EVERYTHING IS ROSY...

SALLY McGonigal is Britain's best midwife ... and that's official.

She's been chosen from thousands of entries in a competition organised by nursery equipment manufacturer Mamas and Papas in association with Prima Baby magazine.

But when Sally was told she had won the Scottish heat of the competition she thought her workmates were winding her up. There was a far bigger surprise in store for the modest 43-year-old mother of two, who is based at Roodlands Hospital in Haddington.

She said: “I just couldn't believe it when the judges told me I had also won the UK title. I was completely taken by surprise.”

Sally’s name was put forward for the top award by a grateful Louise Elder, who safely delivered her son Hugo at home in Haddington with Sally’s help.

Unusually the baby was lying back to front, and a marathon 17-hour labour followed before he arrived safely into the world.

Louise, a business manager, said: “It was a very speedy delivery, I went into labour at 12 and had him at 12.30 before my midwife had time to arrive.”

She says there is definitely a growing trend for home births, with 25 babies born at home in East Lothian last year and the number likely to top 30 for 2004.

“Woman enjoy the birth experience because they are in their natural environment and they tend to be more active while in labour. Giving birth at home can be a very peaceful process,” added Sally.

The kind-hearted midwife is now planning a big night out for her workmates with some of the £1000 prize money she received.

An additional £1000 has also been presented to Sally is the best in Britain!
Beth is top volunteer

NHS Lothian worker Beth Thomson has been voted one of the country’s top volunteer managers.

She was presented with her ‘Outstanding Management of Volunteers’ award by the Scottish Parliament’s Presiding Officer George Reid MSP, at a special lunch in Edinburgh’s Holyrood Hotel.

The award, sponsored by Standard Life for the Scottish Association of Volunteers Managers, has three categories – public sector, private sector and voluntary sector.

Each winner received a commemorative glass shield, a £50 Marks & Spencer voucher and a ‘goodie bag’ from Debenhams.

Beth, who is Voluntary Services Manager at NHS Lothian’s Primary and Community Division, was stunned when her name was flashed up on the giant screen at the awards as winner of the public sector award.

She said: “I don’t remember anything else that was said. I was too busy trying to stay on my feet. At one stage I asked the Presiding Officer to catch me if I fainted!”

She said: “I really don’t think I do anything special. I love my job and I wouldn’t swap it for the world.”

Comment

Busy and best...that’s the story for Lothian

Beth Thomson, who works in the Primary and Community Division has been named Volunteer Manager of the Year.

We’ve had our first successes in the Primary and Community Division in the Scottish Executive’s challenge to keep our hospitals free of Healthcare Association Infection (HAI).

And even Connections, that many of you have told me you enjoy reading, has had success of sorts.

It has been shortlisted in the best internal publication by the Institute of Public Relations in their PRide Awards 2004 and we will know the result on Thursday 28 October.

Also in this issue you’ll see the transformation that’s been made in the occupational therapy gardens at Ashley Ainslie Hospital. It looks fantastic and I’d commend staff to pay a visit the next time they’re in the area.

Jenifer Stilton
Editor

Get your flu jab NOW!

IT IS that time of year again when the nasty flu bug is preparing to strike and it vital that frontline health care workers take steps to protect themselves now.

Although there hasn’t been a major epidemic in the UK for some time, it is crucial for your own health and that of your patients that you get vaccinated.

Dr Mike Winter, Medical Director, NHS Lothian Primary and Community Division said: “A major outbreak of flu could strike at any time so health workers can’t afford to take any chances, particularly as new strains of the virus – such as Avian influenza – have emerged internationally in recent years.

“Health care workers are dealing with vulnerable people, many of them with lowered immunity, so it is very important that staff do not pass on influenza to them.

“It has been shown that mortality rates in the elderly fall when staff are vaccinated against flu.”

Influenza can lead to potentially fatal illnesses in the frail such as pneumonia and breathing difficulties, so don’t delay - attend one of the sessions listed below.

Dr Winter added: “There has been a slight increase in uptake of the vaccination in recent years but we would really like a big rise in numbers this year.

“It takes seconds for a quick jab in the upper arm and vaccination produces very little in the way of side effects.”

Clinical signs and symptoms of influenza

Influenza viruses are spread from person to person, primarily through coughing and sneezing by infected persons.

The incubation period for influenza is one to four days with an average of two days. Adults are typically infectious from the day before symptoms show and for five subsequent days.

Children can be infectious for longer and immunocompromised patients can be infectious for weeks.

Patients with the uncomplicated illness typically have fever, sore throat, headache, cough and muscle pains.

Recovery takes place within a few days, but it can take up to two weeks for the cough to disappear. Young children can experience high fevers and the 2003/4 flu season was dominated by a Fijian strain of influenza, which affected young and adolescent children.

Patients with underlying medical conditions and the elderly can have an increased risk of complications from influenza.

Arrangements in your area


WLD: Begins 1 October, 2004 Contact: Carol Bowman, OHS 01506 419 666. NHS Lothian Board: To be arranged.

Health Protection Team: 0131 536 9197. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH: SESSIONS FOR FLU VACCINATION (P&C)

Monday 25th October: Astley Ainslie Hospital, Consulting Room, basement, Morelands (8:00 - 12:00 & 12:30 - 16:30).

Tuesday 27th October: Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Midmar Ward (9:00 - 12:30 & 1:00 - 16:30). Thursday 28th October: Sighthill Health Centre (8:30 - 13:00), Monday 1st November: Roodlands Hospital, Out Patient Department (9:00 - 12:00 & 12:30 - 15:00), Tuesday 4th November: Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Midmar Ward (8:30 - 12:30 & 13:00 - 16:00), Wednesday 1st December: Springwell House Podiatry Department (9:00 - 12:00)

By the sponsors to the community midwife service at Roodlands and a further £1000 to Louise.
One stop shopping is a great saving

NHS Lothian has joined a new scheme that’s designed to save vital cash on stationery and other materials. All of Scotland’s health boards will now get their stationery from one supplier — bringing a huge cost saving to the service. It’s part of NHSScotland’s Best Procurement Implementation (BPI) programme, which has targeted £50 million in recurring savings. The three year project is part of the public sector eProcurement Scotland initiative.

BPI is gathering pace, and moving towards the rationalisation of products across health boards through negotiating better prices, using a common electronic ordering service and a national logistics strategy.

The new eProcurement ordering service will make sure that everyone buys the contract items from the agreed sources in order to deliver the savings. Every board will get its pens and paper from one national supplier rather than dealing with almost 100 firms — bringing more competitive prices on stationery and computer consumables with a potential saving of over £1 million.

All health boards will start saving money — one, which currently spends £237,000 a year on stationery will save around £80,000 using the new scheme.

Chairman of the BPI Programme Gerry Marr said: “If we can save thousands of pounds purely on pens and paper in a single health board, then we can save millions of pounds by shopping together on a national scale.” Dennis Rowe, Head of Procurement at NHS Lothian said: “We are all working together across the health boards to achieve savings, which will go back into front line resources and improve the health service in our own areas.”

**CLEANING UP!**

**MEET the Cleanliness Champions.** They’re the first workers in the Primary and Community Division to complete the Scottish Executive’s Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) programme.

Earlier this year, former Health Minister Malcolm Chisholm MSP announced a major role for nurses in tackling HAI.

He set out proposals to train 3,500 frontline nurses with the aim of creating a ‘cleanliness champion’ in every ward and clinical service in the NHS in Scotland.

Cleanliness champions are specially trained healthcare workers who promote the prevention and control of Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) within NHSScotland.

They act as an important link between the wider NHS workforce and the ground such as nursing, domestic services, the sewing room and estates have completed the programme.

They graduated at a ceremony when their awards were presented by Dr Paul Morrison (Chair of Control of Infection Committee).

