

2024-2025

# ANNUAL REPORT



A summary of Key  
Developments, Activity  
and Performance



# FOREWORD

## Welcome from our Chief Executive and Chair

As we both took up our roles during 2024/25, we would firstly like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the warm welcome we have received from local staff, colleagues in the wider health and care system and our many partner organisations.

Over the last year, we have had the opportunity to visit many teams across the organisation, and it has been inspiring to hear about the great work underway and see first-hand the ongoing commitment to delivering high quality care and services.

Some of this work is highlighted in this Annual Report Summary which aims to provide an overview of key service developments and achievements during 2024/25, along with examples of service activity and performance information. We hope that local staff, patients and partners find this Report a useful summary of the wide range of work undertaken across the organisation during this 12 month period.

Over the last year, significant changes and improvements have also continued to be made to strengthen leadership, culture and governance arrangements across the organisation. As a result of these efforts, the Board was moved from level 4 to level 3 of the Scottish Government Support and Intervention Framework (previously known as the Escalation Framework) from 1 October 2024 and therefore no longer requires direct formal oversight by the Scottish Government.

While this is a positive achievement and testament to the hard work of local staff, we recognise there is more to do to ensure we maintain and build on the progress made in recent years to further improve the experience of local patients and staff. We aim to do this by taking a 'Value Based Health and Care' approach to ensure we make best use of the resources available to improve the health of all local people, achieve better outcomes for patients and deliver sustainable services which meet current and future healthcare needs.

This approach will also support the delivery of our new Population Health and Care Strategy, due to be published later this year, which will set out our vision and priorities for the next ten years.

Although there are many challenges ahead, there are also many opportunities and we are confident that by working with our staff, partners, local patients and communities, we can ensure Forth Valley is a great place to live, work and learn.



**ROSS MCGUFFIE**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**



**NEENA MAHAL**  
**INTERIM CHAIR**

# BOARD MEMBERS

NHS Forth Valley is managed by a Board of Executive and non-Executive Directors who are accountable to the Scottish Government through the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care. The overall purpose of the Board is to provide strategic leadership, direction and governance, focussing on key plans and priorities which:

- Improve and protect the health of local people
- Improve local health services and the experience of those who use them
- Improve health outcomes, working with a wide range of partner organisations

The Board holds meetings every two months at our Board Headquarters in Stirling. Members of the public are welcome to attend and observe the meetings, in person or online. Details of the Board members for 2024/25 are listed below.

## Non-Executive Members

Neena Mahal (Interim Chair)

Allan Rennie (Vice Chair)

Martin Fairbairn

Gordon Johnston

Stephen McAllister

Michele McClung

John Stuart

## Local Authority Members

Falkirk Council - Cllr Fiona Collie - Falkirk Council

Clackmannanshire Council - Cllr Wendy Hamilton (until 7 March 2025) and Cllr Fiona Law (from 24 March 2025)

Stirling Council - Cllr Gerry McGarvey (until 30 July 2024) and Cllr David Wilson (from 26 November 2024)

## Advisory Forum Chairs / Employee Director

Kirstin Cassells, Lead Pharmacist - Community Pharmacy, Public Health and Integrated Services

Robert Clark, Employee Director

## Executive Members

Amanda Croft, Interim Chief Executive (until 24 September 2024)

Ross McGuffie, Chief Executive (from 1 October 2024)

Frances Dodd, Executive Nurse Director

Dr Graham Foster, Director of Public Health

Andrew Murray, Medical Director

Scott Urquhart, Director of Finance

**AT A GLANCE**



**6,473**

Staff  
(whole time  
equivalent)



**£631m**

Annual  
Budget



**305,000**

Population  
Served



(approx)

**2,811**

Babies  
Born



**64,401**

Emergency Department  
Attendances

**21,888**

Minor Injuries Unit  
Attendances

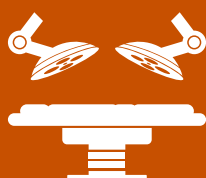
**745,729**

Outpatient  
Appointments  
(new and return)



**18,711**

Operations  
Carried Out



**114**

Research  
Projects  
Underway



**31,065**

Shingles and RSV  
Vaccinations  
Delivered



**224,248**

Samples Collected  
by our  
Microbiology  
Laboratory



**207,083**

Radiology  
Scans Carried  
Out



**210,387**

Covid-19 and Flu  
Vaccinations  
Delivered



**888,129**

Pharmacy  
Prescriptions  
Issued (inpatients)



**66,516**

Contacts with  
our Health  
Visiting Teams



**10,943**

Contacts with our  
School Nursing  
Teams



**27,970**

Contacts with our  
AHP Community  
Inpatient Services



# **SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS**







## Improving Treatment for Skin Cancers

A new clinic was introduced at Forth Valley Royal Hospital in April 2024 to provide gold standard treatment for patients with certain types of skin cancers.

