NHS Lothian has launched a physiotherapy advice clinic with a big difference…

PhysiotherapyAdvice is on the Internet and it offers instant advice on knee injuries to anyone, anywhere in the world.

The pilot service, which is funded by NHS Lothian, will run for one year and is in addition to normal physiotherapy services provided in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

The PhysiotherapyAdvice website was the brainchild of two Lothian physiotherapists – Angela Lindsay and Wendy Johnson.

It offers immediate and early physiotherapy advice on knee pain and injuries, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year. Evaluation of the website will be ongoing throughout the pilot study.

It is expected that the service will contribute to improving patient access to services and speed up the process of treatment and recovery.

The new Internet physiotherapy service leads each visitor through a registration process, personal login and then a screening questionnaire to evaluate appropriate advice for their knee problem.

Users of the website will receive individual advice for whatever knee problem they have, including suitable exercises, how to manage pain, swelling advice, knee anatomy information and details on common knee problems.

Video clips of each exercise are available to show the exercise in motion.

Brian Cavanagh, chairman of NHS Lothian, said: “We are delighted to announce this truly innovative and exciting new physiotherapy service, particularly as it is the first of its kind anywhere in the world.

“The talents and skills of our staff has led to the development of this pilot service which encourages patients to manage their own symptoms and speed up their recovery.”

Wendy Johnson, clinical specialist physiotherapist at the University Health Centre at NHS Lothian said: “It started off as a small idea and evolved from there. We are keen to look at how more people can access physiotherapy at a time and place to suit each individual, as well as looking at ways of improving the quality and effectiveness of our service.

“The website has been designed to carry out careful, selective screening to ensure only those with knee problems will be able to access the advice from within the site, and that those people identified with more serious knee injuries, such as fractures, are directed to seek further assessment by a qualified health professional.”

The website can be accessed at: www.physiotherapyadvice.scot.nhs.uk

Click Fix!

NHS Lothian sets the pace with a website that lets patients manage their injuries...

Andrew Gray, a student at Edinburgh University, gets physiotherapy advice on-line while he relaxes in the park...

...AND GRADUATES BOOST SERVICE

PATIENTS waiting for physiotherapy across Lothian are set to receive swifter treatment with the creation of 11 physiotherapist posts that will be filled by newly qualified graduates.

NHS Lothian has received funding of £342,384 from the Scottish Executive to cover the costs of the new temporary posts, which will help to reduce waiting times for patients.

The one-year appointments will also give the new graduate physiotherapists valuable experience and could lead to permanent posts if funding can be found by NHS Lothian.

Brian Cavanagh, chair of NHS Lothian, said: “We are delighted to be able to offer positions for new graduate physiotherapists as they start out on their careers.”

“These posts will strengthen our physiotherapy services and assist patients greatly.

“It is very important for the quality and professionalism of our future services that people who have invested in their training and committed themselves to healthcare find fulfilling and rewarding positions.”

Heather Tierney-Moore, NHS Lothian’s director of nursing, said: “Under this scheme, we will be able to offer positions across our five community health partnerships and our community paediatrics department at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children.”

“These posts will help our efforts to reduce waiting times, strengthen our work in preventing the admission of patients to hospital, and provide treatment in community-based facilities.”

Meet the President

New Director of Nursing

Click Fix!
Western takes the holistic approach

THE WESTERN General Hospital hosted a revolutionary study day recently concentrating on complementary therapies and services.

The day was tailored to provide an insight into the many types of complementary therapies and services that are available to patients. A host of subjects were covered, all aimed at delivering a more holistic approach to patient care, and talks were given on spirituality, the role of the social support team, and Maggie’s Centre.

The day ended with an explanation and demonstration of massage and aromatherapy. The event was organised by Jim Clark, CSW3 and Susannah Flower, education coordinator, oncology, who are both based at the Edinburgh Cancer Centre.

Jim said: “Susannah and I decided to have this unique study day because it’s important for health care workers to know about therapies that may ease problems such as anxiety, anger, depression, irritability, stress and low self-esteem.

“And not just for cancer patients but for every patient coming to hospital!”

Staff who attended were enthusiastic about the day and found it ‘very relaxed and informative’ and ‘very enlightening’. Jim added: “I hope there will be another holistic study day in the future, for all who are interested.”

NHS Lothian

Your pay packet can save a life...

WATCH out for the chance to save somebody’s life in your wage packet in June.

Along with your payslip, you’ll find a leaflet giving you the chance to register as an organ donor. It’s part of a nationwide campaign run jointly by UK Transplant, the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Transplant Coordinators Network to raise the number of donors on the register.

Scotland has an admirable record when it comes to the organ donor register with 27 per cent of Scots already signed up. And in a recent survey, nine out of ten people said they believed organ donation was a good thing.

Many people have not signed up as organ donors just because they ‘never got round to it’. 27 per cent of Scots already signed up.

Connections

COMMENT

Read all about it...exciting times in NHS Lothian

THERE are a number of exciting new initiatives to report in this issue of Connections. The only problem is where to begin.

As you will see on page 5, NHS Lothian physiotherapy experts have pioneered a new website that offers people advice and information about knee injuries wherever they are in the world.

It’s an exciting development in health care that we are convinced will have a significant part to play in treating such injuries.

We are also recruiting a number of newly qualified physiotherapists to help reduce the waiting times for patients who need treatment.

You will see on page 5 that a new perinatal unit is being set up at St John’s Hospital to help new mums who need specialist inpatient care for mental health problems, including severe postnatal depression. It means they can keep their babies with them while they are having their treatment.

I’m delighted to report that Ear Nose and Throat services have also been transferred to St John’s (page 7). The Scottish Executive’s new pharmacy contracts are being introduced this summer with patients able to access many minor ailments through their local pharmacist.

We also have another brand new health centre at Gracemount in Edinburgh.

Congratulations to NHS Lothian teams who have been successful in gaining bronze awards from Scotland’s Health at Work (pages 8 and 9).

And to our world-beating clinical researcher Sheila Morris who has been chosen top study site co-ordinator for £500 by Pharma Times. We all know colleagues who could be described as ‘hidden heroes’ of the health service, and on Page 12 you’ll find one of them.

Dr Martin Tolley was chosen by the British Medical Association as one of its hidden heroes in a recent report and you can read his story in Connections.

Jenifer Stirton
Editor
New unit will let special needs mums stay with their babies

A UNIT for new mothers who need specialist inpatient care for mental health problems, including severe postnatal depression, is due to open in August.