The second cohort started in June and are well on their way to completing the programme. In December 2004 we will start our third cohort.

If you are interested, use the following numbers for the Primary and Community Division to contact your Infection Control Nurse.

Carol Horsburgh 0131 536 8062 or 58062, Susan Wilson 0131 537 9217 or 49217, Ian Forbes 0131 537 6705 or 46705 or see the discussion forum on the intranet for more information.

RESEARCH has been carried out on the use of non-latex gloves because an increasing number of users are suffering from allergies and other skin problems caused by the latex in gloves.

The Scottish Executive has issued new national guidelines for the production of gloves and health boards have been to move towards nitrile and vinyl gloves instead of latex.

A simpler selection of suppliers and products will help make sure that the appropriate gloves are sourced, and allow NHSScotland to negotiate the best prices available for all glove types.

Gerry Marr and student nurse Amanda Reddie give the BPI programme the thumbs up.
Belhaven’s best is open and caring

THE former 11-bed ward at Belhaven Hospital in Dunbar has been refurbished and re-commissioned as a care home for 11 residents.

It was officially opened by Tom McCabe, MSP, who is Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care.

Belhaven Nursing Home takes an innovative approach to providing healthcare in Scotland, as an NHS facility that will be used to help address the shortfall in care home provision.

East Lothian Local Health Care Co-operative (ELLHCC), part of NHS Lothian, will own the new home, but East Lothian Council will be the registered service provider, delegating the provision of services at the home to ELLHCC.

The Care Commission advised the local agencies that the NHS cannot register as a care home provider.

The staff working in the home are NHS Lothian employees, and are all either registered nurses, social care staff or nursing assistants.

The integrated approach at Belhaven makes sure that the highest level of care is provided for residents, and NHS Lothian and East Lothian Council are now looking to expand this integrated approach to other areas.

Tom McCabe: “We face a huge challenge in looking after the growing number of older people in Scotland, whether in their own homes or in a care home.

“I am pleased to see this excellent example of partnership working between East Lothian Council and NHS Lothian to increase care home capacity in this area.”

Brian Cavanagh, Chair of NHS Lothian added: “Belhaven Nursing home is an excellent example of imaginative partnership working.

“This nursing home is a practical example of the spirit and aims of Joint Futures, because it takes the positive attributes and legal competencies of each agency and puts them together to produce a flexible, high quality service that meets local needs better than either agency could do alone.

“This is the first time the model has been put into practice in Scotland, and we are now looking at how this innovative approach can be replicated elsewhere, both in East Lothian and other parts of Lothian.

“Members of the public will also be pleased to know that the model means that the service can be provided at a lower cost to the public purse than the previous NHS-only service.”

Bruce Walker, Director of Community Services, East Lothian Council said: “We are delighted to be working with East Lothian Healthcare Co-operative in this joint initiative that will help us to provide new and much needed care home places in the county.

“The Belhaven Nursing Home shows joint working can achieve really positive outcomes for service-users and their families.”

Belhaven’s best is open and caring

Mrs McConnell praises Staff work

BRIDGET McConnell praised the ‘incredible dedication’ of staff working with patients with cystic fibrosis during a recent visit to the Western General Hospital.

The wife of the First Minister, who is patron of the cystic fibrosis charity The Butterfly Trust, met with patients being treated for the disease in the hospital and out patient clinic.

Mrs McConnell said: “When I first became involved, like many people, I had the old fashioned view of children lying on a bed having their backs slapped.

“It is a measure of how far we have come in the treatment of cystic fibrosis that now there are so many adults being treated for the disease.”

She added: “I feel privileged to have been able to come to the hospital and see the incredible dedication and commitment of the staff working with these patients.”

More chances for staff to have their say

MURRAY Duncanson, chief executive of Primary and Community Division, has been holding a series of surgeries where staff have the chance to have their say about issues that are important to them.

Murray’s already visited Herdmans Flat Hospital in Haddington and Dalkeith Medical Centre.

There’s another surgery planned, on Friday 26 November (9am to 11.30am) at Crieffmillar Medical Centre, 15 High Street, East Linton – ‘home’ to South East Edinburgh LHCC. Everyone’s welcome.

■ Peter Gabbitas, chief executive of West Lothian Health Care Division, is also out and about meeting staff.

He’ll be holding his own surgery in the Lecture Theatre at St John’s Hospital on Monday 8 November at 12.30pm. All are welcome.
New intake head for a nursing career

ANOTHER 19 clinical support workers have completed the first stage of their journey to become fully qualified nurses.

They’re the latest intake to complete a flexible Higher National Certificate in Healthcare course that allows workers to develop their skills and obtain qualifications while continuing to earn.

Janet McLean, co-ordinator for clinical support worker development, explains: “In the past people might have had second thoughts about becoming a registered nurse either because they couldn’t afford to be a full-time student, lacked confidence in their academic ability, or had family and other commitments that limited their options.

However, we’ve keen to give people every chance to progress and develop, so we developed the HNC course with Jewel & Esk Valley College.

It’s flexible because it can be done either as a full-time course over one year, or as a part-time course over two years.

“If someone takes the one-year option their weekly timetable would involve two days at college, one of study and the rest of the time dedicated to working in the hospital.

That means they’re not overburdened with work or study, and they’ve kept the ability to take home a wage.”

After they’ve completed the course successfully, the Healthcare students automatically qualify for year 2 of Pre-Registration Nursing at Napier University.

Although that does involve full-time study, once again there’s the chance to earn some money by taking an ‘honorary contract’ which allows them to join the nurse bank or work in their previous clinical area during holidays and other appropriate times.

Janet added, “Patient care is not compromised as financial help is given by the Scottish Executive Health Department enabling us to support the clinical area using bank staff.

“We began this course back in 2003 and at the moment there are around 100 people in total at the different stages of the process.

“All the feedback we’ve had has been positive and we’re planning an audit to assess the progress and impact of this initiative.

“We feel the programme recognises the contribution that clinical support workers play in healthcare and provides a career pathway that promotes and supports lifelong learning.”

DOMESTIC ABUSE - HOW STAFF CAN HELP

WHEN you think about agencies concerned with domestic abuse, you might not automatically put the NHS at head of the list.

In reality, however, because abuse involves physical and psychological mistreatment, NHS staff are often in the frontline when it comes to giving help.

The crucial role staff can play was outlined at the launch of the NHS Lothian Domestic Abuse Strategy in Livingston on 3 September.

At the event, M ary Mulligan M SP, deputy communities minister and chair of the Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse said: “Health workers play an important role because they are often the first people that women approach for help.

“This strategy for the Lothian area will help to ensure that workers know how to respond appropriately to women experiencing domestic abuse.”

Dr Anne Marie Wallace, acting director of Public health NHS Lothian added: “Addressing the needs of women experiencing domestic abuse requires action by many agencies and NHS Lothian is working with partner organisations in each local authority area to meet these needs.”

The launch was followed by workshops on practice issues for staff, for example how to recognise signs that a woman is being abused, and how to give on-going support, either within the NHS or through referral to other agencies.

Now that the strategy’s been published, a group, chaired by Libby Campbell, Director of Nursing for West Lothian, will see how staff can implement its policies.

Meanwhile, if you have any questions about the subject you can get in touch with Susan Moffat, senior health promotion specialist, who is the main contact person for this area of work in NHS Lothian.

Susan’s e-mail is susanm.moffat@jhb.sct.nhs.uk

FLEXIBLE FRIENDS

Doh! Bart meets up with the other Simpson!

NANCY Cartwright, the voice of TV comic character Bart Simpson, paid a visit recently to the Simpsons Maternity Unit at the new Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

She was taking part in the alternative Edinburgh People’s Festival, the small festival that was set up last year in an attempt to bring more cultural activity to people who are often excluded from arts events.

