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Message from Neil McCallum - A Quick Goodbye From Me



As we get towards the end of June, it's really strange to think I'm writing my very last newsletter entry as your director.

After so long with this incredible organisation, the time has come for me to step down, unfortunately for health-related reasons. Walking through the corridors over the last few weeks, I've been struck by how grateful I am for the journey we've all shared. It has been an absolute privilege to lead the North Sector.

A sector of our size, with 1,000 beds and a team of over 5,000 people, is a massive operation. But it's never really been about the building or the numbers. You've heard me say it so many times - it's about the people. Together, we've been through some of the toughest times healthcare has ever seen. From relentless winter pressures to the absolute rollercoaster of Covid, your resilience and sheer dedication to looking after our patients - and each other -

has been nothing short of inspiring. You didn't just keep the place running, you did it with real heart.

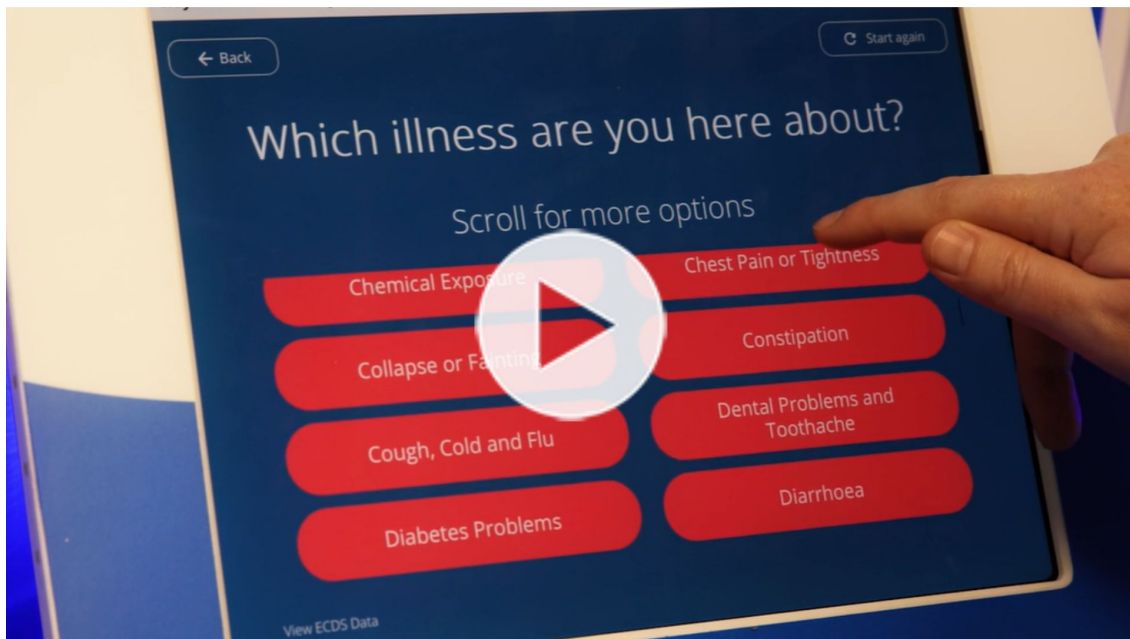
To my Senior Leadership Team, our clinical and support staff, and everyone working hard behind the scenes - thank you. I especially want to thank those closest to me who have been my absolute anchors over the years, helping keep things (and me!) on track through thick and thin. While I'm leaving behind the day-to-day running of the hospital, I do so with total confidence in the future because I know exactly how talented and committed this team is. Susan Groom, who starts as Interim Director - North on 1st July, is really looking forward to getting to know you all, and I am absolutely certain things will go from strength to strength.

I won't be disappearing entirely from the wider NHSGGC family just yet as I move on to my next chapter, and I may still bump into one or two in my new role, but this is a massive change for me. Thank you for all the memories, the hard work, the laughs, and the honour of working alongside and for you.

Take care of yourselves, and each other, and all the very best for the future you will create.

Neil McCallum

GRI to introduce digital triage in A&E to support faster, safer patient care



NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) will introduce a new digital triage system at the GRI A&E department this week to help prioritise patients with the most urgent needs.

The system, also known as eTriage, is now in use at the Royal Alexandra Hospital after initially being rolled out at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital.

Digital triage forms a key part of NHSGGC's Virtual Hospital programme, which is designed to improve patient flow, reduce delays and ensure people receive care in the right place.

