Opinions have been flowing in on NHS Greater Glasgow's smoking consultation, which is scheduled to come to a close on May 30.

Staff have been viewing the draft policy (which is available online at www.nhsgg.org.uk) and feeding back their views which have ranged from the desire to ban smoking completely on NHSGG property, to the need for areas for patients who still wish to smoke.

Since the consultation was launched on March 22, the views have been collected at Dalian House and will be evaluated after the closing date on May 30.

Following this, the Corporate Management Team will study staff and public feedback before going back to the Board with a revised version of the draft policy.

And those who haven’t already seen the draft policy that’s out for consultation, or filled in the response form, can check out www.nhsgg.org.uk/smoking or request a printed version of the material from Smoking Concerns on 0141 201 9825 in advance of the closing date.

It's hoped that NHSGG's final smoking policy will be in place across the health service later this year.
Glasgow’s new equipment sterilisation centre leads Europe

Europe’s largest, most advanced centre for the cleaning of hospital surgical and medical instrumentation will be opening in Glasgow later this year. Glasgow’s hospitals use approx. 12 million re-usable instruments annually, ranging from single surgical instruments and complex theatre sets, to various items of medical equipment. All of this instrumentation has to be collected, decontaminated, tested, repackaged, sterilised and returned to hospital staff quickly to ensure that thousands of patients can be treated each and every day.

The new £9m, 40,000 sq. ft centre, based in Cowcailrs Industrial Estate, Springburn, will open in July 2005 with existing decontamination facilities in each acute hospital transferring on a phased basis over the following 17 months.

Boasting a wide range of unique decontamination and sterilisation equipment designed specifically for the new unit, the facility is one of the most advanced and environmentally friendly of its type in Britain. The £9million project has already won national awards and the methodology developed has been shared with the NHS Scotland Property and Development Forum with a view to benefiting other hospitals.

Jonathan Best, Chief Executive of Yorkhill and Project Lead for the Pan Glasgow Decontamination Centre, said: “This a great success story for Glasgow, bringing together people from all backgrounds to create an unparalleled sterilisation service for our hospitals. “Our existing sterilisation units have served us very well over the years, however the NHS has been given strict new standards for the decontamination of hospital instrumentation that none of our existing units can meet. The result is a centralised state-of-the-art unit with which Glasgow can lead the way for others to follow.”

Stobhill will be the first to transfer its services followed by The Royal Hospital for Sick Children, the Victoria Infirmary, Gartnavel General, Glasgow Royal Infirmary and finally the Southern General. It is anticipated that the transfers will be completed by December 2006.

Mark Lavery, Head of Sterile Services, said the layout and sophistication of the new unit will play an essential part in combating hospital acquired infection. He said: “The equipment we have here enables us to track instrumentation through the decontamination process and record the patient history of specific instruments. This enables speedy identification of which instrumentation was used on individual patients in any of our hospitals. Alex Graham NHS Greater Glasgow Property and Planning Manager has never known a project of this size and complexity to be completed in such a short timescale. He said: “I have worked in NHS Estates project management for over 30 years and this undertaking has basically re-written the rules of what can be achieved with the application, dedication and commitment of our own people. The unit has been designed on a stand-alone basis with its own filtered water supply, a dual fuel boiler, clean steam raising plant and an emergency generator. “In terms of the NHS in Glasgow, there has never been such a project which has harnessed the expertise of so many people from different disciplines, including staff from microbiology, supplies, HR, IT, transport, TSSU, Health & Safety, Quality control staff and many more.”

David Shaw is the Estates Operations Manager behind the new Central Decontamination Unit. It’s David’s job to ensure the new facility is up and running to timescale and that hospital decontamination services are transferred seamlessly. David said: “I’ve worked in the NHS for 17 years and have never seen a project of this complexity before. My previous role was in the Royal Infirmary where I was the Chief Engineer and jumped at the chance to apply for this new position. “To give you an idea of the uniqueness of this project, when you plan to build a new hospital, around 30-40% of the total cost is based on services such as electricity, steam, water, gas etc. Due to the amount of hi-tech equipment, as well as the strict hygiene control protocols, the services costs for our new decontamination centre will be around 60-70% of the total cost…it really is leading edge technologies and practice. “It’s been a real benchmark project for NHS Greater Glasgow, bringing together people not only from a variety of different backgrounds, from IT to Microbiology, but from all of the city’s former NHS Divisions. The results of the project team’s work speaks for itself.”
We’ve got the X-Factor!