Nancy delighted her audience of expectant and new mums, nurses, doctors and ward staff from the moment she addressed them with: “What’s happening man, I’m Bart Simpson.”

The 44-year-old mother-of-two had the audience of both adults and children in stitches as she led them through the range of Simpsons voices, as she recounted some of her favourite lines from the show.

She also shared a few of her own stories about the birth of her two children, now aged 13 and 14, with the maternity unit staff, and joked: “I feared I was going to have my own little Bart.”
THE BARIUM BABES...

MEET the Barium Babes from the Sick Children’s Hospital.  
This bevy of beauties from the hospital’s X-Ray Department took part in the 12-mile Great Scottish Walk around Edinburgh.  

And their efforts raised a magnificent £350 for the Sick Kids’ Friends Foundation.  
From the left, they are Lesley Packer, Claire Gillon, Gillian McCafferty, Karen Sturrock, Cathy Scott and Elaine Sandeman.

THE HARM REDUCTION TEAM FROM THE SPITFALL STREET CENTRE RAISED MORE THAN £300 FOR THE SUDAN APPEAL WHEN THEY COMPETED IN EDINBURGH’S 10K ROAD RACE.

TEAM MEMBERS (FROM LEFT IN OUR PHOTOGRAPH) ARE JIM SHANLEY (MANAGER, HARM REDUCTION TEAM), RACHEL MAGILL (URBAN ACCESS DENTIST), MARK BAILEY (ROAM) AND GEORGE SIRREL (ROAM). THEY ARE ALL BASED AT SPITFALL STREET AND THEIR TIMES IN THE 10K WERE IN A RESPECTABLE 51 TO 55 MINUTE TIMESPAN.

From left: Doctors Craig Oxley, Mandy Drake, Maria Kalina and Ian Wardhaugh, Shaun Roach, Barbara Wardhaugh and Dr Louise Bath.

Doctors and nurses are often so busy seeing patients that they have little time for anything else.  
But some staff from the Endocrine and Diabetes Department at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children found time to raise cash for the Sick Kids Friends Foundation.  
Six adventurous bikers pedalled the Tweed Cycle Route from Melrose to Kelso and back – a 78 mile round trip that raised over £1,300.  
They are: Ian Wardhaugh, Shaun Roach, Barbara Wardhaugh and Doctors Craig Oxley, Mandy Drake, Maria Kalina and Louise Finc.

In the run for Sudan

THE Harm Reduction Team from the Spittal Street Centre raised more than £300 for the Sudan Appeal when they competed in Edinburgh’s 10K road race.

Team members (from left in our photograph) are Jim Shanley (Manager, Harm Reduction Team), Rachel Magill (Urban Access Dentist), Mark Bailey (ROAM) and George Sirrel (ROAM). They are all based at Spittal Street and their times in the 10K were in a respectable 51 to 55 minute timespan.

THE HARM REDUCTION TEAM FROM UHD’S MEDICAL AND CORPORATE SERVICES RAISED A GRAND TOTAL OF £260 FOR THE SIMPSONS SPECIAL CARE BABIES CHARITY.

The five members of the team came up with their brilliant fundraising idea while they discussed possible team-building events and competed in the recent Corporate 5k run in Edinburgh.  
Team leader Marion Finc said: “I was thinking about pizza and a glass of wine but the team had other plans and I found myself running round Inverleith Park and the Botanics instead!”

The five chose to support the Simpsons Charity – partly because Marion’s son Matthew was a ‘special baby’ in 1990 when the unit was based at the Western General Hospital.

And although Liz McEwan wasn’t able to run, she did a fantastic job as official fundraiser and gave plenty of encouragement to other team members.

Cheque out the singers

MEMBERS OF AN EDINBURGH CHURCH CHOIR HANDLED OVER A CHEQUE FOR OVER £1000 TO THE LIVER TRANSPLANT ENDOWMENT FUND AT THE ROYAL INFIRMARY RECENTLY.

The choir, from Brightons Parish Church in the capital, travels the country raising cash for good causes and decided some of the cash should come to the unit.  
Choir member Ronald Wallace (back row, wearing a yellow tie) had a liver transplant two years ago, and accompanied by other choristers, handed over the cheque to Dr Andrew Bathgate (on the right holding the cheque), and Professor Peter Hayes (holding the cheque on the left) at the unit.  
The cash will be used to make transplant patients more comfortable in the unit, and to support research into liver disease and transplant surgery.

As you might expect, life is very seldom boring at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh’s busy Endoscopy Unit.  
We were intrigued by a story from Nurse Endoscopist John Pendlebury about a recent event when the unit got more business than it expected.

It seems the unit’s now a vital comfort stop on one holiday company’s itinerary.  
John said: “The unit was running like a well-oiled machine with everyone playing their part to reduce waiting times.  
Then, out of the blue, our waiting room was full of patients – many more than were booked. The admitting nurses was battling to control the throng when she realised that most were queuing up to use the loos.

“She tried to find out who the patients were and whose list they were on, she couldn’t get a response – at least not in English.

“It transpired that a coach-load of German tourists had pulled up opposite the medical day case unit, and the driver had told them they could use the loos in our waiting room.”

“It’s left us wondering if the Royal has been put on the tourist route to provide the tour companies with a convenient comfort stop.”

BARE FACED CHEEK OF THE ONE STOP TOURISTS
Congratulations...2

CHIEF Pharmacist at the University Hospitals Division, Norman Lannigan, has been appointed an honorary professor at the School of Pharmacy at Robert Gordon University (RGU) in Aberdeen.

He said: “I think that this honour reflects the innovation of the pharmacy service in NHS Lothian and the University Hospitals Division in particular. “The new Head of the School at RGU, Terry Healy, is keen to forge productive links with practice to encourage excellence in teaching and research and to ensure that graduates meet the requirements of modern health services.”

“Given our existing relationships with Strathclyde University in Glasgow, I think this appointment offers a great opportunity to forge partnerships between NHS Lothian Pharmacy Services and both schools of pharmacy within Scotland.

“I can see exciting opportunities for NHS Lothian and the pharmacy profession in particular from such a partnership and I hope to play a part in facilitating this through my appointment;”

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Quality comes first at Howden Health Centre

We've passed... the ten successful ‘pupils’ with their diplomas and teacher Andrew Thomson (right).

TEN staff from Primary and Community Division successfully completed a 13 week SVQ course in British Sign Language.

The course, organised through the Health Inequalities Department, has enabled the staff - who volunteered to take the course in their own time - to communicate more confidently with deaf people they meet.

They’re now able to impart basic information and conduct simple conversations that help to make deaf people feel more at ease when they have to make use of health services.

The course was run by Andrew Thomson of Deaf Enterprise, who’s provided Deaf Awareness training for health board staff for the past three years.

Lesley Boyd, Health Inequalities Manager, said: “Although the training doesn’t reduce the need for experienced interpreters in the clinical setting where complex issues may need to be discussed to enable the deaf person to understand and be-involved in their care.

“Having staff available to welcome deaf patients to services will go a long way to helping make services more accessible.

The staff who studied for their NVQ continue to meet each month to practice their skills.

And some are using BSL in their everyday work, Jon Dianey, a physiotherapy technical instructor at Rosliston, was able to converse with an outpatient who really enjoyed being able to ‘talk’ with him.

Lesley said: “Staff have really appreciated learning from deaf people how we can provide our services better to meet their needs.

“The second SVQ course has started, and many more staff have recognised the value of learning some basic communications skills and are on a waiting list for further training.”

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C H P D E L A Y B U T P L A N S S T I L L G O A H E A D

THE five Community Health Partnerships planned for Lothian will bring health and care services closer to the people who need them most when they come into force in April next year.

