

Slàinte

Health update from NHS Western Isles **SPRING/SUMMER 2026**

NHS Western Isles leads Scotland in Hospital at Home care



Encouraging a Breastfeeding Friendly Western Isles
Page 41

International Day of the Midwife
Page 44

Developing the Young Workforce
Page 42



Contents 'at a glance'

[Major expansion of Hospital at Home and Integrated Front Door Services: Page 9](#)

[Supporting Eriskay to create Community Hub: Page 10](#)

[Quit Your Way: Page 12](#)

[Mental Health Accreditation Scheme: Page 18](#)

[Buggy Buddies returns: Page 21](#)

[Creative Sanctuary Cabin for Uist: Page 22](#)

[Boiler replacement plan for St Brendan's: Page 23](#)

[Western Isles named one of top Boards for helping people quit smoking: Page 24](#)

[Science Fair welcomes AHPs: Page 28](#)

[Stornoway Primary Alcohol and Drugs awareness session: Page 30](#)

[A unique nursing experience: Page 33](#)

[Be Tick Aware: Page 34](#)

[Women's Aid space transformed: Page 36](#)

[New JustGiving page: Page 38](#)

[Breastfeeding Friendly Western Isles: Page 41](#)

[Celebrating International Day of the Midwife: Page 42](#)

[Developing the Young Workforce: Page 44](#)

[Celebrating our Nursing Teams: Page 48](#)

[Leading Scotland in 'Hospital at Home': Page 52](#)

[A legacy of care in Maternity: Page 58](#)

[Recruitment: Page 62](#)

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



Pictured L-R: Hughina Mackinnon, Sara Else, Veronica MacNeil.



Pictured: Attendees at the Dark Island on March 24.

Marking over 30 years of NHS service in Uist and Barra

The final event in this year's NHS Western Isles Long Service Awards series took place on March 24 at the Dark Island Hotel in Benbecula, where colleagues from across Uist and Barra gathered to celebrate an extraordinary milestone: more than 30 years of service to NHS Western Isles. The event offered an opportunity to recognise the dedication of individuals whose careers have spanned significant change within the NHS.

Staff were invited to bring a guest of their choice, making the occasion a shared celebration. The ceremony was opened with a warm welcome from Diane Macdonald, Director of Human Resources and Workforce Development, followed by words from Frances Robertson, Nurse/AHP Director and Chief Operating Officer. Each member of staff was then presented with a certificate and special badge from Board Chair, Gillian McCannon. Mrs McCannon closed the ceremony with a message of thanks to all those in attendance. Guests then got to enjoy an afternoon tea provided by the Dark Island Hotel, and an opportunity to reminisce with colleagues and share stories of their time in service.

Unfortunately, due to work commitments and adverse weather, four award recipients from Barra were unable to attend the event on March 24. To ensure their achievements were still recognised, Sara Else, NHS Western Isles Medical Director, visited Barra on April 14 to personally present each colleague with their badge and award certificate, marking their dedication to NHS Western Isles (see photograph, left).

Reflecting on all the award ceremonies for 2025/26, Diane MacDonald, Director of Human Resources and Workforce Development, said: "Our Long Service Award recipients exemplify the values that make NHS Western Isles such a special organisation. Their commitment, resilience and compassion have shaped the care we provide and supported our communities through times of change and challenge. We are deeply grateful for the contribution each of them has made over many years, and it is a privilege to recognise their service."

Nominations Now Open for Scotland's Health Awards 2026

Nominations are officially open for [Scotland's Health Awards 2026](#), offering a unique opportunity for the public to recognise and celebrate the extraordinary contributions of healthcare individuals and teams across NHS Western Isles and the wider NHS Scotland network.

Organised by The Scotsman in partnership with NHS Scotland and the Scottish Government, the annual awards shine a spotlight on healthcare staff who go above and beyond to deliver compassionate, high-quality care to communities across the country.

From frontline staff to behind-the-scenes support workers, the awards honour the full spectrum of health and social care professionals whose dedication and innovation are vital to the wellbeing of Scotland's people.

The 2026 award categories include:

- Support Worker
- Innovation
- Volunteers
- Midwife
- Allied Health Professional
- Global Citizenship
- Care for Mental Health

- Integrated Care
- Tackling Health Inequalities
- Leader of the Year
- Nurse
- Doctor
- Healthcare Scientist
- Pharmacist
- Young Achiever
- Top Team
- Reader's Choice – Unsung Hero/Heroes

Gordon Jamieson, NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, said: "I am incredibly proud of the commitment and compassion shown by our staff across the Western Isles, on a daily basis. Scotland's Health Awards give us the chance to celebrate the individuals who go above and beyond to care for our communities. I would encourage patients, families and colleagues to put forward the individuals and teams who have made a real impact."

The winners will be announced at a prestigious awards ceremony and gala dinner to be held at the Edinburgh Corn Exchange in November 2025.

Nominations close on Sunday, 23 August 2026. and for full details and to submit a nomination, visit: www.nationalworldevents.com/sha-2026



SCOTLAND'S
HEALTH
AWARDS 2026

Thursday 12th November 2026
Edinburgh Corn Exchange

NOMINATE NOW!



SCAN HERE
TO NOMINATE

Deadline for nominations is 23rd August

NHS
SCOTLAND

Healthier
Scotland
Scottish
Government

Campaign to help parents struggling with money or employment worries

If you're finding it hard with costs mounting up and the thought of applying for benefits you're entitled to, taking that first step into work or looking for ways to increase your earnings can be overwhelming - but Parent Club can help. The good news is there is lots of support available and Parent Club can guide you to someone you can talk to about applying for benefits and one-off payments, or gaining skills, finding work or childcare.

Benefits and grants you could be entitled to
Knowing where to begin with benefits and one-off payments you're entitled to can be stressful. You might also think you're not eligible for any additional financial support, but it's always worth checking as you may be surprised. Parent Club can guide you to a trusted adviser who can help you find and apply for all the benefits and payments available

to you and your family. All advice is confidential, so you don't need to worry about losing any existing benefits.

Finding a job that works for your family
The thought of finding a job can feel overwhelming, especially if you're looking for something that fits around childcare and other commitments. If you've been out of the workplace for a while, you might be a bit concerned about returning, or worried that your skills are out of date. This might be your first time looking for a job, and you don't know where to start. Or perhaps you already have a job, but are looking to increase your earnings. Whatever your situation, you don't have to do it on your own, as there are lots of support services to help you.

Looking after your mental health
Worrying about money can take its toll on your mental health, and if you feel like everything is getting too much, it's important to remember that you're not alone and there is support out there. Parent Club has tips to help you look after your mental health and places you can go to find support.

To find out more about benefits and employment support, take that first step and visit parentclub.scot/money-work



To drive forward our commitment to health and wellbeing and to help improve local sporting infrastructure, NHS Western Isles has provided a Capital Grant to Goathill Park Amenities Trust (GPAT) enabling them to upgrade the changing, storage and spectator areas of the Goathill Pitch in Stornoway.

A donation of £10,000 has enabled the Trust to enhance grassroots football participation on the island, benefiting both youth and adult players, as well as offering accessible, sheltered facilities for those with additional support needs to spectate and/or participate in the sport.

The donation has also enabled the upgrade of changing facilities by helping to renovate and enlarge the existing changing rooms, ensuring they are accessible for all, including those with mobility impairments. This has included roof works to the external toilet and existing storage sheds.

In addition, sheltered and accessible seating areas for spectators has been developed to allow the community to enjoy matches comfortably. Improved weatherproof storage utilising a container has also been developed to house sports equipment, allowing easier access to sports equipment by teams and coaches.

Voicing his appreciation of the grant, Ali Maclean, GPAT Chair, said: "Goathill is the main football pitch used for Youth and Senior Cup Finals, representative matches with mainland Highland

League and Scottish League teams. We see these vital improvements as a massive step to enhancing the football experience on our island and sincerely thank NHS Western Isles for their valuable contribution.

"Regular physical activity through football helps to combat obesity, improve cardiovascular health, improves bone health, and develop and maintain motor skills. In addition to these physical benefits, football fosters teamwork, discipline and resilience, all of which contribute to positive mental health outcomes."

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive, Gordon Jamieson, said: "NHS Western Isles is proud to support local grassroots football. The sport is widely recognised for its profound impact on both the physical and mental wellbeing of all who partake in the sport – players and spectators alike.

He added: "These works will further encourage participation and tournaments that attract regional and national teams, strengthening community ties and helping to reduce the risk of social isolation."

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 to help support these groups.

NHS Western Isles
Board Meetings

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

You can attend meetings by contacting michelle.mcphail@nhs.scot

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



Marching to end violence against women



NHS Western Isles' Renal Dialysis Staff Nurses Elaine Nicolson and Ailidh MacLeay supported the first 'Reclaim the Night Stornoway 2026' event which saw over 60+ walkers, all marching to end violence against women and girls.

The International Women's Day event was organised by Western Isles Violence Against Women Partnership. The walk was to remember all those women who have lost their lives to gender-based violence and to honour all the women who have survived.

NHS Western Isles marks major expansion of Hospital at Home and Integrated Front Door Services

NHS Western Isles has announced significant progress in the further transformation of urgent and unscheduled care across the islands, following substantial investment and the successful recruitment of a new multidisciplinary workforce within the Integrated Front Door Services (IFDS).

The 2025/26 end-of-year report highlights a pivotal year for the three interconnected services that make up IFDS: Hospital at Home (H@H), Urgent & Unscheduled Care (U&UC) and the Acute Assessment Unit (AAU). Together, these services aim to ensure that more patients can be assessed, treated, and supported safely in their own homes - reducing unnecessary hospital admissions and improving patient experience.

"Funding of more than £1million has enabled NHS Western Isles to more than double its virtual ward capacity to 26 beds, now the largest virtual ward per head of population in Scotland."

Funding of more than £1million for Hospital at Home and £400,000 for improved flow and frailty services has enabled NHS Western Isles to more than double its virtual ward capacity to 26 beds, now the largest virtual ward per head of population in Scotland.

This expansion includes:

- Significant recruitment across nursing, paramedic, medical and frailty specialist roles
- Investment in diagnostic equipment for home-based imaging and blood tests
- Introduction of self-monitoring kits to help prevent deterioration and reduce acute admissions

In terms of the impact on hospital admissions and Emergency Department pressures, the early data shows a reduction in Emergency Department

attendances from October 2025 onwards and sustained growth in Hospital at Home activity, particularly through admission avoidance. There has also been improved support for care homes, enabling more residents to be cared for without transfer to Western Isles Hospital.

The rapid recruitment drive, completed largely in February and March 2026, has enabled the service to put in place:

- A single Senior Clinical Decision Maker (SCDM) providing seven-day medical oversight
- A new frailty service delivering Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment and early supported discharge
- A dedicated OPAT Nurse Lead expanding intravenous antibiotic therapy in the community
- , Seven-day administrative support, enhancing communication and freeing clinical time
 - A forthcoming Senior Charge Nurse and Pharmacist, completing the new structure

Over the next 12 months, IFDS will focus on embedding its new workforce and delivering key objectives, including a single point of contact for all admissions to reduce

unnecessary hospital stays, and expanding frailty assessment for all patients aged 65+ at the front door. The aim is also to support more people to spend the end of life at home, where this is their wish; to increase diagnostic capability in the community; and to develop a single electronic record for all three services.

