

# Report of Secretary for Scotland to Guild Council Meeting 16/5/13

## Group Meetings

There have been no local meetings since my last report to Council.

## In the Press

**04/03/13** NHS Scotland is reported to be safer than ever as latest figures show hospital mortality has drastically reduced. Across Scotland there has been a 12.4 per cent reduction in deaths – equating to over 8,500 lives saved – since the introduction of the Scottish Patient Safety Programme in 2008. Measures put in place as part of the national programme include: a safety checklist to be completed before operations take place, more ward rounds, double-checking medicines and an early warning system for critically ill patients. Cabinet Secretary for Health Alex Neil announced the expansion of the safety programme to maternity units and mental health services. Originally a five year programme, a three year extension was announced in June 2012 which aims to reduce Scotland’s Hospital Standardised Mortality Ratio by 20 per cent and ensure 95 per cent of patients will suffer no avoidable harm.

**05/03/13** NHS boards and their local authority partners are trialling models similar to the ‘Hospital at Home’ initiative, which has been piloted by North Lanarkshire Partnership and enabled 80 per cent of patients to stay in their home rather than being admitted to hospital. It involves a team of nurses, allied health professionals, healthcare support workers, social care staff, GPs and consultants caring for patients at home, allowing them to remain in familiar surroundings with family and friends close by.

**07/03/13** GPs are set to help patients get healthier by highlighting the many benefits of physical activity. New ‘brief interventions’ will ask patients about their levels of physical activity and offer advice and follow-up support if appropriate, in the same way as already happens across the NHS for smoking and alcohol. GPs and health professionals in six health board areas (NHS Ayrshire & Arran, NHS Borders, NHS Grampian, NHS Lothian, NHS Tayside & NHS Western Isles) will encourage adults to get active in a bid to tackle a range of health problems, as physical inactivity contributes to nearly 2,500 premature deaths every year in Scotland and can cause heart disease, stroke, obesity or depression.

**13/03/13** One million pounds of European funding is being invested in developing innovative telehealth solutions to treat patients closer to home. Across Scotland, between 2006 and 2011, around 44,000 people received a telecare service, which helped to avoid 8,700 emergency admissions to hospital, and over 3,800 admissions to care homes. Staff at New Craigs Hospital are able to use a live link up with Abbeyfield Care Home to provide specialist assessment and treatment for care home residents, and to offer advice to care home staff. It reduces the need for staff and patients to make the four hour round trip for hospital treatment.

**18/03/13** GPs in Scotland are set to become even safer as the world’s first patient safety programme for primary care is launched. GPs and their staff will undertake safety surveys and

case note reviews to increase staff awareness and integrate patient safety into their daily work to reduce avoidable harm. This follows on from the successful patient safety initiatives in hospitals which has seen a 12.4 per cent reduction in death rates since 2007. This means that for the first time almost all patient care will be covered by the Scottish Patient Safety Programme with initiatives now up and running in GP surgeries, hospitals, mental health and maternity services.

**24/03/13** NHS grounds to be completely smoke-free by 2015 under new Scottish Government plans and patients, visitors and staff will no longer be able to smoke on NHS sites. People who do smoke will be offered advice and support to help them not to smoke during hospital visits as well as access to specialist smoking cessation services for those wanting to quit. NHS Boards will be required to implement and enforce smoke-free policies across their grounds by March 2015. The new measures will not apply to mental health facilities, which have an exemption to allow the provision of designated smoking rooms under the original 2005 smoke-free legislation.

**27/03/13** Scotland has set an ambitious target to become tobacco-free – by having less than five per cent the population choosing to smoke by 2034. The aim is part of a new tobacco control strategy, launched to reduce the number of people choosing to smoke. The strategy supports the introduction of standardised packaging and education programmes to prevent young people from starting to smoke. Services to help people stop smoking are to be improved and measures to protect people from the harms caused by second-hand smoke are also included in the strategy. Two other countries have set similar targets. New Zealand aims to be tobacco-free by 2025. Finland plans to be tobacco-free by 2040.

**02/04/13** A National Confidential Alert Phone Line for NHS staff who wish to raise any concerns about practices in NHSScotland went live today. It will be piloted for one year and delivered by Public Concern at Work, an independent organisation, to ensure confidentiality and impartiality. Any concerns that employees raise will be then passed on to the employer or the relevant regulatory organisation for investigation. Public Concern at Work will also support callers to pursue their case with the appropriate regulator when they consider this to be the most suitable course of action.

**17/04/13** Derek Feeley, the Director General for Health and Social Care in the Scottish Government and the Chief Executive of NHS Scotland, is leaving in August 2013 to take up a new position as Executive Vice-President of the not-for-profit Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) in the United States, where he will lead IHI's work to deliver innovative approaches to health and healthcare improvement around the world, building on Scotland's ground-breaking Patient Safety Programme. Arrangements for his departure - and how his post will be filled - have still to be confirmed.

**24/04/13** Feedback from NHS staff is helping to shape Scotland's health service, following a series of 'back to the floor' visits to 11 NHS sites by the Health Secretary and Minister for Public Health which have enabled them to seek the advice of over 70 members of staff and learn first-hand how care is delivered. These visits included a shift with an ambulance crew, a visit to NHS 24's contact centre and speaking to NHS staff working in a range of different settings and specialties.

**10/05/13** £3 million is to be used to purchase 660 insulin pumps for people with type 1 diabetes in Scotland. A dedicated insulin pump support team will also support NHS staff around the country to widen access to the pumps. The Government has reaffirmed its commitment to ensure that 25 per cent of under-18s with type 1 diabetes have access to the pumps.

### **Unlicensed Medicines Review**

Work has begun in Glasgow to ensure that staff in the Pharmacy Production Unit are kept fully informed of progress ahead of the closure of the unit. It will be important to keep the service going whilst providing training opportunities for staff to allow them to take up other roles when the unit does close.

### **Other**

I have dealt with a number of member queries.

Colin Rodden  
13.05.13