New Health and Community Care Minister Andy Kerr has now issued the final CHP guidance notes that will enable NHS Lothian and its partners - including all four local authorities and many stakeholders from the private and voluntary sectors - to establish the new CHPs by April 2005.

But that hasn’t delayed plans by NHS Lothian and its partners - including all four local authorities and many stakeholders from the private and voluntary sectors - to establish the new CHPs by April 2005.

Senior Partnership Development Manager at NHS Lothian, Sally Lee, said: “CHPs will devote resources and decision making to front line staff, support the development of the health and well-being of individuals and local communities.

They will be clinically led and continue to shift the balance of care from hospitals to improved services in the community as close to people’s homes as possible.”

The CHP development process has involved and engaged a wide range of stakeholders including the Lothian Partnership Forum and there will be consultation with the trade unions on all proposals.

The CHP development team has held a number of local meetings connected with the proposals and a recent Pan-Lothian stakeholders’ day at Hibernian Football Ground attracted 100 people from across NHS Lothian.

The final development plans will take account of the views of individuals, community groups and carers throughout the Lothian area and Public Participation Forums will be established to ensure that the public is actively involved in decisions that will affect them.

Prospective CHPs are now planning events for workers from the voluntary and statutory agencies as well as local communities, kick-off off with the proposed new North Edinburgh CHP on November 4 when they’ll discuss how best to bring the North West and North East LHCC services together.

Among the priority areas covered by the CHPs are:

- Mental Health
- Older People
- Children’s Services
- Learning Disabilities
- Unscheduled care

The next major hurdle for the CHP Development Team is to put a Scheme of Establishment and Five CHP Development Plans before the Lothian NHS Board by the end of November, and with the Scottish Executive Health Department by 24 December.

THE C CCP Development Group is chaired by Dr Ian McKay, Non Executive Director, LHCCs.

Key Contacts are: Sally Lee, Senior Partnership Development Manager; Tim Montgomery, Edinburgh Project Manager; Eileen McBain, CHP Project Administrator. Tel: 0131 536 9744. Email: Eileen.mcBain@lhb.scot.nhs.uk Or cChp@lhb.scot.nhs.uk
**Welcome to the garden....where everything is looking rosy**

**THINGS are looking rosy for Astley Ainslie’s occupational therapy garden.**

It has received a boost this year with donations and practical help from a variety of organisations valued in excess of £5,000.

Originally set up in the early nineties as a place where patients could enjoy a quiet space and improve their capacities through easygoing gardening, the garden has been remodelled under the direction of Technical Instructor, Max Blinkhorn.

There’s a range of new features including a woodland challenge – a path laid through the garden’s wooded area with a variety of surfaces and inclines to test patients who have just got back on their feet - and a chess board with large size pieces with which patients can play during sessions.

The entrance to the garden now boasts a new Triffid Trellis – 600 feet of steel vines and 30 copper flowers designed by Edinburgh artist ‘Spiral Annie’ Berrie.

During August, in an intense, two-day hit squad style operation, a group of staff from Asda distribution in Falkirk lead by ex-nursing auxiliary John Stupart cleared a previously difficult to manage area, which will now be developed as a sensory garden.

“All our donors have been fantastic” says Max, who has been in post for 12 months. “They haven’t just made donations; they’ve rolled up their sleeves and worked like Trojans clearing, painting, digging and slabbing!”

“AWG Construction have adopted the garden as their project for 2004, providing 30 tons of materials and over 100 hours of labour and expertise under their community project scheme.

“They also erected our new greenhouse, which has sat on the shelf in our shed for over three years - that’s doubled our growing power.”

ATOS Origin, who provide IT services to the NHS, raised £1000 from the sale of older computer equipment to staff and this has been used to purchase our amazing trellis.

Managing the garden is no mean feat.

“It’s around two-thirds of an acre and it takes a lot of effort to keep it ship shape,” says Max.

“Without our donors, our volunteers, Fred Robertson and help from Dorothy Brydon, the departmental secretary and Kath Anderson, deputy head in occupational therapy, the garden’s value to patients would diminish significantly.

“Thanks to AWG we have two new wheelbarrows, shovels and a fantastic chess set. Chris Hill, an artist currently studying at Edinburgh College of Art, has also helped with a loan of a small piece of sculpture, as well as donating materials for patients to work with.”

The garden continues a tradition of innovative services at Astley Ainslie, which is recognised as the birthplace of occupational therapy in Britain.

The entrance to the garden now boasts a new Triffid Trellis – 600 feet of steel vines and 30 copper flowers designed by Edinburgh artist ‘Spiral Annie’ Berrie.

**Putting the ho, ho, ho into hospital**

“I TELL patients that the garden is less about hoeing and more about ho-ho-hoing,” says technical director, Max Blinkhorn.

“In other words, it’s something for them to enjoy. But what they don’t realise is that we’re getting them working at the same time!”

Max explains that the garden can play a very important part in helping people become independent again, which is occupational therapy’s main purpose.

“In most cases we’re preparing people for discharge and they get to have regular sessions of between half an hour and an hour, depending on how much they can do.

“We calculate things carefully so that they get the full benefit from working in the garden.”

“It’s clear that the hard work involved doesn’t put patients off, since there is huge interest from people wanting to take part.

“In fact, there are more volunteers than there are available spaces.

“We want to expand what we do, if possible,” says Max. “Often people come back to help as outpatients. But we’re hoping that we can offer regular three-day placements that can allow discharged patients to get even more used to returning to the world of work and a normal, everyday life.”

“The garden is a valuable resource, providing a unique environment for patients and contributing to their rehabilitation,” says Head of Department, Lisa Stewart.

Future plans include the possibility of heating the greenhouses directly and creating a sitting area for patients from the Millbank and Sutherland wards.
THE Astley Ainslie garden is a featured project in an exhibition currently being held at The Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh.

Organised by Thrive, the charity for therapeutic gardening, it’s a ‘moving exhibition of photographs’ where you can ‘see how gardeners enjoy solitude, camaraderie, laughs and contemplation in diverse Scottish garden landscapes.’

Running until 21 November at the Exhibition Hall in the Botanic Garden, opening hours are 10am - 5pm (closes 3.30pm in November). Admission is free.

THREE projects set up by NHS Lothian did well in a government-sponsored competition for Allied Health Professions.

The local projects were runners up in the Scottish Executive-backed national competition - with each winning £1000 for its service.

Two of them are in West Lothian where Sally Westwick is the Division’s AHP Services Manager.

Jigsaw Juniors was devised by the Jigsaw Child Development Centre at Beatlie Campus in Livingston, whose lead officer is speech and language therapist M a i l l o u s .

The project provides an integrated therapeutic approach, which helps youngsters with complex physical needs learn skills including communication, language skills and feeding.

The structured activities within the group help the child’s functional development, largely through movement, song and play.

The project aims to use its award cash to fund further development of staff knowledge and skills through lectures, courses and workshops.

Paediatric Baseline Motor Screening and Dual Referral Project. This initiative allows Primary One children in Linlithgow schools who are experiencing motor difficulties to be referred by the PE specialist to the school doctor and occupational therapy/physiotherapy at the same time.

Occupational therapist Michelle La Barre leads the project, which arose from knowledge that movement competence can determine the extent to which a child can function effectively.

Without intervention, children who have difficulties often remain uncoordinated and continue to exhibit associated problems such as under-achieving and low self-esteem into their teenage years.

The third submission is: A Multi-professional approach to the redesign of orthopaedic foot and ankle clinics at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

Submitted by Rose Byrne, Operations Manager, Musculoskeletal Service, Roddy McDonald, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon and Colin Thomson, Specialist Podiatrist (M SK), it offer AHPs the opportunity to take on new roles traditionally carried out by orthopaedic surgeons which has an impact on quality of care for patients by reducing waiting times.

