Annual Report
2017/2018

What Matters to you? ...........

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www.whatmatterstoyou.scot
Ask what matters, listen to what matters, do what matters

A summary of highlights and developments in 2017/2018
Overview

I joined NHS Forth Valley in January 2018 and, although I have only been here a relatively short time, I am already hugely impressed with the enthusiasm, commitment and hard work of staff across the organisation.

From the outset I have been listening, learning and discussing how we can best work together to improve the health of people in Forth Valley and seeking the views of staff to help shape our priorities for the future. This feedback is particularly important as we seek to make the changes necessary to meet the current and future health needs of our local population. I therefore want to look at how we can value, support and empower staff to drive forward change, make better use of information to guide our decisions and use technology to support integration, improve health and drive innovation.

Over the last few months I have seen many examples of good practice, witnessed excellent care and met many highly motivated staff who are committed to doing their very best for patients. The dedication and expertise of local staff was recognised throughout the year with a number of key awards, some of which you can read about in this summary report. We have also sought to highlight the important contribution made by local volunteers, charities and businesses who have helped raise funds for local services during 2017/18. This support was particularly appreciated during the spell of severe weather at the end of February 2018 when we were inundated with offers of assistance. I would like to thank everyone who helped transport our staff and patients during this very challenging period and to pay tribute to our staff who went above and beyond to help maintain vital services.

This report includes examples of some of the key activity and performance information for the year and, while there are several areas where we continue to do well, there are others where our performance is not where we would want it to be. Work is underway to reduce waiting times in a number of key areas and this is important as behind these numbers and targets are local people and patients who are waiting for treatment.

At the first of many staff events I had an opportunity to discuss some of the ideas and potential solutions to help increase capacity. Further staff engagement events are planned over the coming months to discuss future plans, give local staff an opportunity to ask questions and enable me to hear firsthand about the experiences of staff across the organisation. A review is also underway to explore how we can make the best use of our existing healthcare facilities and take advantage of new developments such as the Stirling Health and Care Village.

We will continue to work closely with NHS colleagues from across the West of Scotland to look at how we can deliver services across traditional Health Board boundaries, making best use of existing staff skills, resources and capacity. Joining up local health and social care services remains a key priority and there are plans to support further integration over the next 6 to 12 months.

Collectively these developments will help us to think differently, act differently and deliver real improvements with certainty and pace.

Chief Executive
NHS Forth Valley
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number of Staff</th>
<th>Population Served</th>
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<tr>
<td>6,342</td>
<td>305,580</td>
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<table>
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<th>Budget</th>
<th>3,099 babies delivered</th>
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| 3,500 patient meals prepared every day |

| 283,780 outpatient attendances |

| 82,159 attendances at Emergency Department and Minor Injuries Unit |

| 1.7m contacts with local GPs |

| 800,000 contacts with local practice nurses |

| 280,000 samples tested in our microbiology department (70% of patient diagnoses are directly due to laboratory test results) |

| 152,007 scans carried out (including ultrasound, CT & MRI) |
New Initiatives & Service Developments

Pharmacy First

Under the Pharmacy First scheme, local pharmacies across Forth Valley already provide free treatment for urinary tract infections and impetigo without the need for a prescription. In May 2017 the scheme was extended to cover a range of additional common health conditions. These include bacterial conjunctivitis, vaginal thrush, skin conditions such as eczema and contact dermatitis and skin infections including cellulitis, insect bites and nail infections.

All 76 Forth Valley pharmacies participate in the Pharmacy First scheme which aims to make better use of the skills of local pharmacists, increase access to treatment and reduce pressure on GP practices.

