**Message from Chief Executive Professor Jann Gardner
(25 March 2026, 5.05pm)**

All NHSGGC newborns now screened for Spinal Muscular Atrophy

Routine screening for Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) has now officially launched in Scotland and we're pleased to share that all national testing is being delivered right here in our NHSGGC laboratories.

SMA is a rare, progressive muscle-wasting condition that can affect movement, breathing and swallowing. The Scottish Government, in partnership with Novartis, is funding a two-year evaluation to understand how well newborn screening can detect SMA earlier, enabling babies to begin treatment as soon as possible. Earlier diagnosis has the potential to significantly improve outcomes for affected children.

Until now, babies were only tested after showing symptoms. Scotland is the first part of the UK to introduce routine newborn screening for the condition. Each year, an estimated three to four babies in Scotland are born with SMA. All parents will now be offered screening through the existing day-4 blood spot test.

Today, NHSGGC Chief Executive Professor Jann Gardner welcomed Cabinet Secretary Neil Gray, SMA UK CEO Giles Lomax, and Elaine and her son Max to the labs at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital campus to see the new service in action.

Professor Gardner said:

"A special thank you to everyone for coming along and to the labs team for opening their services to us this morning. Elaine generously shared her family's story. Max lives with SMA, and their experience highlights just how important early diagnosis can be for families across Scotland."

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