Four NHSGG members of staff have definitely got the X-Factor and that’s official!

Dietician Tomoyo Fujiwara and Business Manager Viktoria McGuinness from the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Naeem Akhtar, Consultant Urologist at the Southern General and Alia Gilani, Primary Support Pharmacist, Gartnavel Royal have been selected as some of the new faces of Scotland’s NHS.

Last year the Scottish Executive kicked off a nationwide search to find 20 faces of the health service who would represent the cultural diversity that we have across our NHS.

They were inundated with applicants and, after Staff News made a plea for NHSGG staff to enter, our fair city was well represented.

The lucky 20 will now star in a national ad campaign and posters featuring them are already appearing throughout the city’s healthcare settings.

The successful Glasgow four recently joined the other ‘faces’ from across Scotland for a professional photo shoot – and thoroughly enjoyed their moment in the limelight!

“I had never been involved in a photoshoot like that before,” said Viktoria McGuinness, who originally comes from Russia. “It was a completely unique experience but very relaxed and good fun! On a more serious note, it’s great to see a range of people from different backgrounds being featured in this way.”

“It’s great to see NHS Greater Glasgow so well represented,” said NHS Greater Glasgow Chief Executive Tom Divers. “This is an excellent way to show the range of cultural diversity that exists with NHS Scotland and I am delighted that NHS Greater Glasgow has been able to play such a prominent role.”

Make sure to look out for the posters at a noticeboard near you…

Staff in the Limelight

IN BRIEF

HELP RAISE MONEY DOING THE BACK STROKE!

Do you enjoy a swim in your local swimming pool? How about turning that enjoyment into fundraising for a worthwhile cause!

ENABLE is having a Swimathon week in the Greater Glasgow area between June 19th and 25th and are hoping as many people as possible will take part.

All funds raised from the challenge will be used to enhance the lives of children and adults with learning disabilities throughout Scotland.

If you are interested in taking part or would like more information contact Kevin Thomas on 0141 225 1643.

NEW GOLDENHILL CENTRE OPENS ITS DOORS

Colleagues and service users got together recently to officially launch the new purpose built £1.3 million Goldenhill Resource Centre.

The Centre – which provides community based mental health services in Clydebank and surrounding areas – was officially launched by Vice Chairman of NHS Greater Glasgow, Andrew Robertson, on April 19.

The brand new building on Dumbarton Road provides much improved accommodation including more group and interview rooms for patients and the multidisciplinary team, which includes nursing, medical, psychology, occupational therapy and social work staff.
The Endoscope

In case, dear readers, you haven’t noticed it, there’s a general election going on. The Endoscope therefore feels obliged to offer some perspective on the brawling and verbal belching of the various candidates as they relentlessly disturb our TV schedules and generate thousands of extra pages between the TV and sports pages of our newspapers.

Choose after-life

Searching through our news archives, we came across this story about a dead MP who finds himself at the pearly gates. “Welcome to Heaven”, says St Peter, “We don’t often see your type here and we’re not sure what to do with you.”

The MP replies: “That’s easy, just let me in.”

“Not so simple”, replies the haloed one, “The orders from higher up are that you must spend one day in Hell and then another in Heaven and only after that can you decide where to spend eternity.”

So, the MP goes to Hell. Much to his surprise, he finds himself in a vast golf course, where he meets all his old friends and the politicians who’ve worked with him, including several Health Ministers. They reminisce about old times, have a great game of golf and finally dine on lobster, caviar and fine wines.

The next day, the MP goes to Heaven. As he expects, he moves from cloud to cloud playing a harp: it’s rather boring.

Afterwards, St Peter asks, “Well, what’s your choice?” The MP reflects for a minute and replies, “Well, to be honest I think I’d be better off in Hell.” And so, off he goes.