The programme strongly supports national priorities including Realistic Medicine, reducing unwarranted variation in care, and delivering health services closer to home.

NHS Western Isles Medical Director, Dr Sara Else, said: "This year marks a major step forward for how we deliver care in the Western Isles. By expanding our Hospital at Home model and strengthening our integrated front door services, we are ensuring more people receive high-quality care in the place they most want to be - at home. We are proud of the team's achievements and excited for what the coming year will bring."

Monday Stroke Club benefits from Staff Raffle

A fantastic £160 was raised through the Health Board Office Christmas Raffle held in December 2025.

Each year, the main prize allows the winner to choose a local charity to receive the funds raised, and this year, Cheryl Martin from the Finance Department selected the Stornoway Monday Stroke Club as the beneficiary.

Pictured clockwise from bottom left: Cheryl, Jenny, Georgia, Laura and Moira from Finance, along with Danny MacKay, Chairperson of the Monday Stroke Club, accepting the donation on behalf of the organisation.



Helping Eriskay revitalise former school into community hub

Plans to develop the former Eriskay School into a multi-purpose community hub by Comann Eachdraidh Eirisgeidh (CEE) have been given a further boost, thanks to a Capital Grant provided by NHS Western Isles.

The £20,000 grant has enabled CEE to commence with its phase 2 plans of developing four accommodation units and a laundrette. The group successfully purchased the old school in 2021 and has already redeveloped it into a museum, community tearoom, archive room and small library. Two areas will also be temporarily used for community events and services, with rooms available for hire by visiting professionals, including NHS staff.

Another valuable addition is one of the accommodation units which was designed fully adaptable for disabled visitors, ensuring

accessibility for individuals with significant disabilities and providing essential support for families and carers.

Sandra MacInnes, CEE Chair, said: “Our island’s community hub will serve as a meeting place for elderly residents to socialise with other members of the community and visitors alike, providing opportunities for them to engage in events, as well as pass on their life skills through storytelling sessions, and social activities.

“Importantly, the accessible accommodation unit will also allow elderly visitors, including those with mobility issues, to stay on the island with family or carers, ensuring they can fully participate in cultural and community events.”

She continued: “We know of many people who would like to visit or return home to Eriskay to see family but are unable to do so due to

a family member having disabilities. The community spaces will be inclusive, ensuring that anyone with physical or learning disabilities can participate in local events, workshops, and social gatherings in a welcoming and supportive environment.”

Additionally, the facility also expects to host learning events on employment, upskilling, childcare and traditional skills, helping residents secure jobs and overcome barriers to employment. Currently, there are very few opportunities on the island for residents to engage in meaningful activities where they feel valued and connected. By providing a dedicated space for people to meet, share their life skills, and pass on knowledge, this project will create a sense of purpose and community, enhancing well-being for all involved.

The project will also highlight Eriskay’s rich history, including key events such as Bonnie Prince Charlie’s arrival, the SS Politician/Whisky Galore, the island’s vibrant fishing industry, the Eriskay Jersey, and the Eriskay Pony, a rare breed that continues to attract visitors.

NHS Western Isles Medical Director, Dr. Sara Else, said: “NHS Western Isles is proud to support the former school’s redevelopment, recognising the importance of supporting an initiative that directly enhances mental and physical wellbeing, reduces social isolation, and improves access to healthcare and cultural activities on Eriskay and surrounding islands.

“This project embodies Community Wealth Building principles, ensuring that Eriskay’s cultural, social, and economic future remains strong.



Through local ownership, strategic partnerships, and long-term sustainability, this initiative will leave a lasting impact on the well-being of residents 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.



Stopping smoking isn't about giving something up - it's about taking your life back

NHS Western Isles is urged people across the Western Isles to take the first step towards a healthier, happier future by choosing to 'Quit Your Way' on No Smoking Day. This year's campaign focused on the four major "wins" of quitting smoking: better health, improved finances, increased fitness, and protecting family wellbeing.

Stopping smoking has immediate and long-lasting health benefits. Within 20 minutes of quitting, heart rate and blood pressure return to normal. Over time, lung function improves, circulation gets better, and the risk of heart attack and cancer significantly decreases.

The average person who smokes could save around £205 a month if they quit smoking. After a year not smoking, a person could see savings of £2,430.

Quitting smoking improves fitness levels. Many people report feeling more energetic and able to return to activities they enjoy, such as walking, running, or exercising without feeling breathless.

Do it for your family. Stopping smoking can reduce the risk of lung cancer for those around you by a third by reducing their exposure to second-hand smoke.

Local quitters have shared their experiences of using the NHS Western Isles Quit Your Way service:

After 1 week of quitting, one service user stated: "It is really difficult to stop smoking. But with the help of the service – it really helps. Difficult times for me is when I am craving a cigarette. I decided after getting my patches and gum to stop 2 weeks in. I have started running again and this has really helped to get my mind off it. Best thing I ever did for my health."

Also using patches and lozenges, another service user encourages everyone to do it: "Just quit. Take it a day at a time. If you slip up, don't beat yourself up. Start again."

After 3 months, one service user said: "It was really hard at the start. I had times when I struggled. The patches and gum were amazing and really helped me as well as calls from Smoking Cessation."

Another service user shared how much better they felt: "I can't believe how much better I feel. I can breathe so much easier now and the coughing has stopped. Used patches and inhalator."

After 1 year of quitting, another service user said: "I feel so much better. For the first time I feel so much happier too. I have more energy and I feel healthier. I used patches and gum."

The following health benefits can be experienced over time when you stop smoking:

- CO levels reduce almost immediately.
- Within a few days, breathing and lung function significantly improves.
- Between 2-12 weeks, circulation improves.
- After 6 weeks, mental health starts to improve.
- Between 2-9 months, coughing and wheezing is reduced.
- After one year, risk of heart attack reduces by half.
- After one year, distress, anxiety and depressive symptoms are significantly improved.
- After 10 years, risk of lung cancer reduces to half that of someone who has never smoked.
- After 15 years, risk of heart disease is that of someone who has never smoked.

Mags Ralston, NHS Western Isles Smoking Cessation Coordinator, said: "No Smoking Day isn't about giving something up - it's about taking your life back. Every cigarette not smoked is a win. Today is your fresh start."

If you're ready to quit smoking and want support tailored to your needs, contact the NHS Western Isles Quit Your Way service by emailing wi.hebridesquityourway@nhs.scot or telephoning 01851708040.

No Smoking Day

Quit and Win on No Smoking Day

Get free NHS support to stop smoking with Quit Your Way

#NSD26

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.

Enjoy the MUSIC and KNOW your limits

Outer Hebrides Alcohol & Drug Partnership



Feeling unwell?
Ask for help

Watch your drinks
and your friends

Safe space tent – no
judgement, just support



Take care of yourself –
you're part of what makes
this festival great!

Outer Hebrides
Alcohol & Drug
Partnership

Supporting scouting in the Western Isles



To support the continued provision of scouting locally, NHS Western Isles awarded Western Isles District Scout Council (WIDSC) £31,000 in capital grant funding to make necessary improvements to the Scout Hall in Stornoway.

Each week, over 130 young people aged between 5-18 attend scouting and guiding groups, supported by 35 dedicated adult volunteers who organise and lead the groups.

Scouting offers a wide range of activities that promote physical fitness, social development, and mental wellbeing. It helps young people build a sense of community and equips them with valuable life skills that may not be gained through other clubs or activities.

At a time when it's so vital for children and young people to have screen-free time, scouting is such a valuable and positive hobby for them - teaching young people how to make good decisions and to take responsibility for their actions, whilst preparing them for life and providing the skills they need to succeed in the modern world, while allowing them to have fun and experience adventure.

The Scout Hall has served as a base for scouting for decades. However, the building had begun to show signs of wear and required significant upgrades to remain a safe and functional space for current and future generations. Improvements have already been made, including insulation, redecoration, upgraded toilet

facilities, and the replacement of windows and doors. With support from NHS Western Isles, the Stornoway Trust, and Point and Sandwick Trust, the WIDSC have been able to replace the entire roof and guttering. The previous roof was leaking, and the guttering had deteriorated beyond repair in several areas, causing issues for nearby residents.

This final phase of refurbishment ensures the hall is wind and watertight, and in good working order for years to come. The improved structure will provide a safe and welcoming environment for all young people and volunteers involved in scouting, allowing them to continue benefiting from this valuable community resource.

Gordon Jamieson, Chief Executive, NHS Western Isles, said: "We were delighted to support the Western Isles District Scout Council with funding to improve their base in Stornoway. Scouting has numerous health benefits for young people, both physically and mentally. It also helps them to learn important life skills, whilst empowering them to make a positive contribution to society."

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 to help support these groups.

Six Western Isles Organisations Step Up for NHS Mental Health Accreditation Scheme



Staff from five of the participating organisations attending Mental Health First Aid training sessions held on May 13th and 21st, 2026.

Six organisations from across the Western Isles are taking part in a pilot of the NHS Western Isles Mental Health Accreditation Scheme, aimed at promoting positive mental wellbeing within the workplace.

The scheme was developed by NHS Western Isles in 2025, following consultation with local employers to understand better the types of support they would value in improving staff mental health and wellbeing.

The organisations participating in the pilot are Hebridean Housing Partnership, Ishga, NHS Western Isles, Alzheimer Scotland, Navantia and An Garadh in Barra.

Through the accreditation programme, participating employers are recognising the importance of supporting mental health in the workplace and are committing to creating positive, supportive working environments that promote employee wellbeing.

The framework is centred around several key principles:

- senior leadership buy-in
- cultivating a positive workplace culture
- providing support and training
- encouraging positive work practices.

To achieve accreditation, organisations will work through a structured framework focusing on raising awareness of mental health, delivering staff training, reviewing

recruitment practices, carrying out risk assessments and improving signposting to support services.

Norma MacLeod, NHS Western Isles Healthy Working Lives Advisor, said: "Since launching our Mental Health First Aid training programme last July, we've trained 58 Mental Health First Aiders across local workplaces. The training supports organisations working towards the Mental Health Accreditation Scheme, while equipping participants with the skills and confidence to support colleagues, friends and family members. It's encouraging to see the positive impact this is having in raising awareness, reducing stigma and creating more supportive communities."

The accreditation scheme is delivered across three progressive levels, with each stage building on the previous one. The framework supports organisations in developing their approach to workplace mental health - from increasing awareness and understanding through to strategic planning and the provision of comprehensive support services.

