The eco warriors
Scotland’s most highly skilled ‘green’ domestics
World-leading epilepsy service gets star billing in parliament

SOME of Scotland’s most prominent politicians stood in the Scottish Parliament to voice their pride at the world-leading achievements made by staff at the Glasgow Epilepsy Genetics Service based at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children (RHSC).

The Glasgow team of doctors and scientists are using cutting-edge genetic technology to establish early diagnosis of childhood epilepsy and deliver specialised and personalised treatments... not just to Scottish patients, but to referrals that come in from around the world.

They have tested more than 2500 DNA samples from the UK and beyond in the six years since it was set up and it is firmly established now as the principal testing centre for epilepsy in children across the UK.

Dr Sameer Zuberi, consultant paediatric neurologist at the RHSC, said: "Epilepsy is the most common neurological condition affecting more than 50 million people worldwide, including 5000 children in Scotland.

"The work here has been instrumental in advancing crucial research into severe forms of the condition and understanding the gene responsible for many early childhood epilepsies.

"Establishing an early diagnosis means the correct treatment and medication makes an enormous difference. The service is clearly an excellent example of the direction modern medicine is taking."

Here's what the MSPs said...

Kenneth Gibson, SNP: "The impact of genetic testing on epilepsy is only just being explored, but it is clear that Scotland is pioneering future research."

Dr Richard Simpson, Labour, said of the staff: "Their dedication, enthusiasm and professionalism are helping and supporting families and individuals throughout Scotland and further afield through modern testing."

Nanette Milne, Conservative, said of the service: "It is at the cutting edge of advancing the accurate diagnosis and more focused treatment of patients with epilepsy."

Alison McInnes, Liberal Democrat, also added her own congratulations to the team.

The service is a partnership between paediatricians from the RHSC and genetic lab scientists from the West of Scotland Genetic Laboratories.

It was established in 2005 and is the principal testing centre in the UK for children with epilepsy.

The service was set up with funding from National Services Division (NSD) of NHSScotland and the Muir Maxwell Trust.

Recently cash for additional equipment came from NSD and Yorkhill Children's Foundation, which will transform the way genetic testing is carried out for patients.
Royal recognition for two of our colleagues

Consultant clinical psychologist Dr Anne Douglas and Agnes McGowan, former health improvement lead (tobacco), will be heading to Buckingham Palace later this year after being named in the Queen’s Jubilee year Birthday Honours List.

Anne has been made an OBE for her work setting up and leading Scotland’s only NHS specialist service for asylum seekers and refugees, Compass. And Agnes is an MBE for leading proactive smoking cessation work in the community.

Compass is an NHSGGC service that works with people of all ages who have fled their homeland traumatised because of persecution and who have complex psychological problems. Many have suffered or witnessed torture, rape, murder or experienced prolonged detention. At Compass, they are offered emotional support and psychological therapies with the aim of making them feel safe, helping them process traumatic memories, and finally support to settle and fully integrate with the community.

Dr Douglas said: “It was a surprise and, of course, it’s a terrific honour. It’s great for me, but equally for the team, and I also think it’s important because it recognises that the health of the people we are working with is something that we need to focus on.”

Agnes delivered a robust smoking policy which led to the most successful quit rates for the NHS in Scotland, with 44 per cent of staff attempting to quit being successful in remaining smoke free. She also personally drove forward a major campaign to protect children from second-hand smoke in the home and in the car, which was recognised by MSPs.

Agnes said: “It is a real honour to be recognised like this, but I would also like to pay tribute to my colleagues who have worked very hard on NHSGGC’s smoking cessation campaign, which has helped many people to quit and, as a result, improved their health.”

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Agnes McGowan, left, will receive an MBE while Anne Douglas will receive an OBE.
Our quality commitment

Women and Work Project is helping our staff to improve their skills – and ensure the safety of patients and colleagues

Domestics rise to new challenges

WE now have some of the most highly trained and “eco-friendly” domestic staff in Scotland thanks to an intensive skills programme. Keeping our hospitals clean and safe for both patients and staff has always been their top priority, but now they are empowered to combine these tasks with newly acquired skills in reducing our carbon footprint by using less water, energy and chemicals and disposing of waste in a more environmentally friendly way, plus safe use and care of equipment and storage of equipment and chemicals.

A group of 35 female staff drawn from acute hospitals across the organisation have completed a course as part of the Asset Skills Women and Work Project and are now the “eco warriors” in their departments, passing on their new knowledge to colleagues.

Mary Anne Kane, corporate general manager facilities, said: “I congratulate every one of our domestic staff who has successfully completed this course. “We should be proud as a Board that we now have some of the most environmentally aware domestics in Scotland who are making an important contribution to building an eco-friendly hospital environment by addressing the wider issue of managing resources even more effectively.”