On returning down below, he is shocked to find himself roasting in a veritable inferno. “I don’t understand,” the MP quavers, “it was all so wonderful the day before yesterday”.

Satan replies, “We were campaigning then. Today you voted for us!”

The vision thing

Having spent so much time peering around the dank nether regions of the NHS, The Endoscope has become convinced that the only way to save it is to form a political party and stand for election. This is our manifesto:

To avoid more tedious arguments about hospital locations, all Greater Glasgow hospitals will be closed down. The SS Tuxedo Princess will be reclaimed from the Clyde and refitted as an adult inpatient/sick kids/maternity hospital. On Mondays it will berth on the north bank of the river, on Tuesdays the south bank, on Wednesdays the east end and Thursdays the west end. On Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays it will be available for weddings, discos and birthday parties, thereby cutting the journey time to A & E for the majority of attendees by 99.9%.

The Ikea superstore will be re-designated as an inpatient hospital. This is because if you encounter another beds shortage, you just have to go down to the warehouse and assemble a few more.

And you can get a nice sofa too.

The scandal of Scottish Executive Health Department circulars will be ended. They are clearly ‘rectangulars’ and that is what they will be called.

GPs will be paid on the basis of the square yardage of patients treated rather than numbers – greater attention will therefore be focused on the problem of obesity.

Golf courses will be re-designated as ‘Outpatient Departments’. In this way, patients can be sure they will see their consultant.

Health journalists will be required to submit their work to the Booker Prize Committee along with all the other creative fiction.

Put your X here

Finally, this is your chance to demonstrate what a shrewd judge of political character you are. Check out the candidates below and exert your democratic will accordingly. Then peek at their names to see if you made a wise choice. Mind how you vote!

Candidate A – Used Class A drugs as a university student. Has been thrown out of office twice. Sleeps till noon every day and drinks a bottle of whisky each night.

Candidate B – Linked with crooked politicians. Has had two mistresses and consults an astrologer. Drinks a bottle of Martini every day.

Candidate C – A decorated war hero. A non-smoking tee-total vegetarian who has shown absolute fidelity to his wife.

Who did you vote for?

A – Winston Churchill
B – Franklin D. Roosevelt
C – Adolf Hitler
Amazing response to Staff News Special Olympics plea

Following an appeal in the last edition of Staff News, more than 60 busy NHS Greater Glasgow staff have volunteered to give up their time to help at this summer’s Special Olympics.

Fifty nurses and 18 doctors have come forward – some with a background in A&E or sports medicine and some without. However even those who don’t, can still help out with administration and offer advice on health-related issues.

The event – which is being held between July 2 and 8 - is being organised by the Special Olympics Great Britain Team, Glasgow City Council and NHS Greater Glasgow.

Special Olympics Great Britain is a volunteer-run organisation that provides sporting opportunities for people with learning disabilities and focuses uniquely on providing equality for all athletes regardless of their level of ability or degree of disability.

The organisation’s mission is “to give athletes with learning disabilities continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.”

Over the eight days, athletes will compete at 15 venues in and around Glasgow. These include Scotstoun Leisure Centre, Kelvin Hall and Strathclyde Park.

Alan Dorn, NHS Greater Glasgow’s Emergency Planning Officer, who is part of the team helping to organise the Games said: “We’re absolutely delighted with the response from NHS Greater Glasgow staff – these are all hard working busy professionals and for them to give up their free time is very much appreciated.

“This is the seventh national games and we are expecting around 2,500 participants to be involved. “Our message to people is that no matter what background you have, everyone with any medical experience will be of great use to us. The more volunteers we have helping out the better.”

Anyone interested in volunteering can contact Alan Dorn on 0141 201 4554 or Tracy Curtis on 0141 201 4553.

NHS GEARS UP FOR NEW NATIONAL STAFF DATABASE

NHS Greater Glasgow’s HR teams are working with their national counterparts to develop NHS Scotland’s first nationwide staff database.

The Scottish Workforce Information Standard System (SWISS) project - known as E-you – will hold all necessary information about NHS Scotland staff.