NHS Western Isles hopes the pilot will help establish a consistent approach to workplace mental health across the Western Isles and encourage more organisations to prioritise employee wellbeing in the future.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the scheme can email norma.macleod1@nhs.scot



"Thank you" video from Sgoil Lionacleit Pipe Band

NHS Western Isles was delighted to receive a 'thank you' performance video from Sgoil Lionacleit Pipe Band - all kilted up, and using their new pipes and drums, purchased using an NHS Western Isles Capital Grant provided to them last year.

As well as their lovely 'thank you' message, the video features wonderful singing and Scottish Highland Dancing, whilst the band play, especially for NHS Western Isles, the same beautiful

arrangement of pipes and drums they performed at the recent Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships.

To watch the video in full visit: <https://youtu.be/ou30koVrKXI>

To read their full story visit: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/maintaining-the-rhythm-for-local-pipe-band/



Please tell us about your experience of NHS Western Isles services

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





ARE YOU TICK AWARE?

DO'S:



REPELLENTS

Use insect repellents containing DEET

CHECK YOUR CLOTHES

Wear light coloured long clothing so ticks are easier to spot and brush off



Remove your clothes when arriving home; not in the bedroom, as ticks could remain on carpets/bedding.

CHECK YOUR SKIN

Ticks like warm, moist places; think waist, armpits, hair line, groin, ears

Keep exposed skin to a minimum. Wear long sleeves and tuck trousers into socks



GOING OUTSIDE

Avoid/take care in areas with dense vegetation

Walk on paths



PETS

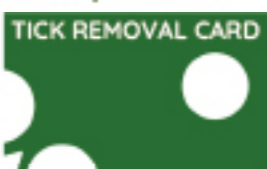
Wash pet bedding by itself at 50°C



REMOVING TICKS:

remove the tick as soon as possible

to use the card: place card between tick and skin. Then scrape the tick off



FOLLOWING A TICK BITE, IF YOU FEEL UNWELL WITH FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS OR DEVELOP A RASH AROUND THE SITE OF ATTACHMENT PLEASE CONSULT YOUR GP.

DO NOT

cover the tick with oils, lotions, chemicals or petroleum jelly

try to burn the tick off with a lit cigarette end or match. This can increase the likelihood of the tick passing on a disease



squeeze or squash the tick



apply antiseptic to the bite area/wash with soap and water. Keep an eye on the site for several weeks for any changes



BUGGY BUDDIES is back

Join the summer strolls!

NHS Western Isles was delighted to announce the return of Buggy Buddies, the popular buggy walking group for parents and carers, which kicked off on April 16.

Led by NHS Western Isles' Health Visiting Team, Buggy Buddies is aimed at parents and carers of babies and toddlers in buggies, prams, or carriers, and meets weekly throughout the summer months.

The group meets every Thursday at 12:30pm, starting from Porter's Lodge beside the Stornoway Golf Club car park.

Group organiser, Elaine MacMillan explains: "Buggy Buddies is open to all parents and carers and is free to attend. This welcoming and relaxed group is a great way for baby to get fresh air within our beautiful Castle Grounds, whilst parents and carers have an opportunity for some gentle exercise together as well as increasing their parent and baby bonding time."

Elaine added: "Walking can improve wellbeing, improve fitness and promote good mental health. We hope that the group will give new parents and families opportunities for social interaction with others, and help them to take positive steps to improving their

own mental and physical health.

"During the walks we see the potential for new friendships being forged, which is particularly beneficial for parents of similarly aged children to their own. Developing supportive social networks with one another can help them cope with the challenges of parenting."

Walks will be facilitated by a Health Visitor from NHS Western Isles and kindly supported by local Action for Children staff.

For more information contact the NHSWI Health Visiting Team on (01851) 709842 or email wi.nps@nhs.scot



Come and join Buggy Buddies, the free weekly local buggy walking group open to parents and carers of babies and toddlers in buggies, prams or carriers.

Parents are assured that the walking group will be low-impact exercise and the route will be based within Lewis Castle Grounds and pram-friendly. Registration is taken at the beginning of each walk with safety advice provided. For further information please contact the HV team on (01851) 709842 or email: wi.nps@nhs.scot

Women who have recently given birth should allow a sensible period of time for recovery and seek advice from a healthcare professional if at all in doubt before taking up any exercise program. Disclaimer: All participants taking part in the 'Buggy Buddies' group do so at their own risk and NHS Western Isles shall not be liable for any injury or loss that might occur as a result of their participation.

Creative Sanctuary Cabin for Uist



To bolster Tagsa Uibhist's approaches to supporting mental health and wellbeing on Uist, NHS Western Isles provided a capital grant to purchase a dedicated garden cabin to create a safe space for art psychotherapy and wellbeing groups and sessions.

A donation of £15,000 has enabled the group to purchase an insulated wooden cabin, which is located within their community gardens, surrounded by vibrant flowers, trees and soothing greenery. A further £10,000 grant from The Clothworkers Foundation, will be used to develop the base and path.

Tagsa Uibhist, which is a community-based charity, takes a holistic approach in helping people live their life to the full, and access the care and support they need to reach their potential. It does this by finding ways to connect people with each other, to be physically active, to learn new skills and fulfilling activities, and to take an active part in community life.

The cabin will be used for community art psychotherapy which is available for all ages. Art

psychotherapy can be adapted to act as prevention and early intervention when our mental health is challenged, for example in Tagsa's popular parent infant and intergenerational groups to evidence-based psychotherapy for mental health illness and underlying issues such as trauma. The cabin will also act as a base for wellbeing sessions and activities with Tagsa's adult support and dementia support service users. For Tagsa's Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Team, the new cabin will allow them to maximise the therapeutic benefits of the community garden environment for service users, while having a private and secluded place to undertake therapeutic creative and life enhancing work.

Chris MacLulich, Tagsa Uibhist Chief Executive Officer, said "I would like to thank NHS Western Isles for their donation, which will enable us to offer a wider range of activities which address those presenting with underlying mental health challenges, while strengthening familial bonds and community support."

Set in a peaceful and supportive environment, the cabin features large windows to make the most

of natural light and ensures accessibility to all clients via ramps and a wide doorway. In addition, it now also enables Tagsa's weekly Gardening Club, which comprises a number of vulnerable adults, to have a safe space to use between their activities.

NHS Western Isles Nurse/AHP Director and Chief Operating Officer, Frances Robertson, said: "We are so pleased to be able to provide this funding to support Tagsa Uibhist to enhance health for their local community. Their work within the community supporting clients is commendable. We hope that the Garden cabin and outdoor safe space will help lead to more comprehensive and lasting improvements in mental health for both their clients and their community."

Pictured left-right are: Olivia MacLennan (Community Gardener), Catriona MacInnes (Art Psychotherapist and Manager of Tagsa's Mental Health and Wellbeing Department) and Chris MacLulich (Tagsa Uibhist Chief Executive Officer).

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.

NHS Western Isles approves boiler replacement plan for St Brendan's

NHS Western Isles has approved a £300,000 commitment towards the replacement of the boiler system at St Brendan's in Barra, following a detailed feasibility study presented to the Board's Corporate Management Team.

The existing oil-fired boilers have reached the end of their serviceable life and have become increasingly unreliable. The new plan ensures a safe, resilient and efficient heating solution for both the hospital and the adjacent care home, which share a common heating system. It is expected that the project will cost in the region of £600,000 with NHS Western Isles and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar each funding 50 per cent of the costs. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's funding of the percentage of the costs has now also been approved by its Asset Investment Team, to be funded from the Property Capital allocation.

Following a full analysis of short and long-term options, NHS Western Isles has approved the recommendation to install new oil-fired boilers within a packaged plantroom, positioned on the site of the redundant oil storage tank.

This option was identified by consultants as offering the lowest operational risk, the least disruption to patients and staff, and the most practical programme for continuity of heating. As the plantroom can be constructed off-site, the transition to the new system can take place with minimal interruption to heating services.

St Brendan's Hospital has been identified for future replacement, and the approved boiler solution provides a safe, reliable and cost-effective system for the coming years, while avoiding unnecessary investment in infrastructure that may not be required long term.

The project will now progress to the detailed design and procurement phase, with timelines for installation to be confirmed. The change ensures the continued provision of warm, safe and dependable facilities for the people of Barra while long-term redevelopment plans continue.

Western Isles Named One of Scotland's Top Performing Health Boards for Helping People Quit Smoking

NHS Western Isles has been highlighted as one of the strongest performing health boards in Scotland in the latest Public Health Scotland (PHS) report on NHS Stop Smoking Services.

The newly published official statistics, covering July to September 2025, show that the Western Isles is one of only two health boards in the country currently on track to meet the national Local Delivery Plan (LDP) Standard for 2025/26. The LDP Standard measures the number of people successfully quitting smoking and staying smoke free for 12 weeks, with a particular focus on people living in the most deprived areas.

As an Island Board, the Western Isles has a higher threshold to meet than mainland boards, with 60 per cent of successful quits required to come from residents in the most deprived communities. Despite this, local services continue to achieve strong results.

Local commitment driving national progress

NHS Western Isles' positive performance reflects the continued hard work of local stop smoking staff and the commitment of people across the islands who are choosing to take steps to improve their health. Smoking remains one of the leading causes of preventable illness in Scotland. Achieving and sustaining 12 week quits is an important milestone toward long-term health improvement, reduced healthcare pressures, and tackling health inequalities.

Supporting people on their quit journey

NHS Western Isles offers free, confidential stop smoking support for anyone ready to quit. This includes:

- Specialist one to one behavioural support
- Group support sessions
- Access to nicotine replacement therapy or other pharmacotherapy
- Tailored support for people in priority communities

Mags Ralston, Smoking Cessation Coordinator commented: "Across the Western Isles, people are proving every day that stopping smoking is achievable with the right support. Quitting is one of the most powerful things you can do for your health. No Smoking Day (11th March 2026) gave us a chance to pause, reflect, and take that first step - small choices today can lead to life changing results tomorrow, and we're here to support you every step of the way."

**QUIT
YOUR
WAY**
with our
support

Vaccines
Save
Lives!

At least she's
had her vaccines.

Being a parent is tough. Getting your child vaccinated means one less thing to worry about. Look out for their letters in the post or visit nhsinform.scot/onelessting



Public Health
Scotland

Healthier
Scotland
Scottish
Government

NHS
SCOTLAND



Announcing two new projects from Advocacy Western Isles

Advocacy Access focuses on making services more accessible for people with disabilities, including those with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, and dementia-related conditions.

It will host a year-long series of meetings in communities throughout the Western Isles.

The first series of meetings took place in June in Barra, Breascleite and Galson.

Advocacy Connect is a unique online advocacy community focus on improving social care. Anyone with experience of social care, whether personally or through supporting others, is encouraged to join and share their own views (see poster on opposite page).

Both projects are an opportunity for a broad cross-section of the Western Isles community to have a say about issues which affect them.

The more Advocacy can encourage participation, the more evidence they will be able to gather to present the case for improvement, whether within social care specifically, or in the wider sphere of access (in the broadest sense) to services.

Please have a look at the [Advocacy Western Isles website](#) for each project and don't hesitate to get in touch with Advocacy if you have any questions, would like more information, or if it would be helpful for one of the Advocacy Western Isles team to speak about these projects.



