to get his picture taken with all these wee ones, at their Traitor themed party, which he loved.”

NHS Western Isles shares Nicola's pride for Stephen, who has done so much to raise the profile of the Western Isles in such a positive way, and we are delighted to have been able to feature him in Team Brief!

And of course we want kept in the loop about whether 'Take That' has accepted Stephen's recent invitation to visit the Western Isles and when we can expect to bump into the rest of the Traitors cast in The Narrows!

Stephen very kindly popped into the Western Isles Hospital to see some of his fans



Stephen with his mum and dad.





Jo and Iona with some of the Maternity Unit staff and Grazyna Stanczuk, Consultant Obstetrics and Gynaecology

battling strong winds, heavy rain and difficult Hebridean hills. Their determination carried them through to their final run on 29th November which they completed together. Starting at the Woodlands Café, the Jo and Iona made their way through the Castle Grounds and around Stornoway before meeting their husbands, Mark and James, and their children, Isabella, Alana, Ruairidh, Hamish and Calum at Porter's Lodge to run the final kilometre together.

NHS Western Isles would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to Iona and Jo for their strength, compassion and generosity. Their dedication will make a meaningful difference to families across the Western Isles.

Catherine Macdonald, Head of Midwifery, NHS Western Isles, said: "This is an incredible achievement from both Jo and Iona, supported by their families and friends throughout the year. All the staff within the Maternity Unit would like to thank them and everyone who contributed to the grand total of funds that was raised. We hope to use this funding to support bereaved parents and their families by making their stay in hospital as comfortable as possible."



Jo and Iona after completing their final race

Iona and Jo's incredible donation to Maternity Services

Iona Morrison and Joanna (Jo) Macdonald have raised a remarkable £3689.55 (£3,563.27 donated after Just Giving fees) for Western Isles Maternity Services after completing an extraordinary challenge: ten 10km runs throughout 2025, undertaken in memory of their baby boys on the tenth anniversary of their loss.

Jo said: "Iona and I should have met at the school gates, instead we met at a baby loss awareness group. Although our losses were different, we bonded over our shared grief. Over the years we have supported each other through various milestones, and in 2025 we decided to run ten 10km runs to mark 10 years since we lost our precious boys, to honour the lives they didn't get to live."

Iona added: "We wanted to raise money for Western Isles Maternity Services to help them provide the

best support they can for other families going through the heartbreak of losing their baby. Over the years we've met and made friends with a lot of other women who have gone through the pain of losing a child, while also witnessing friends and family go through the agony of having to say goodbye to their babies. We hope that this money can go towards helping support families who may be going through a similar heartbreak."

The first 10km route that they completed was a meaningful one Beginning at Back School, where their sons would have started school together, Iona and Jo ran all the way to the Western Isles Hospital, where both women were cared for following the loss of their babies.

Jo and Iona ran various 10km routes over a 6-month period, some together and some individually,



Jo and Iona crossing the finish line with their children.

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Refill and reuse: how 25p is reducing single-use cup waste in NHS Western Isles

Around 24,000 fewer single-use cups have been thrown away over a six month period, and £4,500 has been saved, as a result of an initiative introduced by NHS Western Isles in June 2025.

In June 2025, in a move to reduce waste and support environmental sustainability, the dining rooms and vending machines within Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway and Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh in Benbecula implemented a 25p surcharge on single-use drink cups. This has been a resounding success.

Between the months of July and December, throwaway, single-use, cup usage has dropped by a staggering 94 per cent. This means that in a six-month period, around 24,000 fewer single-use cups have been thrown in the bin, also saving the organisation £4,500. There are added environmental and cost benefits through less waste being sent to landfill.

To support the transition away from single-use cups, reusable takeaway cups were distributed to NHS Western Isles staff as part of the organisation's Rest, Rehydrate and Refuel



campaign, linked to staff wellbeing. Staff have been encouraged to use these cups in dining areas to avoid the surcharge and help reduce the organisation's environmental footprint.

One staff member said: "It's great to see teams engage so positively with this project, it was an easy swap and thanks to the organisation for the reusable cups."

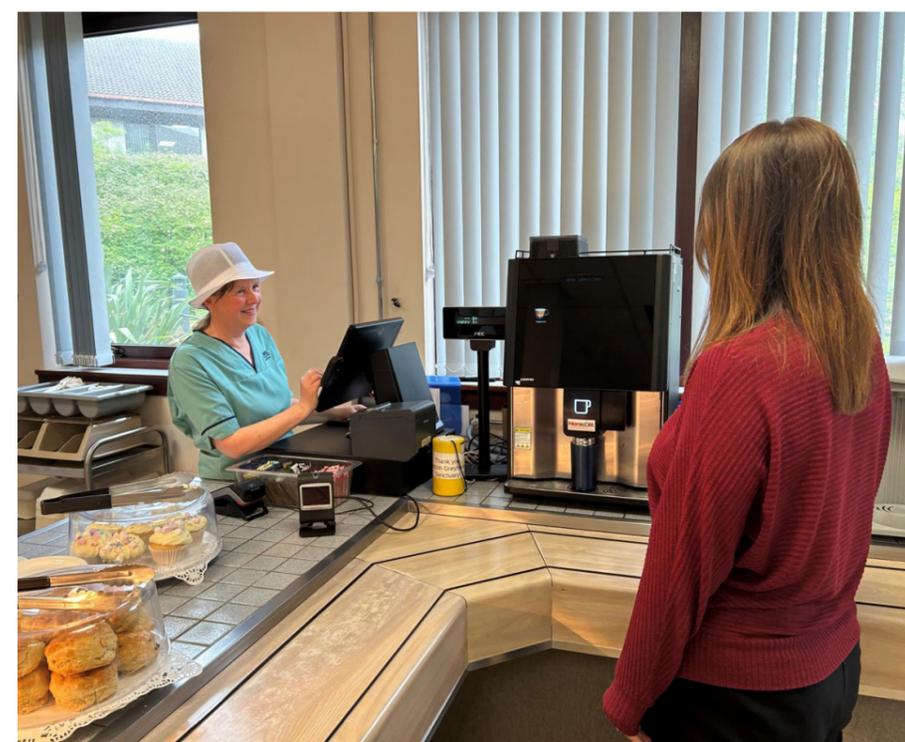
Another added: "We even take our reusable cups with us when attending meetings outwith the office."

George Maciver, NHS Western Isles Catering Manager, said: "Staff and visitors embraced the project from the start. We've seen a massive change where customers rarely request a single-

use cup anymore and are happy to use reusable cups. The incredible 94 per cent reduction in the single-use cups speaks for itself. I would like to thank our catering staff for their work in implementing the scheme and all our customers for their continued support."