Creating Capacity to Care

During the year several departments, including arthroplasty, orthodontics, urology and dental, took up the Creating Capacity to Care challenge, a new initiative designed to help release valuable appointment time and free up inpatient beds. Instead of automatically being asked to attend a follow-up outpatient appointment, certain patients were offered a telephone consultation. Face-to-face appointments were scheduled for patients who felt they needed one, but for those who were well, it saved a journey to hospital and helped free up clinic time. Patients with kidney stones were advised to attend for an X-ray within a two-week time frame. The images were then viewed and only those who needed further treatment were given a hospital appointment. These changes helped ensure that a target to save 10,000 face-to-face outpatient appointments by March 2018 was met two months early.

Specialist Mental Health Support for Women

Hope House, a specialist six bedded mental health facility for women, opened on the Bellsdyke Hospital site in August 2017. The Unit provides treatment and rehabilitation for women with more complex mental health care needs who require greater levels of support and supervision. Patients are allocated their own bedrooms and Hope House provides a ‘home-style’ model where staff and patients prepare, cook and eat meals together. Therapy and group activities are scheduled regularly and daily meetings between patients and staff are held to allocate tasks and discuss appointments and activities. The new facility means that women, who were previously transferred to specialist mental health facilities in other parts of the country, can now receive care and support closer to home.
New Initiatives & Service Developments

Asking the Right Questions

Hundreds of patients across Forth Valley were sent postcards with their outpatient appointment letters encouraging them to ask questions about their care and treatment. These included asking whether the treatment or procedure was really needed, what the potential risks, benefits and side effects are and whether there were simpler, safer or alternative treatment options. Based on an initiative developed by NHS England, the questions also ask patients to consider what would happen if they did nothing. Five key questions were adapted for use locally by NHS Forth Valley’s Medical Director Andrew Murray and these are also displayed on TV screens in Forth Valley Royal Hospital to remind people waiting to be seen in outpatient clinics.

Breastfeeding Welcome

Hospitals and health centres across Forth Valley introduced new Breastfeeding Welcome window stickers and posters to let mums know that breastfeeding is welcome at local healthcare facilities. A logo was created to support the new scheme which was developed in partnership with a range of groups and organisations. These included local breastfeeding groups, Central Scotland Racial Equality Council and women’s groups from both BME and deaf communities. The maternity service at Forth Valley Royal Hospital already has UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) accreditation and staff were keen to identify new ways to encourage women to breastfeed if they wish.

Maternity Goes Digital

A new electronic system, known as Badgernet, was introduced in August 2017 to enable pregnant women across Forth Valley to access a summary of their maternity notes through their PC, tablet or mobile phone. The secure system also means women no longer have to carry hard copies of their notes, are able to complete their birthplan online and have access to a wide range of health advice. In addition, they can add information to their own health record which can be reviewed and discussed at their next midwifery appointment. Women without internet access can also be provided with summary notes of their electronic maternity record, if requested.
New Initiatives & Service Developments

Screening Success

Nearly 6,000 women across Forth Valley were invited by Health Promotion staff to attend pop-up clinics for cervical screening. The scheme proved extremely successful, with some women turning up for appointments who hadn’t had a smear test for more than 30 years. The women received eye-catching pink tartan invitations which were posted out in bright pink envelopes. The clinics, which ran until the end of March 2018, were held in quiet and relaxed surroundings and women were advised they could bring a friend along to support them. The smear test saves around 5,000 lives every year in the UK and prevents eight out of ten cervical cancers from developing.

Better After Bowel Surgery

Results unveiled in November 2017 showed that NHS Forth Valley consistently leads the way in a national programme to improve the recovery of patients undergoing bowel surgery. The special programme speeds up recovery and cuts the time spent in hospital from several weeks to several days. As well as undergoing a detailed pre-op assessment, patients attend a special preparation ‘boot camp’ which gives them the chance to meet with other patients and discuss with staff what will happen before, during and after their operation. The results are particularly encouraging for patients undergoing keyhole surgery for conditions such as bowel cancer, inflammatory bowel conditions such as Crohns, Colitis and diverticular disease. Patients also receive a direct number for the on-call surgeon who they can contact if they have any concerns or problems after they have been discharged from hospital.