Mohs Micrographic Surgery is a highly specialist surgical technique to remove skin cancers while preserving as much healthy tissue as possible. It is most often used to remove skin cancers on the scalp, face, lip, ear and neck area, and has a very high cure rate.

It requires the expertise of plastic surgeons, pathologists and healthcare scientists who work together to remove, prepare and examine skin tissue to ensure all the cancerous cells have been removed. The specialist treatment is currently only available in only four NHS Boards in Scotland (Forth Valley, Tayside, Greater Glasgow and Clyde, and Lothian) and there are only 8 Consultant Mohs Surgeons in Scotland who can carry out the highly specialist procedure, including two at Forth Valley Royal Hospital.

The new Mohs Clinic operating in the Day Surgery Unit at Forth Valley Royal Hospital is equipped with a treatment room and dedicated laboratory, enabling skin tissue to be removed under a local anaesthetic, then prepared and examined in the same area. Patients undergo the procedure at a single outpatient appointment and return home on the same day, normally after a few hours.

The technique involves a consultant plastic surgeon removing skin tissue from the patient's face or neck. This sample is taken to the on-site laboratory and cut into thin sections which are stained and mounted onto glass slides. The slides are then examined under a microscope by a consultant pathologist for the presence of cancer cells at all edges of the tumour. If cancer cells are seen, another thin layer of tissue is removed and checked, and the process is repeated until no more cancer cells are seen.

The Mohs clinic at Forth Valley Royal Hospital takes place fortnightly to provide treatment for local patients from across NHS Forth Valley as well as suitable patients referred by NHS Lanarkshire.



# Investing in State-of-the-Art Diagnostic Equipment



A third CT scanner was installed at Forth Valley Royal Hospital in March 2025, which will enable an additional 6,500 scans to be carried out each year. This investment will also help reduce waiting times and support faster diagnosis and treatment for serious conditions such as cancer, stroke and major injuries.

The Diagnostic Imaging service currently performs around 190,000 scans each year, supported by 109 clinical staff, including 26 Advanced Practitioners.

The new scanner will ease pressure on the existing two CT scanners, which have been operating for extended hours, supplemented by a temporary mobile CT unit.



A new state of the art system to enhance diagnosis for cancer, urology and endocrine patients has been introduced at Forth Valley Royal Hospital.

The SIEMENS Symbia Pro.specta merges CT and SPECT imaging into one step for faster and more accurate medical diagnoses, providing local patients with faster access to scans, shorter scanning appointments and reducing the need to return for multiple scans.

The system was installed as part of an ongoing equipment replacement programme to update existing equipment which was installed when the hospital originally opened in 2011.

The new machine uses nuclear single-photon emission computed tomography (SPECT) technology, with a gamma ray camera to scan patients who have been injected with a harmless radioisotope. This is combined with a 360-degree CT scan to create detailed imaging of structure and physiology. The patient receives the CT scan immediately after the gamma ray scan, when previously they would have to wait a few hours or even days for the subsequent CT scan. The quality of the images is significantly enhanced by keeping the patient in exactly the same position for both scans.

The system's artificial intelligence superimposes the images from both scans to create a more accurate and detailed report for diagnosis. The ability to pinpoint a tumour or lesions with more detail can result in less invasive surgery and therefore better recovery.

# Harnessing Technology in Pharmacy Services



A new smaller, faster and more advanced robotic system that improves dispensing efficiency, reduces waste, and frees up staff time for patient care was installed in the pharmacy department at Forth Valley Royal Hospital in November 2024.