This change reflects NHS Western Isles' ongoing commitment to sustainability and was funded through the board's Endowment Funds.

More information on the impact of single-use cups can be found at <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/single-use-cups-scotland>.





Golf more accessible to senior golfers as a result of NHS funding grant

The popular sport of golf will be more accessible to senior golfers in the Western Isles, as a result of a £20,000 capital grant from NHS Western Isles, to purchase battery-powered golf trolleys.

Stornoway Golf Club recently applied for a capital grant to purchase 16 battery-powered golf trolleys and a storage container. Supporting the club to purchase this equipment will open new opportunities to develop membership and introduce the sport of golf to more people.

Stephen Moar from Stornoway Golf Club said: "Stornoway Golf Club has members from across Lewis and Harris, including visiting members for Uist, Barra and further afield. We believe that this initiative will significantly enhance the accessibility of golf for our elderly members, increase participation across all age groups, and contribute to the overall health and well-being of the local community.

"In recent years, we have seen a growing demand for more accessible options for our senior golfers, many of whom face physical challenges that

make walking long distances or carrying golf bags increasingly difficult. We believe that providing battery-powered golf trolleys will remove this barrier and encourage more elderly individuals to continue participating in the sport."

Battery-powered golf trolleys allow elderly golfers to enjoy the game without the physical strain of carrying heavy bags across the sometime challenging gradients of Stornoway Golf Course, whilst walking long distances.

This will not only improve their golfing experience but also ensure that they can play for longer periods, which is crucial for their social engagement and mental wellbeing.

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson, said: "Golf can promote up to four-hours walking activity per match. It improves cardiovascular health, flexibility, and balance. By making golf more accessible to more people through the use of trolleys, Stornoway Golf Club can encourage more elderly individuals to participate in regular physical activity, which is

essential for maintaining mobility and improving overall health."

He added: "We are delighted to have been able to support this health and wellbeing based initiative, which will undoubtedly improve accessibility to a popular sport and the associated physical activity, and will also support additional benefits including reducing isolation and loneliness and improving mental health."

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.



A Warm Welcome for Everyone This Winter

During the cold winter months in the Western Isles, staying warm and maintaining social connections is especially important, particularly during the long, dark days. Across the Islands there are welcoming places and activities where people can enjoy a hot drink, friendly conversation, and companionship.

As temperatures drop and energy costs continue to rise, local communities are coming together to offer friendly, warm spaces.

Many of these spaces are free, and can be found in community centres, libraries, churches or other suitable local venues.

They can offer a warming bowl of soup, a hot drink or snack in a friendly environment whilst also letting people catch-up with the local news.

These 'hubs' are open to everyone, young and old, who can benefit from a warm, comfortable

place to spend a few hours catching up with neighbours or friends or just to pop in to read a newspaper or book.

These initiatives reflect the strong community spirit of the Western Isles, ensuring everyone has a warm and welcoming place to go.

Whether you're looking to connect with others, enjoy a hot drink, or participate in fun activities, these spaces are here to support you. Make the most of these opportunities to stay warm, make friends, and enjoy the vibrant community life this winter.

To view the Warm Hubs available in your local community view our pages overleaf, or visit: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/cost-of-living-support

For help and support setting up a Warm Hum in your community, please contact Mary MacLean, Fas Fallain Manager, email: mary.macleam@nhs.scot

ACTS OF KINDNESS AT CHRISTMAS



Physiotherapy's Donation to Calum's Cabin!

Each year the Physiotherapy staff in Western Isles Hospital choose to donate to a charity rather than send Christmas Cards. This year, the chosen charity was Calum's Cabin in recognition of the amazing support they have shown to the family of one of our colleagues. Shona Shields very kindly accepted the donation of £220 on behalf of Calum's Cabin.

Shona is pictured left accepting the donation from Allison Martin, Acting Physiotherapy Manager.



Emergency Department's Christmas Donation to Stornoway Stroke Club

Emergency Department (ED) staff, Susan Macaulay and Louise Smith recently popped in to the Stroke Club to present a donation on behalf of all the ED staff at Western Isles Hospital. Instead of doing a secret Santa at Christmas, staff decided to donate what monies would have been spent to a local organisation. The sum of £330 was raised.

Occupational Therapy Fundraise for Crossroads!

The Occupational Therapy team recently completed a Christmas pop up thrift shop fundraiser for local service, Crossroads Lewis.

Staff from the Occupational Therapy department met with Crossroads staff in January to give the £145 raised from the event to the charity (pictured right).

The Occupational Therapy team would like to thank all those who donated items for sale and all those who supported the event.



World Kidney Day 2026: Kidney Health for All

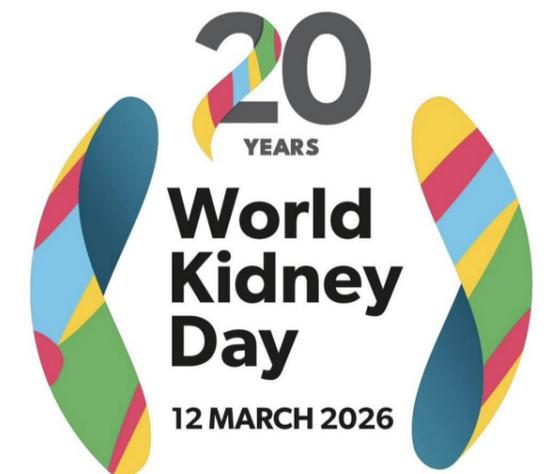
Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a major and growing global health challenge, affecting 1 in 10 people worldwide.

Often silent in its early stages, CKD can progress unnoticed until it causes severe health consequences, profoundly impacting individuals, families, and communities.

The disease significantly increases the risk of cardiovascular complications, reduces quality of life, and may advance to kidney failure, where survival depends on life-sustaining kidney replacement therapies such as dialysis or transplantation.

Its burden is unevenly distributed, disproportionately affecting disadvantaged populations and exacerbating existing health inequities. Early detection can save lives. Simple, non-invasive, and cost-effective testing through blood and urine tests can identify kidney dysfunction, enabling timely interventions that slow disease progression.

Find out more at: <https://www.worldkidneyday.org/>



Launch of Western Isles walk-in hub to strengthen same day unscheduled care

A new primary care 'walk in' service will open in Benbecula in late March, aimed at increasing access to same day unscheduled care for both island residents and the growing number of visitors across the Western Isles.