The perinatal mental health unit at St John’s Hospital in Livingston will enable women to keep their babies with them in a safe and supportive environment while they are undergoing treatment.

The six-bedded unit is a joint initiative between five health boards and will serve women from Tayside, Borders, Fife and Highland as well as Lothian.

"This new unit will mean that mums and babies can stay together, which is in everyone’s interests. "

"We plan that the unit will be as home-like as possible and a focus group of mothers has played an important role in advising us on what they would like. “

"Obviously security is also of the utmost importance and we’re taking that very seriously indeed. The unit will have a separate, closed entrance and a baby-tagging system will be in place. “

NHS Lothian is the lead board in the project, providing £311,000 of the £700,000 cost.

But Linda says: “The perinatal mental health beds will be open to women from across much of Scotland – it’s a great example of health boards working together.”

As well as the inpatient beds, NHS Lothian is developing community perinatal support to allow women to be treated in their own homes.

“A specialist perinatal team will work with all community mental health teams across Lothian – it’s a really exciting development,” she added.

Stop Smoking Groups will start at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh (RIE), Astley Ainsley Hospital (AAH), and Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH). There will also be drop-in sessions at the Western General Hospital (WGH). The group meets for an hour once a week for six weeks. There are usually around 10-15 in a group. Please note that they are not therapy groups. The focus is on practical ways to support you to make the change from smoker to non-smoker. To book your place on a course, please contact Stop Smoking Administrator Ada Zhou (above) at stopsmoking.staff@lpct.scot.nhs.uk or 0131 537 9494 (internal ext 49494).

For more info on how to give up smoking, contact your nearest smoking cessation facilitator at: West Lothian - 01506 419666, ext. 3000 or 01506 302225
Midlothian - 0131 536 8971
East Lothian - 01620 827363
North West Edin - 0131 659 7244.
Pilton area only: 0131 551 1671
North East Edin - 0131 536 6247
South West Edin - 0131 537 7446
South Central Edin - 0131 536 9759
South East Edin - 0131 672 9532
Pregnant smokers in Edin/East Lothian/Midlothian - can also phone 0131 536 6453.
Success for AHPs’ patient network

SCOTLAND’S ALLIED HEALTH Professionals (AHPs) are celebrating the success of an innovative multi-disciplinary network to promote clinical effectiveness and practice development and improve patient care.

Around 90 AHPs from across Scotland gathered at Edinburgh’s Playfair Library Hall on 5 April 2006 to attend the launch of ‘Together we can’, the national network’s first report.

This charts the evolution of a network that is supported by NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (QIS), a special health board charged with leading the development of patient services north of the border.

The network now encompasses nine of the allied health professions including arts therapists, dietitians, occupational therapists, orthoptists, physiotherapists, podiatrists, speech and language therapists.

If you would like a copy of the report please contact Jane Higginbottom at ahp.administrator@nhshealth.org.uk or email: pamperpremiere@myedinburgh.org.

HELPING people to have their views and opinions heard – and speaking on their behalf where necessary – is an increasingly important part of the advocacy role.

The Circles Advocacy Team at Edinburgh’s Royal Edinburgh Hospital has been carrying out such work since October 2004.

The project was commissioned by NHS Lothian and The City of Edinburgh Council as a direct result of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 that came into force in October of 2005.

The team – five full-time members and one part-time member – are supported in their work by a project leader and a full time administrator.

Project leader Tina Hannan said: “We support people in a range of issues, often in relation to their care and treatment and in connection with personal and family circumstances, legal matters and in other areas where they want to be heard.

“We can arrange to attend ward rounds and case conferences, and will write letters or put the person who is leaving the hospital setting in touch with community advocacy projects when requested.”

“A large part of our work is concerned with supporting people through individual advocacy at mental health tribunals.

“It might be one aspect of their care people want evaluated, such as their medication, or they may want, on discharge, to have community services in place to help them make the transition from hospital to community.”

Tina added: “We’re also keen to promote awareness of our work with local mental health community groups and organisations.”

If you want further information, contact: Circles Network Advocacy Project, c/o Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Morningside Place, Edinburgh EH10 5HE. Tel/fax: 0131 537 6004, or email: circles.advocacy@myedinburgh.org.

DVD launch is a triumph for Craigmillar and Dr Allison

Since October 2003 we have organised six successful and well attended women’s only pamper nights in Craigmillar,” explained Anne Stronach from the BLF cancer awareness project.

“They provide advice on reducing the risk of cancer, what signs and symptoms to look for and how to live a healthy lifestyle.

“People were attracted by the pampering, of course, such as the taster sessions for aromatherapy, Reiki, reflexology and healthy eating demonstrations, but we were able to put over serious messages in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.”

“The six sessions covered breast, cervical, lung, bowel, and skin cancer and a general overview of cancer awareness.”

The events were captured on film and edited, along with Dr Allison’s sketches performed by actors, into a 20-minute DVD that had its premiere in mid April at the Hays Business Centre in Craigmillar.

“We had really good feedback from the pamper sessions and people said that they had learnt a lot from them.

“We hope the DVD will entertain people and inform them about the risks of cancer and help them understand how they can minimise these risks by leading a healthier lifestyle,” added Anne.

Access all hours

NHS Lothian chief executive James Barbour paid a fact-finding visit to a rough sleepers initiative in Edinburgh.

He toured The Access Point, in Leith Street, as part of a series of monthly visits he is making to health-related projects across Lothian.

The Access Point is a one-stop shop offering health, housing and social work advice to Edinburgh’s homeless people…particularly those who have to sleep rough on the city streets.

Prof. Barbour met staff and clients on his guided tour of the facility.

He was accompanied by Peter Gabbitas, director of health and social care at City of Edinburgh Council and Iain Smith, health and homeless co-ordinator who works closely with The Access Point.

From left, Peter Gabbitas, Iain Smith and James Barbour talk to social worker Claire Pattison at Access Point.

PAMPER PREMIERE!

PAMPER nights and film premieres may be the stuff of movie stars but in Craigmillar it was the finale to an innovative project to raise cancer awareness among local residents.

‘Nae Fear it’s only a smear and other stories’ is a DVD produced from the talks on cancer awareness and feedback from people at the pamper nights held in the Edinburgh housing scheme.

It includes three humorous sketches written by local GP Dr Mandy Alliston to bring home the message about how healthy living can help to reduce the risk of cancer.

The DVD is being distributed to local health professionals and voluntary groups to spread the word throughout the local community.

The pamper nights were the brainchild of Diane Devlin, public health practitioner for SE Edinburgh LHP. The events were planned in partnership with the Big Lottery cancer awareness project, local healthworkers and community groups.