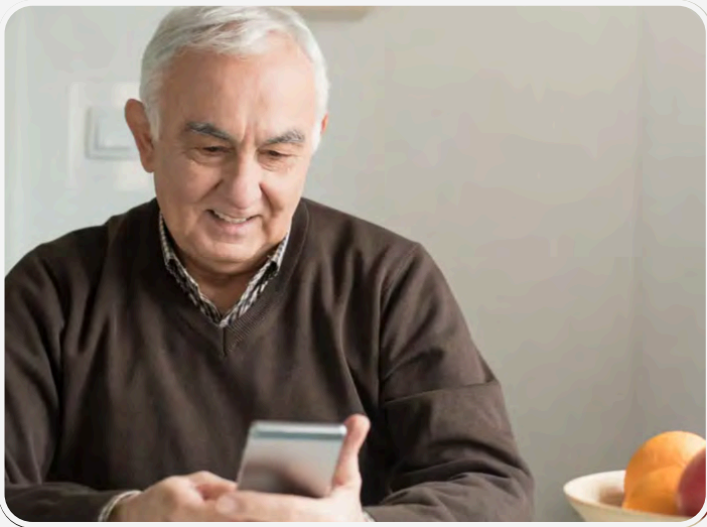
This allowed the previous pharmacy robots, which were affectionately known as Rosie, R2D2 and Lindsay Lohan, to retire after 14 years of service.

It also created space to expand pharmacy services for oncology and home care support, and introduce a new dedicated training zone for local pharmacy staff.

Alongside the new robot, a new biometric safe for controlled drugs was also introduced in the hospital's pharmacy department. The first of its type in use in Scotland, it replaces the traditional dual-lock and manual recording system. The new BD Pyxis C2 Safe uses biometric thumbprint access and electronic tracking to enhance security and streamline drug management as part of a broader modernisation of the hospital's pharmacy systems.



# Joining Forces to Improve Dementia Care



NHS Forth Valley has joined a £2 million, three-year initiative called CONSOLIDATE, which aims to enhance independent living for people with dementia through the use of technology.

The network, which is led by Heriot Watt University, brings together a number of NHS Boards, universities, charities and community groups to explore how artificial intelligence, robotics and sensor technologies can support cognitive and physical abilities, adapting to individuals' changing needs over time.

Involving people who have experience of living with, or caring for, someone with dementia will also help identify solutions which are practical, inclusive and empowering.

With dementia cases in the UK projected to reach 1.4 million by 2040, the project aims to improve quality of life, reduce care costs and extend the length of time people with dementia are able to live independently.

# Increasing Access to Speech and Language Therapy



A pioneering collaboration between Stirling Council and NHS Forth Valley is transforming the way children access speech and language therapy (SLT), delivering some of the lowest waiting times in the country and setting a new standard for providing support at an early stage.

Between July 2023 and June 2024, nearly 40% of children in Stirling received SLT support within just one week of referral - an achievement made

possible by having speech and language therapists embedded in schools and nurseries across the region.

This approach ensures that any concerns about a child's communication skills are addressed swiftly and effectively. Each educational setting has a dedicated link therapist who works closely with staff to identify and support children in need. In addition, a weekly helpline offers families direct access to healthcare professionals for guidance and reassurance.

Over the past two years, 29 schools have been formally recognised by NHS Forth Valley for creating communication-friendly environments.

Research shows that strong spoken language skills are a key predictor of success in education, employment and overall wellbeing. This initiative is therefore not only improving access to speech and language support but also laying the foundation for better lifelong outcomes.



## Speeding up Access to Cancer Treatment



Waiting times for cancer treatment saw marked improvement during the year, with 100% of patients beginning treatment within 31 days of the decision to treat, exceeding the national cancer treatment target of 95% for the period April to June 2024.

Performance in relation to the 62-day cancer treatment target (95% of patients should start treatment for a newly diagnosed cancer within 62 days, following an urgent referral) was also well above the Scottish average for this period.

In the period July to September 2024, 84% of local patients started treatment for a newly diagnosed cancer within 62 days, compared to an average of 72% across the rest of Scotland and 99% of patients began their treatment within 31 days of a decision to treat, compared with 94% nationally. Work continues to maintain and build on this performance over the year ahead.



## Introducing New Clinical Roles



NHS Forth Valley achieved a 22% reduction in waiting times for diagnostic scans and urology treatments between April and September 2024. These improvements were driven by a combination of national and local investment and the ongoing development of advanced clinical roles, including Advanced Nurse Practitioners and Advanced Radiology Practitioners.