This service, developed in response to a request from the Scottish Government, sets out a rural-proofed model designed to relieve pressure on local GP practices across the Western Isles, improve patient access, and enhance the resilience of primary and unscheduled care services.

There are two phases to the project, with the first phase involving access to a new hub for visitors and temporary residents across the Western Isles and the second phase involving opening up access to the hub for Uist residents.

There are approximately 27,000 permanent residents in the Western Isles, with a rapidly increasing number of visitors – over 389,000 in 2023, representing a 22 per cent increase from the previous year and a 15-fold rise in the number of people who might require healthcare. This dramatic rise has placed additional strain on primary and unscheduled care pathways, particularly in areas without community pharmacies such as Harris, the Uists and Barra.

Local GP practices have reported significant growth in temporary resident registrations, with the Uists alone registering around 600 additional temporary residents to their existing combined list of approximately 5,000 patients last year – almost double the rate seen in Stornoway.

This increased activity impacts local GPs' ability to deliver same day care for their own resident patients and the pressure is expected to intensify with large-scale renewable energy developments bringing additional temporary workers.

The new service, which has received around £580,000 funding from the Scottish Government, will be located at Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh (Uist and Barra Hospital) in Benbecula, providing a central, accessible hub with on-site diagnostic facilities and multi-professional support.

The hub will initially launch as a service for same day unscheduled care for **temporary residents and visitors** across the Western Isles, freeing capacity in the current GP services for Western Isles residents.

The service will be available weekdays from 9am – 5.30pm, offering telephone, Near Me (video conferencing) and face-to-face appointments and will be offered in addition to current existing unscheduled care provision during the out-of-hours period. A space will be developed within Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh to include consulting rooms, a waiting area and dispensary. This provides a central location and excellent accessibility to patients, with ready access to onsite diagnostic facilities and access to multi-professional services.

For temporary residents not located in the Uist area, virtual appointments (telephone or Near Me) will be available and face-to-face appointments will be arranged (if necessary) in an appropriate location.

From November 2026, the service will expand to be available as a **walk-in provision for residents** of North Uist, Benbecula and South Uist, as an alternative to attending their own GP Practice.

NHS Western Isles Medical Director, Sara Else, said: "The model will enable GP practices to redirect temporary resident activity to the hub, freeing capacity for same day care for registered patients. The model is projected to provide up to 50 patient contacts per day."

Staffing will include an Advanced Clinical Practitioner, a GP, a Pharmacy Technician, a Primary Care Flow Co-ordinator, and analytical support from Public Health Intelligence. Recruitment prospects are strong.

Dr Else added: "The proposal has received support from the Western Isles GP Sub-Committee, which emphasised the importance of developing a sustainable, equitable model of urgent care that does not destabilise existing GP services – particularly on Lewis, where an alternative walk-in model was deemed inappropriate at this time."

NHS Western Isles is fully supportive of the pilot, recognising its value in improving access for permanent residents and visitors alike, and in safeguarding the sustainability of primary care services across the island chain.

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

How to get your 5-a-day?

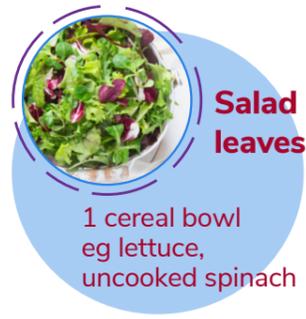
Eating at least five portions of varied fruits and vegetables daily is important for overall health. The following counts as 1 portion of your 5-a-day.



Medium to large vegetables
½-1 whole vegetable eg courgette, leek, pepper



Root vegetables
1 whole eg carrot, parsnip, sweet potato



Salad leaves
1 cereal bowl eg lettuce, uncooked spinach



Green leafy vegetables
8 florets or pieces eg broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower



Small or sliced vegetables
3-4 heaped tablespoons* eg peas, sweetcorn, or sliced cabbage, mushrooms, runner beans



Dried fruit
1 heaped tablespoon* (30g) (only counts as one of your 5-a-day) eg raisins, dried cranberries



Small fruit
2 whole eg kiwi fruits, plums, satsumas



Large fruit
1-2 slices eg mango, melon, pineapple



Cooked pulses (beans and lentils)
3 tablespoons* (only counts as one of your 5-a-day) eg canned chickpeas, lentil



Berries
1-2 handfuls eg blueberries, raspberries



Unsweetened fruit or vegetable juice
1 glass (150ml) (only counts as one of your 5-a-day) eg orange juice, apple juice



Medium fruit
1 whole eg apple, banana, orange, peach, pear

*A tablespoon is equivalent to a 15ml measuring spoon, whereas a dessert spoon only holds 10ml.

“Back to Basics” campaign reminds Western Isles residents of simple steps to better health

A new health promotion campaign, Back to Basics, is being launched across the Western Isles to remind people of the simple, everyday building blocks that support good health and wellbeing.

The campaign focuses on clear, practical information that many of us have heard before, but may not always remember or find easy to apply in day-to-day life. Topics include:

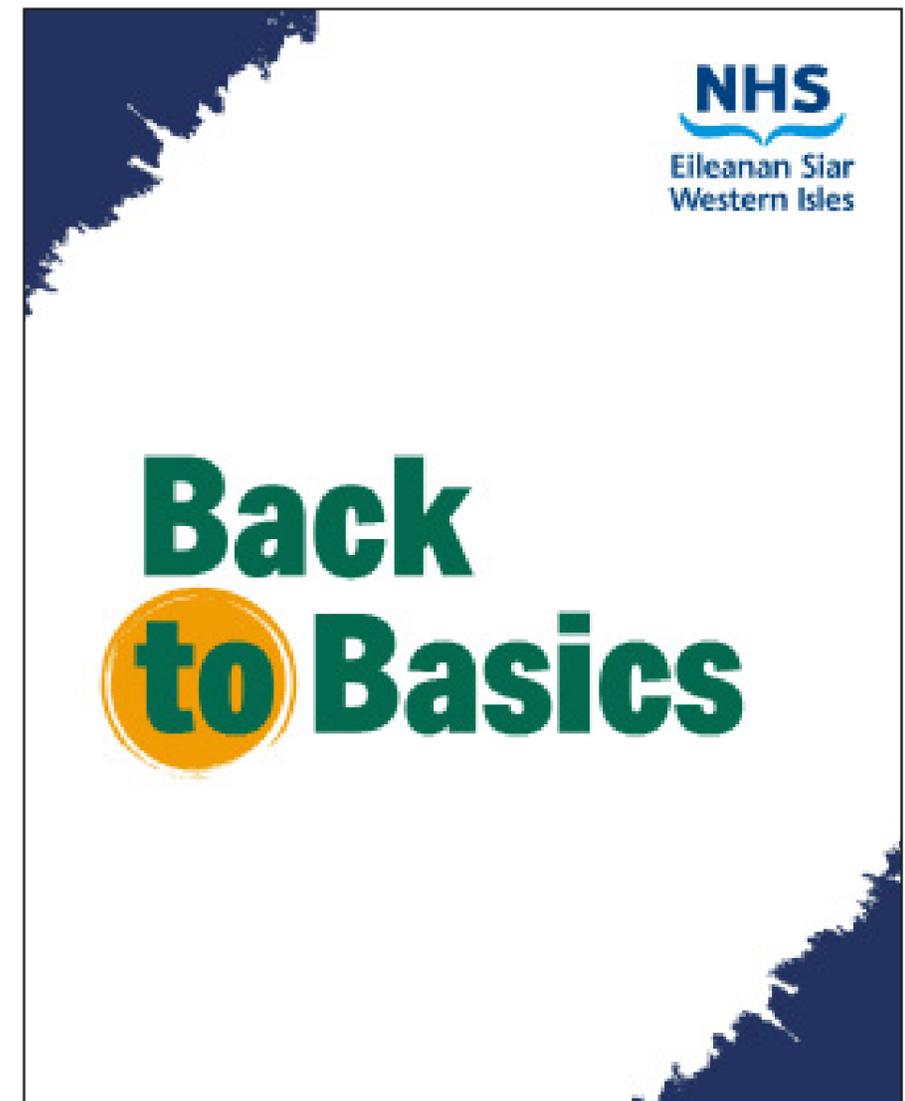
- What makes up a portion of fruit or vegetables, to help people reach at least 5-a-day
- Why it's important to look after mental health, and simple ways to do so
- How active we should be, with suggestions for fitting activity into everyday life
- How much water we should be drinking, and how to recognise when we need more
- How many units are in different alcoholic drinks
- How much sleep adults should aim for, and tips to help get a good night's sleep
- What makes a healthy snack, and how to make sure they're available when needed

Back to Basics is not about perfection or pressure. Instead, it provides straightforward reminders and trusted information to support small, achievable choices that can add up to long-term benefits.

As part of the campaign, a series of posters have been created. These will be shared on social media and hosted on NHS Western Isles' public health webpages, where people can view, download and share them with family and friends, in workplaces, and within community groups.

Alison MacDonald, Senior Health Promotion Officer, said: 'Health advice can sometimes feel overwhelming, especially when life is busy. Back to Basics is about going back to the fundamentals, the simple things that make a difference to how we feel.'

The campaign aims to help people feel informed, confident and empowered when it comes to their health. To view the full range of posters, you can visit: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/public-health/resources/



NHS Western Isles helps 'The Barn Project' reach completion



NHS Western Isles supported the completion of The Barn Project by awarding £20,000 in capital grant funding to The Shed Project (in partnership with Martin's Memorial).

The Barn Project set out to refurbish the hall at Martin's Memorial Church, creating a new and dedicated family centre through the installation of modern toilets and a fully equipped community kitchen, both housed in redesigned spaces. This upgraded facility now serves as an inclusive and supportive environment for families and individuals across the community.

Designed with the hope to tackle isolation and loneliness within our community, The Barn provides a safe, welcoming, and positive space for people of all ages. It offers a whole-family approach which aligns with the work of the Outer Hebrides Drug and Alcohol Partnership, recognising that recovery affects not only individuals but the wider family network.

The funding from NHS Western Isles was used to secure equipment for the new community kitchen for The Barn Project, a resource that now plays a central role in the day-to-day operation of the Barn.

The work was finalised in October 2025 with the official opening due to take place later this year. Since the work was finalised, The Barn has been very well used by groups including Alpha, Little Stars, and the Well. The hall has also hosted a variety of community activities such as men's and women's meetings, as well as wider community

gatherings.

The new kitchen facilities have become a key asset, regularly used by groups who rely on the space for meals, workshops, and community-building activity.

Rev. Tommy Macneil, Team Leader of The Shed Project and The Barn Family Centre, said: "We are indebted to NHS Western Isles for their support of The Barn, by enabling us to properly equip the community kitchen for use."

Colum Durkan, Director of Public Health, NHS Western Isles, said: "We were delighted to support The Barn Project, which is already making a meaningful and positive impact within our local communities. By helping to equip the new community kitchen, we are supporting a space that brings people together, reduces isolation, and strengthens family and community 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.

Pictured above L-R: Christeen MacDonald, The Barn Manager, Claire Smith, The Shed and Barn Chairperson, Colum Durkan, Director of Public Health, NHS Western Isles, and Rev. Tommy Macneil, Team Leader of The Shed Project and The Barn Family Centre.

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

NHS Western Isles marks International Women's Day with a week-long focus on women's health

To mark International Women's Day on Sunday March 8, NHS Western Isles launched a weeklong women's health awareness campaign – 'Empowering Women's Wellbeing'.

Throughout the week, the campaign shone a spotlight on a range of health conditions commonly experienced by women, many of which are still under-recognised or misunderstood. Topics included:

- Menopause Awareness
- Endometriosis Spotlight
- Menstrual Health & Education
- Common Women's Cancers

It is estimated that there are around 400,000 women in Scotland of menopausal age, with many more experiencing perimenopause in their late 30s or early 40s. Menopause and perimenopause can affect physical, emotional and social wellbeing, with significant impacts on home life, relationships, and work. By raising awareness, NHS Western Isles aims to help women feel informed, supported and understood.

Endometriosis was also a key focus on one of the days during the campaign. This is a long-term condition, which affects around 1 in 10 women, and can have a significant impact on daily life. Because diagnosis can be challenging, highlighting the signs and symptoms is vital to ensuring women feel confident in seeking help.