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“We can arrange to attend ward rounds and case conferences, and will write letters or put the person who is leaving the hospital setting in touch with community advocacy projects when requested.”

“A large part of our work at the moment is concerned with supporting people through individual advocacy at mental health tribunals.

“It might be one aspect of their care people want evaluated, such as their medication, or they may want, on discharge, to have community services in place to help them make the transition from hospital to community.”

Tina added: “We’re also keen to promote awareness of our work with local mental health community groups and organisations.”

If you want further information, contact: Circles Network Advocacy Project, c/o Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Morningside Place, Edinburgh EH10 5HE. Tel/fax: 0131 537 6004, or email: circles.advocacy@myedinburgh.org.

“Nae Fear it’s Only a Smear and other stories”

“Nae Fear it's Only a Smear and other stories”

The British Psychological Society’s new president is Ray Miller (above), head of the adult mental health psychology service at NHS Lothian.

A chartered clinical and health psychologist, he is also the health authority’s professional adviser for psychology.

Ray gained his honours degree in psychology at Strathclyde University and completed his Master’s degree in clinical psychology at the University of Liverpool. On qualifying he worked in St Helens and Knowsley and then as clinical director for psychology in Chester before returning north to Edinburgh.

He told Connections: “The importance of psychology in the day to day lives of people throughout the community is increasingly recognised. In business, education, health, sport and the wellbeing of individuals we see the positive difference that an understanding of psychology makes.

“The task of the British Psychological Society is to maintain high standards in the psychological sciences and their application. We will promote and support our members in bringing their knowledge and skills to the wider society to maximise those benefits.”

Miller is named as psychology president

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ADvocacy team are there to help patients

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Pharmacists get set for a new role

THE minor ailment service (MAS), the first of four core elements of the Scottish Executive’s new community pharmacy contract, will begin introduction from 1 June.

The contract is part of a package of measures aimed at modernising the NHS, and is aimed at improving the range and quality of care provided to patients through community pharmacists and their staff.

The minor ailments service and public health service begin in July – the chronic medication service and the acute medication service will be phased in over the next year or so.

The aims of the minor ailment service are:

■ To improve access to advice and medicines for common illnesses
■ To promote care through the community pharmacy setting
■ To transfer care from GPs and nurses to pharmacists where appropriate
■ To help address health inequalities.

A common illness is a self-limiting condition that requires either little or no intervention such as a cough, cold, or constipation.

Individuals who wish to use the minor ailment service must be registered with a GP in Scotland. Patients who are eligible for the service include those exempt from paying prescription charges.

Pre-payment certificate holders and those resident in a care home are excluded from the scheme.

At the beginning of June pharmacists across Scotland will start to inform their patients of this new development, and registration of eligible patients who wish to avail themselves of this service can begin. From 1 July treatment of minor ailments through this service will be possible.

Now pharmacists like Jill Cruickshank are ensuring their eMAS software is enabled and planning how to communicate the service to patients and other healthcare professionals.

Jill works at Lloyds Pharmacy in Rosebery Avenue, South Queensferry. She is one of six ‘champions’ identified by the local pharmacy contractors’ committee who are providing local support to their colleagues in the run-up to the new contract’s introduction under the guidance of NHS Lothian’s managed pharmacy service.

The champions contact details are:

■ Pamela Chisholm: 0 13 3 3 34 4694 (East Lothian and South West Edinburgh)
■ Jo Donaldson 0131 332 5721 (Midlothian and North East Edinburgh)
■ Jill Cruickshank: 0131 331 2579 (North West Edinburgh)
■ Fiona McCready 0131 468 2566 (South Central Edinburgh)
■ Scott Garden 01506 465030 (West Lothian)
■ Sally Connelly 01506 465030 (West Lothian)

Jill told Connections: “I’ve been attending eMAS awareness sessions and letting pharmacists and their staff know what eMAS is all about. “Most people now know that things are changing… the champions’ job is more to do with supporting them to deliver the new contract.

She added: “Some other healthcare professionals have raised healthcare issues around patient confidentiality, but more than three quarters of Lothian’s 178 pharmacies have installed a consultation area or room where they can give information and advice to customers confidentially and all members of the pharmacy team are bound by a confidentiality agreement which is reinforced in the training all counter assistants must complete.”

Vouchers can be saved up and used when needed for children up to 15 years old, or 16 if they have a disability. The scheme will be offered to all employees and both partners are eligible.

Debbie added: “Promotional material is being finalised at present and we hope to be able to start distributing this within the next few weeks.

“If you have any questions relating to this please wait for more detailed information which will either address any queries directly or refer you to someone at Imagine who can assist.”

NHS Lothian is on track to have its child care voucher scheme for employees up and running by this summer.

Staff will be able to exchange part of their salary for child care vouchers up to the value of £35 per week, or £245 per month, to be spent on child care with registered and approved carers. Nursery, childminding, after-school care and holiday play schemes are all included.

Imagine Co-operative Childcare has been appointed as the designated agency to deal with the day-to-day administration of the scheme following a formal tendering process.

Further information on Imagine is available at www.childcarevouchers.coop

A working group, chaired by Debbie Walker, human resources manager with the Primary Care Organisation and Community Health Partnerships, has been developing the scheme over the last few months.

Debbie said: “We’re hopeful that the scheme will be up and running by this summer and we’re pulling out all the stops to achieve this.”

VOUCHER SCHEME IS ON TRACK

AROUND forty clinicians and managers attended a meeting on the management of long-term conditions at the Chancellor’s Building at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh recently.

They discussed the work of the Long Term Conditions Steering Group and output from a patient’s and public workshop looking at long term conditions that was held in March.

Long-term conditions (LTCs) and their management pose an ever-increasing challenge for health and care services and are given prominence in the Kerr Report and ‘Delivering for Health’.

Dr Brian Montgomery, associate medical director – service modernisation at NHS Lothian spoke at the meeting.

He said: “It is reckoned that as many as one in five of the population has some form of LTC and that one in three households in the UK has someone who has at least one LTC.

“This is only likely to increase as the population lives longer. People with LTCs are also more likely to be admitted to hospital as an emergency and more likely to have a longer stay once there.

“A different approach to managing LTCs would result in an improvement in the health and quality of life of affected patients but also reduce demands on health services for emergency or unscheduled care.”

The management of LTCs forms a major part of the Primary Care Modernisation Strategy now in the final stages of development.

The strategy will take account of the input and experience from within Lothian and more widely and will also be responsive to the needs and wishes of patients with LTCs.

