

Unannounced Inspection

Acute Hospital Safe Delivery of Care Inspection

Western Isles Hospital

NHS Western Isles

Key Messages for the public

3 – 4 September 2024

Plain language versions of inspection reports are written for patients and the public in order to easily understand how their hospital is performing.

Why did we carry out an inspection?

We carry out these inspections to ensure the care of patients in the hospital environment is safe, effective and in line with current standards and best practice. We engage with staff and hospital managers so that we can be assured they are following NHS board policies, procedures and national standards. We publish inspection reports based on our findings during inspections in key areas to ensure patients are receiving care that meets their needs.

Where did we go?

We visited Western Isles Hospital and produced a full report which can be found on our website. Western Isles Hospital is a small, rural general hospital located in Stornoway. It is the largest of the three hospital services within NHS Western Isles, with a capacity of 52 acute funded beds with 16 adult inpatient additional beds. Western Isles Hospital was opened in 1992 with a range of acute hospital specialties such as general surgery, paediatrics, maternity and psychiatry. The hospital also includes diagnostic facilities, day hospital (ambulatory care unit), laboratory, allied health professionals and other services.

We inspected this hospital on Tuesday 3 – Wednesday 4 September 2024.

We visited a number of areas during this inspection including the emergency department. Our team of three inspectors spoke with both patients and staff. We observed how the nurses and staff interact with patients at important points in the day. For example, mealtimes and when medication are administered.

We reviewed wider hospital policies and procedures in place to gain assurance for future patients and visitors, family members and friends, that despite the everyday challenges, the hospital team are enabled and guided to provide the best care possible. We also looked at the teamwork and support that is given to the staff.

What did we find?

During our onsite inspection we observed staff working hard to provide compassionate and responsive care with all patients being complimentary about the care provided. We found that the hospital environment was clean and well maintained. Additionally, mealtimes were calm and well led with patients receiving assistance with hand hygiene prior to meals and with eating and drinking where required.

However, significant concerns were raised in relation to mandatory staff training, particularly paediatric training and fire safety. Due to these significant concerns we wrote to the board twice to raise our concerns about this. There remains a lack of assurance in this area. We also raised concerns about staff training in child and adult support and protection and regarding fire training compliance and maintenance for firefighting equipment in Western Isles Hospital.

Routinely health boards are expected to provide action plan at 18 weeks however due to significant concerns raised throughout inspection process we have asked NHS Western Isles to provide updates at 6, 10, 14 and 18 weeks.

Like all boards within Scotland, NHS Western Isles can face pressures within the emergency department due to increased attendances and availability of inpatient beds. Therefore, NHS Western Isles run a campaign called 'knowing where to turn' which supports patients to make the correct decision about who should be contacted on different occasions for assistance in relation to healthcare. This signposts patients and carers to a variety of services such as dentist, pharmacist and GPs.

Western Isles Hospital cares for both adult and children. We found that children are cared for in a dedicated bay or within single rooms in an adult ward. Through several incident reports we observed occasions where adult patients within the ward have become distressed, confused and aggressive. Although we were told that children were accompanied by an adult at most times during their hospital stay, there may be occasions that children are unaccompanied. Hospital managers told us that where an adult patient becomes confused and shows signs of aggression, they would move them to another ward to ensure children are not cared for in the same area.

Some of the areas visited were calm and well organised with visible leaders. However, within one ward we visited there were no visible leadership and staff reported feeling stressed.

Like the majority of boards in Scotland NHS Western Isles have to use additional beds in non-standard care areas at times of increased pressure. While Healthcare Improvement Scotland does not support the use of additional beds and beds within non-standard care areas such as treatment rooms and corridors, we acknowledge that due to increased capacity and emergency admissions, this may be required to ensure patients receive the care they require. In the emergency department there was an additional bed within the corridor which was used with temporary screens to maintain some privacy for patients. Additionally, in the emergency department we also saw no patients have access to a call bell and in the side rooms there was only an emergency buzzer. There are times where the door may be closed, and it may be more difficult for patients to get help.

Within one ward we saw that medicine had been left on the patients' bedside tables. This may increase the risk of errors such as medicine being missed or being taken by the wrong person. We also saw medicine cupboards and preparation rooms were unlocked with some medicine left unattended.

We observed several mealtimes, most of which were well organised with patients receiving their meals quickly and with assistance if needed. We observed that staff were aware of patients' dietary requirements. We also saw patients receiving assistance to carry out hand hygiene prior to meals and assistance given to eat and drink if needed.

In the emergency department patients receive hot meals from the kitchen within opening hours. Patients can receive hot soup and sandwiches when the kitchen is closed. The dining room has been extended and part of the area is open at all times allowing staff, patients and relatives to use vending machines and microwaves anytime.