In radiology, these Practitioners now perform mammogram readings and diagnostic ultrasounds, enhancing service efficiency.

New roles have also been introduced in urology services, including Advanced Surgical Care Practitioners, who have undergone additional training to perform simple surgical procedures such as vasectomies and circumcisions. This has freed up urology consultants to focus on patients who require more complex treatment or surgery.

In local breast services, the introduction of Advanced Nurse Practitioners has significantly improved care through the delivery of one-stop clinics that combine consultation, imaging and biopsies in a single visit, reducing delays and improving the experience of local patients.



## Reducing waits for Outpatient Appointments



The number of people waiting for a first outpatient appointment reduced significantly over the last year (from 19,902 in July 2023 to 13,740 in July 2024) – a reduction of 30%. The number of people waiting beyond 12 weeks also halved in the same period.

This was due to an increase in activity which continued throughout the year with more appointments being delivered, exceeding the figure forecast in the Board's annual delivery plan for 2024/25.

# Supporting Families Following the Loss of a Baby



Families who suffer the tragic loss of a baby now have access to additional counselling and support at home thanks to a new partnership between NHS Forth Valley and Held in our Hearts, the baby loss counselling and peer support charity.

The charity already provides support for families in Forth Valley, however this new initiative, introduced in June 2024, provides additional support to families to help their transition from hospital to home and build on the available support offered by the pregnancy and baby loss charity Sands.

This include help with planning a funeral or memorial, preparing for follow-up hospital appointments, advice on talking to siblings and getting ready to return to work.

The new service is available to any family that has experienced a loss after 12 weeks and provides sessions in their own home with a member of Held in Our Heart’s Hospital to Home team. Families can also be referred for longer term peer support or counselling, if appropriate.



# Welcoming New Nursing Colleagues From Overseas



NHS Forth Valley welcomed eight international nurses during the year as part of a Scottish Government initiative to boost overseas recruitment and support healthcare delivery across Scotland.

The nurses from India, Iran and Trinidad and Tobago bring valuable experience and completed a comprehensive induction and training programme before they started their full-time roles in a wide range of departments and wards across Forth Valley Royal Hospital.

The new recruitment intake brings the total number of international healthcare staff recruited to NHS Forth Valley in recent years to 55.





## Improving Mental Health Services for Children and Young People

Changes in the way local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are designed and delivered across NHS Forth Valley resulted in significant improvements and reduced waiting times for young people experiencing severe and complex mental ill health.

A new 'Choice and Partnership Approach' has been put in place to help increase the range of treatment options available, and improve the management and monitoring of demand to maximise capacity. This internationally renowned approach has had a positive impact on local services and since February 2024, NHS Forth Valley CAMHS has consistently seen and treated 99% of children and young people within 18 weeks of referral.

The current performance remains above the national average waiting times target of 90% and the service is confident this performance will be maintained in the months ahead. In addition, very long waits have been eliminated and there are currently no children or young people waiting over 18 weeks for an initial assessment. This is a significant improvement on previous performance against the 18-week referral to treatment target which has risen from 44% to 99% over the last two years. The improved performance is the result of additional resources provided by the Scottish Government, alongside the commitment of local staff who have embraced new ways of work and are continuing to develop and improve local services for children and young people with very severe, complex and persistent symptoms of serious mental illness.

Staff also continue to work closely with colleagues in local councils to help increase access to a range of new community-based services which aim to make it quicker and easier for children and young people to access mental health and wellbeing support at an early stage.



## Supporting Clinical Research



There has been a significant increase in research projects being conducted across NHS Forth Valley and the Clinical Research Team is now supporting more than 110 different research trials across a range of areas. These include lung cancer, cardiology, dementia and endometriosis.

Successful trials have also been carried out into the treatment of diabetes, breast cancer and blood cancer (Myeloma). NHS Forth Valley is also on the list of Top Recruiters for 2025 for an international, multicentre study

investigating the best time for people with severe narrowing of the aortic valve to undergo surgery to replace it.

Further information on local clinical trials and case studies can be found on the NHS Forth Valley website.



## Improving Facilities for Parents of Premature Babies



A new Green Room has been created in the Neonatal Unit at Forth Valley Royal Hospital to provide a calming space for the parents of premature babies.