Advocacy Western Isles
Tagradh nan Eilean Siar
Your Voice, Our Support
Do Ghuthsa, Ar Taic

Advocacy Access

Improving Accessibility Together

Welcome to a new forum from Advocacy Western Isles designed to improve access to services for people with disabilities in the Western Isles.

We are taking our service into communities from the Butt to Barra to work with you and, together, improve accessibility for everyone.

Join us, share your experiences, and partner with us to ensure you have access to meet all your needs.

www.advocacywi.co.uk | access@advocacywi.co.uk
01851 701755
Scottish Charity Number SC034774



connecting people, informing care

Join our free online community to share your **social care experiences** anonymously and help shape future change.



Scan or click the QR code to join



connect@advocacywi.co.uk

01851 701755

@advocacywi   

advocacywi.co.uk

Scottish Charity Number SC034774





Stornoway Science Fair welcomes AHP interactive stalls

Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) from the Western Isles Hospital presented at the Science Fair, held in the Nicolson Institute in March, to mark the start of British Science week.

- Physiotherapy: Mary Lou Stilwell, Jenny Murray, Sophie Callan (student)
- Podiatry: Sarann Macphee, Tara Taylor-Shayle and Sarah Pickles
- Dietetics: Karen France Macleod.

Their interactive stalls showed how Dieticians, Physiotherapists, Podiatrists and Speech and Language Therapists use their scientific knowledge every day in their work.

The science fair was well attended by the Primary school children of Lewis and Harris and their families, even busier than the previous year. A book was left for comments some of which included:

- 'Fantastic day, Lots of amazing family learning opportunities, Thank you'
- 'Great! Lots of different stalls that kept my boys interested and busy'
- 'This was excellent! What a fantastic time.'
- 'Fantastic event again! Many thanks to all involved.'

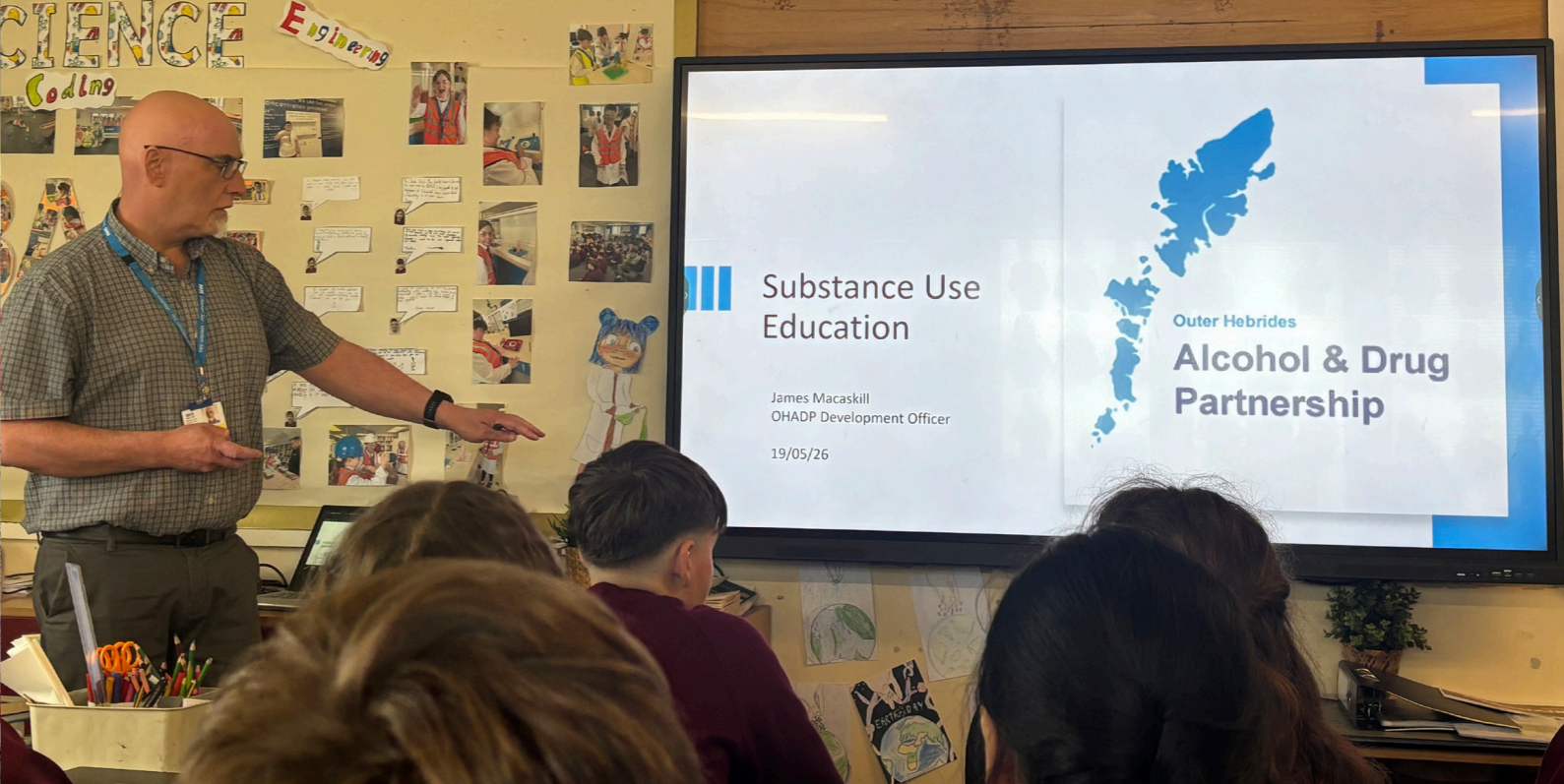
There were also comments written by some children, 'Amazing, really loved everything, so fun!' and 'I think it was really cool.'

A big thank you to all the AHPs who supported the event:

- Speech and Language Therapy: Mhairi Price, Donella Macdonald, Helen Morrison, Sarah Gerrard and Phillipa Rewaj



Stornoway Primary School Alcohol and Drugs Talk



James Macaskill, Alcohol and Drug Partnership Development Officer for NHS Western Isles, recently visited the Primary 7 classes at Stornoway Primary School as part of their Health and Wellbeing programme to deliver a talk on alcohol and drugs.

pressure was also discussed as part of this session.

Feedback from teaching staff was very positive: "The pupils really enjoyed the presentation and were highly engaged"

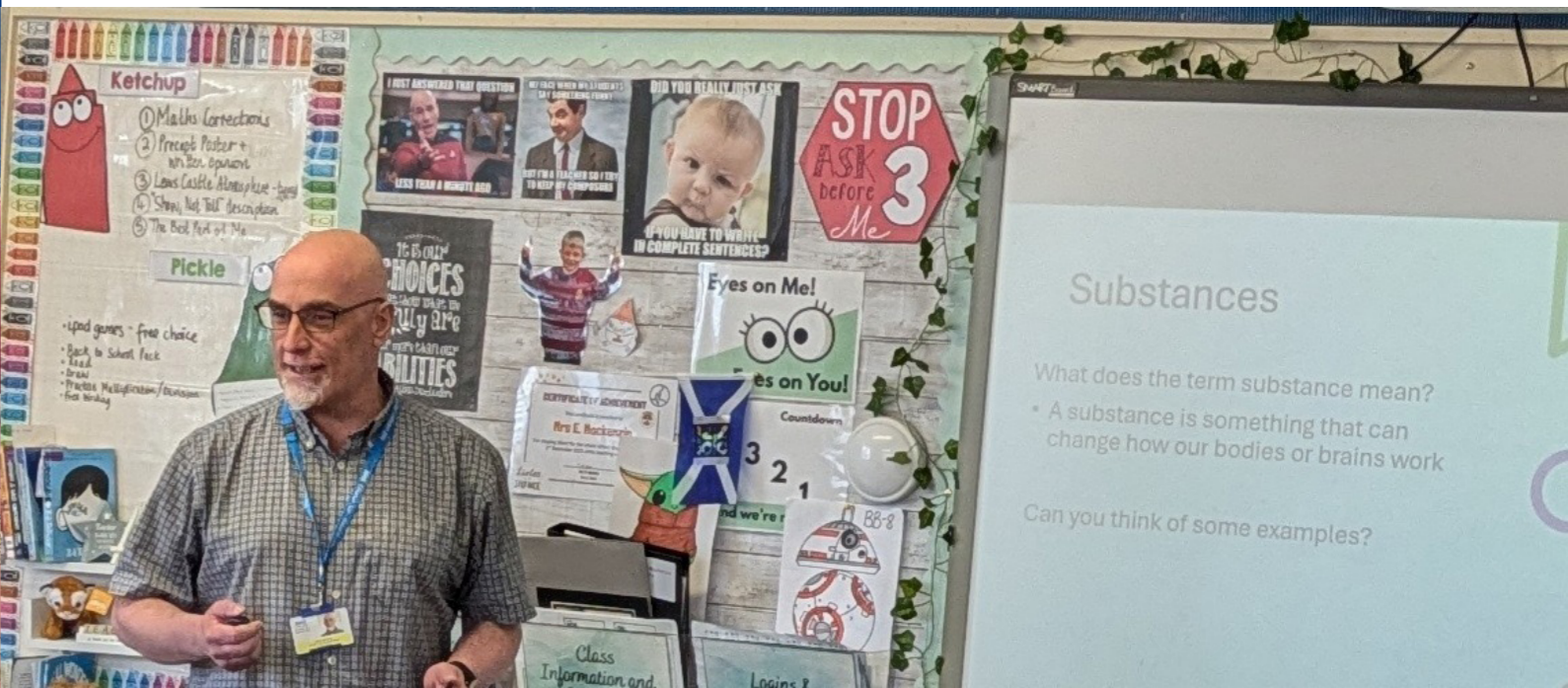
The session covered awareness of both legal and illegal substances, including the potential consequences of misuse. Pupils explored a range of substances, identifying and categorising them while discussing their effects on the body over time. The session also supported understanding of the differences between helpful and harmful substances, including medicines, tobacco and alcohol.

"It makes a difference having interesting speakers delivering presentations on such important topics. The pupils seem to listen better to the key messages"

"They loved the activity. It helped them discuss what they knew and clear up any misconceptions they already had."

An interactive activity focused on stereotypes and the impact of stigmatising language which the pupils engaged with very well. The influence of peer

For further information, email the Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership team via wi.ohadp@nhs.scot





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



A unique nursing experience in the Western Isles

Louise Reid, Student Nurse with the Open University, has recently completed a placement with NHS Western Isles, gaining invaluable experience across a wide range of clinical settings.

Louise is studying nursing through the Open University and is normally employed by NHS Highland. She chose to undertake her placement in the Western Isles as her husband is from the island, allowing her to base herself locally during her time with NHS Western Isles.

During her time in the Western Isles, Louise worked with various teams, including Medical Ward 1, the Emergency Department, Bethesda Care Home and Macmillan Nursing. She also took part in several insight days, spending time with Paramedics, Urgent and Unscheduled Care Nurses and the Day Hospital team.