Supporting Local GP Practices

In February 2018 NHS Forth Valley announced that it would take over responsibility for managing Dr Stirling & Partners Medical Practice in Clackmannanshire Community Healthcare Centre following confirmation that all of the GPs intended to leave or retire. Since then a number of new GPs and nurses have been recruited or redeployed from other areas of the Health Board to provide additional support. This has ensured that the Practice, which has been renamed Hallpark Medical Practice, remains open and continues to provide services to the local community.

Work also began to identify how Primary Care Out-of-Hours services can best be delivered across NHS Forth Valley in the future with the support of wider multi-disciplinary teams. Feedback was gathered from local service users and carers which showed a strong preference for care being delivered by wider multi-disciplinary teams. There are now plans to recruit a number of Advanced Nurse Practitioners, pharmacy staff and mental health nurses to support a number of local GP practices and Primary Care Out-of-Hours services.
New Initiatives & Service Developments

Care Village Milestones

Two topping out events were held to highlight progress with the construction of the new Stirling Health and Care Village. The first saw the final solar panels slotted into place on the roof of the new GP and Minor Injuries Unit Centre in September 2017 and the second marked the final tiles being installed on the roof of the new Bellfield Centre in November 2017.

Respecting Your Wishes

During the year NHS Forth Valley became one of the first Health Boards in Scotland to trial a new scheme which gives patients the opportunity to say what sort of treatment they would like in case of an emergency. Known as ReSPECT (Recommended Summary Plan for Emergency Care and Treatment) the initiative aims to help patients discuss and record their priorities in relation to care, treatment and medication if their health changes or deteriorates. It has now has been piloted in a number of inpatient wards, Strathcarron day hospice and the Anticipatory Care Planning (ACP) community team. More than 100 forms have been completed and feedback from patients and families has been very positive. Work is now underway to build on the learning from the pilot and roll out ReSPECT to other wards and services across NHS Forth Valley.

Providing the Best Start

In October 2017 NHS Forth Valley was selected as one of five early adopter NHS Boards to take forward the recommendations outlined in The Best Start, Scotland’s new national maternity and neonatal strategy. Work is underway to create an Alongside Maternity Unit within the existing labour ward. This will be midwife led and create a less clinical and more homely environment for women to give birth in. There are also plans to develop new neonatal services in the community to prevent families from having to travel to hospital and to improve continuity of care so that more women are looked after by the same midwife during pregnancy, labour and after birth.

Enjoying the Great Outdoors

A pioneering outdoor activity scheme to improve the health and wellbeing of young children was launched in February 2018. The Natural Health Award, which is run by NHS Forth Valley’s Health Promotion Department and the Scottish Childminding Association, is believed to be the first of its kind in Scotland specifically developed for childminders, and the only award for under 5’s. Twenty childminders from the Stirlingshire area, along with more than 90 children, took part in a range of 15 outdoor activities over the course of several months to gain the award. Activities included visits to parks and wooded areas, along with bug hunts, playing hide and seek and walking 1,000 steps.
New Initiatives & Service Developments

Investing in New Equipment

A new state-of-the-art MRI scanner was delivered to Forth Valley Royal Hospital in February 2018. The one million pound specialist scanner was carefully craned into position outside the hospital before being transferred to its new home within the hospital’s radiology department. It now operates in a specially refurbished room with a new back-lit picture wall and ambient lighting to help patients relax in calming and less clinical surroundings. MRI scanners are used to take images of all parts of the body including the brain, spinal cord, heart and blood vessels and internal organs such as the liver, womb, prostate gland and gall bladder. Around 160 patients from across Forth Valley require MRI scans every week.