It also provides a private, non-clinical area for parents to meet with healthcare staff to get an update on their baby's progress, catch up with their local midwifery or health visiting teams or have support from a member of the psychology team.

The comfortable room is stocked with snacks and drinks, as well as books and craft materials to help entertain and keep older children occupied. It is also used to host a number of wellbeing sessions and parent craft sessions throughout the year.

**GOING  
GREEN**



# Reducing our Carbon Footprint

NHS Forth Valley continues to lead the way in delivering a wide range of environmental initiatives to support the delivery of NHS Scotland's net-zero targets. This includes work to:

## Minimise Waste

A groundbreaking pilot project is underway in operating theatres at Forth Valley Royal Hospital to recycle non-contaminated plastics that were previously disposed of as clinical waste - a process that is both environmentally and financially costly. Delivered in partnership with NHS Scotland Assure, if successful, it could be rolled out in other hospitals across the country.

## Go Electric

Significant progress has been made in switching our transport fleet of cars and vans from diesel to electric and the aim is operate a fully electric fleet by the end of 2025/26.



## Increase Energy Efficiency

A major energy conservation programme, delivered in partnership with Vital Energi, has seen rooftop solar PV panels installed on 13 buildings; insulation upgrades at six sites; windows and doors replaced with more energy efficient options at five locations, gas boilers replaced with electric boilers at one site along with upgrades to systems that monitor and control lighting, energy, and security at eight healthcare sites.

Collectively these initiatives help save 116 tonnes of carbon, reduce energy use by over 600,000 kWh and deliver energy savings of nearly £60,000 per year. Lighting has also been upgraded to energy-efficient LEDs across 60 sites, cutting carbon emissions by 267 tonnes and reducing electricity usage by nearly one million kWh per year.

In 2024/25, the programme was expanded to:

- install Battery Energy Storage Systems at three sites, enabling solar energy to be stored and used during peak hours
- trial the use of an Air Source Heat Pump to reduce reliance on gas heating systems

These additional measures are projected to save a further 72 tonnes of carbon and reduce energy consumption by more than 460,000 kWh annually.

## Overall Impact

NHS Forth Valley has achieved a 41% reduction in its carbon footprint compared to the 2014/15 baseline and work continues in 2025/26 to build on this progress and further reduce emissions across our healthcare facilities.



## Going Green in Theatres

NHS Forth Valley continues to set the standard in sustainable healthcare through its leadership in the National Green Theatres Programme - a pioneering initiative to reduce the carbon footprint of NHS Scotland while maintaining high standards of patient care.

The programme was inspired by the efforts of anaesthetists across Scotland to eliminate the use of desflurane, a volatile anaesthetic with a global warming potential 2,500 times greater than carbon dioxide. In a world-first, Scotland banned desflurane in early 2023, saving an estimated 6,400 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) and nearly £850,000, all without compromising patient outcomes.

The following initiatives reflect NHS Forth Valley's commitment to environmental stewardship, clinical excellence and financial responsibility. Collectively they are not only reducing emissions but also reshaping the future of sustainable healthcare in Scotland.

**Decommissioning of Nitrous Oxide Pipeline** - NHS Forth Valley has eliminated over 500 tCO<sub>2</sub>e by replacing its nitrous oxide pipeline with a localised cylinder system. This change not only reduced emissions, but also freed up skilled staff to work in critical care areas. Nationally, 44 of 68 manifolds have been decommissioned, saving over 4,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

**Enhanced Waste Segregation** - Improved recycling and diversion of non-clinical waste has led to a 20% reduction in clinical waste volumes, cutting down on costly and carbon-intensive disposal methods.

**Oral vs. Intravenous Medication** - By encouraging oral medication where clinically appropriate, NHS Forth Valley has reduced IV paracetamol use by 30%, lowering both waste and resource use.

**Surgical Suction System Upgrade** - A certified system now filters and safely disposes of surgical waste fluids, saving approximately 1,000 tonnes of clinical waste and reducing handling risks for staff.

**Energy Efficiency** - Adjustments to HVAC fan speeds and anaesthetic gas scavenging systems have helped optimise energy use without compromising safety or efficiency.

**Additional Sustainability Measures:** A 'Gloves Off' campaign was launched to help reduce the use of plastic disposable gloves in situations where they are not required. Reusable theatre hats, gowns and drapes have also been introduced along with systems to automatically switch off equipment and greater use of online records to help reduce paper waste.