Reflecting on her experience, Louise said: “I have really enjoyed just embracing each placement and the variety of skills and experiences I have gained from them all have been huge! The multi-disciplinary teams in every area have been so welcoming and inclusive of student nurses. All the placements have been so different that I feel my time in the Western Isles has been a real insight into all nursing disciplines hopefully setting me in good stead for the future.”

When asked if there were any moments during her placement that she felt particularly proud of, Louise added: “At the end of every placement, I felt a little proud just for completing it and for working so closely with such experienced teams. The work that is done in Western Isles Hospital is something to be proud of, and it has been great to be a small part of that as a student nurse. My confidence has definitely grown over the course of each placement.”

Coming from Tiree, Louise commented on how much she has enjoyed working in a similar rural island setting: “Having the opportunity to learn in a similar setting to my hometown has been



wonderful. I’ve always found the caring culture in the islands so inspiring and as a student, to work with people so passionate has been great.”

She continued: “Every staff member I have worked with has been so supportive of learning and making me feel welcome. The nurses, doctors and healthcare assistants have all encouraged questions and taken time to support learning opportunities.”

One of the biggest challenges Louise faced was being away from home for an extended period. However, she would still strongly encourage other students to consider a placement or training opportunity with NHS Western Isles. She said: “I would definitely encourage other students to undertake a placement with NHS Western Isles. I think sometimes the temptation is to go to the mainland to the bigger hospitals for experience, but the experience you can get from rural hospitals and nursing is so unique and challenging.

“Being remote and rural almost forces you to be resilient not only as a nurse but also as a person and having the opportunity to be able to immerse yourself in the culture and community of the Western Isles is something I would definitely recommend to other student nurses, and I feel really grateful to have been able to do this.”

Be tick aware - stay safe from tick bites

Tick season is here. Warmer weather means more people are outdoors enjoying the Western Isles - but it also means more ticks.

NHS Western Isles is reminding residents and visitors to take simple precautions to avoid tick bites and reduce the risk of Lyme disease.

Isabell MacInnes, Health Protection and Screening Nurse specialist, said: "We're entering one of the busiest times for tick activity. Ticks can carry infections like Lyme disease, so it's important that people know how to protect themselves. Enjoy the outdoors - but take a few simple steps to stay safe and check for ticks daily, especially after time in long grass or undergrowth."

Prevent tick bites

Ticks don't jump or fly - they latch on when you brush past vegetation. Reduce your risk by:

- wearing long-sleeved clothing and tucking trousers into socks to minimise exposed skin
- choosing light-coloured clothing to spot ticks easily
- sticking to footpaths and avoiding brushing against plants and long grass
- taking extra care in dense vegetation
- using an insect repellent that is effective against ticks.

After being outdoors

Adopt the following routine tick-checking practices after spending time outside:

- brush off clothing (and pets) before entering indoors
- remove clothing once home
- check your body carefully - look and feel for ticks
- pay close attention to hidden areas like behind knees, armpits, and along the hairline
- remove any ticks promptly to reduce the risk of infection, including Lyme disease.

Tick removal tools (available from vets and local shops) are the safest way to remove ticks.

Key areas to check for ticks

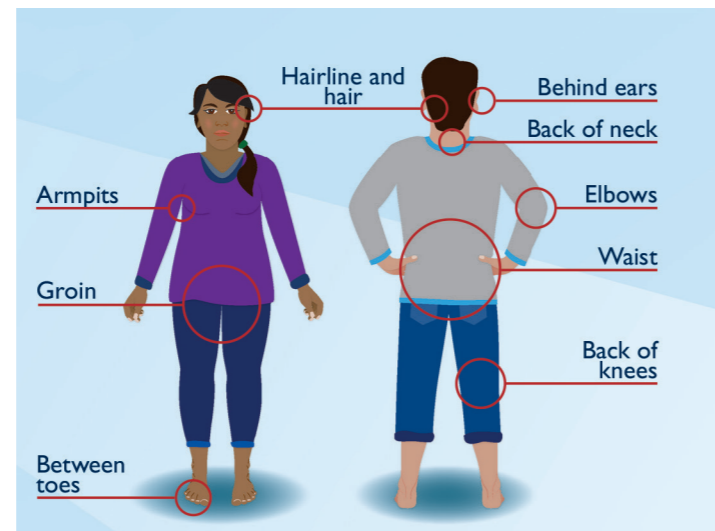


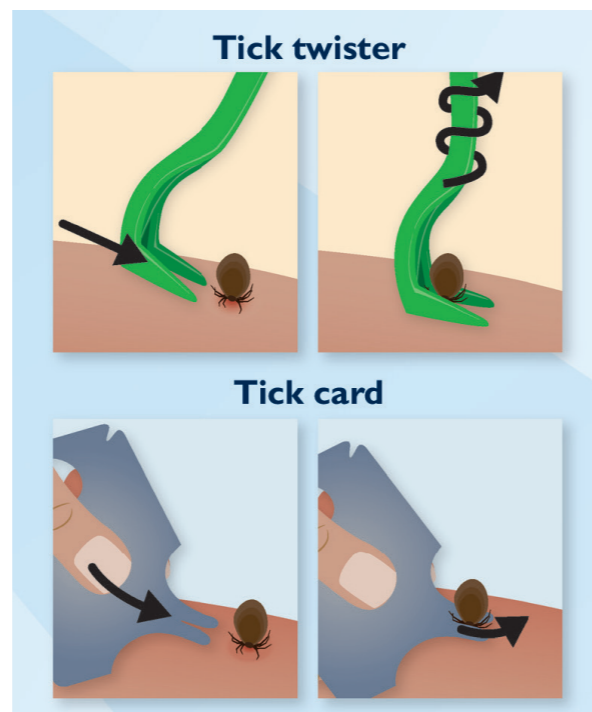
Image source: Public Health Scotland

If you find a tick

- Remove it quickly and carefully using a proper tick-removing tool.
- Don't pull it off with your fingers - this can leave parts behind.
- The sooner it's removed, the lower the risk of infection.

Removal is best achieved using one of the methods below. A plastic tick removal tool that looks like either a small claw hammer or a credit card works well. These are available in many rural shops throughout the Western Isles.

How to use a tick removal tool



What to look out for:

- not all ticks carry the bacteria that cause Lyme disease.
- it usually takes more than 24 hours for the tick to deliver bacteria into the human bloodstream, so prompt removal of ticks greatly reduces the risk of being infected.
- symptoms of Lyme disease include fever, headache, fatigue, and often a skin rash that is round and/or looks like a bull's-eye.
- anyone who develops this rash should contact their GP for diagnosis and possible treatment.
- Lyme disease is treatable with antibiotics, especially if diagnosed early on in the disease.
- undiagnosed Lyme disease can develop more serious complications and be harder to treat effectively.



Typical 'bullseye' rash of Lyme disease

To disseminate the important tick awareness messages, the NHS Western Isles Public Health Team has prepared **information packs for local businesses**.

Each pack includes a poster, an information leaflet, and a tick-removing tool, and can be requested by emailing wi.hirs@nhs.scot or by telephoning 01851 708055. Gaelic resources are also available on request

To view resources produced by the Public Health team, visit: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/public-health/resources/

Supporting your students through life changes

The summer time is always a whirlwind, especially for young people who are moving on. To help you navigate these transitions, Kooth has put together a [free transitions toolkit](#). These resources are designed with clinical teams to give young people the emotional tools they need to thrive over these next few months.

In sessions: Ready-to-go resources

Save time on prep with these simple, high-impact tools:

- 'Moving on' video: A 15-minute, plug-and-play session perfect for exploring change.
- Visual prompts: Use our 'Change happens' and 'It's a big moment' posters to help normalise the uncertainty of growth.

For young people leaving education: practical next steps

Whether they're heading into the workforce or off to campus:

- Starting work: Share the 'Leaving school and starting work' article for practical advice on that first professional leap.
- The next steps journal: A dedicated space for students to reflect, set goals, and plan their future with confidence.
- Uni fears podcast: An honest look at 'feeling like a failure' at university to help students tackle common higher-education worries.

Summer wellbeing: Staying connected

Kooth is here all year round to ensure no young person feels unsupported.

- Processing change: Their 'Letting go' meditation helps students find closure at the end of the term.
- Summer purpose: Encourage positive habits with our article on volunteering and wellbeing.

Don't forget: Kooth is always free, safe, and confidential. Students can access **live 1:1** chats with practitioners from 12noon–10pm on weekdays and 6pm–10pm on weekends. They also have 24/7 access to self-help tools and peer support.



Transforming the space at Western Isles Women's Aid

NHS Western Isles has awarded £5,000 in capital grant funding to Western Isles Women's Aid to carry out upgrades to the communal space at their premises.

Western Isles Women's Aid is a charitable, women-led organisation dedicated to supporting women and children affected by domestic abuse, and to working towards ending violence against women. As a charity, the organisation relies heavily on grant funding to continue delivering safe, supportive and empowering services.

Before the upgrade, the communal space was a large open-plan area comprising a small kitchenette, lounge, and children's play zone. With the support of capital grant funding, the space has now been enhanced through the installation of additional cupboard space and a dedicated food preparation area.

Further improvements include upgraded flooring and décor, enhanced storage solutions, and the

addition of new play equipment for children. The area has also been thoughtfully re-zoned to ensure it can be used effectively by service users of all ages, as well as for meetings, group work and events.

These improvements mean that service users now benefit from a high-quality, safe, private and welcoming environment that meets both therapeutic and practical needs.

The creation of a dedicated children's area will help reduce barriers to accessing support by addressing common childcare challenges, enabling more women to attend appointments with confidence. Accessibility has also been improved to better accommodate individuals with mobility difficulties.

Louise Harrison, Children and Young People's Practitioner and IDAA, Western Isles Women's Aid, said: "Western Isles Women's Aid is incredibly grateful to have received this grant, allowing us

to refurbish our kitchen, lounge and meeting area. Since completing the project we have received many compliments on the space, which is now bright, welcoming and ideal for supporting survivors of domestic abuse in the Western Isles."

NHS Western Isles Nurse and AHP Director/Chief Operating Officer, Frances Robertson, said: "We are very pleased to support Western Isles Women's Aid with this funding. They provide a vital and often life changing service for women and children across our communities. These improvements will help support the wellbeing and recovery of those who rely on this vital service."

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 to help support these groups.

Pictured left: Frances Robertson and Louise Harrison



Eilean Siar Youth Lewis and Harris Conference

Pictured above are Angela Grant, Coordinator, and James Macaskill, Development Officer, both from the Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership, who recently attended the Eilean Siar Youth Lewis and Harris Conference in the role of facilitators to aid discussions in the workshops which took place.

The conference provided pupils from the Nicolson Institute and Sir E Scott an opportunity to discuss items including issues affecting young people in Lewis and Harris in 2026, where young people feel comfortable sharing their views and how to have their voices heard, investigating the difference between misinformation and disinformation online and discussions about the 2026 National Islands Plan.