In the emergency department we saw two CCTV cameras within the corridor where there was potential for footage of patients. Permissions are required from senior members of the executive team to access footage and this footage is only accessed where there has been an incident where the police are involved.

In one ward there was one shower and no bath for 22 patients, managers advised that there are plans to upgrade the facilities within this ward. All patients were offered assistance with personal hygiene and if required were provided with a basin to wash at their bedside.

All patients we spoke with spoke highly of the care received, staff were seen to be responsive to patients' care needs. All patients stated they had received care quickly with no long waits for assistance. Patients we spoke with said they would be happy if a loved one had to access care at Western Isles Hospital.

What do we think?

There are many challenges currently facing the staff at the hospital such as training as mentioned above as well as challenges in relation to recruitment and retention of staff.

What changes do we expect?

We have 22 requirements for this hospital and NHS Western Isles must make sure these are all met.

We have added below the areas of good practice, recommendations and requirements. For more information on each of these areas, please see the full report.

Areas of good practice

Effective emergency department working to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place by following Scottish Government emergency department signposting and redirection guidance
The hospital environment was visibly clean and well maintained
Staff were observed delivering compassionate patient care
Mealtimes were well coordinated and patients received timely assistance with hand hygiene before meals and assistance with eating
All equipment examined was clean and stored safely ready for use
NHS Western Isles has introduced a variety of development opportunities for senior charge nurses
All observed interactions were professional, friendly and respectful
Patients speak highly of the care received

Requirements

NHS Western Isles must ensure as a matter of urgency all staff are provided with and complete the necessary paediatric and adult immediate life support training to safely carry out their roles
NHS Western Isles must ensure improvement actions within fire risk assessments are carried out, fire safety equipment is tested and maintained to ensure safe working and staff have complete mandatory fire training
NHS Western Isles must ensure all staff have completed appropriate levels of adult support and protection and child support and protection training relevant to their roles
NHS Western Isles must ensure that senior management and leadership oversight and support is effective, to reduce the risks for staff and patients and support staff wellbeing
NHS Western Isles must improve feedback to staff on incidents raised through the incident reporting system and ensure learning from incidents is used to improve safety and outcomes for patients and staff
NHS Western Isles must have effective processes in place for communication and dissemination of information from hospital wide huddles
NHS Western Isles must ensure staff are supported within their role and that concerns raised by staff are acted upon
NHS Western Isles must ensure effective and appropriate governance approval and oversight of policies and procedures are in place
NHS Western Isles must ensure use of a selection criteria within risk assessments to support placement of patients within additional beds that are used during periods of extreme system pressure
NHS Western Isles must ensure all patients have access to call bells
NHS Western Isles must ensure that all patient care documentation is accurately and consistently completed
NHS Western Isles must ensure the safe storage and administration of medicines at all times

NHS Western Isles must ensure that all staff carry out hand hygiene at appropriate moments and use personal protective equipment in line with current guidance
NHS Western Isles must ensure all staff comply with the safe management of waste including sharps
NHS Western Isles must ensure cleaning products are stored safely and securely
NHS Western Isles must ensure that decision making regarding staffing risks and mitigations are open and transparent and aligned with patient acuity
NHS Western Isles must consider skill mix, dependency and complexity of patients to support staff to apply professional judgement when declaring safe to start
NHS Western Isles must ensure a robust system in place consistently to assess and capture real time staffing across all professions to ensure clear management oversight
NHS Western Isles must ensure clear real time staffing data is consistently recorded and communicated and clear escalation processes and any mitigations/inability to mitigate are recorded clearly and accurately
NHS Western Isles must ensure that there are processes in place to support the consistent application of the common staffing method, demonstrating triangulation of quality, safety and workforce data to inform staffing requirements and, where appropriate, service improvement. This includes that the principles of the common staffing method are applied, including having a robust mechanism for feedback to be provided to staff about the use of the common staffing method, and staffing decisions made as a result
NHS Western Isles must ensure patient dignity is maintained at all times. This includes but is not limited to access to shower facilities for all patients
NHS Western Isles must ensure safe and effective policies and procedures are in place for all CCTV cameras in use. CCTV cameras must be operated in line with national regulation, guidance and local policy and staff are aware of and apply correct procedures

What happens next?

As part of the overall inspection, we will follow-up and support the hospital on these requirements. The hospital has written an action plan which explains how they will make these improvements and includes completion deadlines. The action plan will be updated by the NHS board at 6, 10, 14 and 18 weeks after publication, and shared on our website. Our inspectors may revisit this hospital at a future date.

We would like to thank the staff at Western Isles Hospital and colleagues across NHS Western Isles for their help and support.

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