The aims are to improve the quality of life of patients with LTCs, equip health and care services to meet the challenge and minimise demands on acute hospital services.

Dr Brian Montgomery
The move is designed to establish St John’s as a centre of excellence for head and neck surgery and medicine.

Brian Cavanagh, chairman of NHS Lothian, said: “We have always said that St John’s has a secure future and we have always made clear our intention to invest in the facilities at St John’s.

“Contrary to what was said about centralising services, we are moving facilities from Edinburgh as part of our plans for delivering even more services at St John’s.”

Dr Karen Watson, associate clinical director for head and neck surgery and medicine at St John’s, said: “We are delighted to be able to welcome colleagues to work with us.

“We see this as an improvement which will further develop our ability to offer an excellent service to patients from across Lothian.”

The move involves the relocation of in-patient and most day-case ear, nose and throat surgery to St John’s. Outpatient clinics will continue to be provided in a number of locations across Lothian to ensure local access.

The transfer creates a centre of excellence at St John’s for head and neck surgery and medicine, as the specialities will join other specialities such as maxillo-facial and plastic surgery already located there.

The transfer was approved by the Scottish Executive on the recommendation of NHS Lothian as part of the board’s ongoing “Improving Care, Investing in Change” development programme.

Other future plans for St John’s include the establishment of a short stay centre for elective surgery, while the hospital recently celebrated being conferred with university teaching status.
Special help for sick kids

A UNIQUE centre that will provide invaluable help and support to many of Scotland’s most seriously ill children has been opened next door to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh.

The Sick Kids Drop in Centre is the first of its kind in the UK and aims to do for children and their families what the successful Maggie’s Centres have done for cancer sufferers.

It is the latest initiative from the Sick Kids Friends Foundation, a charity that has raised over £6 million in the past 12 years to improve the treatment and care offered to sick children. The centre has cost £135,000 to establish and annual running costs will be £50,000 a year. The foundation is continuing its fundraising efforts to meet the on-going running costs.

The new centre provides a place of respite for children and parents close to the hospital but away from it to aid the sense of having a break from the hospital. Parents and children will be able to access alternative therapies in a special quiet space or play in the new centre’s activity room.

COME ON IN... YOUR PATIENT NUMBER’S UP!

NHS Lothian aims to be using community health index (CHI) numbers for all patient details by the end of June.

A CHI number, which all patients registered with a GP already have and is unique to each individual, is regarded as the only way to safely transfer details between sites, services and agencies.

To get up-to-date specialist treatment, patients are often seen by many doctors, nurses and other clinical staff in GP surgeries, clinics and hospitals.

Paulette Channon, CHI/EMPI project manager, explained: “Information related to patients has to be available at the point of need.

“Traditionally, different hospitals and sometimes even different departments within the same hospital used a variety of number systems to identify patient records.

In Lothian we have 800 various hospitals and clinics which can cause problems when trying to join up information from different sources.

“This can cause delays and even serious risk for the patient.”

Using CHI numbers on all letters, reports and appointment cards means the patient will automatically be matched with their details.

As the CHI number will be the unique identification of the patient it helps with electronic transfer.

Paulette added: “To help with implementing the new transfer process, we would ask you to use CHI wherever possible.

“It will be on all labels within patient records. If you don’t have a patient’s CHI please follow up by getting one.”

Anyone with questions on using CHI should contact paulette.channon@luht.scot.nhs.uk

Anatomy - time to get in on the act

A NEW exhibition in Edinburgh brings together for the first time rare anatomical items from Scotland’s museums, libraries and galleries.

The touring exhibition Anatomy Acts will run at the City Art Centre until 9 July. It explores the social, cultural and scientific significance of anatomy in Scotland over the past 500 years.

The majority of the 350 items in the exhibition are on public display for the first time, giving visitors a rare opportunity to see some of Scotland’s finest anatomical treasures together in one place.

Since the 18th century, Scotland has laid claim to being among the most important countries for medical training, teaching, practice and research in Europe.

It continues to be at the forefront of health and medical developments in terms of professional development and new technologies for medical imaging.

The exhibits at Anatomy Acts provide an insight into anatomical teaching resources of the past, present and future and reflect Scotland’s pre-eminent role in medical developments of modern times.

Connections offers a sincere apology to Deaf Action, the charity that provides a range of services to deaf people and their families, for misspelling its name in the “Parents get a real voice” story in the March/April 2006 issue (Number 13).

Connections
NHS Lothian enjoyed triple success at Scotland’s Health at Work (SHAW) Awards, where the theme was ‘celebrating achievement’.

Teams from the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, Royal Victoria Hospital and Western General Hospital received SHAW bronze awards, at the event hosted by NHS Lothian workplace health promotion team.

Representatives from 42 organisations attended the lunch, held in Edinburgh’s Caledonian Hilton Hotel.

During the ceremony, Gill Johnston, national co-ordinator for SHAW, provided an insight into the last ten years of the initiative, and Steve Bell, strategic director of the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, outlined the programme’s future.

There was special joy for the radiology department in Edinburgh’s Western General Hospital, which has become the first hospital department in Scotland to successfully implement the Scotland’s Health At Work (SHAW) scheme.

The unit, which forms part of the Department of Clinical Neurosciences, received its bronze SHAW award from NHS Lothian chief executive Professor James Barbour at the award ceremony.

The SHAW initiative is a national award programme that aims to raise the profile of health in the workplace, with a range of health-enhancing activities for staff.

Radiographer Barbara Nugent, who is the department’s SHAW facilitator, told Connections: “As you can imagine participating in the scheme has proved a tremendous benefit to everyone in the department.

“We are continuing to implement health promotion ideas with ongoing taster classes of yoga, the Alexander technique*, and various complementary therapies.

“We are getting a nutritionist to give us a talk on healthy eating and planning to provide organic fruit to staff on a regular basis.

“We are also looking at providing health checks for staff and creating a garden for staff to sit out in when they are on their breaks.”

“The Alexander Technique is a method that works to change (movement) habits in people’s everyday activities. It is a simple and practical method for improving ease and freedom of movement, balance, support and coordination.

*The Alexander Technique is a method that works to change (movement) habits in people’s everyday activities. It is a simple and practical method for improving ease and freedom of movement, balance, support and coordination.

**About Sheila Morris:**

Sheila Morris is a clinical researcher who has been named top study site co-ordinator for 2005 by Pharma Times, beating off international competition for the prize.

Sheila told Connections: "I had to go through several rounds during the summer and autumn of last year including a written submission and an interview."