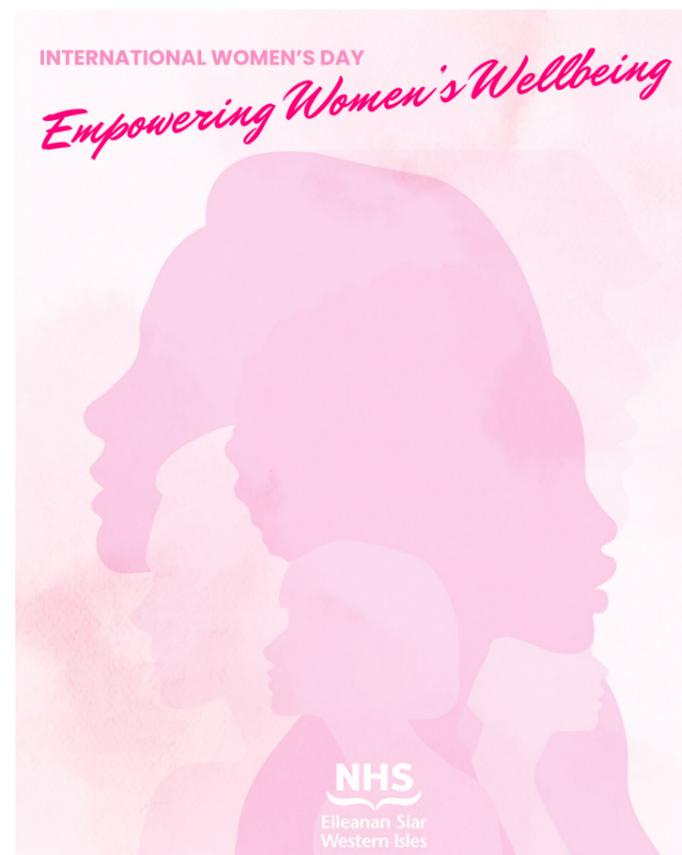
Menstrual health is an area where embarrassment can prevent people from having open conversations. It's important to remember that periods are a normal part of life, but symptoms that interfere with daily activities may indicate an underlying condition. Throughout the campaign, NHS Western Isles shared guidance on what's typical and what you may need to discuss with a health professional.

On the final day of the campaign, information was

shared on common women's cancers, including breast, ovarian and cervical cancer. Knowing what symptoms to look out for and understanding the importance of attending screening appointments are crucial steps in early detection. Women are encouraged to contact their GP promptly if they notice anything unusual.

NHS Western Isles is committed to improving women's health and wellbeing across our communities. By encouraging open discussions, increasing understanding and reducing stigma, we hope to empower women to take control of their health and to seek support when needed.

Gordon Jamieson, Chief Executive, NHS Western Isles, said: "International Women's Day is an important reminder of the unique health challenges faced by women and girls. Our aim is to break down stigma, promote early help-seeking, and empower women to make informed choices about their wellbeing."



Shining a light on endometriosis

- understanding the signs through real experience

At NHS Western Isles, we want to raise awareness of endometriosis by sharing the real experiences of those living with the condition. Thank you to our local resident for bravely sharing their story with us in the hope of helping others recognise the signs and feel empowered to seek support.

"My symptoms first began around 6 years ago, and it started with sharp, one-sided pain. Over time, the pain has progressively worsened, especially with movement, and can now spread around to my abdomen and back. Looking back, I struggled with fatigue and heavy menstrual bleeding for many years beforehand, but I didn't recognise them as potential symptoms at the time.

After my second pregnancy, the pain became worse and more frequent. This was when I decided to pay attention to my body that something wasn't right.

Symptoms can vary. Some days I have no pain at all, and other days, I can manage the pain with hot water bottles and ibuprofen. However, many days I experience intense pain that limits me to the point where I can't stand for long and need to take stronger pain medication. My symptoms become noticeably worse around the time of my period. Before my laparoscopy last year, I would struggle to complete simple tasks such as washing dishes, walking around my house or lifting my children.

A typical flare up begins with a sharp pain in my side or cramping in my abdomen. This will build up to intense pain that feels as though someone is twisting my insides repeatedly, and it can quite literally take my breath away. When this happens, I am often unable to move and become bed bound. There have been times that the pain has been severe enough to make me vomit. A flare up can last anything from a few hours to a few days.

I visited the GP and hospital many times over the 6 years before I finally received

my diagnosis last April. It felt like a battle, having to repeat my symptoms and struggles to different people. Each time I was sent for a kidney scan which would show up clear. When I was finally referred to Gynaecology to query endometriosis, I was sent for another kidney scan and told that they didn't think it was a Gynae issue. Thankfully I pushed for the laparoscopy, and I was referred on. Endometriosis was then confirmed following the surgery.

The journey to my diagnosis massively affected my mental health and emotional wellbeing. I have been left feeling very emotional and mentally exhausted over the years. I feel frustrated and hopeless when experiencing a flare up. I am afraid to arrange plans as I don't know if I will feel well enough to attend. I put a pressure on myself to 'power through' the pain, which can feel draining.

There should be more awareness about this condition. Not enough people are aware of this condition and the impact it can have. Employers should be more aware in order to provide support to not only those suffering, but their families too. I think that there is still that pressure to 'put on a brave face' and carry on your day through pain, but if more people were aware of the unpredictability of this condition, it may ease that feeling.

To anyone who is experiencing symptoms and thinking about seeking a diagnosis, I would tell them to not give up, to listen to the voice in your head telling you that something is not right with your body. Although there is no cure for the condition, receiving the diagnosis is a huge relief and there are steps available to help ease the pain."

Endometriosis affects around 1 in 10 women, yet it often goes unrecognised. NHS Western Isles encourages anyone experiencing similar symptoms to seek medical advice and to keep advocating for themselves. Early recognition and support can make a significant difference.

Response to public letter from Cllr Kenneth MacLean

NHS Western Isles has been made aware of a letter circulated by Cllr Kenneth MacLean, which was not shared with us by Cllr MacLean.

The NHS Board welcomes and encourages the raising of legitimate and evidenced concerns about healthcare. However, Cllr MacLean's letter presents a number of unfortunate inaccuracies, speculation, unsupported damaging allegations and incomplete accounts that risk causing unnecessary alarm.

NHS Western Isles fully complies with all statutory Duty of Candour requirements, and our reporting is independently audited and publicly available. The number of cases we report reflects actual clinical criteria, not speculation or population comparisons. Annual Duty of Candour reports for 2020-21 (bearing in mind this was during a worldwide pandemic) and 2021-22 were both developed and were presented at an NHS Western Isles Board meeting in November 2022.

We cannot discuss individual patient cases in the public domain and at the point of this response we have not had the opportunity to identify Cllr MacLean's descriptions of patient care. However we can confirm that all significant adverse events are investigated through established clinical governance processes.

Whilst we fully acknowledge that, despite best efforts, things can occasionally go wrong in healthcare, NHS Western Isles staff work tirelessly with dedication and professionalism to provide the highest standard of patient care. When concerns do arise, we are committed to ensuring they are thoroughly investigated, that patients receive appropriate feedback and apologies, and that learning from every case is embedded to improve future care.