# CELEBRATING SUCCESS







## Supporting Breastfeeding

NHS Forth Valley Community Health Visiting Team successfully maintained their UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Award accreditation with flying colours.

Following a detailed assessment of local breastfeeding services and support, the Team held a celebratory event to mark this achievement in June 2024 to coincide with Scottish Breastfeeding Week.

The Team offers practical and emotional support to enable local women across NHS Forth Valley to help them feel more confident and comfortable breastfeeding. This support and encouragement is having a significant impact on local women, helping to improve local breastfeeding rates.

Breastfeeding protects babies against a wide range of serious illnesses including gastroenteritis and respiratory infections in infancy, as well as asthma, cardiovascular disease and diabetes in later life. It also reduces the mother's risk of some cancers.

The Baby Friendly Initiative, set up by UNICEF and the World Health Organisation, is a global programme which provides a practical and effective way for health services to improve the care provided for all mothers and babies.

In the UK, the initiative works with public services to protect, promote and support breastfeeding and to strengthen family relationships for all babies, not only those who are breastfed.

The Award is given to health facilities, hospitals and universities after an assessment by a UNICEF team has shown that recognised best practice standards are in place.



## Diabetes Project of the Year



NHS Forth Valley Adult Diabetes Team won the Diabetes Project of the Year Award at the 2024 Scottish Healthcare Awards.

The team was nominated for a project to change diabetes practice and ensure all patients have the opportunity to receive essential care and checks every year to help reduce the risk of developing diabetes related complications in the future.



## National Recognition for Pharmacy Team



NHS Forth Valley Community Hospital Pharmacy Team won the prestigious 'Hospital Pharmacy Team of the Year' award at the 2024 Scottish Healthcare Awards.

The Team was recognised for its work to improve and enhance pharmaceutical care. This has led to positive outcomes for local patients, reduced costs and greater collaboration with pharmacy colleagues from other hospitals.



## International Recognition for Hepatitis Team



The Viral Hepatitis Team received international recognition at the 2024 INHSU Conference for its Outstanding Contribution to Models of Care and Programmes through the STEP C Free Project.

The project demonstrated the effectiveness of delivering hepatitis care outside traditional clinical settings, reaching underserved and marginalised populations.

In collaboration with the Hepatitis C Trust, Change Grow Live, and Transform Forth Valley, the Team used peer-led, community-based approaches to help overcome barriers to accessing treatment.

## Family Nurse Partnership Turns 10



The Family Nurse Partnership, which works with young parents across NHS Forth Valley, celebrated its 10th birthday in August 2024.

During this period, staff have worked with hundreds of first-time parents who have given birth to 650 babies over the past ten years.

To mark the milestone anniversary, the service held an event at the Albert Halls in Stirling. Over 40 parents, past and present, attended with their children to take part in a range of fun activities.

The Family Nurse Partnership programme is an intensive home visiting programme for first time parents aged 19 and under (and eligible 20 to 24 year olds) and is delivered by specially trained nurses and midwives who provide support from early pregnancy until the child reaches the age of two.

Family Nurses develop strong relationships with local families, identifying their strengths and working with them to help achieve their goals and aspirations, both for themselves and their children. The service was launched in 2014 and is delivered by a team of staff including family nurses, midwives and psychologists.



## Supporting Healthcare Staff from Overseas



NHS Forth Valley received the NHS Scotland Pastoral Care Quality Award (PCQA) in recognition of the outstanding support provided to internationally recruited staff.

The Award highlights the organisation's commitment to ensuring a safe, supportive, and well-structured transition for healthcare professionals who have moved from overseas to work for NHS Forth Valley.

This achievement reflects NHS Forth Valley's dedication to providing high-quality pastoral care at every stage of the international recruitment process and acknowledges the efforts of local staff who play a key role in delivering tailored training, helping staff find accommodation, and offering both professional and personal support throughout their relocation and integration journey.





## Nurse of the Year Finalists

A local nursing student and a nursing team from NHS Forth Valley were finalists in the 2024 RCN Scotland Nurse of the Year Awards.