"Then I had to wait until the awards night in a London hotel to find out that I had won.

"It was an absolutely lovely night and I’m really glad I ended up in first place!"

Sheila’s award of £1,000, a glass trophy and a certificate, was sponsored by the Institute of Clinical Research, and presented at a glittering gala award night at London’s famous Café Royal by institute chair Dr Tina Barton.

Dr David Wilks, consultant physician at RIDU said: “We are very proud of Sheila. Her prize is richly deserved and was won against stiff competition from an international field.

“The runner up came from Australia.”
Barbara Nugent (centre) and her colleague Evelyn Cowie receive the Bronze award for Scotland’s Health at Work from James Barbour.
STAFF from NHS Lothian and The City of Edinburgh Council met recently to discuss their fact-finding trip to Gävle, in Sweden.

As we reported in issue 12 of Connections (Jan/Feb 2006), the group of ten staff were funded for the three-day trip last autumn by SCANSCOT Travel Scholarships.

The scholarships have been running for some years in East and Midlothian and have now been extended to cover the whole of NHS Lothian.

The latest visit allowed the Scottish delegates to examine how Sweden’s health and social care services look after older people.

It provided an excellent opportunity for NHS and local authority staff to learn about joint health and social care capacity planning for older people in the Scandinavian country – and to consider the differences in service provision in Sweden and those provided in Lothian.

Since their return, the teams have been working on their individual projects, which included:

- the provision of continuing care services in care homes
- day care services
- short breaks and respite services
- housing solutions
- health improvement and health promotion for older people.

The members met to explore ways of building on their experiences and how to take forward some of the good practice they saw in Sweden.

They have devised an action plan that will be presented to NHS Lothian’s executive management team and The City of Edinburgh Council’s operational management group.

Watch out for further information in the next issue of Connections.

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ROBERT Anderson (right) has been reappointed as a member of Lothian NHS Board.

He is a retired NHS manager, and a member of the management committee of Melville Housing Association Limited, a charitable body that provides affordable housing in communities in Midlothian and South Lanarkshire.

Mr Anderson is also a volunteer with the Scottish Mining Museum in Newtongrange, and a member of Alzheimer Scotland Action on Dementia.

He has been a member of Lothian NHS Board since 2004, and does not hold any other ministerial appointments.

Mr Anderson’s re-appointment will be for a period of three years from April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2009.

The announcement of his reappointment was made by Health Minister Andy Kerr MSP.
JUDY Gibson has been appointed as the lead allied health professional for the primary care organisation (PCO) representing allied health professionals (AHPs) across Lothian.

Her role will be to ensure AHPs are involved in the strategic development and integration of their services both within the PCO and through the transition to community health partnerships (CHPs).

She took up her position on 1 April for a period of 12 months and has joined the senior management team and board of the PCO.

JUDY TAKES LEAD ROLE IN INTEGRATION

Judy said: "I’ve had lots of experience that will be invaluable in this new role.

“For example, over 12 years I’ve managed a variety of OT teams and services in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, Liberton, East and Midlothian and most recently the Astley Ainslie Hospital.

“In the last two years I was project managing a demand management review across Lothian, and this has given me valuable experience and exposure to the wider health and social care issues. I’m currently also one of two nominated individuals in Lothian participating in a national strategic clinical leadership programme and am very much looking forward to putting the skills I acquire from this into practice.”

Part of Judy’s new responsibility will be to work collaboratively with lead AHPs in the CHPs and other partner organisations to develop a consistent joint framework for strategic and professional development.

Key areas she will represent in the lead AHP role include: art therapy, dietetics, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, radiography and speech and language therapy.

DIGNITY, respect and care, in addition to technical nursing competence, are fundamental to providing a world-class patient experience.

This is what Heather Tierney-Moore is aiming for as the new director of nursing at NHS Lothian.

Heather took up the post in January after moving to Edinburgh from her previous position as chief nurse with Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

“I’ve been made very welcome here. I’m quite settled now in the job and excited about the challenges ahead,” explained Heather who now lives in Edinburgh’s New Town with her IT consultant husband Damian.

“I was very interested in working for Lothian NHS because of the scope of the Single System. I’m absolutely passionate about improving people’s health and patients’ experience of the NHS and this system gives us the potential to deliver the vision of world-class healthcare.

“My challenge is to see that nurses are supported and empowered to make this happen and to be part of the process – to lead and help design the service changes.

“Our front line staff are closest to patients so they know what works and what doesn’t. I’m keen they play a key role in the development of patient services.

“At the end of 12 months I hope that we will have created a team of nurses and allied health professionals all committed to working together across the Single System.

“I want to harness their collective strength and innovation to help shape healthcare to the patients’ needs.

“The overall aim is to build on the great work already done throughout NHS Lothian and continue to increase our quality of care.

“To do this effectively we need to give the patients a voice and for us to listen to their views across all our areas.

“As well as being technically proficient and professional we also have to focus on ‘fundamental’ aspects of nursing that ensures people in our care have dignity, respect and safety at the core of their experience.”

Heather is enjoying her new life in Scotland and is keen to improve her golf and explore the west coast, particularly the islands.

However, after living in the rural wilds of the Peak district where the local shop was miles away, she is finding it hard to resist the daily temptation for a spot of retail therapy in the capital.

THE second annual child protection conference takes place in Edinburgh on Friday 2 June.

The conference will focus on substance misuse, its causes, the impact on young lives, and what is being done.

Napier University’s Craiglockhart Campus is the venue for the event, where delegates will receive updates on what is being done professionally to tackle the issue, locally and nationally.

Contact Nicola Brown: 0333 537 6877 or nicola.brown@lptc.scot.nhs.uk

PARTNERSHIP CALLS FOR VOLUNTEERS

A NEW partnership has been forged between NHS Scotland (NHSS) and the international development charity Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO).

The scheme is aimed at encouraging NHSS staff to volunteer for service with VSO for up to two years in some of the poorest countries in the world.

It has been agreed that during their volunteer period, employees’ pension and employment benefits will not be lost.

Urgent vacancies currently exist in several areas of specialty and VSO is looking for applicants with skills and at least three to five years’ experience in those areas, which include:

- Doctors with experience of surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics and HIV and AIDS
- Health managers
- Health promotion specialists
- Nutritionists/dietitians
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational therapists
- Speech and language therapists
- Biomedical scientists
- Other

You can find out more about the scheme at the Scottish Executive website (www.scotland.gov.uk) and SHOW website (www.show.scot.nhs.uk) and you can also go to the NHSScotland workforce website www.workinginhealth.com
THE ‘HIDDEN HEROES OF THE NHS’

SCOTLAND’S ‘Hidden Heroes’ of the NHS have been thrust into the spotlight by the British Medical Association (BMA) and the Scottish Parliament.