At the moment there are a variety of different Human Resources (HR) systems in use across NHS Scotland. In fact in some areas there are no HR systems in use at all! This means that collecting and analysing workforce information is a time-consuming task that is occasionally prone to inaccuracies.

The new Eyou database is therefore vital in the drive to inform and improve the planning and delivery of NHS care across the country.

A national project board has been set up to see this work through with representation from the NHS, including a full time Trade Union Official, and the Scottish Executive Health Department.

Given the scale of the project it will take some years to be fully implemented, but key milestones have been identified and will begin to be met as early as May this year when you will be asked to complete a vital questionnaire.

The questionnaire will be issued with your payslip at the end of May and will ask some detailed personal questions in line with equal opportunity legislation. However for particularly sensitive issues you will have the opportunity to decline to comment.

Staff News will keep you updated on the project as it develops.

If you have any questions please email Caroline Hutchinson, the SWISS Project Lead, at caroline.hutchinson@nhs.net
The eagle-eyed amongst you may have noticed some new boards that have been erected around the site of Stobhill and Victoria. The signs were put up at the turn of the year to mark not only the location of the hospitals but also a first step in the major building projects that will begin next year.

And as work continues to reach financial close, the project team has been liaising with architects to draw up designs for the new hospitals. These first images of Stobhill show how bright and spacious the new hospital will be. When completed in 2008, the hospital will cover four floors and an area the size of 30,000 square metres.

Detailed designs are also currently being finalised for the new Victoria Hospital; these latest images show clearly - for the first time - the size of the new hospital. Again, the hospital will cover over 30,000 square metres.
square metres and will be built over three floors.

The current designs for each hospital include an atrium stretching from the ground floor to the ceiling, giving an open airy feel to the building. Also planned are well-equipped treatment areas and state-of-the-art theatres and therapy areas, making the new hospitals the finest facilities for outpatient and day case treatment in Scotland.

Alex McIntyre, Project Manager for the new Hospitals, said: “These images provide the first opportunity to see how the new hospitals might look from the inside as well as the outside. They also begin to show the scale of the hospitals – a similar footprint to five full sized football pitches.

“The designs are likely to be further modified, as we continue to work with our architects to refine our plans. As and when the final designs are agreed we will ensure that these are covered in Staff News.”

The spacious atrium that forms the heart of the new Stobhill Hospital

How it will look: the new Stobhill Hospital
Thanks to NHS Greater Glasgow paying an annual membership to Glasgow City Council, all staff can take advantage of a reduced membership rate of £20 per month for the Glasgow Club.

Giving access to all local authority sport and leisure facilities in Glasgow, including swimming, gym and fitness classes – there’s no excuse for being lazy this spring. NHS Greater Glasgow staff are entitled to Glasgow Club membership for 12 months with one extra month included. All we need to do is sign a salary mandate form and the money is deducted on a monthly basis from our salary at a rate of £20 per month for a period of 13 months.

If you are interested in joining this scheme download an application form from http://www.nhsogg.org.uk/content/default.asp?page=s11_7_2 and return to:

Alex Dawson
Corporate Reporting Officer
Finance Department
Greater Glasgow NHS Board
Dalian House
350 St Vincent Street
Glasgow G3 8YY
Email: Alex.Dawson@gghb.scot.nhs.uk

Get a spring in your step

The process of moving 33,000 NHSGG staff from Whitley Council to Agenda for Change terms and conditions moves on relentlessly.

Staff involved in the initial step of the process – job matching and evaluation – report that they are making real headway, despite some sluggishness in submission of up to date job descriptions.

Paul Watt, management partner on job matching and evaluation, said: “Volunteers on our panels tell us that the procedures we have in place are working well and they’re encountering no real problems. A lot of preparatory work was undertaken and it does seem to be paying off.

“My main concern is that we are still not getting the throughput of completed job descriptions we’d anticipated. There may be a number of reasons for this, including simple administrative delay, and we have no illusions about the scale of the task.