Using New Technology

Patients with high blood pressure in a number of GP practices across Forth Valley are able to get their blood pressure checked without leaving the comfort of their home. As part of a new initiative they now receive a text message from their local GP Practice asking for information about their blood pressure. Using a cuff device they can then take their own readings and text the result. All the readings are collated on a secure web interface which can be viewed by their GP or Practice nurse. Crucially, if readings fall outwith certain parameters agreed in their care management plan, a text is sent back to the patient advising them of what to do next. An alert can also be sent to clinical staff to support early intervention which can reduce the need for the patient to travel to their GP or hospital. Practices involved initially are Bannockburn, Viewfield (Stirling) Killin, Alva, Clackmannan, Dollar, Antonine (Bonnybridge), Carronbank (Denny) and Viewpoint (Stenhousemuir).

Reducing Missed Appointments

Newly-referred patients to five specialties in NHS Forth Valley are now receiving automatic reminders by phone to try to reduce the number of people who fail to turn up for their hospital outpatient appointment. The departments are cardiology, ear nose and throat, endocrinology, ophthalmology and pain management. The roll-out follows an earlier trial in gastroenterology, neurology and dermatology which was very successful.

Under the new system patients automatically receive a telephone call around seven days before the date of their outpatient appointment. The new initiative enhances the patient-focused booking service which enables patients to arrange an appointment on a day and time which suits them, rather than being automatically allocated an appointment which they may be unable to keep.
Our People

Royal Recognition

A senior NHS Forth Valley dietitian was awarded an OBE in The Queen’s Birthday Honours for services to dietetics and public health. Morag MacKellar, who has a long and distinguished career spanning more than 40 years, played a key role in developing NHS Forth Valley’s Food Policy, the first of its kind in Scotland. As AHP Manager for Children’s Services, Morag is also passionate about improving the health of young people and had the opportunity to discuss this with Prince Charles when she attended Buckingham Palace to receive her award. She also found out more about the Prince’s work at Dumfries House where local youngsters are encouraged to get more active through gardening.

Celebrating Long Service

Around 90 of our staff with a total of 2,590 years’ service between them received a Long Service Award after achieving 20, 30 or 40 years’ service. The event was hosted by NHS Forth Valley vice chair Julia Swan and Chief Executive Cathie Cowan, and each member of staff received a specially-designed certificate and pin badge.

Providing Expert Advice

NHS Forth Valley’s Head of Family Child Psychology, Dr Lorraine Johnstone, was selected to take part in the BBC Academy Expert Women Scotland day, winning one of 24 places whittled down from 400 applicants. Dr Johnstone, who is based at the University of Strathclyde, has already received a Butler Trust award for a ground-breaking programme working with some of the most difficult and troubled young people in the country. The Expert Women events are designed to increase the number of women presenters and contributors appearing on TV and radio in under-represented subjects.
Our People

Recognising Service Excellence

A specialist team, who have helped improve the quality of life for hundreds of women suffering incontinence after childbirth, was awarded the prestigious William Cullen Prize for service excellence and innovation by the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. The multidisciplinary team, which includes gynaecologists, urologists, gastroenterologists, physiotherapists and the continence advisory service, is led by NHS Forth Valley Consultant Colorectal surgeon, Mr John Camilleri-Brennan. Mr Brennan’s team was the first in Scotland and only second in the UK to introduce anal implants designed to tighten sphincter muscles. They have also developed a protocol for the management of tears and pelvic floor disorders.

Helping Patients with Dementia

An initiative to improve the experience of patients with dementia who have to be admitted to hospital won the Acute Care Category at Scotland’s Dementia Awards. It aims to reduce the number of moves between wards and increase the number of transfers to wards before 8.00pm. These changes have resulted in positive patient, carer and staff experiences by helping to reduce anxiety and confusion.