We encourage any family, or individual, who believes they have a complaint about the care received, or outstanding questions, to contact us directly so that we can address their concerns in full, taking into account all of the facts. If individuals remain unsatisfied with the complaints process, we make it clear their right to appeal any decisions to the independent Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

With regard to accusations about the organisational culture of NHS Western Isles, we strongly dispute these allegations. NHS Western Isles is very proud of the services delivered and supported across the Western Isles by our staff who act all times with the patients at heart.

Independent staff surveys show a supportive working environment, and all concerns from staff are handled through established, transparent processes.

We have robust mechanisms for staff wellbeing and support (which are being continually reviewed and strengthened through an organisational Wellbeing Group) and we take allegations of bullying extremely seriously. Anonymous reporting, whistleblowing channels, and external escalation routes are all in place.

Contrary to the allegations, recent independent staff surveys have shown both high levels of pride in working for NHS Western Isles and positive experiences of teamwork and support. No such cultural concerns as alleged by Cllr MacLean were suggested in any way.

Our focus remains firmly on delivering safe, compassionate, and high-quality care to the people of the Western Isles.

Like all Health Boards, in particular island Boards, we face increasing recruitment challenges in some areas, but we are encouraged that we continue to attract committed professionals from across Scotland and beyond, and we have a diverse, skilled and dedicated workforce we are extremely proud of. Unfortunately unsubstantiated, damaging miscommunications can have the impact of adversely damaging recruitment campaigns and, as a result, impacting negatively on local healthcare services, such as those in the area represented by Cllr MacLean.

We welcome scrutiny and operate within a system that already includes regular external audits, national oversight bodies, Scottish Government reporting, independent and professional regulation, announced and unannounced Inspections by Healthcare Improvement Scotland, and an annual public accountability review.

If further reviews are requested by Government, we will of course cooperate fully and are more than willing to provide any evidence requested. However, the claims in this letter do not reflect the evidence, the reality of clinical practice, dedication, commitment and professionalism of all our staff and the experience of the vast majority of patients.

NHS Western Isles remains unequivocally committed to patient safety, high-quality, person-centred care, continuous learning and improvement, and full transparency. We take our responsibilities seriously and Health Boards as organisations are fully accountable for the care we provide.

Public statements that appear to prioritise publicity and which contain misinformation undermine constructive relationships, misrepresent the reality of our work, and create unnecessary alarm within the community. Such behaviour is counterproductive and does not support our shared aim to continuously improve care across the Western Isles. [Read more](#)

NHS Western Isles congratulates Immunisation Champions

Many school pupils throughout the Western Isles took part in the immunisation champions project delivered by the NHS Western Isles Health Protection team.

The children attended four education sessions where they learned about immunisation preventable diseases, immunity and vaccination. The students created fantastic information boards within their school and then supported the school nurses at the flu vaccination sessions.

Debbie Crackett, NHS Western Isles Immunisation Nurse Specialist, recently visited Sgoil nan Loch to present the children with their certificates and a £15 Co-op voucher.

Pupils from Sgoil Bhreascleit were presented their certificates by Norma Macleod, NHS Western Isles Healthy Working Lives Advisor.

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



Pictured L-R - Steven Davidson, Imogen Casselden, Beth Macleod and Debbie Crackett (missing from the photo is Struan Bayly)



Pictured L-R - Norma Macleod, Eilidh Mackenzie, Ryan Macarthur James Macleod (missing from photo is Izabella Woods)

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.

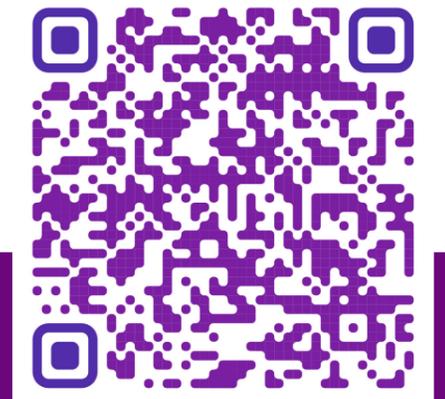
It is up to all of us to be more responsible about ordering and using repeat prescriptions. Unused medicines cannot be recycled. If you aren't taking your medication, tell your GP or make an appointment with the Primary Care Pharmacy team.

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.

NHS STAFF NEWS

WELCOMING BEAUTIFUL BABIES!

BABY BOY!

Everyone in the Laboratory at Western Isles hospital sends a huge congratulations to Jessica Campbell (Medical Laboratory Assistant) and her husband Kenny on the birth of their baby boy, Samuel Peter, who was born on December 18.

A perfect little brother for Cailean.

Jessica, Kenny, Cailean are pictured, right, with baby Samuel.



TWINS!

Congratulations to Alison and Kenneth Mackinnon, who welcomed the arrival of twins, Ronnie Iain and George Paddy, on December 29.

Big sister Mairi-Alice is also delighted with her gorgeous wee brothers.

Alison is employed as a Domestic Assistant at the Western Isles Hospital.



RETIREMENTS

Dr Francis Tierney retires after decades of service to healthcare in the Western Isles

Originally from Sheffield, Dr Francis Tierney started off in his career as a chemical engineer.

He said: "I got fed up talking to computers, so I decided to become an auxiliary nurse and got a job in a Leonard Cheshire Nursing Home. I then decided to do my nurse training and I got on a course as a student nurse in Sheffield.

"After a while, I decided that I wanted to do medicine instead, so I applied to Sheffield University and was accepted."

After graduating, Dr Tierney went to Raigmore Hospital in Inverness, for his first pre-registration job, and stayed there from 1984 until 1989. This included a wide range of different specialities, such as general medicine and surgery, accident and emergency, ENT and ophthalmology, chest medicine, paediatrics and obstetrics.

After his time in Raigmore, Dr Tierney did his GP training in a GP Practice in Portree, Skye, for a year. Keen to continue to develop and enhance his knowledge and skills, he then returned to Sheffield

to undertake specialist training in anaesthetics for a year and a half.

It was after this additional training that Dr Tierney was contacted by Dr John Macleod, Lochmaddy, with an inviting proposition.

Reflecting on this time, Dr Tierney said: "Dr John contacted me out of the blue and said 'Tierney, young man, there is a job we need you to do in Uist'.

"The Health Board had a plan at that time to convert Daliburgh Hospital into a GP-run hospital, so they were looking for GPs with additional hospital-type skills and they wanted me to be the first one.

"What happened was that I actually joined the GP Practice here in Benbecula in 1991. Dr Jack who was here at that time was looking for a GP partner, and I came to join him. The plan was that I would later move to Daliburgh Hospital."