The Ward 4 nursing team at Forth Valley Royal Hospital was highly commended in the Nursing Team of the Year category, which aims to recognise great nursing delivered by teams, in close partnership with colleagues, patients or stakeholders. The Team works in the Mental Health Unit at the hospital which cares for patients with severe mental illnesses, including advanced dementia. They use their skills, care and compassion to help patients maintain as much dignity, quality of life and independence as possible. The Team also supports local patients and families, helping them to access specialist assessments, helping to establish the Ward as a centre of excellence in dementia care.

Kasey Saunders, a nursing assistant in Ward 2 at Bo'ness Community Hospital, was also a runner up in the Nursing Student of the Year category.

This award recognises those who have shown exceptional promise during their practice placements and deserve recognition for exceptional achievement during their studies.



Kasey overcame a number of personal challenges, including social anxiety and dyslexia, to fulfil her dream of training to become a nurse. Although she lacked confidence, with support and encouragement, she applied to the Open University, balancing work in a Dementia Ward with her studies and inspiring others to consider a nursing career.

Kasey embraced many challenges, participated in various placements and initiated projects like a carers' group and a garden restoration for patients. She was described by her colleagues as a confident and competent nursing student who exceeded expectations with her dedication and compassion.

## Excellence Award for Occupational Therapist



An NHS Forth Valley Occupational Therapist has been recognised in the Royal College of Occupational Therapists' Merit Awards 2024 for excellence in the field.

Alison Keir, Occupational Therapy Team Lead for the Older Adults Mental Health Team based at Clackmannanshire Community Healthcare Centre, received the Merit Award for the impact she has made on the profession and, more specifically, her significant involvement in raising the profile of occupational therapy in the Scottish Parliament and across local authorities.

Every year, RCOT celebrates excellence in Occupational Therapy with Merit Awards which recognise and individual's significant achievement and contributions to the profession.



## Royal Recognition for Parkinson's Nurse



Kay Mair, NHS Forth Valley's Lead Nurse for Parkinson's and one of Scotland's longest serving Parkinson's Nurse Specialists, spent a day with royalty after receiving an invitation to help celebrate the work of Parkinson's Nurses around the UK.

An afternoon tea reception was hosted by the Duchess of Gloucester, Patron of Parkinson's UK at St James's Palace, London to celebrate and recognise the 35th anniversary of the Parkinson's Nurse.

Twenty seven nurses were invited from across the UK to share their experiences as long serving professionals who have played a key role in Parkinson's education, service development and research.

Kay has been a part of the Parkinson's nursing community since 1996 and was a founding member of the Association of Scottish Parkinson's Nurse Specialists.





## Organ and Tissue Donation Memorial Unveiled

A colourful, 'floating' sculpture, which aims to recognise the life-changing contribution that local organ and tissue donors have made and help raise awareness of the importance of organ and tissue donation, was unveiled on 23 September 2024.

The sculpture by artist Hans K Clausen – entitled *Everyone Everyday Evermore* – is displayed on a wall in the atrium of Forth Valley Royal Hospital. The idea was conceived by donors, recipients, clinicians and supporters who wanted an artwork that is both a memorial and a celebration, and one that will enhance the hospital environment for years to come.

The vibrant, cloud-like sculpture is formed from signatures and hand-written names collected from across the healthcare community and from individuals whose lives have been affected by organ and tissue donation. The 366 signatures (one for each day of the year, including leap years) were enlarged and laser cut from fluorescent acrylic.

Attendees included Irene McCusker, whose deceased son Graeme donated his lungs, kidneys and eye tissue, and the Dewar family – dad Blair donated a kidney to son Nathan, while twin brother Daniel also received a kidney transplant from a deceased donor.

The unveiling of the new memorial sculpture was part of a programme of wider events to celebrate Organ and Tissue Donation Week, where healthcare organisations, charities and communities across the UK will come together to promote organ and tissue donation. People are also encouraged to record their decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register and discuss this with their loved ones to help ensure their wishes are honoured.

The project was funded by NHS Forth Valley's Organ and Tissue Donation Committee with support from Artlink Central, ForthHealth, Serco and FES.



## Supporting The Next Generation of Nurses



Nursing staff who play an integral role in supporting student nurses were recognised at a special awards ceremony.

Close to 70 nurses were nominated for special recognition for their roles as supervisors and assessors to nursing students from the University of Stirling, with 40 coming together to celebrate at an event held in Forth Valley Royal Hospital in December 2024.