Fighting Flu

NHS Forth Valley’s flu immunisation team was extremely successful in vaccinating children in primary schools across the area. Almost 19,000 children were vaccinated which represented an uptake rate of 78% compared with a national average of 72. They also vaccinated more than 45,000 people aged over 65, the largest number ever vaccinated locally in one flu season and the highest percentage uptake in Scotland (76% compared with a Scottish average of 72%). Another area where NHS Forth Valley performed well was in vaccinating pregnant women with risk factors. The Health Board offered the vaccine to women whilst they attended maternity clinics at Forth Valley Royal. The successful flu campaign was attributed to good partnership working between GP practices, NHS Forth Valley staff, a dedicated immunisation team and support from local councils.
Our People

Improving Language Skills

Children at a Forth Valley primary school substantially increased their language skills thanks to the support provided by local speech and language therapists. Figures showed that, on average, children made 28 months progress in their spoken language in a 12 month period, with one child making exceptional progress of 43 months. The initiative at Bankier Primary School in the Falkirk area involves class teachers, support for learning assistants, parents and children from P1 to P3. It is based on a number of approaches such as colourful semantics where pupils use coloured cards, symbols and gestures to make up fun spoken and written sentences. This helps keeps children interested and entertained. In addition, a speech and language therapist provides an initial talk to parents, highlighting the importance of spoken language and providing examples of things they can do to help support their children. The programme is now being extended to some schools in Clackmannanshire and Stirling.

Return of Royal Title

A NHS Forth Valley nurse was among a group of 20 to have been awarded the title of Queen’s Nurse in December 2017, marking the first time the honour has been made in Scotland for almost 50 years.

Joan Gracie, who works as Team Leader for School Nursing, was selected to take part in a nine-month development programme run by the Queen’s Nursing Institute Scotland (QNIS). Each of the community nurses was nominated by their manager for providing high quality, compassionate care.

Joan manages the school nursing service in Stirling and Clackmannanshire and oversees a team made up of a Health Care Assistant, a family support worker, two counsellors and 10 Staff Nurses. Between them they offer support to around 500 families a year.

Emergency Department 50th Anniversary

In October 2017, staff from the Emergency Department organised a local event to help celebrate 50 years of emergency medicine as a specialty. An appeal on social media for staff, past and present, helped reunite retired nursing sisters who had worked in the casualty departments in the former Falkirk and Stirling Royal Infirmarys. They joined current nursing and medical staff to share their memories of emergency care, old NHS uniforms and working as part of an extended NHS family.
Dazzling Day Medicine

The Day Medicine department at Forth Valley Royal Hospital was one of 15 ‘Diamonds’ selected to receive a 2017 Pride of Forth Valley award by Central FM.

The Department, which won the NHS/999 category, was highlighted for the excellent care they provide and for going above and beyond the call of duty. They can see up to 50 patients a day and were praised for staying cheerful and welcoming from the first appointment to the last. A number of staff from Day Medicine attended an awards ceremony at Airth Castle Hotel in November 2017 to receive their Diamond Award.

Championship Players

A football team, run in partnership with NHS Forth Valley, Caledonian Services and Stenhousemuir Football Club, won the SFA Mental Health and Wellbeing League 2017 in November 2017. The team, which includes staff and service users from Woodlands Resource Centre and Bellsdyke Hospital, promotes positive mental health and train twice a week at Stenhousemuir football club with support from coach Danny Newbiggings. As well as regular games, the group provides opportunities for individuals with mental health difficulties to socialise and mix with other people interested in football in an informal setting, with qualified health professionals. The physical health and fitness of all team members has improved as a result of taking part.

Investing in Young People

A new campaign was launched in partnership with Forth Valley College to highlight the success of Modern Apprenticeships within NHS Forth Valley. The campaign, which took place during Scottish Apprenticeship Week at the beginning of March 2018, featured videos of local staff and apprentices. These were promoted widely via social media to help raise awareness of the joint scheme which has been running for several years.
Fundraisers and Volunteers

More Support for Bereaved Families

Parents coping with the loss of a baby are now able to spend more time with their little one in a bereavement suite at Forth Valley Royal Hospital which was refurbished during 2017 to provide local families with greater space and privacy at this difficult time. The £16,000 refurbishment was made possible by the generous donations received from several individuals and groups. These included bereaved parents and families, pregnancy loss charities Sands and SiMBA, Tesco at Alloa and local staff from Forth Valley Royal Hospital. Carolann Mason from Stirling, who raised almost £5,000 towards the project, cut the ribbon to mark the opening of the new suite. Improvements include a new sofa bed, comfy chairs and a tea making facility. An adjacent room has also been given a new look and three counselling/quiet rooms on the ground floor have been upgraded to make them more comfortable.