Marie Curran, domestic supervisor at the Victoria Infirmary, is one of the staff who underwent the course. She said: “I thoroughly enjoyed the course and learned a load of stuff I wasn’t familiar with. I am now putting what I learned into practice in the hospital and sharing what I have learned with colleagues.”

Training was organised through the Women and Work Project and supported by Asset Skills, the sector skills council for cleaning services. Women and Work is a Government initiative which aims to boost opportunities for women in the workplace to develop their careers by raising skills and unlocking their potential.

Those who participated in the course have been awarded a British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICSc) accredited qualification.

It’s our business to care – and it’s good to share

WE have a commitment to put our patients at the centre of everything we do. One way of helping us identify new opportunities for this is for staff to share what has worked well within their local service area.

Our StaffNet now hosts a staff portal to give you the opportunity to feed in what you are proud of – and something that you believe others elsewhere in NHSGGC could adapt for their practice.

The new ‘Sharing Good Practice’ area is in the Facing The Future section on StaffNet and is being populated with some very interesting initiatives to better improve the way we work. One example on StaffNet is the main X-ray department at the Southern General, which has shared the way it has improved the flow of inpatients through the radiology department.

Caroline Handley, lead radiographer, left, explained the need to make changes: “Inpatients were often being sent for on more than one occasion on the same day for different tests and there was little communication with wards regarding when an appointment for a
Our quality champions

patient was scheduled. As a result, patients were not receiving the best patient journey and staff were working in a stressful environment.

Discussions with patients and ward and portering staff took place to evaluate what was letting the system down and establish how best to improve the patient journey.

A number of simple but effective measures were implemented to ensure patients no longer have to wait long to be seen and are now aware of when and why they are attending the department.

Staff are also less stressed due to inpatient appointments being distributed, therefore preventing peaks and troughs, and time slots are no longer being wasted.

Chief executive Robert Calderwood, right, said: “Some of the best ideas to improve services and the way we work come from staff.

“Capturing these ideas will enable the quality of care throughout the organisation to thrive. Sharing best practice with our colleagues is one of the most simple and convenient ways to improve services. It has a direct and positive impact not only on our patients, but also on the working environment of our staff.

“I would encourage all staff to share information and further improve our ways of working.”

Visit: StaffNet > Info Centre > Facing The Future Together > Our Resources > Sharing Good Practice

Dr Karen Hogg and the Caring Together programme team are hosting a heart failure and palliative care symposium at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons Glasgow on Thursday 22 November, with the title of “Update on Management of Advanced Heart Failure with a Focus on Palliative Care”.

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The majority of heart failure patients prefer to have their palliative care delivered at home and also to die there.

These are the initial findings from pilot sites in north-east and south-west Glasgow and Inverclyde, who are taking part in the Caring Together scheme to improve end-of-life care for this group of patients.

Dr Karen Hogg, our consultant cardiologist involved in the pilots, said: “What is important is that we are able to offer patients realistic choices for their care in the advanced stages of their illness.

“Co-ordinated care must be deliverable in different care settings. While many patients wish to die and be cared for at home, specialist services need to provide clear management plans, support and communication pathways to help deliver that care in primary care.”

The five-year programme, involving NHSGGC, Marie Curie Cancer Care and the British Heart Foundation (BHF) Scotland, was launched last year.

Care plans are drawn up, with input from patients and their relatives, stating their choice of where they wish to be cared for, assessing their needs and to improve the co-ordination of multi-disciplinary teams involved in their care.

Each of the pilots is developing its own models of care, and Karen, who has been supporting the development of consultation models, explained: “One model won’t fit every site, and that’s important, because the work going on in each of the sites depends on local resources and expertise meeting the needs in these communities.

“But it is also important to have core components when the initiative is rolled out across NHSGGC and the UK.”

The plans contain information about patient preferences, along with heart failure and symptom management for both acute and primary care staff who are supporting the patient, with an emphasis on anticipatory care planning to cope with future health problems and resuscitation status.

Karen added: “Investing the time at this point brings benefits further down the line.

“People’s perception of palliative care is that it’s for people who are imminently dying, but it’s about management of the symptoms, giving patients some choice about how they would like to be cared for in what is going to be an inevitable circumstance in time.”

The ultimate aims are to improve access and co-ordination of palliative care services and increased support to families and carers.

After five years, the pilots will be independently evaluated and used to build recommendations for how care can be improved elsewhere in Scotland as well as the rest of the UK.