“I heard rumours that staff are nervous about signing off revamped job descriptions. All I can say is that, of course if you are concerned the job description is not accurate, you should speak to your line manager, local HR team or staff representative. But as soon as you are ready, please sign it off and make sure it is submitted into the Agenda for Change process – any unnecessary delay may have a knock on effect on the timing of your actual assimilation onto the new terms and conditions.”

Agenda for Change - UPDATE

The medical equipment service is there for you

The Community Care medical equipment team based at the Southern General is expanding its work and encouraging more GP practices and health centres in the area to use the valuable service.

The team – led by Technical manager John Henderson – covers the testing of equipment ranging from ventilators in patients’ homes to defibrillators in health centres and GP practices.

John Henderson explained: “We want to encourage more people to use us because we are affordable, have high standards and solid accreditation, we have rigorous test procedures and protocols for the health service, and are NHS employees (not a private company) so there’s a sense of loyalty as well as comeback for users.”

The Technical Manager added that the service has:

- A database that records what medical items have been tested and when the next tests will be due;
- Appointments that are arranged one month prior to testing;
- Rapid response times;
- British Standard accreditation;
- Additional reliable pointers for the purchasing of new equipment.

So to find out what the team can do for you in the NHS, call 0141 201 1895 or email john.henderson@sgh.scot.nhs.uk.
State-of-the-art unit for critically ill children

As part of an unprecedented level of investment for modernising healthcare facilities in Glasgow, a new £6 million (£1 million charitable donation from Magic Million) state-of-the-art Intensive Care and High Dependency Unit will open its doors at the beginning of May.

The new unit at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children will demonstrate the very latest in technology, clinical training and parent accommodation, replacing the existing facilities at the hospital.

Professor Sir John Arbuthnott, Chairman of NHS Greater Glasgow, is delighted with the new facilities and the investment by NHS Greater Glasgow to ensure critically ill children from all over Scotland receive the best possible care.

He said: “NHS Greater Glasgow is investing more than £750 million on healthcare facilities in Glasgow over the next decade and this improvement in services for critically ill children is part of our drive to modernise services for patients from Glasgow and beyond.

“The new unit will provide care for children with a wide range of life threatening conditions including heart disorders, cancer and meningitis.”

NHS Greater Glasgow’s Jonathan Best, Chief Executive of the Yorkhill Division, praised everyone involved in the project saying: “By bringing Intensive Care Unit and High Dependency Unit together in a modern, bright purpose built department, co-ordination of patient care will be improved along with the potential to reduce cancellations of elective surgery and inappropriate use of ICU beds.

“Everyone who was involved in helping us to make this a reality should be very proud of this fine achievement.

“We have been very conscious of the need to focus not only on the clinical and technical aspects of each new build with our staff, but also take into account the views of former patients and their families.”

Sister Edith Gracie from the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit said: “Our new unit replaces the existing facilities that have served us well for the past 20 years.

“The difference between the old and new units is night and day, and will bring improvements not only to the level of care, privacy and comfort we can offer patients and their families, but provides us with dedicated staff areas including specific clinical training rooms and dedicated labs.”

With 14 paediatric intensive care beds and six high dependency beds (with a potential to increase to 10 high dependency beds) the new unit will provide a seamless critical care department with ready access to all of the staff and facilities our young patients require.