This was a valuable opportunity to listen to what the young people in attendance had to say about these issues.

For further information, email the Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership team via wi.ohadp@nhs.scot





Walking Football Ball-Coise Coiseachd

Interested in gentle exercise? We hold a walking football session every week.

Ma tha ùidh agaibh ann a beagan eacarsaich socair tha ball coise coiseachd a'dol gach seachdainn aig Ionad Spòrs Leòdhais!

New JustGiving page makes donating to NHS Western Isles easier than ever

Western Isles Health Board Endowments, the official charity of NHS Western Isles, has launched a new JustGiving page to make it easier than ever for the public to support vital healthcare projects across our communities.

The Endowments fund plays a key role in enhancing patient care, improving hospital environments, and supporting the wellbeing of NHS Western Isles staff and communities. Through charitable donations, the fund provides resources and initiatives **that go beyond what NHS funding alone can deliver.**

- In the past, generous donations have provided:
- Hospital garden projects in the Western Isles Hospital and Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh.
 - A dementia-friendly room in Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh.
 - Care boxes and memory bags for patients.

Across the Western Isles, individuals and groups continue to make a meaningful impact through fundraising and donations. Their support helps to deliver improvements that transform experiences for both patients and staff.

- The new JustGiving page offers a simple and flexible way to contribute. Supporters can:
- Make a one-off donation.
 - Set up regular monthly contributions by direct

- Direct donations towards specific wards, services, or projects such as Dignity Bags.

For information on other ways to donate, please email wi.endowments@nhs.scot.

Fundraising efforts continue to play an essential role in improving lives throughout the islands. Members of the public are welcome to take part by creating their own fundraising challenges and linking them to our JustGiving page.

We encourage those planning fundraising activities to share their plans with us so achievements can be celebrated and promoted across the community.

Please note if you wish to do a fundraising event for a specific piece of equipment, please contact us in advance to ensure the equipment can be accommodated within the area required, and that the equipment would pass Infection Control (and any other applicable) regulations.

Together, through generosity and community spirit, the Western Isles can continue to enhance care and make a lasting difference to local healthcare services.

Visit our JustGiving page today: <https://www.justgiving.com/charity/Western-Isles-Health-Board>



Stornoway Sports Centre
Every Tuesday



12:00pm – 12:45pm
Meet in the Cafeteria



Public Pricing

- £6.50 - Full Price
- £3.50 - Concession

Free with Slainte Mhath membership
Attendance is free for Penumbra supported people.

If you would like to attend, just contact Western Isles Nova via phone or email



david.alldred@penumbra.org.uk



01851 706360

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

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



CALL 999 OR
GO TO ED FOR
EMERGENCIES

CONTACT
GENERAL PRACTICE
DURING THE DAY

CALL NHS 24
ON 111
DAY OR NIGHT

ONLY

**Right Care
Right Place**

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



Encouraging a breastfeeding-friendly Western Isles

NHS Western Isles was proud to support Scottish Breastfeeding Week 2026, celebrating breastfeeding across Scotland and promoting a culture where it is seen, supported, and encouraged.

Breastfeeding belongs everywhere, and every mum deserves to feel confident feeding their baby. From those first feeds after birth to everyday life at home, in cafés, and in parks, breastfeeding is a normal part of life across Scotland. Behind every mum is a community that can uplift, support, and encourage.

In Scotland, it is illegal to stop a parent feeding their child, whether by breastfeeding or bottle feeding, in any setting where the public has general access. Deliberately preventing someone from feeding a child under the age of two in a public place is a criminal offence. It is also unlawful to ask a mother to move to another part of the premises or to leave.

Breastfeeding is a natural and powerful way to support a baby's growth and immunity, while also promoting maternal health and strengthening emotional bonds. Its benefits extend beyond families to wider society.

Benefits for baby include:

- Optimal nutrition: Breast milk contains the perfect balance of nutrients tailored to your baby's needs.
- Immunity protection: Rich in antibodies, it helps protect against infections (e.g. respiratory illnesses, diarrhoea, ear infections).
- Long-term health: Associated with lower risks of obesity, diabetes, and some childhood cancers.
- Brain development: Supports cognitive development and may improve learning outcomes.

- Digestibility: Easier for babies to digest than formula.

Benefits for mum include:

- Physical recovery: Helps the uterus contract and reduces postnatal bleeding.
- Reduced disease risk: Lowers the risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and type 2 diabetes.
- Convenience: Always available, sterile, and at the right temperature.

Breastfeeding also has emotional and bonding benefits as it promotes strong attachment through skin-to-skin contact and increases oxytocin levels that support bonding and maternal wellbeing.

Lyn Macdonald, Midwifery Team Lead, said: "Breastfeeding is one of the most natural and beneficial starts we can give a baby, supporting their health and development from the very beginning. It also brings important health benefits for mothers and helps build a strong emotional bond between parent and child. In the Western Isles, we're committed to supporting families every step of the way - whether that's in hospital, at home, or through local groups like Bosom Buddies. Creating a community where breastfeeding is understood, welcomed and supported makes a real difference to parents' confidence and experience."

Local support is available through the Bosom Buddies breastfeeding group, which offers a friendly and informal space to meet other parents, share experiences, and receive practical advice from trained peer supporters and health visitors.

The group meets every Wednesday at the Fàilte Centre, Bayhead, from 10am to 12noon.



Celebrating International Day of the Midwife

International Day of the Midwife on May 5 presented us with the opportunity to celebrate the extraordinary contribution our midwives make every day.

Midwives are at the heart of safe, compassionate and high-quality maternity care. From pregnancy and birth through to the early days of parenthood, Midwives support women, babies and families at some of the most important and vulnerable moments of their lives.

Their clinical expertise, calm leadership, advocacy and kindness make a lasting difference - not just

to outcomes, but to experiences that families carry with them forever.

A Midwife's role goes far beyond childbirth. Midwives are educators, supporters, problem-solvers and champions for women's health, often working under significant pressure while continuing to deliver care with professionalism, empathy and resilience.

On behalf of colleagues across the organisation, thank you to all of our Midwives for your dedication, commitment and the vital work you do every day.



NHS Western Isles Pledges Support to Developing the Young Workforce

NHS Western Isles is proud to pledge our support to Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and join organisations across Scotland in creating opportunities for young people. The DYW Pledge is a commitment from employers to support Scotland's young people to succeed in the world of work through jobs, apprenticeships, further and higher education, training programmes and work experience.

We believe that preparing young people for the workplace is a team effort, and we are committed to working in partnership with DYW to continue providing inspirational opportunities. By engaging directly with schools, we can help young people understand and develop the skills they need to succeed. Activities like class talks, work experience and career events will help us bring the curriculum to life and broaden young people's awareness of the diverse career pathways available within NHS Western Isles.

Offering meaningful work experience and placements is a key part of our pledge. Providing these opportunities allows us to offer vital experience to those preparing for work, including young people who may face additional barriers to employment. This doesn't just help young people achieve their potential, it directly benefits our organisation by bringing in fresh perspectives, supporting equality, diversity and inclusion and giving us early access to future talent.



Gordon Jamieson, Chief Executive, said: "We are undertaking significant work to provide young people with meaningful experience in healthcare, and the number of opportunities available has grown substantially, particularly over the past year. These opportunities give young people valuable, hands-on experience and the chance to make a real contribution. Few organisations offer opportunities at this kind of scale, across such a wide range of roles and functions, and we hope this investment will encourage more people to choose careers in healthcare and, ultimately, to remain and build their livelihoods here."

Furthermore, investing in a skilled workforce through apprenticeships is essential for our future. Work-based learning opportunities, such as Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships, allow us to attract fresh talent, upskill our existing employees and develop the workforce of the future. Apprentices learn on the job while working towards recognised qualifications, which helps us improve productivity, retain skilled staff and ensure we have the capabilities required to deliver high-quality care.

Two of our current Modern Apprentices share what drew them to an Apprenticeship within NHS Western Isles.

Caitlin Morrison, who is currently working with the Clinical Governance & Professional Practice team, said: "I chose to do a Business Admin Modern Apprenticeship with NHS Western Isles as I knew I wanted to gain valuable office experience and develop my administrative skills, whilst supporting the organisation and community. I had experience living on the mainland and attending University; however, I learned that it wasn't ideal for me. I found a great opportunity to work whilst learning and gaining a qualification, without moving away to study. Through the support of Louise and the Clinical Governance and Professional Practice Team, I am constantly learning and developing my skills, whilst enjoying my tasks and work."

Hannah Maclean, who is part of the Organisational Development & Learning team, said: "I chose to do a Modern Apprenticeship with NHS Western Isles because it gave me the opportunity to learn new skills while gaining valuable experience. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do when I left school, but I knew I didn't want to go to University. This opportunity was perfect for me as I can gain qualifications and earn at the same time. I really enjoy being part of the Organisational Development and Learning team and supporting the wider organisation to deliver healthcare services to the community."

We look forward to working alongside our local DYW team to continue the good work in delivering these opportunities and champion the young people of the Western Isles.

Pictured L-R: Caitlin Morrison, Hannah Maclean and Gordon Jamieson.

Is it football or flip flops this Summer?

Whether you've headed overseas to attend the World Cup, relaxing on the beach, or enjoying festivals closer to home, it's important to make sure your vaccinations are up to date.

Large crowds and busy events can make it easier for infectious diseases such as measles and meningitis to spread. Checking your vaccination status can help protect both you and those around you.

It's also important for young people heading to university or college this year to check they are fully vaccinated before the new term begins. More face-to-face contact means they're at higher risk of catching and passing on infectious diseases.

For more information, and to find out how to check your vaccination status visit nhsinform.scot/gettingvaccinations

A graphic with a red background. At the top, text in white and blue boxes reads: "Large crowds make it easier for diseases like measles to spread". Below this is a photograph of a football pitch at night, with a goal visible and confetti falling. At the bottom, there are three logos: Public Health Scotland, Healthier Scotland Scottish Government, and NHS Scotland.

Roof repairs strengthen the future of the Claddach Kirkibost Centre thanks to NHS Western Isles Capital Grant

Essential roof repairs at the Claddach Kirkibost Centre have now been completed, thanks to a successful £15,000 capital grant application from Urachadh Uibhist.

The Claddach Kirkibost Centre plays a vital role in supporting the health and wellbeing of the North Uist community and surrounding areas. It provides a warm, welcoming and vibrant space for social interaction and hosts a wide range of activities, including community meetings, art exhibitions, Fèis music classes, a book café, genealogy classes, a community gym, and hot desk facilities for remote workers.

Water ingress and subsequent damage - including a build-up of mould - created potential health risks for centre users, as well as the risk of further deterioration to the building structure and the long-term sustainability of the centre.

Urachadh Uibhist is a Scottish Charity, housed within the Claddach Kirkibost Centre, which provides health and wellbeing improvement for a range of age groups through offering a wide range of educational, social and employment opportunities for the North Uist community.