On arrival at A&E, patients will check-in using a digital kiosk. They'll be guided through a short set of clinically designed questions about their symptoms using a touchscreen.

Their responses will be sent instantly to the clinical team, giving staff a fuller picture of each patient's condition within minutes of arrival.

It means that by the time a patient sits in the waiting area, staff already have

essential, detailed clinical information that can help them prioritise those who need urgent treatment and ensure the safest possible care.



As the system develops, digital triage will also support patients to be directed to the most appropriate service for their needs.

While A&E is for serious or life-threatening conditions, many patients may be better cared for by alternative services.

In future, information provided at check-in may be reviewed by wider clinical teams, including those in the Virtual Hospital.

This could allow patients to be supported without needing to wait in A&E – for example, through clinical advice, a virtual consultation, a booked appointment at another service, or guidance to a more appropriate care setting.

This approach will help ensure A&E departments remain focused on the most complex and urgent patients, while supporting others to receive timely care in the right place.

Digital triage also offers improved privacy, as sensitive information can be shared directly through the kiosk rather than being spoken about in busy public areas.

Patients who prefer to speak to a member of staff, or who need additional support, can still use the traditional reception desk.

Front door reception staff remain essential, particularly for patients who require assistance due to accessibility needs, language barriers or digital confidence.

The system is an additional tool and will not replace any staff roles. It gives clinicians key information immediately, enabling faster decision-making and earlier intervention if required.

It will also give emergency teams real-time visibility of the waiting room to help monitor patients and maintain safety.

Lorraine Cowie, Director of Interface for NHSGGC, said: “Introducing digital triage across our A&E departments is an important step in improving how quickly and safely we assess patients.

“By giving clinicians immediate access to high quality information, we can prioritise those in most urgent need and reduce delays.

“As part of our wider Virtual Hospital programme, this approach will also help us guide some patients to more appropriate services, including offering advice, virtual support or booked appointments elsewhere when it is safe to do so.

“This means A&E can focus on the most serious conditions, while other patients are seen more quickly in the right setting.

“Patient safety will always remain our priority, and anyone who needs emergency care will continue to receive it.”

For further information, please see our Frequently Asked Questions about digital triage [here](#).

World Cup Party Brings Joy to Lightburn Patients as Activities Boost Wellbeing in Hospital



Patients at Lightburn Hospital were at the heart of a lively football celebration earlier this week as staff organised a special party to mark Scotland's participation in the upcoming World Cup.

The event brought together patients, staff and families for an afternoon of music, entertainment and shared excitement, with entertainer Jack High helping to create a vibrant atmosphere.



The celebration is one of a growing number of activities designed to boost wellbeing, encourage social interaction and create moments of joy during time in hospital.

From music sessions and bingo to pampering and arts and crafts, a mix of daily and group activities is helping patients feel more engaged, confident and connected. The Activity Coordinators Kayleigh, Lauren, Karen and Sharon work closely with ward teams to tailor sessions to individual needs, ensuring each activity is suitable for patients' abilities and preferences.

Alongside the World Cup celebration, the programme includes a number of regular and seasonal highlights, such as music sessions led by students, bingo sessions, and a new Therapet service that offers patients the chance to spend time with specially trained therapy animals. Following the success of recent events, including a popular silent disco, further sessions are already being planned.

The team has also been supporting Dementia Awareness Week with a special coffee afternoon and bake sale, which, along with other fundraising events held in May, has raised over £1,400 for Alzheimer Scotland.



Alongside these larger events, smaller day-to-day activities remain a key part of ward life. These range from card games and dominoes to listening to music, singing sessions and personal care experiences such as hairdressing and nail care.

Staff say these activities can make a real difference, helping to boost mood, stimulate memories and reduce anxiety. Music, in particular, has proven especially powerful, with patients often becoming more animated, engaged, and interactive when familiar songs are played.

One recent moment saw a patient singing along with others during a ward-based music session, something their relative said they had not seen in a long time. Feedback like this highlights the positive impact these activities can have not only on patients, but also on families.

Janet Duncan, SCN Admin support, who helps coordinate the group activities, said the approach is shaped by patients themselves: “We plan a mix of regular and one-off activities, and we’ve learned from experience what works

well. Our Activity Coordinators get to know their patients and tailor what they do day to day, making sure everyone has the opportunity to take part in something that suits them.”

Neil McCallum, North Sector Director, added: “It’s great to see the positive impact these activities are having for patients at Lightburn. Initiatives like the World Cup celebration and Dementia Awareness Week events highlight the commitment of our staff to providing not only high-quality care, but also creating meaningful experiences that support patients’ wellbeing and recovery.”