It’s a good example of redesign funded by Lothian NHS Board. A multidisciplinary foot and ankle team has been created - possibly for the first time in Scotland.

The Award for Innovation in Health Improvement and Improved Health Services aims to encourage AHP staff to develop innovative practice and at the same time raise the profile of AHPs in health care teams.
The daddy of all trips.

JOE KEMISH got on his bike to raise cash for the Simpson Neonatal Care Unit in Edinburgh recently. Joe and Tony his dad cycled, on a tandem from Land’s End to John O’Groats in just 11 days and between them, reckon they’ve raised over £4,000 for the Simpson Special Baby Care charity!

Joe, who’s 32, takes up the story. “Our son Enzo was born five weeks early, which came as quite a surprise. “Being born early he had to spend ten days in the Neonatal Unit. “We were keen to discover another world in which work takes place twenty-four hours a day to aid all sizes of babies through their earliest days. “Travelling from Land’s End to John O’ Groats had always being an ambition of mine and to repay some of the hard work done I decided to cycle for Simpsons Special Care Babies. "Enzo’s grandfather Tony, who’s 62, and myself set off from Lands End cycling a tandem and arrived late in the evening in John O’Groats 11 days later having braved the British topography - all 900 miles of it - in between. “After a quiet start (46 miles from Land’s End to Tresillian on day one) we did better and as our legs strengthened we fairly flew along. “By the time we got to Scotland we were averaging 98 miles a day and on the last leg from Tore to John O’ Groats we did 116 miles! For me the highlights were cycling over the wilds of Dartmoor, catching up with my wife and son in Edinburgh after a week on the road, and arriving at John O’Groats late in the evening with the sun setting on the Orkney Isles. “I would like to thank the Leith Cycle Company for lending the bike to no rental charge and the support of all my family and friends, who followed, lodged, fed and most importantly sponsored us. “I hope that one day in the future I can retrace my journey with Enzo.”

Gill Mitchell, who is secretary of the Simpsons Special Care Babies charity said: “We are delighted to be supported by Joe and Tony and appreciate their energy, time and effort, together with the support of their families, for this long distance challenge. “All gifts and donations allow our voluntary run charity to continue to purchase state of the art equipment for the benefit of the babies. Their gift will make a difference.”

Would you like to help a good cause? Community Service Volunteers (CSV) have organised a national volunteers day on Saturday 30 October. You can find out more at their website at www.csv.org.uk/difference The Leith Cycle Company also has a website. It’s www.edinburghcyclehire.co.uk and the telephone number is 0131 467 7775

A TIME FOR SHARING

IN THE last issue of Connections, we outlined the background and values of ‘Care with Pride’. In this, and in subsequent issues, we will be sharing with you some of the ways in which Care with Pride is being integrated into a wide range of initiatives and working practices in NHS Lothian. Our first examples look at how Care with Pride is percolating through the Health Board’s Divisions and departments.

Robert Aitken, General Manager of Astley Ainslie and Associated Hospitals tells us how his work is informed and driven by Care with Pride values.

And we also take a look at the Primary and Community Division’s Department of Spiritual Care and find out how it is influenced by the values.

As Murray Duncanson stressed in the last article, it’s important to remember that Care with Pride isn’t a set of additional tasks to add to the ‘to do’ list – as you can see from the examples below, it provides a structure, and supports thinking on required changes in service provision, patient involvement and team-working.

Have a think about the ways in which you can use Care with Pride in your own department and let us know your suggestions. You can call extension 46881 or email us at Care.withpride@lpct.scot.nhs.co.uk

ROBERT AITKEN’S EXPERIENCE

HAVING worked in a part of the organisation with many good examples already of patient centred practice and strong team work, Robert Aitken was strongly motivated to adopt the Care with Pride approach. He explained: “Although I knew I wanted to focus on Care with Pride, I struggled initially with how tangibly I might progress it, both for myself and for the Division/team. “Then I discussed the possibility, with my OD and training colleagues, of using a 360 degree appraisal tool which measured the Care with Pride values and how well I was exhibiting these behaviours. “A draft appraisal tool was developed and tested with some of my team before being issued to a range of colleagues. “The whole process was facilitated by an independent facilitator, so my team felt the exercise was more independent and they could provide honest and open feedback.”

Robert continued: “The 50 per cent response rate provided good information for the facilitator to summarise the results, including validity scores and comments. I have been able to develop an action plan looking at issues of visibility and communication, providing support and encouragement on issues of health inequality and public involvement, and to be more challenging on improving the patient experience. On many other issues I also received encouraging and positive feedback. “I hope to encourage the group I approached to consider using such a tool as well as revisiting my 360 performance again next year and seeing how far I’ve progressed in demonstrating the Care with Pride values.”

Spiritual Care

ONE of the recent tasks for the Division’s Department of Spiritual Care has been decorating the Quiet Room in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital – and Care with Pride values have helped the department to consider some important aspects of the job. “In the past, spaces set aside in hospitals for worship or for peace and quiet were adorned with mainly Christian symbols. In recognition of the multi-faith society in which we live, we wanted to create a quiet space which would be inviting and accessible to all, whatever their beliefs.”

“So we removed all of the existing religious symbols from the room to reduce inequalities and began creating a new kind of space, with plants, water features, curtains, cushions and furniture. “We tried to encourage user involvement by asking for opinions, and by having a sign for the room made by the joinery group at Inverleith Day Unit. “We are in the process of gathering symbols and aids to meditation/worship of many different religions, which although not on constant display in the room, are available for use by people of these faiths.”

“We are also working on ways in which people may express their concerns about their lives and the lives of others in that space. “It is early days yet but the room is gradually being used by more people. It has been a haven for some patients looking to retreat from a sometimes noisy ward. This was our intention, and we hope that it contributes in a small way to improving health. It is an ongoing process.”
Putting others first

A NEW training programme that aims to improve working relationships and create a healthier and safer working environment is underway in West Lothian.

Funded by the Scottish Executive, the pilot scheme ‘Putting Others First’ has been developed by staff and patient representatives at St John’s Hospital in Livingston.

It aims to meet the NHS Scotland commitment to make sure that staff are provided with opportunities to share knowledge and skills that will improve both the way that they interact with others in the workplace, and improve the patient journey through its many services.

Patient focus and public involvement is now regarded as a priority area for NHS services. A core activity of how we involve and interact with those we work with, and deliver services for, involves effective communication skills.

These skills are fundamental to our every day life and effective communication with patients and carers requires particular care and attention.

Equally important is the communication that takes place between staff within the many departments of our organisation.

Putting Others First has been developed to allow staff to share good practice and to explore the knowledge and skills required and supporting staff in meeting this agenda.

DOCTORS SAY: STUB IT OUT!

THE BMA in Scotland recently added its voice to the campaign to stub out smoking in public places. The Association wanted people to make sure they have their say in the Scottish Executive’s current consultation on smoking.

NHS Lothian board also support the ban.

Breathe better in Scotland, a poster campaign for GP surgeries, was launched at Restalrig Park Medical Centre, and highlighted the impact that second hand tobacco smoke in public places has on both children and adults and encouraged patients to use their time while waiting for their GP consultation, to complete a consultation response form.

“It is widely accepted by everyone, except the tobacco industry, that passive smoking kills. As doctors, we treat patients whose health is affected by tobacco smoke and we feel strongly that firm action is needed to tackle this public health problem,” said Dr Peter Terry, chairman of the BMA in Scotland.

“In Scotland one third of the adult population smokes, less than one per cent of bars and restaurants are smoke free and only half of all workers work in a smoke free environment.”

“More than 13,000 Scots die each year from smoking related illnesses and of these, more than 100 die as a result of breathing other people’s smoke.”