Dr Tierney first arrived in Uist in 1991, joining Benbecula Medical Practice as a partner immediately after completing his anaesthetics training in Sheffield. That same year, he began working part-time as a Medical Officer and Anaesthetist at Daliburgh Hospital.

Between 1994 and 1995, Dr Tierney played

a pivotal role in securing Scottish Government funding for the construction of a new hospital in Benbecula. He worked tirelessly to increase the number of GPs at Benbecula Medical Practice to provide additional cover for what would become Uist and Barra Hospital. For two years, he was part

of the team designing the hospital's layout, and when the facility opened in 2000, he joined its Hospital Management Group, on which he served for many years.

In 1995, Benbecula Medical Practice assumed full medical cover for Daliburgh Hospital, with Dr Senior as Surgeon and Dr Tierney as Anaesthetist. They were later joined by Dr Dawson and Dr Johnson, who also served as an anaesthetist. This dedicated group provided the majority of medical provision for Uist and Barra Hospital until Dr Senior retired in December 2014, followed by Dr Tierney's retirement in 2015.

After retiring from full-time practice, Dr Tierney continued to contribute as a locum GP, working in Benbecula Medical Practice, South Uist Medical Practice and Clydebank Health Centre between July 2015 and February 2020, before ceasing all clinical work at the start of the COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020.

Beyond his clinical duties, Dr Tierney was deeply involved in shaping healthcare policy and education. Between 1991 and 2013, he served on several key committees, including:

- NHS Western Isles Local Medical Committee
- GP Sub Committee
- Area Medical Committee
- Area Clinical Forum
- Area Drug Therapeutics Committee

He was also an Undergraduate Tutor for Dundee University Medical School from 1992 to 2016, mentoring countless future doctors.

Dr Tierney's leadership extended to governance roles. He served as a Non-Executive Director on the NHS Western Isles Board from 2009 to 2013, and later joined the Scottish Ambulance Service Board as a Non-Executive Director from 2016 to

2024. Additionally, he worked as a GP Appraiser for NHS Western Isles for 10 years following his retirement in 2015.

NHS Western Isles would like to express its deep gratitude for Dr Tierney's exceptional service and commitment to healthcare in the islands. His contribution to the development of services in Uist and Barra has been invaluable. His clinical expertise, leadership, and dedication to improving patient care have left a lasting legacy. We thank him for his many years of service.

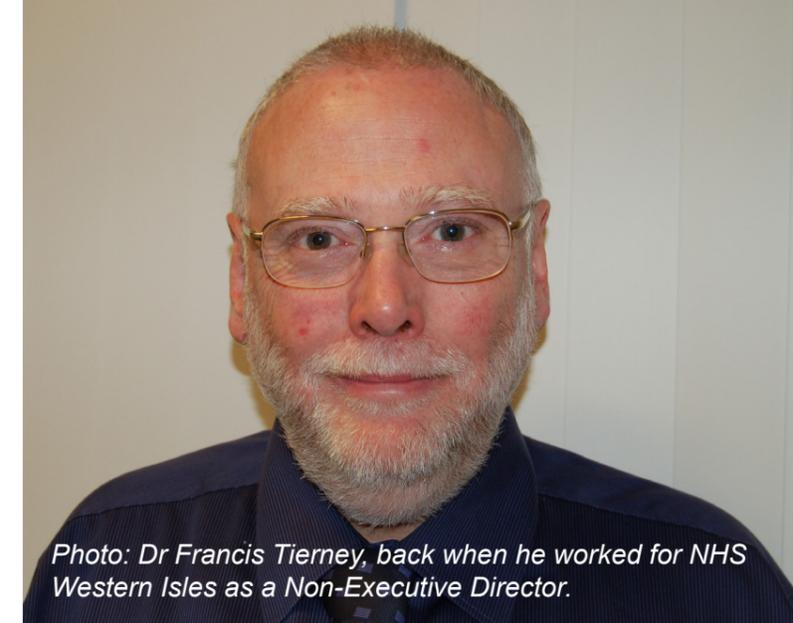


Photo: Dr Francis Tierney, back when he worked for NHS Western Isles as a Non-Executive Director.

Happy Retirement Isabel!

The Public Health Team said farewell to Isabel Steele on February 18, in advance of her retirement on 20 February. Isabel is based in Uist and has worked for NHS Western Isles for 31 years. Isabel plans to use her forthcoming retirement to travel, and to spend more time with her grandchildren.

Isabel is pictured below with her leaving gifts in the Public Health office in Uist.



Photo: Dr Tierney was confirmed a Fellow of the Royal College of GPs in 2014. RCGP fellowship is awarded in recognition of a significant contribution to medicine in general and general practice in particular.

FANTASTIC FUNDRAISING

Roberta takes on HYROX for Macmillan Cancer Support!

Roberta Grant (pictured right), one of the Senior Dental Officers based at Western Isles Dental Centre, is taking part in HYROX Glasgow on March 15, raising money for Macmillan Cancer Support. HYROX is a functional fitness race with a course of a 1km run followed by a functional station, repeated eight times.

She said: "I am taking part in HYROX Glasgow to challenge myself and raise money for a good cause at the same time. It certainly helps with the motivation to keep training. There are over 3.5 million people living with cancer in the UK and at some stage in all our lives we will be affected by cancer, either directly or indirectly. It's Macmillan's goal to ensure people living with cancer get the best care they can but they can't do this without donations. Any donation can help Macmillan continue to provide all the amazing services they do."

Follow this link to donate to Roberta's just giving page.

https://www.justgiving.com/page/roberta-grant-1?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL&utm_campaign=020



From Bosta to Glasgow

Jaqueline's remarkable running challenge!

Jacqueline Macdonald, Ambulatory Care Unit (ACU) Staff Nurse, is running the distance from Bosta in Bernera, to the Royal Hospital for Children in Glasgow – an incredible 310 miles – to raise money for the British Heart Foundation.

Jaqueline's son, Lachie, was diagnosed with an Atrial Septal Defect when he was only three months old. This is a congenital heart defect which causes a hole in the septum that separates the two chambers of the heart and interferes with the blood flow to the lungs. The family was told that he would eventually need surgery but didn't know when.

Three years later, Jaqueline was told that Lachie would require open heart surgery and, after receiving a phone call on the Friday at 4pm, the family was on the first flight to Glasgow on the Monday for Lachie to have his operation.

Recalling this terrifying experience, Jaqueline said: "The next two weeks were something I would not wish on any parent to have to go through, I'm a nurse with 15 years of experience and it all meant nothing, I was on the other side and felt completely helpless.