Delivering the programme is a true team effort, involving Activity Coordinators, nursing staff and wider ward teams, all working together to create a welcoming and supportive environment.

As the programme continues to grow, the focus remains clear, to provide meaningful, enjoyable experiences that support patients’ wellbeing and bring moments of connection during their time in hospital.

From ICU to giving back: Glasgow patient returns to the ward that saved his life



After spending days in the intensive care unit (ICU) at Glasgow Royal Infirmary (GRI), Willie Millar never imagined he would one day return – not as a patient, but as a volunteer supporting others through some of their most difficult moments. Now, each week, he walks the same ward that once cared for him, offering reassurance and a listening ear.

Willie was admitted to hospital in September 2024 following complications linked to pancreatitis. What began as a routine procedure escalated into a medical emergency, resulting in major internal bleeding and emergency surgery.

“I spent nine days in ICU, hooked up to machines,” Willie said. “It was scary, confusing... I felt completely helpless and dependent on the staff around me.”

Willie experienced delirium during his stay – something he describes as one of the most distressing aspects of his experience.

“You’re not lying somewhere peaceful – it’s not like that. The things you see and feel can be really frightening, and even now I can still picture some of it,” he explained.

Although he recalls feeling reassured by the staff caring for him, much of his

time in ICU remains a blur.

“I don’t remember a lot of faces – just flashes. But I did feel confident in the nurses and doctors. You know you’re in safe hands.”

After leaving ICU, Willie spent several more weeks recovering at GRI before returning home. But it was only later that he began to fully process what he – and his family – had been through.

“That was one of the biggest realisations,” he said. “I thought it was all about what I’d been through, but actually my wife and family went through a lot too. At the time, I didn’t really understand that.”

A turning point in his recovery came when he joined the hospital’s INSPIRE programme – a support group for former ICU patients and their families.

“I’d call it medication without taking tablets,” Willie said. “It’s about sitting, talking, listening to other people’s stories. It helped me make sense of everything.”

Initially unsure about sharing his own experiences, Willie soon found that opening up – and hearing from others – played a vital role in his recovery.

“You’re not just discharged and that’s it. INSPIRE helps you understand what’s happened, why you might feel the way you do, and how to move forward.”

For Willie, the experience also sparked a desire to give something back.

During his time in ICU, a volunteer had spent time supporting his wife, offering a cup of tea and someone to talk to. “That stuck with me,” he said. “So I thought, I’d like to do something similar – just to say thank you in my own way.”

He began volunteering with the INSPIRE sessions, helping to welcome people and create a supportive environment. Earlier this year, he took another step and started volunteering directly in ICU at GRI. Now, every Friday, Willie

returns to the unit – but in a completely different role.

“The first time I went back, it was a bit daunting,” he admitted. “I recognised the bed area I’d been in, and it brought things back. But once I got over that, it became easier.”

Today, he feels part of the team. “The staff are amazing. Everyone – nurses, doctors, physios, pharmacists, cleaners – they’re all part of it. When I go in now, I feel included.”

His role is simple but powerful: to support patients and their families in whatever way he can.

“If people are able to talk, I’ll have a chat. Sometimes it’s just offering a cup of tea or sitting with someone. It’s about showing there’s light at the end of the tunnel – because I’ve been there.”

Willie hopes his presence can provide reassurance to families facing uncertain and frightening times. “I want people to know it’s not the end,” he said. “It might take time, and things might be different, but there is life beyond intensive care.”

Reflecting on his own journey, Willie also paid tribute to the staff who supported him and others through the most challenging moments of their lives. “I honestly think ICU – and the hospital in general – are amazing,” he said. “The staff are so helpful. You see what they deal with, and they just keep going, making sure everyone is looked after.”

He also believes that support for patients should not end when they leave hospital.

“The INSPIRE programme made such a difference to me,” he added. “It helped me understand what I’d been through and what my family had gone through as well. Support like that can really help people come to terms with things, and I think it could benefit more patients, not just those in ICU.”

Willie has already seen how sharing his story can encourage others to take steps in their own recovery.

“I’ve met people who are now coming along to INSPIRE and even thinking about volunteering themselves,” he said. “If telling my story helps someone else see there’s a way forward, then that’s a positive thing.”