Edinburgh GP Dr Michael Byrne backed the campaign. He said: “Many of my patients smoke, but we would like young people to give up.

“I believe a ban on smoking in public places would help them to achieve that goal. Most importantly, an increasing number of my patients suffer from respiratory conditions such as asthma, which is worsened when they are exposed to tobacco smoke.”

Pupils get pass marks for their oral

PUPILS at Linlithgow Academy had a lot to smile about recently when their Oral Health Initiative won the ‘Working in Partnership’ category of the West Lothian Celebrating Success Awards 2004.

The team was presented with their award by TV newscaster Jackie Bird at a ceremony in West Lothian College in August.

The initial aim of the project was to encourage pupils to choose water rather than fizzy drinks.

However, this was extended and it was decided to replace the school snack bar with a health bar so that the young people had the chance to eat a wider range of fresh fruit and salads.

Funded by NHS Lothian, the Oral Health Initiative brought together pupils, teachers, Oral Health Promotion specialists, the West Lothian Food and Health Development Officer, the Integration Visitor, and West Lothian Contracts Catering to plan a strategy to improve oral health.

Valerie Drew, Health and Food Technology teacher said: “The Scottish diet gives cause for concern and we would like young people to consider the impact of what they eat and drink on their future health.

“The results of the initiative are encouraging, with sales of water increasing and sales of fizzy drinks down, while the health bar continues to offer a wider range of healthy options.

“Equally encouraging, pupils in S1 and 2 Health and Food Technology now demonstrate increased knowledge about the impact of sugar and citric acid on health.”

Another key feature of the initiative was a promotion by pupils on the benefits of drinking water. As well as their fellow students at the Academy, this was presented to P6 and P7 pupils in cluster primaries.
Freedom of Information Act: Time is running out

The clock is ticking down for health boards across Scotland as they prepare for the new Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act.

From 1 January 2005 anyone who requests information held by NHS Lothian, subject to certain conditions and exemptions, is entitled to receive it.

In general terms the Board and its divisions must, by law, comply with a request for information within 20 working days.

Under the new legislation we are required to:
- Share information proactively, both internally and externally
- Respond quickly and positively to requests for information
- Keep good quality records of what we do and say
- Justify clearly the few cases where we need to refuse information
- Provide as much advice and assistance as possible to enquirers looking for information.

The right of people to receive information is retrospective - it applies to all information held no matter how old it is.

There are some exceptions - for example, where information may prejudice substantially the commercial interests of any person or organisation, or the information is personal information under the Data Protection Act 1998.

NHS Lothian has already published a catalogue detailing all the information that the Board will routinely publish or intends to routinely publish. It will set out the type or categories of information NHS Lothian publishes or intends to publish; the form in which the information is published and details of any charges.

Information that is routinely available through the Publication Scheme should not be subject to a formal Freedom of Information request.

You can contact a member of the FOI Implementation Group for more information.

At Lothian NHS Board - Douglas Weir (ext: 89016), Mike Sampier (ext: 89215) or Alison Murphy (ext: 89054); Management Audit Services - Dave Proudfoot (ext: 49267); at University Hospitals Division - Myra Duncan (ext: 23309), Ted Boyle (ext: 27342) or Lui Giacomello (ext: 31183); at the Primary & Community Division - Richard Walter (ext: 49523) or Val Baker; (ext: 45923) and at West Lothian Healthcare Division - John Jack (ext: 2779).

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KINGS OF THE ROAD SAFETY!

The Primary and Community Division has won a prestigious road safety award from Lothian and Borders Police.

Fleet Sure is a scheme launched by the police Road Safety Unit to encourage fleet operators of all sizes to address safety on the roads for the employees who drive for their organisation.

And Lothian’s Primary and Community Division is one of only 19 organisations in the area to win one of the awards.

Transplant Adviser Alex Paterson and Operations Manager (Community) Bob Comersall attended a special award ceremony at the Pentland Science Park in Penicuik, Midlothian, where they received the inscribed glass Fleet Sure 2004 trophy.

Alex said afterwards: “Lothian & Borders Police is the only force in Scotland which works closely with big fleet users including local authorities and health boards.

“The police examined what we were doing to improve our occupational road safety management techniques. We’ve done a lot of work in the past year tightening up procedures and making sure that various departments in the Division know what’s expected of them as far as road safety goes.

“There are 360 employees who drive and look after the Division’s commercial vehicles – and a further 2000 car drivers who use their vehicles on Health Board business.

“Once the Division’s transport policy is accepted, we hope to organise driver training and assessment and make sure that drivers are competent when they are driving on the Division’s behalf.”

Paul Richardson, Road Safety Manager for the police, said: “Vehicles driven in the course of business are statistically over-represented in road crash figures for Scotland and the UK.

“Here in Lothian & Borders, research indicates that every third fatal and serious road crash involves a vehicle being driven for business purposes.”

Well, did YOU take stress test?

PEOPLE working at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh had the chance to examine their own health and well-being when the annual staff health fair was held in the hospital.

It’s the fourth time the Women, Children and Associated Services Division Health Promotion Group have brought together a wide range of services and activities for staff to enjoy.

From eye care and vision tests to free healthy eating food samples … the chance to put on a stress test (it changes colour if you’re tense) … and information and advice on a whole raft of health issues like alcohol intake, giving up smoking and even what street drugs look like.

There were allergy testing sessions, massages, the chance to try reflexology and plenty of free samples of skin care products which were snapped up within the first 2 hours of the Fair.

Some of the more serious aspects of the fair provided expert advice on workplace health and latex allergy.

Many staff who attended benefited from this stall, which was very busy right up to the close of the Fair.

Many of the staff who came along were interested in the Infection Control team’s stall where they could checkout their own hand washing technique. Not bad guys – most of you passed!

For travellers, advice was given by the Travel Clinic staff on how to stay healthy – everything from straightforward immunisation information to how to deal with snakebites and altitude sickness.

There was expert Ophthalmology advice and information – and a selection of wacky glasses which really helped us to understand just how difficult living with an eye condition can be.

We were delighted at the turnout and interest in the Fair and thank everyone for their support – stall holders and colleagues who came along.

If you want to arrange a Fair within your own Directorate or Hospital site – please contact Rowena Conrad, Chair of WCLAS Divisional Health Promotion Group at Extension 20818, for more information and some useful contact numbers.

Alex Paterson receives the Fleet Sure award from Chief Inspector Kenny Buchanan of Lothian & Borders Police and, right, Alex Paterson, Transport Adviser of Lothian & Borders Police.

ABOVE: Alison Fenwick promotes healthy eating and, right, Rowena Conrad with Medisavers’ Dome of Edinburgh had to chance to examine their own health and well-being when the annual staff health fair was held in the hospital.

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Get up and go at Ocean Terminal

EDINBURGH’S senior citizens were encouraged to ‘get up and give it a go’ over two days at Ocean Terminal in Leith.

NHS Lothian, in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council and Edinburgh Leisure, and with sponsorship from the Edinburgh Evening News, launched the fourth annual Get up and Go programme of activities and opportunities for older people.

Linked to A City for All Ages – the city plan for older people – its aim is to help open up leisure, social, educational and cultural activities and opportunities for older people.

James Barbour, Chief Executive of NHS Lothian, said at the launch:

“Get up and Go shows that the challenges of healthy active ageing can be achieved by providing opportunities for improving physical, social and mental well-being.”

Many voluntary organisations were represented on the 36 stands in Ocean Terminal. Entertainment on both days included Pilates, jive and salsa, drama and singing.

‘The Ageing Well Roadshow Group’ (part of the Ageing Well 50+ project, South Central Edinburgh) Singers from the St Anne’s community centre, The Army, the Navy & the Airforce too!