More than £1 million of the project was contributed by Yorkhill Children’s Foundation. Donations and gifts-in-kind came from all over Scotland thanks to the ‘Magic Million’ campaign launched by Glasgow newspaper The Evening Times. The massive fundraising drive has provided the unit not only with the latest clinical information system, but a wide range of modern soft furnishings and comforts for families who have to stay close to their sick children.
From the Southern to the Himalayas – it’s all in a week’s work for Carol Parkin!
The ambitious Southern General theatre nurse has an ongoing drive to raise money for autism, and in a year’s time (April 2006) she will be undertaking the Everest Base Camp Challenge - with a total sponsorship aim of £10,000.
Carol told Staff News: “I’ll be doing the Everest Base Camp Challenge to raise funds for The Scottish Society for Autism. The trek will begin at Lukla, which is situated high in the Nepalese Himalayas at an altitude of 9,350 feet, before finally reaching the highest point of 18,448 feet at the summit of Kalapathar.”
Carol added: “Not only will the challenge let me fulfil a lifetime dream, but it will also raise vital funds for a fantastic and worthwhile cause.”
And this isn’t the only thing Carol has taken on for Autism Scotland. The theatre nurse went on: “If I do manage to reach my £10,000 Everest target, it will take the total I’ve raised for the charity to £25,000 over five years. “So far I’ve done fun sponsorship work like abseils, zip wires, SCAD diving, a 10,000 feet freefall parachute jump and a 500km cycle in China. It has been exhilarating!”
Carol added: “I really hope I can make the Everest Base Camp Challenge target by next April, as the Scottish Society for Autism is working to build a great new centre for children, adults and their families.
“Autism is a lifelong condition that makes the world a very confusing place and makes people feel very isolated and unable to communicate with others. To know you can help those affected in some way is a great feeling, so I hope my colleagues across NHSGG will show their support and we can make the target by April 2006.”
Any member of staff who wishes to donate to Carol’s Everest trek and play a part in achieving the cash target, can visit Carol’s previous charity challenges included reaching higher heights in an exciting skydive.

Dedicated staff reap awards

The efforts of dedicated NHSGG staff were recognised earlier this year at the 2005 Health Council and Lay Advisers Awards ceremony.
Greater Glasgow Health Council received 531 nominations from people who wanted to praise staff they felt had worked above and beyond the call of duty – the highest number of nominations since the awards began in 1992.
The finalists who received the coveted award certificates and cheques were:
- Paul McNeill - Dentist in Castlemilk West of Scotland Mobility and Rehabilitation Centre, Prosthetic Service (based at the Southern General); National Centre for Training and Education in Prosthetics and Orthotics (based at the Southern General)
- Dr Douglas Wilcox, Honorary Consultant in Medical Genetics for Yorkhill Accident and Emergency Department at the Victoria Infirmary Gastro-Intestinal Centre, Southern General
- Elizabeth Roddick – Pharmacist in Cathcart
- Allison Smith - Lung Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist, Gartnavel General Arndale/Riverside Intensive Community Treatment (mental health services)

Easterhouse Health Centre
The North Avenue GP Surgery in Cambuslang Centre for Rheumatic Diseases, Glasgow Royal Infirmary
Level 8 Orthopaedics team at the Western Infirmary

Although the Health Council has now ceased to exist in Glasgow, it’s hoped that the popular annual awards will be carried on in years to come – so watch this space...
UK STAFF DIRECTORY TO INCLUDE NHSGG

A contract signed recently by the Scottish Executive Health Department means that all NHS staff in Greater Glasgow will feature in a national electronic directory. The National Directory Project is to be used as a single point of access for accurate and up to date information about staff in every NHS organisation in the UK. Its purpose is to allow authorised personnel to track down information about individual staff – including name, organisation, job title and contact details – and to browse through the workforce of any given organisation. A project team is being set up to collate and input the details of NHSGG staff to the directory in the coming months. Further information about the directory can be obtained by logging on to www.nhsgg.org.uk/ds or by calling 0141 201 1662.

CUT OUT AND KEEP GUIDE TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Anyone can be asked under the new FoI (Scotland) Act for information they hold ....

So what do you do if a request comes directly to you?

Here’s a simple step-by-step for NHSGG staff.

Most requests will come directly to one of five designated FoI Contacts.

Some will come in from journalists directly to the NHS Press Office.

But others will come directly to clinicians, nurses, managers, other staff or non-executives. The legislation sets out clearly how requests have to be dealt with and in what timescale.

The Act is intricate and interpretation can be complex. Advice is available in dealing with any request that comes to you.

Steps:

- Retain the receipted copy of the request which must be in writing or other permanent form (normally letter or e-mail).
- Alert your local FoI Contact (listed below) and if from the media also alert the NHS Communications Office.
- Follow advice received from the FoI Contact on who should respond to the request.
- Keep involved/informed as the response is prepared and understand why information is being given or withheld.

The clock starts ticking immediately it is received – there’s 20 working days to provide information to so take action early. This period cannot be extended.