Ada Campbell, Urachadh Uibhist Board Member, said: "If Claddach Kirkibost Centre were to close, it would be a huge loss to the community. The centre is vital in providing safe and comfortable spaces to support the health and wellbeing of North Uist. The repair to the roof was necessary to keep the centre running and the NHS funding has been essential in achieving this."

Sara Else, Medical Director, NHS Western Isles, said: "We were really pleased to support essential maintenance that ensures the Claddach Kirkibost Centre remains a safe, healthy and accessible space for the community. Facilities like this play a crucial role in reducing isolation, promoting wellbeing and providing opportunities for people of all ages."

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 to help support these groups.



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

Celebrating Our Nursing Teams on International Nurses Day

NHS Western Isles celebrated International Nurses Day on May 12 – a day to shine a spotlight on the vital role of nurses worldwide. Just the week before, Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), Professor Aisha Holloway, Interim Deputy Chief Nursing Officer (DCNO), Claire Pearce, and Interim Chief Midwifery Officer (CMO), Gillian Morton visited the Western Isles Hospital, where they met with some of the nursing teams at NHS Western Isles.

The Chief Nursing Officer and her colleagues left with a very positive impression of nursing and midwifery across the area.

During their visit, they spent time with staff in the Renal Unit, Ambulatory Care Unit, Acute Assessment Unit and Emergency Department. Discussions focussed on recruitment and retention, career pathways, and access to learning both pre and post registration. There was also a strong emphasis on Advanced Practice, exploring how it has developed locally, alongside the successes and challenges of delivering healthcare in a remote and island setting.

Susan Macaulay, Emergency Department Manager, said: "It was great to hear the Chief

Nursing Officer recognise and commend the wide experience, post graduate development and advanced practice commitment undertaken by the NHS Western Isles staff in order to provide rural healthcare."

The visit also included meeting with Senior Charge Nurses (SCNs), Senior Nurse Leaders, Community Nurses, and members of the Quality Improvement and Professional Practice teams. The visitors were particularly interested in the varied journeys that brought staff to work in the Western Isles - whether they had remained locally, returned after studying elsewhere, or relocated to the area.

All three visitors were very impressed with the depth and breadth of experience among the SCNs and Senior Nurse Leaders, as well as the developments of Advanced Practice and the number of Advanced Nurse Practitioners working across the Western Isles for a smaller health board.

Kevin MacIver, recently appointment Dementia and Frailty Lead Nurse, reflected on the visit: "Thank you for organising the visit with the Chief Nursing Officer and her colleagues. The visit with the Chief Nursing Officer and her colleagues was

inspiring and I am very glad to have been appointed to NHS Western Isles as I would never have had the opportunity to meet such esteemed individuals."

After lunch, the group visited the Maternity Ward, where they met with midwives and joined in celebrations for International Day of the Midwife, marked with a special afternoon tea organised by the maternity team.

Claire Pearce, Interim Deputy Chief Nursing Officer, said: "It was a privilege to spend time with colleagues across NHS Western Isles and to see first-hand the skill, compassion and leadership demonstrated by all the nurses and midwives I met who serve the island communities. The strength of professional practice, community focus and collaborative working was clear throughout the visit, the wards and clinical areas I visited were welcoming and were passionate about delivering the best care for their patients. I was impressed by the years of experience in your senior team and it was inspiring to see how nursing leadership is driving safe, high-quality and person-centred care across all settings."

As NHS Western Isles marked International Nurses Day, the visit shone a spotlight on the extraordinary contribution of its nursing workforce. Across the islands, nurses bring skill, compassion and leadership to every aspect of care, often going above and beyond to support their communities.

A heartfelt thank you to all our nurses for the outstanding care, commitment and resilience you show every single day in serving our communities.



CNO, DCNO & CMO visiting staff in the Renal Unit.



CNO, DCNO & CMO visiting staff in AAU.

Meeting with the Quality Improvement and Professional Practice teams.



Meeting with SCNs and Senior Nurse Leaders.



To celebrate International Nurses Day, the surgical team put together a wonderful display highlighting the work and achievements of the ward.

Two first-year student nurses led the development of a 'meet and greet' board, which is now displayed at the nurses' station for both staff and visitors to view. This has provided a great opportunity to introduce team members and help patients and families feel more connected to the ward.

They have also showcased their Care Assurance and Improvement Resource (CAIR) Dashboard data at the front of house, offering a transparent view of their performance. The display highlights areas where they

are doing well, as well as identifying key areas for ongoing improvement.

This initiative has been a fantastic way to welcome the student nurses and support their integration into the team during their placement.

As part of their learning experience, the students have followed the patient journey through the Arthroscopy Clinic, spending time with their specialist nursing staff, Nicola Libby and Lois Macleod.

They have also worked alongside the dedicated theatre team and surgical ward nursing team, gaining valuable insight into the wider patient pathway.

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 leads Scotland in Hospital at Home care

NHS Western Isles has emerged as the top-performing Health Board in Scotland for Hospital at Home services, according to provisional new figures published by Public Health Scotland.

The national Hospital at Home management information, covering the period from November 2025 to January 2026, shows that NHS Western Isles recorded the highest rate of patients accepted into and discharged from Hospital at Home services per head of population of any NHS board in Scotland.

During this period, which covers the first quarterly summary of activity across Hospital at Home (and related alternative admission services), 146 patients were accepted into Hospital at Home services in the Western Isles, with 156 patients discharged. When adjusted for population size, this equates to 2,244 patients accepted per 100,000 population and 2,398 discharged per 100,000. By comparison, the national averages were 518 accepted and 469 discharged per 100,000 population.

Our dedicated Hospital at Home service provides hospital-level clinical care to suitable patients in their own homes, helping people receive treatment

closer to family and community while avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions.

Despite serving a small, island population, NHS Western Isles performed well ahead of larger mainland boards on a population-adjusted basis, reflecting the strength and maturity of local community-based models of care.

While the data are classed as provisional management information, Public Health Scotland describes the results as encouraging and highlights the important role Hospital at Home services play in supporting hospital flow and improving patient outcomes.

Gordon Jamieson, Chief Executive of NHS Western Isles, said: "NHS Western Isles has achieved significantly above national average consistently since the service was established in 2020. These latest figures are a real credit to our staff and

partners who work together every day to deliver high-quality, compassionate care closer to home.

"Hospital at Home is particularly important in the Western Isles, where distance and geography can make hospital admission more challenging for patients and families. Being able to safely provide hospital-level care in people's own homes helps improve patient experience while supporting the flow of care across our services.

"While this is provisional national data, it clearly shows the impact of our community-based teams and the commitment they show to delivering innovative models of care for island communities."

NHS Western Isles will continue to work closely with national partners to further develop Hospital at Home services, supporting more people to receive safe, effective care closer to home.

New Chief Officer of IJB

Emma Macsween has been appointed as Chief Officer of the Western Isles Integration Joint Board (IJB) following a competitive recruitment process.

Emma brings extensive experience and knowledge of local health and social care services to the role having served as Interim Chief Officer for the service since November 2025.

Prior to her appointment as Interim Chief Officer Emma served as Chief Officer of Partnership Services and Community Care.

The Western Isles Integration Joint Board is a partnership between NHS Western Isles and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, along with third and independent sector providers of health and social care.

As Chief Officer, Emma will be responsible for leading the strategic planning of a range of health and social care services, including, dentistry, social care, community nursing, social work, community health services and some hospital services such as the Emergency Departments.

Speaking following the announcement Cllr Paul Steele Leader of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar said: "I would like to congratulate Emma on her appointment to the role of Chief Officer. Emma



is an excellent officer who will bring dedication, commitment to high quality service delivery and in-depth knowledge of local health and social services to this key role. Most importantly Integrated Health and Social Care services in the Western Isles need strong leadership and that is exactly what Emma will bring to this position."

Annetta Smith, Chair of the Integration Joint Board said: "Emma MacSween is congratulated on her appointment as Chief Officer. Having demonstrated effective leadership during the time spent in the interim role, this appointment recognises her ongoing commitment. In this key position - leading the integration of health and social care services and working collaboratively with partners to improve outcomes for local communities, Emma is well placed to continue driving forward high quality, integrated care."



Brewing Connections at Bethesda Hospice Shop

Bethesda Hospice Shop on Stornoway's Bayhead Street, has been awarded an NHS Western Isles Capital Grant to help develop a Warm Hub for the wider community and visitors to keep warm, help make new friends and reduce isolation, as well as to relax in comfortable surroundings.

The £8735 grant has been used to purchase a self-service vending unit, situated in the newly redesigned shop, which has helped create a warm and cosy seating area with their library space.

Joanne Ferguson, Bethesda's Finance Development Officer and Fundraiser, said: "Over time, it has become clear to the Bethesda Hospice Shop's management that it serves many purposes, other than simply raising funds for the Hospice. However, whilst this is naturally the main objective of the shop, we also want to enhance and develop its social enterprise aspect.

"We are grateful towards NHS Western Isles for the grant, which helps us to provide hot drinks in our welcoming and inclusive space, offering a low-pressure, informal environment where people can easily drop-in, sit together and engage in conversation, without any stigma or obligation to purchase anything."

Debbie Bozkurt, NHS Western Isles Director of Finance & Procurement / IJB Chief Finance Officer, said, "We are delighted to assist the Bethesda Hospice Shop in developing their Warm Hub. It is evident that the shop is well used by many in our community seeking company, support or simply a warm place to sit."

"With loneliness being a recognised risk factor for poor mental health and wellbeing, we are delighted to help reduce social isolation, particularly in the elderly, those living alone, carers and individuals."

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 to help support these groups.

Photograph (L-R): Joanne Ferguson, Bethesda's Finance Development Officer & Fundraiser, Gilly Lockhart, Bethesda Hospice Shop Manager, and Debbie Bozkurt, NHS Western Isles Director of Finance & Procurement / IJB Chief Finance Officer.