Shining Examples

The team of volunteers who provide support, refreshments and a friendly ear to patients in the Oncology Unit at Forth Valley Royal Hospital were described as a wonderful asset by Macmillan Cancer Support. The praise was contained in an assessment of the Unit which resulted in it retaining a Macmillan Quality Environment Mark for good practice and high standards.

The work of Sandra Campbell, NHS Forth Valley’s Nurse Consultant for Cancer and Palliative Care, was also singled out for praise. A representative from the Royal College of Nursing, who shadowed her through a sponsorship scheme, described her as an outstanding practitioner within this sensitive field of nursing.

Heartfelt Thanks

Local fundraiser Janet Robertson, who has already raised more than £10,000 for NHS Forth Valley, hosted a prize bingo night to say thank you for the care she has received from staff in the Cardiology Unit. The Unit also received another fantastic donation, from the family of Robbie Williams, who sadly passed away aged just 17. Robbie had a life-long heart condition and his family hosted an event on what would have been his 18th birthday, raising £3,000.
Precious Support

Joe and Debbie Clark decided to raise money after their daughter Sophie benefitted from the use of a Babytherm in the Neonatal Unit at Forth Valley Royal Hospital. The Babytherm, which had been donated by local charity So Precious, helps keep premature and unwell babies warm and was used after Sophie had to be resuscitated before being transferred to another hospital. The Clark’s hosted a fundraising night and handed over almost £5,500 to local charity So Precious which raises money for the Women and Children’s Unit. So Precious also provided the Neonatal Unit with a Resuscitaire, which not only helps keep babies warm, but is also equipped for clinical emergency and resuscitation.

Four Legged Friends

The first four-legged friends to visit Forth Valley Royal Hospital’s Mental Health Unit received a warm welcome from staff and patients in Wards 4 and 5. Jamie the whippet and Shadow the lurcher are part of the Therapet scheme designed to use specially-trained animals to promote health, hope and healing. With a dog policy already in place strict guidelines were followed which involved a number of risk assessments. Jamie, owned by Janette Kean and Shadow, who belongs to Bryan Robertson, now carry out alternate visits, to ensure a Therapet is able to visit the hospital for one day every week.

Investing in Volunteers

Many of the volunteers who support NHS Forth Valley received a big thank you at an event in November 2017 when they were presented with specially-designed badges as a gesture of appreciation. The volunteers included representatives from voluntary organisations such as the Friends of Forth Valley Royal Hospital, the Royal Voluntary Service, So Precious and RSVP, to name but a few. Also present were volunteers from a number of wards and departments. There are more than 400 volunteers across NHS Forth Valley who carry out a wide range of activities, including visiting patients in hospital wards and helping patients in the Oncology, Mental Health, Emergency and the Children’s wards. During the event, NHS Forth Valley was presented with an Investing in Volunteers Award by Anne Hislop, Investing in Volunteers Manager, the third time NHS Forth Valley has achieved this accolade.

Community Spirit

The adverse weather at the end of February and beginning of March 2018 caused major disruption to health services across Scotland, including NHS Forth Valley. Transport was a major issue but local staff made heroic efforts to maintain essential health services. Many walked long distances to get to work, others stayed on to support colleagues and many chose to stay overnight in local hospitals to ensure they could continue to care for patients. Staff also had fantastic assistance from voluntary organisations, local businesses and members of the public who helped drive them to work and ensured food and other essential items continued to be delivered throughout the period. Many local suppliers went out of their way (literally!) to make deliveries while local supermarkets donated supplies of food for patients and staff. The community spirit, generosity and kindness witnessed during this period was humbling and demonstrated just how highly local staff and services are valued.
99% of patients waited less than 6 weeks for key diagnostic tests at the end of March 2018.