For further information contact Lorna Hall, Senior Health Promotion Specialist, NHS Lothian Lorna.Hall@hb.scot.nhs.uk

TUNE IN TO DAD’S ARMY!

THEY do things with ‘reel’ style in Morningside if the recent Older People’s Week celebrations are anything to go by.

Organised by Morningside Medical Practice health visitor Harriet Crawford, this ‘Marketing Health’ event was a big hit with local people – thanks in part to lively performances from pipers and drummers from the nearby George Watsons College.

They were also impressed with the range of information on offer on important issues to older people, from osteoporosis to giving up smoking, and pensions.

Dorothy Stewart, who lives in the area, said attending the event in Morningside library had been a very worthwhile experience. She said: “It was a chance to ask things you wouldn’t ask your GP, as you only usually go to your GP if there is something wrong.”

“I took a pile of leaflets away for my neighbour as well.”

A popular service on offer each day was the free blood pressure check along with Lothian and Borders Police’s daily chats with people on personal safety.

Harriet said: “We got a steady flow of people each day and the reaction from them was very positive. “News that the police officers were giving out a number of personal attack alarms spread fast and we actually got calls from other parts of Edinburgh asking if there were any left!”

Harriet explained why she organised the event: “Morningside has a higher proportion of older people than many other parts of Lothian and we felt that it was important that we take health and well-being information out to them rather than waiting for them to come to us.

“It was hard work but it was very productive, not only from the public’s viewpoint but also for service providers from a broad range of agencies who worked together very effectively.”

OLDER PEOPLE’S WEEK IS A ‘REEL’ SUCCESS

A NUMBER of staff enjoyed a right royal occasion when they met up with Prince Charles and Camilla Parker-Bowles at a garden party held in the grounds of Holyrood Palace in June.

It was a special NHS only event where representatives from every Board across Scotland gathered to mingle together and chat with the royal host.

Alan Nicolson, an information officer in the surgical directorate at West Lothian was one of the lucky ones.

He said: “It was a very relaxed and informal afternoon and Prince Charles showed great interest in the health service and the job we do.

I didn’t feel at all nervous beforehand. Not knowing to what extent meant that I could approach it without any anxiety and it turned out to be very enjoyable.”

Equally impressed with the event, and Prince Charles’ eagerness to learn more about the NHS, was Millie Sommerville. Millie works in the Psychiatric Unit at St Johns and is also Unison’s health and safety co-ordinator for Scotland.

She said: “The Prince took time to speak to everyone and was keen to hear our views on a wide range of subjects.

“He even had a chat with my husband, Matthew, who is a recent user of the service having undergone a heart bypass operation.”

Alan Nicolson added: “It was a great privilege to attend the garden party, not just as an individual but also as a representative of the health service staff in West Lothian.”

Prince charming

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“It was hard work but it was very productive, not only from the public’s viewpoint but also for service providers from a broad range of agencies who worked together very effectively.”

Above: The Ageing Well Roadshow Group, part of the Ageing Well 50+ project, South Central Edinburgh, perform the Wizard of Oz. Left: Singers from the St Anne’s Community Centre – ‘The Army, the Navy and the Airforce too!’

Below: Age Concern Edinburgh’s IT project introduces older people to the world of computing and the Internet. Photos courtesy of ACE IT.
**Connections** OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2004

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**LESGIAN, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people living in South East Scotland can now get help to improve their health and lifestyles.**

**The LGBT Centre for Health & Wellbeing, at 9 Howe Street, Edinburgh, is a five-year project - supported by the Big Lottery Fund - that uses a range of methods to help its clients.**

Many LGBT people encounter prejudice when they try to access mainstream services and activities, especially when they need help with general health care or physical, emotional and social problems.

The project also offers safe and welcoming environments for initiatives like LGBT Active - from yoga to sailing - Complementary Therapies, and T Time for all transgender people.

Centre staff have been involved in training senior managers from NHS Lothian Primary and Community Division as part of the Care With Pride Initiative.

The training aims to raise awareness of issues that may have an impact on the health of individuals, and encourages NHS staff to explore their own attitudes and values regarding working with LGBT patients and colleagues.

The overall aim is to highlight heterosexism, which is inherent in many working environments and society in general.

Heterosexism is the assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that being heterosexual is better, preferable or superior to being lesbian, gay or bisexual. It allows straight couples to walk down the street holding hands, whilst same sex couples, doing the same thing, are accused of flaunting their sexuality.

The project is also collaborating with the Scottish Executive funded Inclusion in Health in providing information and training for local health care cooperatives, which identify the policy and practice issues that need to be addressed to ensure LGBT people have full and supported access to health care services.

It there’s more information on the LGBT Centre for Health & Wellbeing, check out www.lgbthealth.org.uk , or contact the project directly on 0131 523 1100.

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**Grasp the medal of good health**

**T HE Department of Clinical Neurosciences at the Western General Hospital is currently working towards its Bronze Award from Scotland’s Health at Work Scheme (SHAW).**

The scheme, funded by the Scottish Executive, seeks to encourage employers to promote the health of their staff.

As a health and safety representative in the radiology unit, Barbara Nugent thought that the SHAW scheme could be beneficial for her colleagues.

Two Radiographers and the Superintendent formed a working group to discuss ideas. Through discussions, all of the staff participated by suggesting ways to take the scheme forward.

Barbara takes up the story.

“Stress emerged as the greatest concern, and people indicated that they were keen to try a therapy taster session of shiatsu, Indian head massage, reflexology or aromatherapy.

“I used some of the first SHAW grant of £300 to implement the plan. Julie Owenson, a therapist who used to provide these services in the WGH, offered to provide shiatsu and Indian head massage; one of our Radiographers, Kathryn Thomson, who’s a qualified reflexologist, offered her services free of charge; and Fiona MacPherson, DCN’s Pain Specialist, who is a qualified aromatherapist, also offered to provide her services free.

“Over four weeks, almost three quarters of our staff had one half-hour taster session. “An interesting result of the exercise was that the department was able to compensate for the time taken by staff members attending taster sessions with no detriment to staff left behind.

“In fact, 95 per cent felt that the department had benefited from allowing staff to take up the opportunity with comments such as:

- ‘shows employer takes staff health and stress seriously’
- ‘staff feel more valued’
- ‘feel more alert to cope with the rest of the day’
- ‘people seemed happier and more relaxed’

“I now have a list of complementary therapists who are keen to provide a service to staff, most of whom already work for the health service and I know that suitable venues are available.

“The question is, if we are serious about improving staff health, could staff be allowed at least a half-hour a month during working time to benefit from some stress-reducing therapies?

“We have shown that this would not adversely affect the efficiency or quality of work in a department. In fact the results of the survey show that staff feel more energised and happier to work.”

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**New pay structure - now the hard work begins**

**WORK is underway in preparation for the potential implementation of Agenda for Change - the new NHS pay structure.**

Managers, staff and staffside will require to review, and sign off job descriptions ensuring that they are up to date and reflective of current roles and responsibilities.

To support this work a process tool including job description guidance notes and template has been developed nationally and is available on CD Rom via www.show.scot.nhs.uk/sehd/paymodernisation.

Work is also ongoing to develop templates job descriptions for core posts with nursing being the first staff group to be completed.

These templates are designed to provide the service with an outline of minimum requirements for posts - however they will require local information to be added.

A rolling programme of training, for both staffside and management representatives, on the job evaluation process and job description preparation will commence in November 2004.

If you are interested please contact Jacqui Robb, AfC project administrator on 01506 419666 ext 4510/2049.

Following the outcome of the ballot a series of staff awareness sessions will be arranged to advise staff of implementation plans and timescales, and the next edition of Connections will provide a full briefing on what Agenda for Change will mean for you.

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Looking for new ways to learn?