A motion lodged by the late SNP MSP Margaret Ewing invited the Parliament to welcome the publication of the BMA’s recent report, ‘The Hidden Heroes of the NHS’, which highlights the significant contribution that the staff and associate specialists (SAS) group of doctors play in providing patient care in NHS Scotland.

She asked the Members to note that 1,460 SAS doctors operate in Scotland but that their work remains unacknowledged and unrewarded, despite the fact that SAS doctors account for 39 per cent of the medical workforce in accident and emergency departments.

NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS THE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION THAT THE STAFF AND ASSOCIATE SPECIALISTS GROUP OF DOCTORS PLAY IN PROVIDING PATIENT CARE IN NHS SCOTLAND

And, in parliamentary language, she hoped that the Scottish Parliament would ‘believe that recognition of, and investment in, this group is much needed, as they are an untapped resource and essential to the modernisation of NHS Scotland, and that the Scottish Executive will recognise this fact.”

Christine Robison, chair of Lothian area staff and associate specialists committee, told Connections: “The staff and associate specialists are a group who are not consultants, but they are not trainees either. They are the steady stalwart workers who form the backbone of many departments throughout the NHS Lothian area.

“In Lothian they are a group that do receive great support and appreciation from the management and the consultant staff; but modernisation of their terms and conditions is long overdue.”

Audrey’s got a £20,000 smile!

AUDREY Pringle thought she’d been April Fooloned when, on Friday, 31 March she had a call from Your Staff Benefits informing her that she had won the Lorna’s Lottery Superdraw prize of £20,000.

In fact, after letting the news sink in over the weekend, she phoned back, just to make sure! Audrey joined Lorna’s Lottery as a student nurse, way back when it first started in 1989. She’s kept the same five chance numbers throughout the years, even though they’ve never proved particularly lucky – until now! The £20,000 win is Audrey’s first although she has many friends and colleagues who have won in the past.

“It’s nice to look down the list of winners and see a few names that you recognise,” she laughed. “(Yes… especially when one of them’s your own, Audrey!) And what is she going to do with her big win? “I’m going on a holiday in the sun with the family.” And with £20,000 to spend, we’re sure that’s going to be some holiday. Congratulations Audrey!

Dr Martin Tolley on a mission

DR MARTIN Tolley is in a unique position to meet the needs of his patients.

For part of the week, he is an associate specialist primary care physician in acute medicine at the Medical Assessment Unit of Edinburgh’s busy Western General Hospital and for the remainder, he works as a GP in an inner city practice.

As part of the multi-disciplinary team based in the city’s second biggest hospital, he assesses patients with complex medical needs, determining whether they should be admitted onwards to the acute ward, rehabilitation unit or to be discharged home with appropriate support services in place.

Working this way creates a streamlined and more efficient pathway for the patient.

The medical assessment team can see patients quickly following admission and reduce the length of wait they have before discharge, meaning that they get the care they need more quickly.

The team liaises closely with general practice and primary care teams to ensure continuity of care for the patient on discharge home.

It is part of a joint NHS Lothian initiative in primary and secondary care which seeks to improve the patient journey in acute medicine and Dr Tolley’s post at the Western General is one of four such posts in Edinburgh.

The assessment unit admits between 400 and 500 patients every month and, since the beginning of his post in early 2003, Dr Tolley has assessed more than 2000 patients.

But his work does not end there. For four sessions each week, he leaves the confines of the hospital for his other job as a partner in an inner city general practice in Edinburgh.

Here, he spends his time with patients who have a radically different range of clinical needs from those he sees in hospital.

Working in primary and secondary care environments gives Dr Tolley a unique perspective on the care he provides in both situations.

He said: “I find that my experience on both sides of the fence allows me to identify how best I can meet the needs of each patient, in terms of acute referral to hospital and downstream management in hospital towards discharge home.

“Although I have less clinical autonomy as a primary care physician than as a GP, in both roles I am supported by a successful multi-disciplinary team.”

You’ve got to be in it to win it!

Would you like to be a winner?

Lorna’s Lottery has a regular first prize of £5,000, with mega draw prizes of £10,000 in July and November and a super draw prize of £20,000 in March.

Chances are only £1.50 each for monthly paid staff or 35p for weekly paid staff and deductions are made directly from your salary.

You can print off an application form at www.your-benefits.co.uk/lornaslottery or request one from Mary on 0131 624 4600.

Remember, you’ve got to be in it to win it!”
WHEN riots were reported in the southern Iraqi town of Basra in September 2005 Lieutenant Colonel Lorna Martin and her team at the 50-bed Scottish field hospital based themselves for ‘incoming’.

Lorna, like other Territorial Army medics, had swapped the cool climes of Scotland for the furnace heat of the Iraqi desert at the Shaiba army base to help support the regular army in their peace-keeping role in the city.

She said that day the scene was reminiscent of an episode of MASH: “The sky was buzzing with helicopters ferrying in soldiers and casualties. We were fighting with insurgents in Basra, but the heat was as intense as that day, she and her team were kept busy. They were often working 18-20 hour days, sometimes they had to wash off the plane in the UK and get off the plane in the UK and arrive back at their comrades still sweating in Basra.”

Not that Lorna’s team had much opportunity to stand around and watch — they had to attend to the wounded.

“High velocity bullets and home made explosives and incendiary devices create an enormous amount of damage to limbs and the body but it’s our job to be close at hand to repair the damage to the best of our ability and return the soldiers home or back to their unit,” explained Lorna, a clinical services development manager in East Lothian and now acting as matron to the field hospital.

Although her three month secondment was not always as intense as that day, she and her team were kept busy. They were often working 18-20 hour days, sometimes up to seven days a week. “Although we had shifts we were on call whenever we were needed. In fact it was better when we were busy.”

Another NHS Lothian colleague enjoying the challenge was West Lothian community midwife Margaret Cefferty – but she obviously wasn’t there to deliver babies. Margaret, a veteran of the first Gulf War, is trained in battlefield advanced trauma life support to help medics save lives in the front line.

While they were no strangers to hard work they certainly found the midday heat exhausting.

“Dealing with the heat was the hardest thing,” said Margaret. “Although we were under canvas in air-conditioned tents the outside could reach 50°C. However they could get some respite at the army base which had sports facilities, canteens and shops.