For more information on the training and education provided as part of Caring Together, please contact the Caring Together lead nurse, Yvonne Millerick, email: Yvonne.millerick@mariecurie.org.uk or tel: 0141 557 7554.

Further information on the Caring Together Programme can be found by visiting: www.mariecurie.org.uk/caringtogether
Mental health project has plenty to tweet about

A media project developed by staff to promote positive mental wellbeing messages through community reporters was shortlisted for a major national award.

“Mind Waves”, created by Trevor Lakey, below, health improvement and inequalities manager for Mental Health, Alcohol and Drugs, and his team, was pipped at the post for the UK 2012 Technology4Good top prize.

The awards highlight charities and social businesses for innovative use of IT and organisers praised “Mind Waves”, the first of its kind in Scotland, for its imaginative idea of recruiting community reporters and training them to use social networking, blogging, internet sites such as YouTube, and mainstream and the creative arts to get their information across.

Some of the volunteers have direct experience of services either personally or as carers or community volunteers.

Trevor said: “New media is growing exponentially and the skills that the volunteers have an opportunity to learn will become excellent life skills. We believe that social media offers real potential to help promote good mental health.

“Never has there been a better time to try to influence the way our communities view mental wellbeing through the stories and personal experiences of our community reporters.”

The scheme was drawn up by ourselves together with partners Outside the Box Development Support, GAMH and other organisations across the area.

UK trial on delicate health issue facing some older women

CONTINUENCE services manager Rona Agnew is leading a UK trial targeting Glasgow women who are reluctant to seek help for urinary incontinence.

And she hopes that once the results of the randomised controlled trials, based on Canadian and American studies, have been analysed, they will become part of standardised practice.

Rona said: “We know that the demographics of the population are changing. With this in mind, and with many older people known not to seek healthcare for this issue, this research was crucial in understanding how we could reach and deliver evidence-based health education to these women.

“There are problems of embarrassment and stigma and a belief that urine leakage, especially for women aged 60 plus, is a normal part of ageing. What we were able to show in the research is that this belief can be changed through providing evidence-based information interventions, such as pelvic floor exercises and distraction techniques, to support and promote continence, as opposed to managing urinary incontinence.”

Community workshops were organised via organisations such as Age UK, the Women’s Institute, and the University of the Third Age and they offered behavioural techniques and information about promoting continence and challenged how people think about the condition.

Rona added: “We need to break down some of the barriers people have around discussing bladder and bowel problems. A lot of colleagues believe that urinary incontinence is the new dementia of the 21st century.

“Where people were reluctant to talk about memory loss in fear of the stigma surrounding dementia, bladder and bowel problems now need the same exposure to break down some of the barriers and myths associated with this area of care.”

Rona’s UK work also led to her winning a prestigious American Geriatric Society 2012 Presidential Poster Award for her poster and presentation – “Comparative impact of continence promotion interventions targeting older women reluctant to seek care for urinary incontinence” – and being praised for her “outstanding work in research on aging” at an event this year in Seattle.

Rona said: “Receiving a Presidential Poster award is a real honour.”
Stroke service success is down to teamwork

Sharing knowledge and experience is bringing great benefits to patients

**WHEN** it comes to caring for patients who have suffered a stroke, teamwork is the name of the game.

The NHS in Scotland has a proud record of working effectively with stroke patients both when in hospital and in aftercare within the community.

SN decided to find out more about the first-rate stroke care services on offer in NHSGGC. We spoke with Gill Alexander, AHP stroke consultant, who explained how things have progressed over recent years.

"It’s no longer about just caring for their illness, but getting them back to good health to be able to live a fulfilling life. It’s a big team effort on everyone’s behalf to ensure that we all communicate and work collaboratively," Gail explained.

"The aftercare for someone who has suffered a stroke can involve numerous services throughout the organisation and we all pull together to put the patients’ needs first."

Multi-disciplinary teamworking has been going on within stroke care for some time now and it really has proved invaluable. All teams across the services work together, they all know what each person is doing and learn from each other. Each service works together "as a family" to provide the best care for patients.

Gill’s remit is vast, bringing together stroke services throughout Glasgow and Clyde, all the while constantly developing her own research, skills and knowledge in the field of stroke and neurology.

Gill also sits on national steering groups for ScOT (Stroke Competency Toolkit) and STARs5 (Stroke Training and Awareness Resources). She is also a trustee for Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland and a member of SSKIA (mental health and employment stroke groups) and the Scottish Vision and Stroke Network.

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Gill spoke passionately about her job: "My role is so diverse and I love that. It’s very fulfilling, especially when you can see the progress patients make when receiving treatment."

"One day I can be seeing patients in the morning and attending a research meeting or perhaps taking some training in the afternoon. "Patient care is constantly evolving and we need to ensure we stay at the forefront to make sure our patients are receiving the very best treatment."

