

core brief

Message from the Chief Executive, Professor Jann Gardner

(8 May 2025, 2.15pm)

As part of Professor Jann Gardner's recent visits to NHSGGC sites, she had the opportunity to speak with teams across the Royal Hospital for Children (RHC). Here is a round-up of her conversations with colleagues, the innovative work they're doing, and what the future looks like going forward.

Articles in this Core Brief:

- **Improving patient experience for all children and young people**
 - **How the interconnected approach of the PICU evolves patient care**
 - **The journey for emergency patients at the RHC**
 - **A focus on care for children and young people with cancer**
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Improving patient experience for all children and young people

As part of her visit, Professor Gardner spoke with colleagues in the Teddy Hospital, Theatres, Outpatients, and Medicinema about how they improve care for all patients.

From learning through play and making hospital visits less daunting in the Teddy Hospital to enhancing the patient environment and focusing on the emotional wellbeing of children and families in Theatres, the RHC continues to lead the way in family-centred care.

The full story can be found on Staffnet [here](#).



Health Play Specialists Theresa Wright and Jane Craig with Professor Gardner



Professor Gardner with Dr Alyson Walker, Anaesthetist, Angie McLean, Theatre Coordinator

How the interconnected approach of the PICU evolves patient care

Speaking with Senior Charge Nurses Eileen Milligan and Kirsty McCool in the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), Professor Gardner heard how the busy 22-bed unit is only one of two in Scotland, covering a wide elective surgical programme including cardiac surgery, interventional cardiology, neurosurgery, renal transplant, and complex airways surgery.

The PICU team also looks after a range of medical subspecialties like haematology oncology, inherited metabolic disease, neurology, and endocrinology, as well as managing a busy emergency workload. With such a diverse mix of cases, it is a great place for junior doctors and newly qualified nurse trainees to build their skills, and the unit also boasts strong links with universities and high levels of ECMO training, all of this leading to an exciting, working environment and strong workforce retention.

On her visit, Professor Gardner was especially delighted to hear about the emphasis placed on teamwork, staff development, peer support, patient safety, pioneering use of technology and quality improvement. The PICU team really enjoyed the visit, not only showcasing all that they do but also explaining the challenges faced.



Eileen Milligan, Senior Charge Nurse, Professor Gardner, and Kirsty McCool, Senior Charge Nurse

The journey for emergency patients at the RHC

Speaking with ED Coordinator, Wendy Lundy, Clinical Director - General Paediatrics, Lesley Nairn, and Senior Charge Nurses Susan McManus (CDU) and Magdalena Dougall (ARU), Professor Gardner heard about how the three departments work together closely, aiming to get children and young people seen within four hours and home safely.

With a hospital admission rate of 20-25%, the ED treats an average of 200 patients a day, rising to over 250 during winter peaks. With good interface with Primary Care via GP Connect, patients are generally admitted from ED to the CDU for initial observation, or direct to ARU for longer term assessment or treatment, where close links with General Paediatrics, Surgical and Medical Specialties, and community and psychiatry teams give children and young people outstanding care.

Speaking with Professor Gardner, the team talked about how they have the opportunity to regularly rotate between departments, building their skills and knowledge. In future, the team is looking to improve triaging and increase Hospital at Home care to further enhance patient experience.



(Left) Professor Gardner speaking with Jamie Redfern, Director – Women’s and Children’s Services, Kalsoom Mohammed, Hospital Coordinator, and Mhairi Witt, Senior Charge Nurse ED

(Right) Professor Gardner speaking with Jamie Redfern, Director – Women’s and Children’s Services, and Lesley Nairn, Clinical Director - General Paediatrics

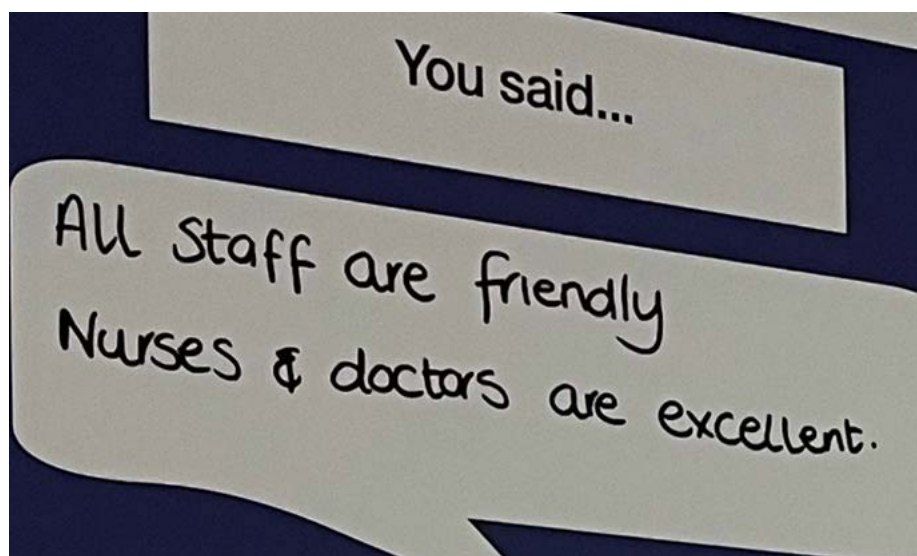
A focus on care for children and young people with cancer

After hearing about the challenges staff face working with some of the sickest children and young people in Scotland, Professor Gardner visited the impressive range of facilities the unit provides.

This included spaces for teenagers, 8–12-year-olds, and a play area for younger children, as well as dedicated parent facilities. Staff explained the background of the 8-12-year-olds' space, and how two inspirational young female patients not only funded it through their own charity, but also worked closely and independently with a commissioned design team to make their vision for it a reality.

These wards act as a regional centre for benign haematology, complex immunology cases, and metabolic disorders, as well as supporting nationally designated programmes such as stem cell transplant and MIBG scanning to detect and assess tumours. They also have close links with The Beatson Centre, making Glasgow the national centre for radiotherapy.

Professor Gardner enjoyed listening about the important roles of all staff included on young cancer patients' journeys including pharmacy, play therapy, adolescent workers, psychologists, specialist nurses, nutrition experts, and wider advanced health practitioners. Going forward, the importance of UK and international clinical trials will be paramount, with a strong focus on data management and quality improvement vital for the team.



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A

Ask yourself

Do I need to go out?
For information on treating minor illnesses and injuries from home, go to **NHS inform** or download the **NHS 24 App**.

B

Be aware

There is help on your doorstep.
Your local **GP, pharmacy, dental practice and optician** offer a range of services.

C

Call 111

If it's urgent, or you're unsure, call **NHS 24** on **111**.
They'll get you the care you need.

Unless it's an emergency - think ABC before visiting A&E.
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