Student nurses undertake a range of placements throughout their studies to gain practical experience in a range of clinical services, wards and departments across NHS Forth Valley and other local health boards.



## Working with Young Offenders



Jacqueline Smith, a Speech and Language Therapist with NHS Forth Valley's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, was shortlisted for a prestigious national award by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists.

The nomination recognises her outstanding work with young offenders at HMP YO1 Polmont.

Jacqueline led the Communication Friendly Environment (CFE) project, a joint initiative launched in 2021 with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS), aimed at addressing the high prevalence of unidentified speech, language, and communication needs among young offenders - estimated to affect up to 90% of this population.

The project involved extensive consultation with both young people and prison officers to improve communication awareness, training and the physical environment. Feedback was gathered through group discussions, environmental audits and surveys. The initiative has since expanded to engage stakeholders across the wider SPS network, with the long-term goal of implementing CFEs in every Scottish prison.



## Harnessing the use of Artificial Intelligence



NHS Forth Valley was announced as the winner of the inaugural 2024 Public Sector AI Challenge, organised by Futurescot, in partnership with Storm ID.

The proposal submitted focussed on how AI technology could be used to better manage and learn from complaints data, and help identify service improvements.

The Health Board was awarded £20,000 in consultancy services to develop an AI prototype that identifies key themes from

complaints information.

The judges said the NHS Forth Valley team demonstrated an innovative and practical use of AI which has the potential to make a tangible difference to patients and staff. The winning concept was described as innovative, practical and highly scalable with potential to free up staff time and increase support for patients.



## Creating Career Ambassadors



The success of the Career Ambassador Project was celebrated at Forth Valley College's Stirling Campus on 17 March 2025. The event brought together mentees, mentors and staff from both Forth Valley College and NHS Forth Valley.

The initiative, which was launched by the Forth Valley University College NHS Partnership, supports students from diverse backgrounds who have experienced

disruption to their education or planned career paths.

The project pairs students with NHS Forth Valley staff who have volunteered to become ambassadors and act as mentors to give students an insight into different healthcare roles and career opportunities.

Speakers included Sarah Higgins, Vice Principal of Learning and Student Experience at Forth Valley College and three students shared their inspiring stories of how participating in the project had made a positive impact to their career options and choices.

# PERFORMANCE



**62.1%**

of patients were waiting less than six weeks for one or more of the eight key diagnostic tests

at 31 Mar 2025

(Target 100% - Scotland 58.5%)

**82.5%**

of people referred for drug or alcohol problems waited no longer than three weeks for specialist treatment

Jan - Mar 2025

(Target 90% - Scotland 91.9%)

**99.1%**

of patients referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) started treatment within 18 weeks of referral

Jan - Mar 2025

(Target 90% - Scotland 91.6%)

**71%**

of patients waited less than 62 days from urgent suspicion of cancer referral to first cancer treatment

Jan - Mar 2025

(Target 95% - Scotland 67.3%)

**99.3%**

of patients waited less than 31 days for their first cancer treatment from the day where a decision to treat was made

Jan - Mar 2025

(Target 95% - Scotland 93.7%)

**44.3%**

of patients started their day case or inpatient treatment within 12 weeks of the agreement to treat

Jan - Mar 2025

(Target 100% - Scotland 56.7%)

**78.6%**

of patients waited less than 12 weeks from referral to a first outpatient appointment

Mar 2025

(Target - 95% - Scotland 61.2%)

**73.8%**

of patients started treatment within 18 weeks of being referred for psychological therapy

Jan - Mar 2025

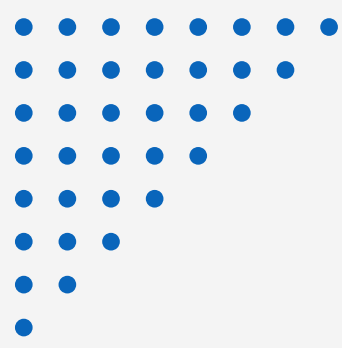
(Target - 90% - Scotland 78.6%)

**4.6%**

did not attend an outpatient appointment at Forth Valley Royal Hospital

Mar 2025

(down from 5.8% in Mar 2024)



[www.nhsforthvalley.com](http://www.nhsforthvalley.com)