NOW, as long as you have access to an Internet-ready computer you can study while you’re at work, or in the comfort of your own home. And you’ll have access to hundreds of training courses – from management skills and personal development to information technology and customer care.

NHS Lothian has just launched its own online learning website portal and a Learning Resource Library that can be accessed by anyone working for the board and its divisions across Lothian.

Organisation Development and Training consultant Lynne Connolly, who is based at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, said: “You don’t need to be a computer genius to learn online. “With basic PC skills and access to the Internet, you can now work on 50 new courses and the European Computer Driving Licence from home or work – and at a time that suits you best.

“Online learning fits around your shift patterns, and you can go at your own pace and spend more time on the things you want to concentrate on.

“And you know you’ve reached a good quality standard in your learning, because you need to pass a test before you get your completion certificate.

“You can accumulate your learning in a training record that can be used for CPD and PDP reviews.

“A full catalogue of courses available is kept at Divisional Training Centres and through some Divisional Intranets – and everyone attending a learning introduction session will receive their own copy.

“Lynne said: “The first step is to book a short introductory session in a Learning Centre, where a trainer will set you up as a user and take you through how to access learning opportunities through the Internet, Intranet and Learning Centres across NHS Lothian.”

You can book an introductory session by contacting one of the following:

Royal Infirmary, Sick Children’s, Eye Pavilion and Lauriston: Ian Miller (27340)
Ian.miller@luht.scot.nhs.uk
Royal Infirmary and Liberton: Jenny Daborn (27340)
jennifer.daborn@luht.scot.nhs.uk
Western general and Royal Victoria: Richard Tobin (31267)
richard.tobin@luht.scot.nhs.uk
Royal Edinburgh: Marlon Wilson (46885)
marlon.wilson@lhb.scot.nhs.uk
St John’s: Gill Webb or Wilma Tofts (2786)
gill.webb@wld.scot.nhs.uk or wilma.tofts@wlt.scot.nhs.uk

Health Board, Ruth Stewart (0 922 3)
ruth.stewart@blh.scot.nhs.uk

Here’s what to do

IF YOU are thinking about taking a course or getting back into learning but feel your writing skills need a brush up, then you’ll be pleased to know that help’s available.

Find out more about the courses by joining a short course - in work time – to build your confidence in your everyday reading and writing and get ready for Return to Learn, SVQ’s or just for your own satisfaction. Or take a basic introduction to computing course (Get IT Together) and boost your writing skills at the same time.

Want to know more? Phone Vickie Hobson in the WEA (0131 225 7176) for a confidential chat.

Return to Learn is a communication and study skills course developed by the Workers Education Association (WEA) in partnership with the public sector trade union UNISON.

The course prepares workers for future learning opportunities, introducing them to techniques for studying, reading, writing, presenting reports and building self-confidence. There is also an opportunity to develop IT skills.

The course offers Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) accreditation for work carried out and carries an SQA Workplace Learners Award for everyone who completes it. How is it delivered?

The course is delivered in the workplace, during work time – students are expected to be given paid release to attend. Courses may take place over 10 full days, or over four full and 12 half days.

Return to Learn involves 60 hours of student/tutor contact time and students are also expected to commit an average of three hours per week course work in their own time. This course involves completion of 10 units within a portfolio, which would be covered over the sessions detailed above.

We are aware of the difficulties of releasing staff from their work place, particularly in areas where low paid staff form the bulk of the workforce.

To address these issues we are planning to deliver courses across NHS Lothian, which will create more opportunities for staff to be released. WEA are also opening up the courses organised for Council employees to NHS Lothian staff.

The course dates will be widely advertised throughout NHS Lothian by internal mail and the Intranet.

Everyone can benefit? The target group on initial set-up for Return to Learn was ancillary and support services, but this is no longer the case.

The course is available to all members of staff employed by the NHS who have not been in formal education or training for sometime, if it all, since leaving school.

Return To Learn has been successful in building the confidence of course participants enabling and encouraging them to go onto further study and to develop their careers.

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PICK FROM 600 COURSES

THE new NHS Lothian Learning Resource Library opens up access to 600 learning courses on a wide range of subjects from team working to customer care and managing people.

There are different formats of learning materials available for you to choose from:

■ CD-ROM based training
■ Video based training
■ Books
■ Workbooks and reference guides
■ Audio cassettes

You can access the resources through the Intranet.

If you work in the Primary and Community Division, go to the home page and click on Training, on the left hand side of the screen, then select Learning Resource Library from the sub-menu.

If you work in the University Hospitals Division, from the home page click on Tools, Training and select Learning Resource Library.

If you work in West Lothian Division please contact Yvonne Marshall on 01506 496966 x 3651 for more details.

If you work at Lothian Health Board, from the home page access the HR TD menu along the top navigation bar and then select Learning Resource Library from the left hand side.

You can also drop in to one of the Board’s learning centres at Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Western General Hospital, Astley Ainslie, or St John’s and have a look at some of the resources or use the paper-based catalogue to find what you need.

Or you can contact your local Training Departments for more information.
CHRISTMAS has come early for youngsters at St John’s Hospital in Livingston. The door of the hospital’s Children’s Ward opened and in came Santa Claus… early for the kids Christmas comes at St. John’s…

He brought a giant TV, two TVs with built-in DVD players, PlayStation 2 consoles, computer games and films, cuddly toys… and a digital camera. The gifts were bought with the proceeds of a charity night held at the Claycross Shooting School in Kirknewton, West Lothian. Children’s Ward Sister Lynn Haddow said: “Mr Campbell had met us and told us he was holding a charity event at the school and had decided the Children’s Ward would be the beneficiary. “The fundraisers decided on entertainment equipment for the Ward. “Televisions are always in short supply, as the buttons take quite a pounding from little fingers. “They tend not to last as long in hospital as they do at home! And to have two DVD players is wonderful – we don’t normally get the latest technology for years! “We also wanted a digital camera for the times like Christmas and New Year when the youngsters dress up – and Mr Campbell made sure that we got one.”

WIN A CHRISTMAS SHOPPING BONUS

HOW would you like to win £100 worth of high street shopping vouchers and have some fun at the same time?

Have a go at our Consort Healthcare wordsearch competition.

You’ll have to search the grid diagonally, horizontally and vertically to find the words we’ve listed.

Surgery, Neurology, Medicine, Hygiene, Prognosis, Ward, Hospital, Operation, Therapy, Clinical, Patients

When you have worked out which word isn’t there, complete the coupon and send it to Connections by last post on Tuesday November 30. The first correct answer drawn after that date will win £100 worth of Marks & Spencer Vouchers courtesy of Consort Healthcare.

Fill in the coupon and send it to Connections at: St Roque, Astley Ainslie Hospital, 133 Grange Loan, Edinburgh EH9 2HL. Make sure it arrives by the last post on 30 November 2004.

HEALTH PROMOTION TEAM WINS TOP AWARD

NHS Lothian’s health promotion department has won a top award for the clarity of its Making Choices, Keeping Safe policy.

The policy and its associated guidelines were produced earlier this year to help meet the sexual health needs of people with learning disabilities (see Issue 3 of Connections).

It was prepared after wide consultation with, and input from people with learning disabilities, their parents and carers.

It will be a supporting document to the forthcoming Edinburgh and the Lothians sexual health strategy.

The initiative has won a ‘Getting the Message Across’ award from the National Information Forum (NIF), a voluntary organisation that aims to encourage the better provision of information to people who feel marginalised by society and disadvantaged by lack of the information they need.

Every year the Forum presents its awards to organisations or individuals who have devised innovative, effective, appropriate or exiting ways of providing information to disadvantaged people.

As Connections went to press, representatives from Health Promotion at the board were planning to travel to London for the award ceremony at City Hall, on Thursday 21 October.