Lorna was impressed with the strict hygiene regulations. “The food was excellent and the place so clean. You had to wash your hands before eating and as a result we had very low incidences of diarrhoea and vomiting which commonly afflict soldiers in this area. It’s a simple practice that we could learn a lot from in the NHS.”

Margaret said she enjoyed the experience and the camaraderie in the camp but was ready to get home after three months. “I was so glad to get off the plane in the UK and breathe in the fresh cold air!” she added.

The temperature plummeted further a month later when she went off with the TA to compete in the Army medical ski championships in the Alps!

WINNERS of our Fairtrade competition in the March/April issue of Connections are Adrian Koning, staff nurse in the eye department at St John’s Hospital, Livingston and Diane Devlin, public health practitioner for South East Edinburgh, and was followed by the ‘Dam Fine Drummers’ samba band from Craigmiller.

A wide range of interesting stalls and workshops featured healthy eating, community food initiatives, composting, and gardening with nature in mind.

There was seed sowing, and story telling for the many youngsters who came along, and everyone could get their hands fine and greasy making seed bird feeders to take home, thanks to the Edinburgh Greenbelt Trust.

Delicious home made soup and organic food kept people warm all day, and relaxing Indian head and back on-site massage was on offer to show how to ease those gardening aches and pains.

The project already has a number of regular participants coming along to help clear the site and get the crops going.

If you would like more information please contact either Anne Jepson on 07789 500388 or Amy Palmer on 07789 650878, or email: anne.jepson@lpct.scot.nhs.uk or: amy.palmer@lpct.scot.nhs.uk

CELEBRATING THE NHS LOTHIAN STAFF WHO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SUPPORT

WIN an iPod

WINNERS of our Fairtrade competition in the March/April issue of Connections are Adrian Koning, staff nurse in the eye department at St John’s Hospital, Livingston and Diane Devlin, public health practitioner for South East Edinburgh.

A NEW CD-Rom and website aimed at tackling stress and anxiety among teenagers has been launched by the Young People’s Unit in Edinburgh.

Stress and anxiety can have a significant effect on teenagers’ current and future wellbeing. Anxiety in adolescence can interfere with social and academic learning during important developmental periods, making teenagers more vulnerable to depression, drug dependency and educational under-achievement.

Early recognition and intervention are recognised as important factors in reducing the complications of stress and anxiety in young people, as research shows that one or two people in a class of 30 children may be experiencing significant symptoms of anxiety.

The programme’s CD and website (www.stressandeverythinginternteangers.com) was funded by the Scottish Executive’s National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being.

It is an integrated multi-media package primarily for young people, but is also useful for families, teachers, mental health professionals, voluntary agencies and social workers.

The resource includes self-help techniques and acts as a guide to seeking professional help and support.

Combining education about stress and anxiety with interactive technology, sections include an audio relaxation exercise and games. The package provides information based on current evidence about both psychological and pharmacological treatment.

It also features personal stories and artwork from young people who have experienced stress and anxiety-related problems.

The CD was piloted with young people and professionals - 94 per cent of teenagers and 91 per cent of the professionals rated it as useful. In addition, what teenagers thought of it was used to shape the final content and layout.

Copies of the new CD are being sent to every secondary school in Scotland.

If you would like a free copy of the CD, contact Assistant Psychologist Margi Amin at the Young People’s Unit on 0131 537 5944 or email magi.amin@lpct.scot.nhs.uk
**Centre is ‘first class’ facility for community**

DONALD Anderson, the Leader of The City of Edinburgh Council, officially opened new state-of-the-art Gracemount Medical Centre in April.

The £3 million building in south east Edinburgh replaces the Howdenhall Medical Practice.

It offers important community health services, including midwives, the district nursing team and school nurses, and has been open to patients since November 2005.

In addition, other services based at the centre include paediatric speech and language therapy, the community learning disability team, podiatry and the local public health practitioner.

Brian Carugh, chair of NHS Lothian, said: “This is a first class facility for the local community and the integration of a wide range of health and community services provides enormous benefits for patients and staff alike.

“It enables NHS Lothian to provide patients with one point of access and highlights our commitment to patient-centred care.”

Councillor Anderson, said: “This important new medical centre is one of the last pieces of the jigsaw in the regeneration of the Gracemount area. “The staff and patients now have an excellent facility which will provide the highest standards of care.”

Child and family health services are also based at the centre, offering baby massage, smoking cessation, healthy eating and health advice for older people.

The medical centre is situated on the former site of Liberton Area Handicapped Association (LAHA) centre which is now located adjacent to the medical practice.

LAHA provides day care services for older people, people with dementia and physical and learning disabilities.

**DRIVE TO INCREASE NURSES**

A SERVICE to encourage nurse recruitment and retention was officially launched at Liberton Hospital on 13 March, following successful pilot projects.

The service, entitled ‘Medicine and Associated Services, Nursing and Midwifery Recruitment and Retention’ tackles the issue of finding and keeping skilled nurses in NHS Lothian.

This builds on the six-month pilot project started in March 2005 by NHS Lothian’s medicine and associated services to review how nursing vacancies are filled.

Pat Wynne, a cardiology charge nurse, was asked to lead the project in partnership with human resources recruitment.

Pat said: “Following a review of present practice and the introduction of a generic interview process, the initial results were very promising with a reduction in nursing vacancies to their lowest rate in ten years.”

After this pilot a decision was made to implement a further year long trial to incorporate surgical and women and children’s services. The initial impact was remarkable, with 80 per cent of all posts being filled from the generic interview process.

The idea behind the service is to identify appropriate staff and match them to the relevant clinical service.

“The service’s role is one of a provider, meeting the needs of LUHD and potential employees. It has already identified and interviewed 400 individuals.”

The service is looking at aspects that can influence a nurse’s decision to work in a certain area, such as accommodation, flexible working, education and staff support.

The aim is to provide a nurse with a lifestyle built around the job and to hold on to more staff from recruitment to retirement.

Following its launch, the recruitment team and the Royal College of Nursing held recruitment road shows across Scotland, visiting four city centre locations, to promote nursing opportunities across NHS Scotland.

The LUHD has also set up nurse retention groups of charge nurses, clinical nurse managers and staff representative groups.

Pat added: “Nursing recruitment is a global challenge, not just a British one. While Scotland as a whole has fared better than many of our colleagues across the United Kingdom, Lothian has seen a higher increase in vacancy levels than many other parts of NHS Scotland.

“While there are clear indicators as to why this is the case, such as the cost of housing, it was clear that a more proactive approach had to be taken to tackle the issues facing NHS Lothian.”