Professor Angela Wallace, Executive Nurse Director and Executive Lead for Volunteering at NHSGGC, said: “Willie’s story powerfully demonstrates the difference volunteering can make – not only to patients and families, but to the volunteers themselves. His journey from ICU patient to volunteer is inspiring, and it highlights the compassion, empathy and lived experience that volunteers bring to our services every single day.”

Neil McCallum, North Sector Director at NHSGGC, added: “This is a remarkable example of the impact our staff and volunteers have on people’s lives. Willie’s decision to return and support others in the same environment where he once received care is incredibly powerful.

“Stories like this remind us of the human side of healthcare and the importance of kindness, connection and support throughout a patient’s journey.”

For Willie, the journey from patient to volunteer has come full circle – and continues to make a difference, both for others and for himself.

“I’m still getting a lot out of it,” he said. “And I just hope other people do too.”

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer and making a difference is encouraged to find out more and explore current opportunities on the [NHSGGC website](#).

To find out more about volunteering with NHSGGC, go to [Volunteering with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde – NHSGGC](#)

A huge thank you from the NHSGGC LGBTQ+ Staff Forum



As Pride Month comes to a close, our NHSGGC LGBTQ+ Staff Forum is thanking colleagues from across the Board for their support, allyship and engagement throughout June.

Over the past month, staff have shown their support in many ways – visiting Pride stalls, taking part in conversations, and helping to create visible, inclusive spaces across NHSGGC sites. These actions, both big and small, have helped strengthen a sense of belonging and community.

Andy Wyllie, Chair of the LGBTQ+ Staff Forum, said: “I want to personally thank everyone across NHSGGC who has taken the time to support Pride this year. Whether you visited a stall, had a conversation, or simply showed your support, it genuinely makes a difference. Pride is about visibility, inclusion and standing together, and it’s been really encouraging to see that reflected across our sites this month. While Pride Month gives us a moment to come together, the importance of this work continues all year round. Creating a workplace where everyone feels safe, respected and able to be themselves is something

we all have a role in.”

The forum’s Pride activity will continue into the summer, with members taking part in Glasgow’s Pride March on Saturday 18 July. Staff who would like to join NHSGGC colleagues at the march – whether as members of the forum or as allies – are warmly invited to get involved. If you would like to attend, or to find out more about the work of the LGBTQ+ Staff Forum, please contact:

ggc.lgbtstaff.forum@nhs.scot.

The forum would like to thank all staff once again for helping to make Pride Month 2026 a positive and inclusive experience across NHSGGC.

Dorcas Society Clothing Room Update

The Dorcas Society ethos is simple, supporting patients in whatever way possible. One of the main ways this support is provided is through the Clothing Room.

The Clothing Room has been based within GRI for around 20 years. Originally established to provide clothing for patients being discharged without suitable clothes, demand has increased significantly over time.

Today, clothing is also provided for patients staying in hospital for longer periods, helping maintain comfort, dignity and wellbeing during their stay. Demand for this service continues to grow year on year.

How the Clothing Room Works

The Clothing Room is managed by two dedicated committee volunteers, Maureen Gardiner (Clothing) and Christine Miller (Toiletries).
Maureen and Christine:



- Order and purchase clothing supplies
- Transport stock to the hospital
- Replenish and organise the Clothing Room weekly
- Ensure a range of sizes and essential items are always available
- Provide toiletries and personal care items for patients in need

Their ongoing commitment ensures patients can access essential items quickly and discreetly whenever required.

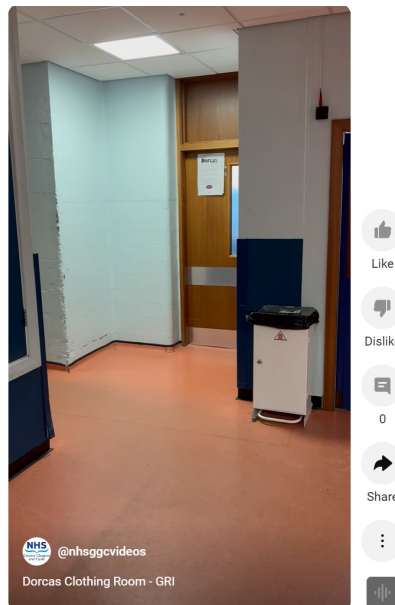
What Is Provided

A range of new, comfortable and easy-to-wear clothing is available, including:

- T-shirts
- Sweatshirts
- Joggers
- Underwear
- Trainers/shoes

Items are available in a variety of sizes for both men and women.