Smoking Cessation visits Stornoway Primary School

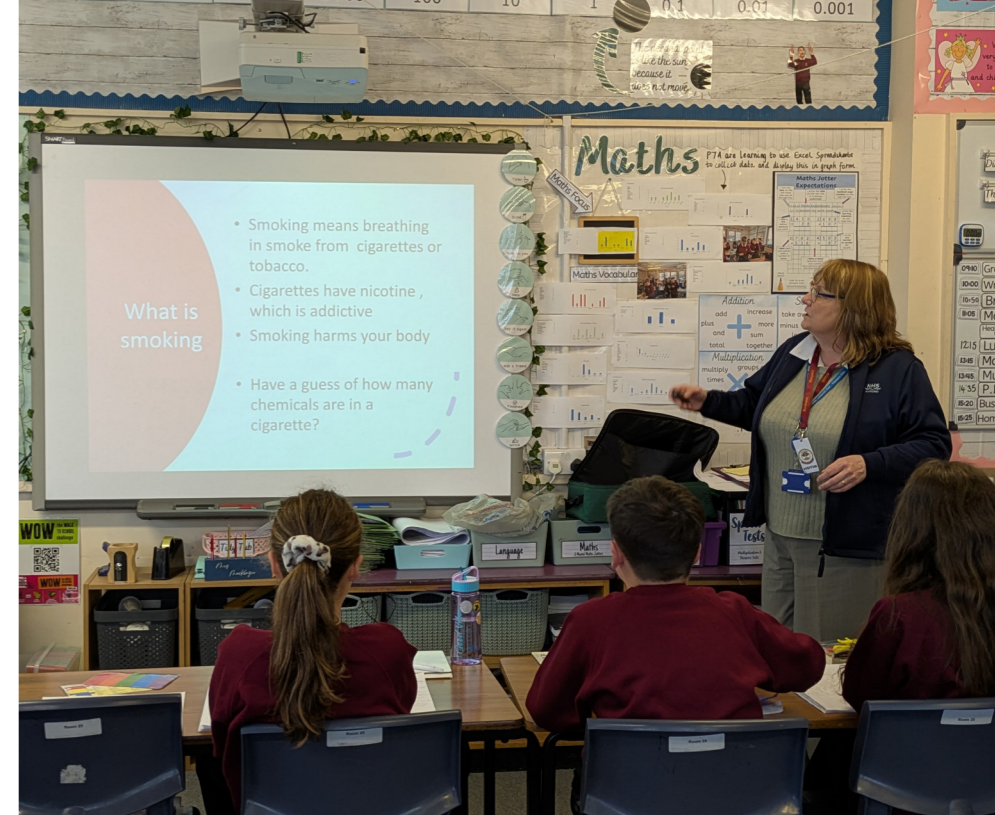
Primary 7 pupils at Stornoway Primary School recently had a visit from Mags Ralston from Smoking Cessation, to deliver an engaging session on smoking and vaping.

Mags explored what smoking and vaping are, the harmful effects on health, and how companies target young people through flavours and packaging. During the session, they also discussed common reasons young people might start, including peer pressure and curiosity.

Using example products and a powerful 'money visual', Mags helped pupils see just how costly these habits can be.

Feedback from the teachers was very positive:

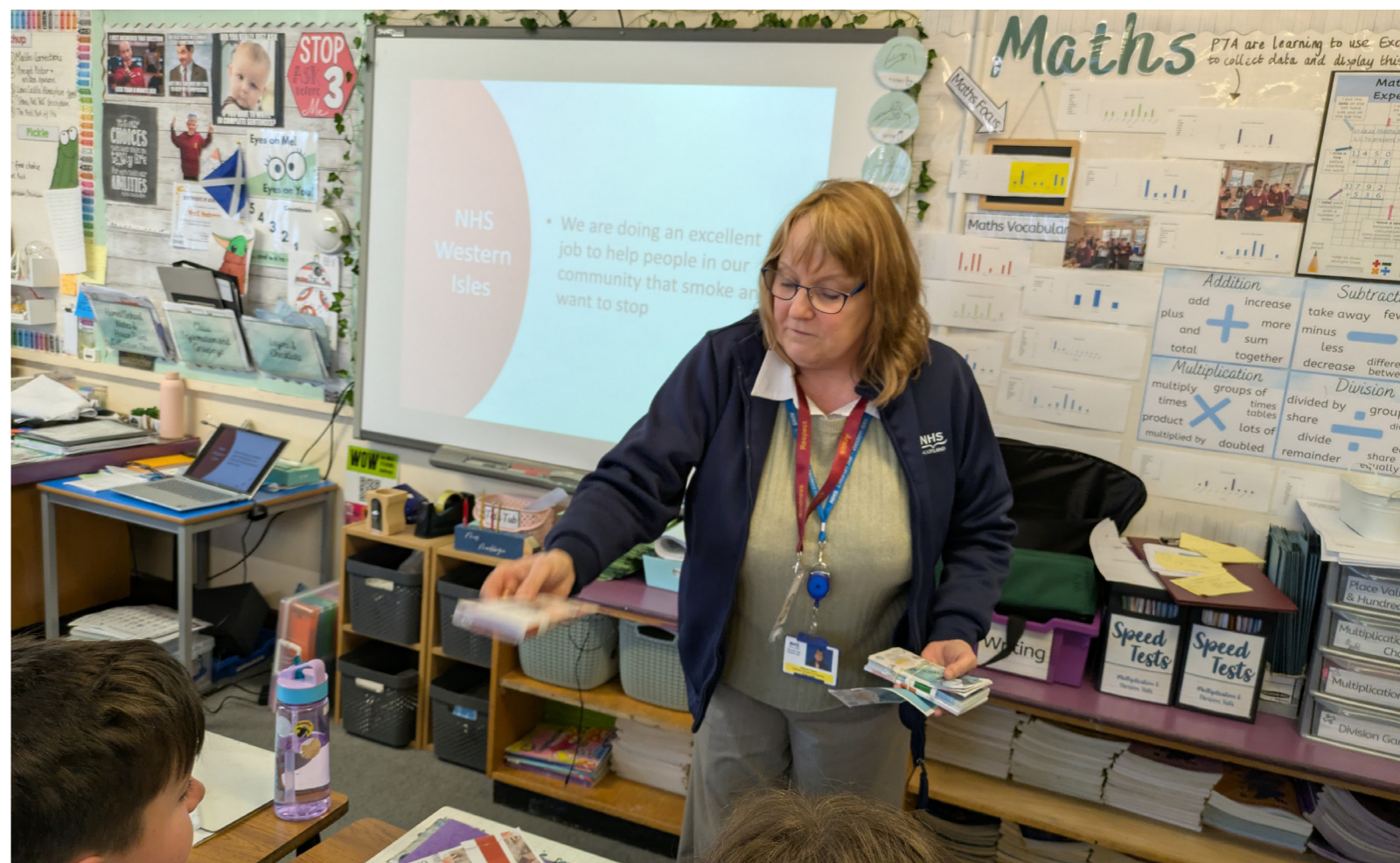
"The pupils thoroughly enjoyed your presentation. It



makes such a difference having a different voice to tell them such important information."

"The pupils were very engaged... the money visual really helped them to see how expensive smoking and vaping is."

Sessions like this play an important role in helping young people make informed, healthy choices for their future.



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.



L-R: Agnes Hodgart, Catherine MacDonald and Catherine Gillies.

A legacy of care

Celebrating almost 140 years as staff retire

The Maternity Ward would like to say a huge farewell to Catherine MacDonald (Head of Midwifery), Catherine Gillies (Midwifery Team Lead) and Agnes Hodgart (Obstetrics and Gynaecology Secretary). All three retired at the end of March with a total of nearly 140 years' service to the NHS.

Agnes Hodgart

Agnes started her working life straight from school in the Nicolson School office, before moving to the Lewis Hospital in 1973. And from there, she became something that is increasingly rare - a constant. A steady, dependable presence through decades of change, challenge, and evolution in the NHS. Agnes has seen everything - from

handwritten notes and shorthand dictation, all the way through to modern systems... including, of course, the memorable arrivals of the new phone system and BadgerNet (an electronic patient record platform specifically designed for maternity and neonatal care).

Agnes has always had a no-nonsense approach to her work - and in a department like Obstetrics and Gynaecology, that comes with a level of responsibility that cannot be overstated.

Agnes plans to continue her walking, as an active member of the Hebridean Walking Club.

Catherine Gillies

Catherine Gillies has been part of the NHS since 1982. From starting as a domestic in Lewis Hospital, to student nurse, to midwife, to clinical lead... it's not just a career, it's a lifetime of service.

Despite the uniforms, the shifts, the stories, the countless births she has been part of - what really defines Catherine is the impact she has had on people.

Generations of families in these islands have been looked after by her. Generations of staff have been supported and guided by her.

She has given so much - not just in skill and experience, but in kindness, strength, and presence.

And as Catherine swaps forceps for CBeebies - embracing life as a nanna, a nonna, and a granny - we think it's fair to say those grandchildren of hers are very lucky indeed!

Catherine MacDonald

Catherine MacDonald qualified as a staff nurse from Raigmore in 1984. She then became a midwife in 1986 at the Southern General in Glasgow.

Catherine has worked as a full-time midwife for 40 years, mainly in the Maternity Department here in the Western Isles, becoming Head of Midwifery in 2005.

Over the last 40 years, Catherine hasn't just led an exemplary service for the women, babies and their families of the Western Isles, but she has supported and guided the maternity team to provide this to a high standard.

Catherine recently achieved her Forensically Trained Nursing qualification, becoming operational lead in setting up the sexual assault response co-ordination service in the Western Isles, in 2019.

They say you never regret a wild swim. It's a bit like retirement - you might be hesitant, even be nervous about jumping in, but once you do, it's pure, exhilarating joy, which Catherine now enjoys, alongside her time in the sauna.

Thank you to our retirees for everything you have given - to your colleagues, to your patients, and to this community. Your dedication and loyalty are unmatched.

To each of you, and on behalf of the entire organisation, congratulations on your truly successful, professional journeys. Your work ethics set a brilliant example for us all.

Thank you for being exceptional colleagues. Your hard work and commitment will be remembered always.



Know Who to Turn To

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

Emergency Department

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



NHS Inform

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

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



Local GP Practice

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



NHS 24

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



Community Pharmacy

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



Think Western Isles

Think Wellbeing

NHS

Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

Want a healthier work-life balance?



Seeking to escape the stressful hustle and bustle?



Looking for improved job satisfaction?



Wide range of development opportunities

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

www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/vacancies



www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/vacancies

Recruitment

Meet the Board

Job Vacancy	Closing Date	Band	Job Ref
Cross-Sectional Radiographer (MRI and CT)	30/06/2026	6	249558
Operational Lead Vaccination Services	24/06/2026	7	251036
Advanced Clinical Nurse Specialist (Cardiology)	24/06/2026	8a	251041
Domestic Assistant (Uist)	25/06/2026	2	251124
Podiatry Administrative Assistant	02/07/2026	2	250553
Specialist Radiographer	02/07/2026	6	251690
Public Dental Officer (Barra)	03/07/2026	PDO	251760
Specialist Clinical Pharmacist	03/07/2026	7	251757
Primary Care Mental Health CPN -Male only (Uist)	03/07/2026	6	251797
Senior Charge Nurse Uist Community Nursing team	07/07/2026	7	252027
Personal Assistant to Director of Dentistry	07/07/2026	4	252028
Bank Registered Nurse	08/07/2026	5	251952
Advanced Nurse Practitioner Urgent and Unscheduled Care (Uist)	08/07/2026	6 to 7	251586
Staff Nurse Barra	08/07/2026	5	252175
Consultant or Specialist Doctor in Old Age Psychiatry	20/07/2026	Cons	244618
Consultant or Specialist Doctor in General Adult Psychiatry	20/07/2026	Cons	244626

All NHS Western Isles vacancies appear on the NHS Scotland website at: <https://apply.jobs.scot.nhs.uk> along with a job description.

The NHS Western Isles Human Resources Department is contactable via email: wi.recruit@nhs.scot or tel. 01851 704704.

If you are interested in joining our staff Bank please contact Mairi Smith, Bank Manager on mairi.smith2@nhs.scot.



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.