The FoI Contact will assist in the process. They will advise on any barriers to giving out the information … it may even already be available in our Publication Scheme - www.nhsgg.org.uk/foi. It’s crucial individuals do not attempt to deal with such requests themselves if they have not been fully trained in the requirements of the Act – and the protocols surrounding response times and appeals processes.

Always there to help and provide advice are:

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www.justgiving.com/everest2006. This is classed as a secure server where people can quickly and easily donate online. Alternatively, to find out about posting a cheque to Autism Scotland, contact Carol directly by calling the Southern General theatre number on 0141 201 1662.

Carol braves the great wall of china to boost vital funds for autism
From east to west

In the first of a new series Staff News will be interviewing some NHS GG staff who’ve come to work with us from overseas. In this edition we meet Majid Sohrabi, Staff Nurse in Renal Dialysis at the Western Infirmary, who is from Tehran, Iran.

SN: Majid what made you leave Iran to come to Scotland?

Majid: I qualified in Iran and worked in Tehran for four years as a nurse in renal dialysis and a related discipline, nephrology. After that I left nursing for a while to do other things and one of the jobs I had during that time brought me regularly to Edinburgh. After a while I realised two things; I wanted to return to nursing and I wanted to do that in Scotland. The process for achieving that ambition wasn’t easy I have to say. Although I was a qualified nurse I wasn’t registered here so I couldn’t practice until I had passed the adaptation course. You can only do the adaptation course if you live in the country. Getting through those months was difficult. You have to rely on friends, get used to life in another country and also pass an exam to prove that your English is fluent enough to allow you to do your job properly.

SN: What was the hardest part of the process for you?

Majid: I think the hardest thing was that I had to work as an enrolled nurse for six months. When you consider I was a Head Nurse in Nephrology in a hospital in one of Iran’s major cities it was very frustrating to find myself in that position. My confidence really suffered. It was the time in the whole process when I wondered if I’d done the right thing.

SN: So what made you persevere?

Majid: The patients. They’ll always decide whom they trust. In the end that’s what gave me my confidence back. Their faith in me gave me enough faith in myself to see me through.

SN: What are the differences between nursing in Tehran and Glasgow?

Majid: Well, the circumstances in Iran after the war were very different from here. There was a real lack of doctors so nursing duties were expanded to help cover - blood transfusions, most things to do with IVs, all sorts of work that would require far greater legislation here were a regular part of my job. Working in a hospital post-war you do what you need to – not because there are no rules, but because they’re not the same. That’s the biggest difference; the rules and regulations in Scotland that govern how you work. While I found that difficult at first, I’m convinced of the need for it now that I’ve had time to work that way. It protects us as nurses as well as the patients.

SN: What could NHS Greater Glasgow do to improve the process for overseas practitioners coming into the system?

Majid: When I first got a job – and admittedly this was in London, but I expect it’s the same everywhere - we had an induction course, but it was for everyone at the same time. Those of us new to the country had the same orientation as all the other new staff. While I can understand there are reasons for this, it was too much to take in. People who are British have not only been trained for the National Health Service, but have grown up with it as part of their lives. There are assumptions made about things that are understood because they’re part of the culture. It would be helpful to overseas staff to have a separate induction taking that into account. Also, it would be really useful to inform staff who are going to be working with those of us from overseas so that they know what to expect in regard to differences in culture and practice so that we all understand one another better.

SN: Now you’ve been here for a while how do you feel about things?

Majid: You know, we’ve talked about differences, but I don’t feel like a foreigner. As a dialysis nurse you have the same patients over a length of time and you get to know each other. When the earthquake happened in Iran, patients were asking me “What about your family? Are they okay?” They were concerned for someone they knew and wanted to be supportive. That’s why I wanted to live and work here in Glasgow.

Staff News

Written by staff for staff with the full support of the Partnership Forum.

If you’d like to send an article, letter photograph or comment to us Send them via our email address: staffnews@nhsgg.org.uk Send them to: Olivia Cornacchia, Staff News, NHS Greater Glasgow, Dalian House, 350 St Vincent Street, Glasgow G3 8YZ.