"But the care Lachie received was AMAZING, from all the theatre staff to the domestics that came in to make him smile every day. He went through so much pain and trauma, but looking at him now almost a year on you wouldn't even know it. The energy he has now compared to before his operation is unreal - he is like a wee pocket rocket and full of mischief, just the way we want him to be."

To complete her challenge, Jacqueline plans to run around 40 miles a week around the Isle of Lewis, before finishing with the final 10-mile stretch from Loch Lomond to the Royal Hospital for Children in Glasgow.

Jaqueline plans to begin on March 12, marking exactly one year since Lachie's open-heart surgery.

Jaqueline said: "I think this challenge is a bit mental and I'm terrified of doing this, but if my wee boy can go through all he's been through like the superhero he is then I can run a few miles. I would appreciate more than you know any donations you can give towards the British Heart Foundation to support research and fight for every heartbeat."

To donate to Jaquelines fundraising efforts please visit: https://www.justgiving.com/page/jacqueline-macdonald-1?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL&utm_campaign=020



From Heels to Hills: Nicola Takes on the Jurassic Coast for CoppaFeel!

This June, Nicola Murray, Patient Services Manager, is swapping her heels for hiking boots as she takes on a challenging and life-changing 100km trek over 5 days along the Jurassic Coast.

Alongside Giovanna Fletcher, and some other familiar faces, and 120 inspiring individuals, Nicola (pictured right) will be trekking in support of CoppaFeel!'s vital work.

CoppaFeel! are on a mission to stamp out the late diagnosis of breast cancer by making sure that young people are regularly checking their breasts, pecs, and chests, and getting to know their bodies to have the confidence to see their GP if something doesn't feel normal.

For more information on CoppaFeel! visit <https://coppafeel.org/>

To support Nicola's fundraising efforts, visit [Nicola Murray is fundraising for CoppaFeel!](#)

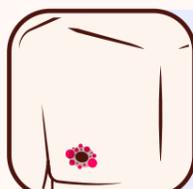
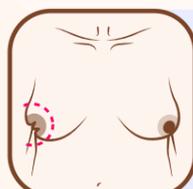
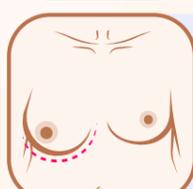


CHECKING YOUR CHEST COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE



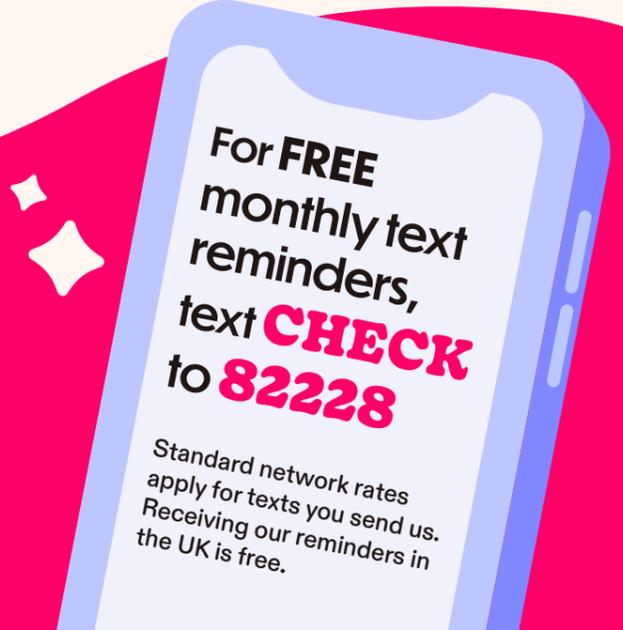
People of all ages and genders can get breast cancer. These signs may look different on your skin tone or your body. Remember to look AND feel when checking your chest.

Signs of breast cancer may include:

-  Skin changes such as puckering or dimpling
-  Unusual lump or swelling in your armpit, or around your collarbone
-  Unusual lumps and thickening
-  Liquid coming from your nipple
-  A rash or crusting on or around your nipple
-  Nipple is pulled inwards or changes direction
-  A sudden, unusual change in size or shape
-  Constant, unusual pain in your breast or pec, or armpit



CoppaFeel! is a registered charity in England and Wales (1132366) and Scotland (SC045970) VAT number (388465343).
Version 1, 2024. We updated this information in April 2024. We will look at it again in April 2027.



For **FREE** monthly text reminders, text **CHECK** to **82228**

Standard network rates apply for texts you send us. Receiving our reminders in the UK is free.

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.



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Recruitment

| Job Vacancy | Closing Date | Band | Job Ref |
|---|--------------|------|---------|
| Bank Specialist Clinical Pharmacist | 18.03.2026 | 7 | 238826 |
| PA to Director of Dentistry | 19.03.2026 | 4 | 241270 |
| Physiotherapy Services Manager | 19.03.2026 | 8b | 241809 |
| Bank Community Equipment Service Assistant Storekeeper | 19.03.2026 | 2 | 241846 |
| Senior Public Health Practitioner | 22.03.2026 | 6 | 241299 |
| Public Health Practitioner | 22.03.2026 | 5 | 241301 |
| Associate Director of Women and Children's Services | 23.03.2026 | 8b | 241764 |
| Bank Domestic Assistant | 24.03.2026 | 2 | 242413 |
| Advanced Nurse Practitioner Urgent and Unscheduled Care | 24.03.2026 | 7 | 241472 |
| Cancer & Palliative Care Clinical Nurse Specialist | 24.03.2026 | 6 | 242275 |
| Bank Staff Nurse | 25.03.2026 | 5 | 235161 |
| Domestic Assistant | 25.03.2026 | 2 | 242428 |
| Bank Cook | 26.03.2026 | 3 | 242683 |
| Medical Ward 2 Staff Nurse | 26.03.2026 | 5 | 241726 |
| Community Staff Nurse | 26.03.2026 | 5 | 239799 |
| Domestic Assistant | 30.03.2026 | 2 | 242402 |
| Public Dental Officer | 31.03.2026 | PDO | 241656 |
| Public Dental Officer | 31.03.2026 | PDO | 241661 |
| Senior Dental Officer | 06.04.2026 | DO | 242169 |
| Advanced Clinical Nurse Specialist Cardiology | 06.04.2026 | 8A | 242253 |

Meet the Board



Gillian McCannon
Board Chair



Gordon Jamieson
Chief Executive

Executive and Non-Executive Directors



Colum Durkan
Director of
Public Health



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



Dr 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

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.