Where Is the Clothing Room?



[Click here to view a video on how to find the clothing room](#)

The Clothing Room is situated in the basement via the stairs in Centre Block. Turn right when exiting the stairwell door.

The access code can be obtained from the Security Office, and the room can be accessed at any time of day.

How You Can Help

To allow the Clothing Room to continue supporting patients across GRI, we kindly ask staff to:

- Take only what is needed for patients
- Help keep the room tidy and organised
- Return drawers and stock to the way they were found

A great deal of work goes into maintaining the Clothing Room, and your support and cooperation are greatly appreciated.

St Mungo's Pupils Help Make a Difference for GRI Patients



The Support & Information Service at GRI recently welcomed pupils, staff and volunteers from the local St Mungos Primary School.

The "Mini Vinnies" group (St Vincent De Paul) at the school are kindly making up and donating toiletries bags for patients who are leaving the hospital to go home or who have been admitted to hospital and require these essentials whilst an inpatient.

These bags provide essentials such as soaps, shower gels, and deodorants, and also include a personalised get-well note from the group.

We are ever so thankful to everyone at St Mungo's Primary who is taking the time to help make a small difference to patients' experience at GRI.

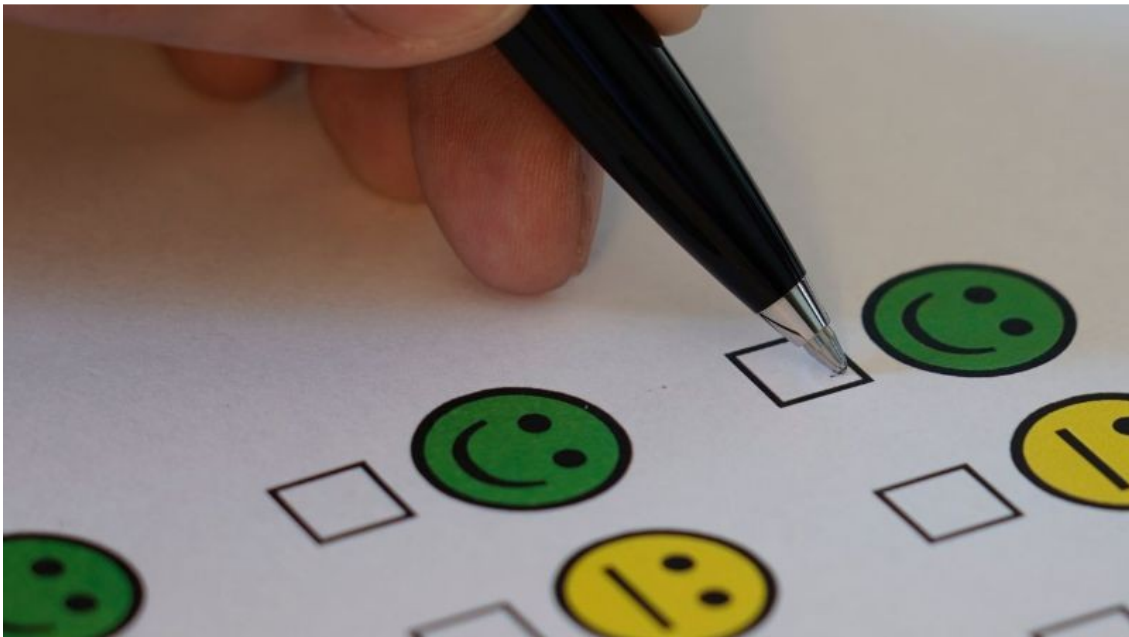


To request a toiletry or foodbag, you can call Support & Information services or email ggc.sis@nhs.scot:

GRI (Tuesday to Friday 10am – 3.45pm) on 0141 531 9127 (Security can be called outwith these hours)

Stobhill (Tuesday to Thursday 10am – 3.45 pm) on 0141 355 1527 (CCTV room can be contacted outwith these hours)

Your stories and feedback



We want to hear from you!

We want to highlight all the amazing and dedicated work going on throughout the North sector. No matter how small you think your success or your story might be, please let us know. It could be about you, your colleagues, your team, or anything within the North sector.

Either contact your line manager with your story, who can contact the newsletter team on your behalf. Alternatively, [email us](#) and be sure to copy them in.

We also want your feedback. Is there something you want to see more in the

newsletter? Or something you'd recommend we change? Big or small, send us your feedback by clicking the button below or [clicking here](#).

[Click here to submit your feedback](#)