Delivered significant savings and met all financial targets.

78% of stroke patients received specific care and treatment - known as the stroke bundle (target 80%).

65% of children and young people received treatment for mental health issues within 18 weeks during 2017/18 (national target 90%).

54% reduction in cardiac arrest rate maintained.

Significant reduction in pressure injuries means NHS Forth Valley has one of lowest rates in Scotland.

87% of patients who attended our Emergency Department were seen, treated and either admitted or discharged within 4 hours (target 95%).
Our Performance

57% of people took part in the bowel screening programme

(56% target)

96% of babies received their first Men B vaccine before the age of 12 months

(95% target)

80% of patients with a suspicion of cancer began treatment within 62 days of being referred

(95% target)

97% of cancer patients were treated within 31 days following decision to treat

(95% target)

84% of patients waited less than 12 weeks for an outpatient appointment at the end of March 2018

(100% target)

66% of patients received inpatient or daycare treatment within the 12 week Treatment Time Guarantee

(100% target)

76% of people aged over 65 received the flu vaccine, the highest uptake level in Scotland

6% of patients did not attend their first outpatient appointment

Additional information on performance and activity can be found on the Annual Report section of the NHS Forth Valley website (www.nhsforthvalley.com). Annual accounts for 2017/18 will also be published on the NHS Forth Valley website after they have been laid before parliament in autumn 2018.
NHS Forth Valley gathers feedback and suggestions from patients and service users using a wide variety of methods. These include weekly inpatient surveys which are carried out to find out the views of hospital patients on a wide range of issues. Patient stories, complaints and online feedback is also received via emails (fv-uhb.yourhealthservice@nhs.net), twitter (@NHSforthvalley), Facebook (www.facebook.com/nhsforthvalley), the NHS Forth Valley website (www.nhsforthvalley.com) and Care Opinion (www.careopinion.org.uk) – an independent website where patients can share their experiences of healthcare and care services.

On the 6 June 2017, staff organised a series of ‘What Matters to You’ events to gather feedback from local patients and visitors across NHS Forth Valley. The Cardiology Department opened a Cardiology Cafe for the day and invited staff, service users, families carers and representatives from the Scottish Ambulance Service to come along and talk about what mattered to them whilst accessing and delivering care within the service. Catering, domestic, portering and housekeeping staff were encouraged to speak to patients throughout the day, and capture stories from patients and their families. Staff who participated in the event said that, although it was a very simple question to ask, it generated some very powerful and enlightening feedback.

Throughout the year NHS Forth Valley posted regular ‘FeedbackFriday’ updates on social media to showcase some of the positive feedback from local patients and their families. This initiative is particularly appreciated by local staff who have fed back that it makes them feel valued.

Feedback is also used to improve local services and listed below are just a few examples of the changes made during 2017/18 in direct response to feedback from local patients and visitors:

- The waiting rooms for children and families attending local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) were redecorated. New seats and toys were also purchased to help create a more pleasant and welcoming atmosphere.
- The Neonatal Unit changed their visiting times policy to provide a more flexible, family friendly approach. Siblings are now allowed to visit, parents are invited to identify a named visitor and staff work hard to meet the needs of individual families.
- The Rapid Eye Access Clinic in Falkirk Community Hospital underwent a refurbishment following feedback from patients and their families who said the children’s area needed to be more fun. A new children’s area has been created which has been painted with bright colours. Bright wall stickers have been added and new toys purchased.
- Feedback received through Care Opinion highlighted that some patients felt they waited too long before being offered pain relief after they had been admitted to the Clinical Assessment Unit (CAU). A pain assessment is now carried out routinely as part of the triage process in CAU.

You can find out more about the feedback, comments, concerns, compliments and complaints received during 2017/18 in the annual feedback report prepared by NHS Forth Valley’s Patient Relations team.