**SCOTTISH STROKE ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS FORUM**

Gill Alexander has also been instrumental in setting up the Scottish Stroke Allied Health Professionals Forum (SSAHPF), which launched this summer.

As Chair of the forum, she explained its beginnings and aims: "While on a leadership course, I met with many AHPs who felt very isolated, particularly those working in rural areas."

"Between us, we thought it would be good to establish a forum specifically for colleagues working within stroke where we could all share good practices and learn from each other."

The main aim of the forum is to promote the “highest quality of rehabilitation for people with stroke”.

It is there to promote awareness of the essential role of AHPs in stroke; share and develop knowledge and expertise in stroke; promote education, training and best practice; promote, facilitate and disseminate stroke research; influence decision making on local and national policies and guidelines; and facilitate networking, support and mentorship for AHPs.

Membership is open to AHPs and AHP support workers with an interest in stroke and AHP students working or studying in Scotland.

Gill added: "Alongside our website, which is hosted by Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland, we plan to hold an annual May conference and AGM and will produce a newsletter twice a year."

"I’d like to thank the National Advisory Committee for Stroke for their support and to CHSS who have been instrumental in setting up the forum."

Apply for free membership by visiting: www.chss.org.uk/ssahp_forum
As if a marathon wasn’t enough!

IF bigger is better, then what is better than running a marathon? Jo Caisley has the answer: an “ultra marathon” takes endurance to a new level, with runners having to complete a 70-mile course.

Jo, an anaesthetic nurse at the Southern General Hospital, was undaunted by the challenge, and proudly wore the NHSGGC SN Champion T-shirt as she raised money for the Help for Heroes charity.

Known as ‘The Wall’, the course, from Carlisle Castle to Gateshead Millennium Bridge, is the UK’s most iconic ultra marathon.

Runners could opt to split the gruelling run over two days... but despite the rain and the wind, Jo buckled to nothing and accepted no favours, finishing in just a single day.

"It was a mixed terrain route incorporating roads, tracks, trails, fields, hills and a fair amount of mud and water,” explained Jo.

"It took a lot of pure grit and determination to keep going at times, when every bone and muscle in your body is screaming for rest, but I kept reminding myself why and for whom I had taken this challenge on, namely Help for Heroes."

Jo understands more than most of the important role the charity, Help for Heroes, plays in supporting members of the Armed Forces who have been wounded in the service of their country. She was formerly a member of the Territorial Army and has completed two six-month tours of Helmand Province in Afghanistan, where she nursed injured soldiers in the field hospital.

Jo explained: “Having worked with these inspirational people and seeing what good work charities such as Help for Heroes do to help these guys on the road to recovery, I thought I would like to do my bit for Help for Heroes and running this ultra marathon seemed to be a great way to do it.

“The course was challenging, both physically and mentally, however, at the same time, it was an enjoyable day. Good things come through grit and hard work and all things worthwhile have a cost.”

You can donate to Jo’s online charity page at: www.justgiving.com/Jo.Caisley

A smoking cessation sensation!

OUR smoking cessation teams didn’t miss any opportunity to spread the smoke-free message when they learned that Olympic football was coming to Glasgow.

They signed up a Glasgow girls football team with a sponsorship deal that would see our young ambassadors starring in an advert to be beamed worldwide during coverage of the Olympic football matches at Hampden.

Public health pharmacist Liz Grant explained: “The girls are all under 17 and none smoke. They are great ambassadors for smoke-free healthy living."

Club organiser Jim Strathdee said: “We are delighted to be part of the Olympic Football games in this way. The girls have amazing skills and to be able to showcase their talent like this is brilliant.”

The Glasgow Girls Football Club is looking for players for under 9s, 11s, 13s, 15s, and 17s, and the women’s team. Find out more at: www.glasgowgirlscarlisle.com

You’re never too old to become a sporting internationalist

NOT many people get the chance to represent their country at an international sporting event when they are in their 60s... but NHSGGC principal pharmacist for production Graham Conkie did just that.

He’s just returned from the World Grand Masters Association (WGMA) hockey tournament for the over 60s in Bra, Italy.

Unfortunately, the team didn’t make it to the final; however, it was very encouraging to see the Scotland team close the gap with some of the big hockey nations such as Germany and England.

Graham said: “It really was a most enjoyable tournament. It shows that even at an older age, sport can be played at a fairly high level."

“Hopefully, it will encourage other elder sportspeople that they can continue to play even to a grand old age. "It was a real honour to represent my country at this prestigious tournament.”

Graham expressed his thanks to Glasgow Life/Glasgow Sport for their sponsorship.