**COUNCIL LEADER OFFICIALLY OPENS £3M HEALTH CENTRE**

**MOVE TO BOOST HEALTH IN SCHOOLS**

A CONFERENCE to help teachers boost health promotion in schools took place at Kings Manor Hotel in Edinburgh recently.

Teachers from schools across Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian attended the Healthy Schools conference where they got guidance from health promotion experts from NHS Lothian, NHS Scotland and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education on how to develop health promotion initiatives in their own schools.

The conference was a partnership venture between NHS Lothian and the four Lothian local authorities.

Between them, the partners have developed the healthy schools scheme to provide schools with a framework for health promoting schools’ development as well as recognition and feedback on their achievements.

Luisa Walker, senior health promotion specialist for schools said: “Schools in Scotland have been set the target of becoming a health promoting school by 2009.

“This encourages us to consider the whole child within the context of a whole school and the conference highlighted all the hard work that is currently going on within schools.

“I believe that by working together we are able to ensure that a joint approach is taken to deliver the best possible service.”

**Return course pays dividends**

NURSES who are returning to the profession are taking advantage of courses organised by NHS Lothian.

The return to nursing course runs for six weeks, and is scheduled to end in June, when hopefully 11 registered nurses will be ready to start work.

Since 1996 NHS Lothian University Hospital Division has run 19 of these courses, encouraging more than 300 nurses back into practice.

Course leader Irene Lawry said: “This is a very rewarding group of staff to support and work with, and I am delighted that the vast majority take up NHS employment with us.

“They become valuable members of the nursing team.”

She added: “We are always grateful to the clinical areas across NHS Lothian for supporting returners and offering them a placement.

“On this course the placements will take place in the community, and at St John’s, the Western General, the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Simples neantial and the RIE. Our thanks go to everyone who helps with this.”

Teaching on the course is a collaborative programme between NHS Lothian and NHS Borders, and is delivered by specialists from both these organisations.
**HOUSE of HELP**

Benefits of Gracemount flat go on show to MSPs

SUBSIDISED fruit and vegetables, dietary advice, baby massage classes and plenty of help and advice – all are on the agenda for the residents of south east Edinburgh thanks to the Fala court community flat.

And its benefits will be going on show at the Scottish Parliament after a special request from the MSP who officially launched the flat two years ago.

An average 170 people a week visit the flat in Gracemount Drive, which puts on a structured programme of activities every day.

The flat is the result of a joint project between NHS Lothian and The City of Edinburgh Council’s housing and social care departments and is used to give people health and advice in a non-medical environment.

Community development facilitator Jennifer Fairgrieve co-ordinates the different activities, along with the Link health visitor Becky Weatherstone.

She said: "In June, we’ll be holding an exhibition at the Scottish Parliament for all MSPs in order that they can see what we do. This was arranged after a request by Margo Macdonald, who launched our flat."

"The exhibition will involve pictures of the flat and also the one in Craigour and information about each of the different services that use the facilities.

"We’ll also be producing a ten-minute DVD that will play throughout the three days of the exhibition.

"We have had a lot of visitors over the two years. Most recently, the Health Minister Andy Kerr came by, along with Nigel Griffiths MP after an invite by Margo Macdonald.

"The BBC has also done some filming in the flat for a further education programme.

"Because the flat is becoming so well known, I’ve had a lot of people from other areas in the city approach me looking to set up similar health facilities. We’re also hoping to start up a youth group and a toy library later this year at our flat."

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A BETTER sense of well-being and a decrease in physical tension are among the benefits reported by patients recovering from strokes and brain injuries, thanks to aromatherapy.

Aromatherapy massage sessions started at the Astley Ainslie Hospital in 2001 as a pilot project by the local charity ECAS that was so successful it has now become a regular service.

NHS Lothian has now decided to fund the project through endowment money and take over its management, leaving ECAS to research other projects of possible benefit to those with physical disabilities.

ECAS carried out a survey to find out if the aromatherapy was beneficial or not.

The majority of patients receive hand, neck, shoulder or foot massages. The treatments make the patients more relaxed and help with circulation and joint mobility.

These patients often have to stay in hospitals for months at a time and the aromatherapy sessions give them something different to do. The service will now provide about 300 people with 600 massages every year.

The hospital’s general manager Robert Aitken said aromatherapy was used to complement conventional treatments.

He explained: “It’s about people’s well-being and about feeling relaxed and less tense at what is, I am sure, an anxious time in hospital for them.”

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**HAVING A BALL AT THE TEA ‘DANCE’**

DOCTORS and nurses at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital had a great time at their ball and raised a magnificent £250 for the hospital’s Veranda Tea Club.

The ‘club’ is a tearoom and meeting place for patients at the hospital, and is run by volunteers.

The ball was organised by Doctors Ben Baig, Andrew McKechanie, Jane Walker, Louise Mowatt and Fiona Murray, and Staff Nurse Eileen Clark.

Highlight of the evening was a specially made video of ‘Is This The Way to Amarillo’ featuring hospital staff.

The ball was held at Craig House – home of the old Royal Edinburgh Hospital.

This year’s ball will be held on Friday 29 September.
COMMUNITY mental health worker Sheila Anderson is enjoying a career break in one of Scotland’s most remote places.

Sheila is working for a Christian charitable trust on Papa Westray, in the extreme north of the Orkney Islands.

Most of the time, all Sheila has for company is a bunch of puppets!

She said: “I decided I wanted to take a break from work and was able to take up a post with the World Exchange Scottish volunteer programme.”

The role of the community mental health worker is split 50/50 working between professionals and referred cases.

“Often this involves coming to an understanding of what lies behind a behavioural difficulty. I have found that puppets can help patients to come to that understanding,” she said.

“Children often let adults know there is an emotional problem through their behaviour – this is true whatever the age from babies right through to old age – and you can communicate things with a puppet that can’t be said otherwise.”

“Through personal development training at work, I focused on the use of puppets in therapy and education. What I’m doing here is drawing on that.”

Sheila communicates with church youth groups, local schoolchildren, elderly groups, and the disabled all by using puppets.

For children that could involve educational topics, for the elderly it could feature reminiscence sessions and for people with emotional problems it could be to help them with therapy.

For Sheila, who’s used to sharing a home in Edinburgh with her husband and grown-up sons, the peace and tranquillity is bliss. And so is getting to watch the odd TV programme.

Sheila added: “I’m often on the phone to my husband Ian and he’s coming up for a holiday soon. I miss the family and I wanted to be within relatively easy travelling distance when I got involved with World Exchange.”

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