

Specific Funds: April 2022 to March 2024

What are Specific Funds?

NHS Lothian Charity is supported by generous donors who are often quite specific about how they would like their donation to make a difference; for example to support a specific service or to support enhancement in a specific area such research or equipment. As a result, the Charity holds donations in approx. 380 Specific Funds each with a purpose that outlines how it should be used. There is no limit on the amount that can be applied for from a Specific Fund, but the potential award might be limited by the amount available in relevant funds.

Grants over £5,000 require a formal application to the Charity, while for grant requests under £5,000 a simplified process is in operation to reduce the administrative burden on frontline colleagues and to speed up impact.

Recognising the diverse range of projects funded by Specific Funds, this report describes how the projects funded or items purchased using Specific Funds align to NHS Lothian Charity's priority objectives demonstrating the funds impact in improving health in the Lothians.

*NB: This report does not include data related to restricted donations made by individuals or trusts and held in Specific Funds until spent e.g. £250,000 from The Blyth Trust for East Lothian Community Hospital. As well as professional development fees or patient amenities costs that are under £5,000 and not placed through PECOS, for example petty cash returns for biscuits in a Meaningful Activity Centre, staff attendance at a conference or nail polish for a patient pamper day in CAMHS reimbursed through payroll expenses.



Specific Funds, April 2022 to March 2024:

- 495 grants awarded/purchases made
- £2,917,688 worth of Specific Funds dispersed to NHS Lothian staff

Projects/items purchased have been categorised. This chart shows the % of Specific Funds awarded/spent in each category and total amount awarded/spent per category April 2022 to March 2024.



Grants over £5,000 awarded from Specific Funds

Why services have different amounts of Specific Funds

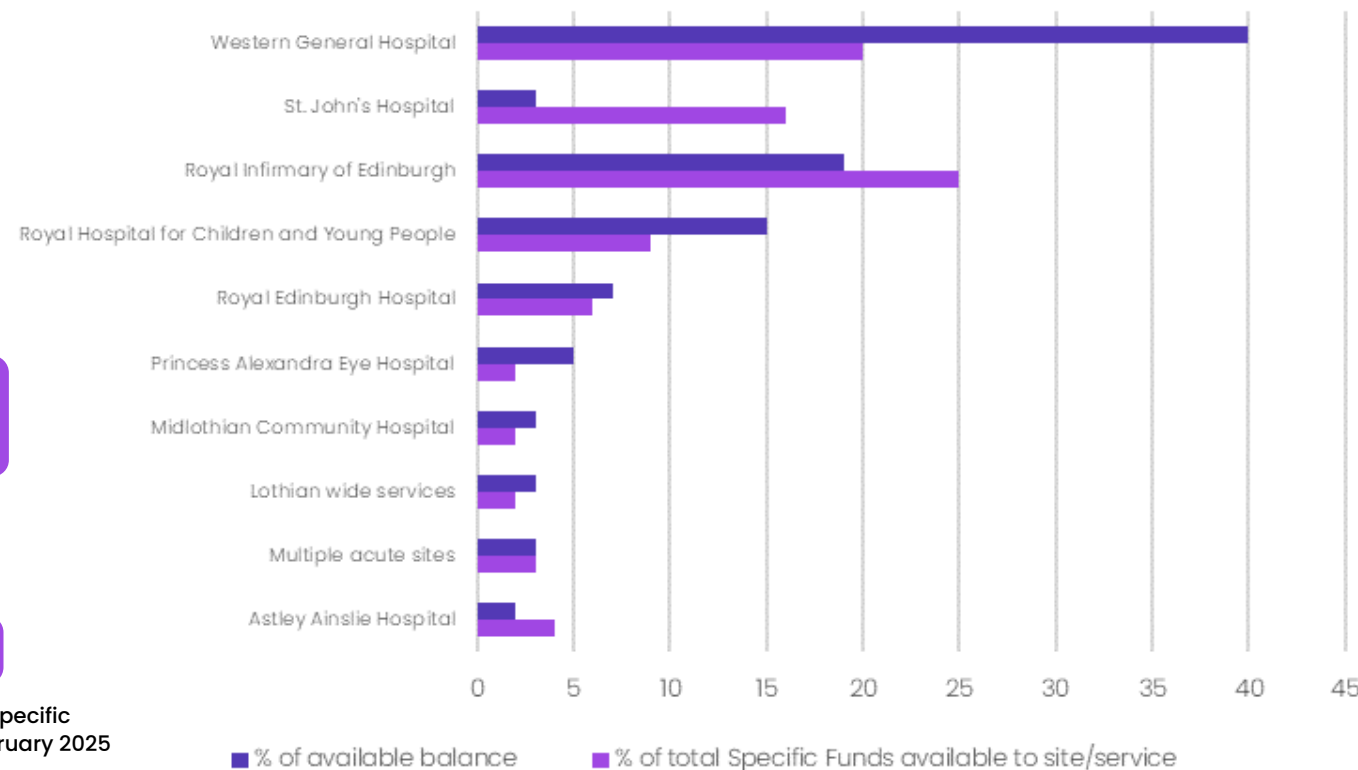
The wishes of donors creates inequalities in the volume and balances of funds supporting specific areas. This is reflective of donors' ability and/or willingness to donate to specific services, patient or staff groups or types of intervention/purchase.

NHS Lothian Charity's Small Grants Programme (funded by the Charity's General Fund created from undesignated monies) is designed to address these inequalities and support those patients and staff that have access to less money through the Specific Funds.

38 services have access to a Specific Fund.

Between April 2022 to March 2024, 40% of services accessed a Specific Fund.

*Based on calculation of Specific Funds available on 28 February 2025

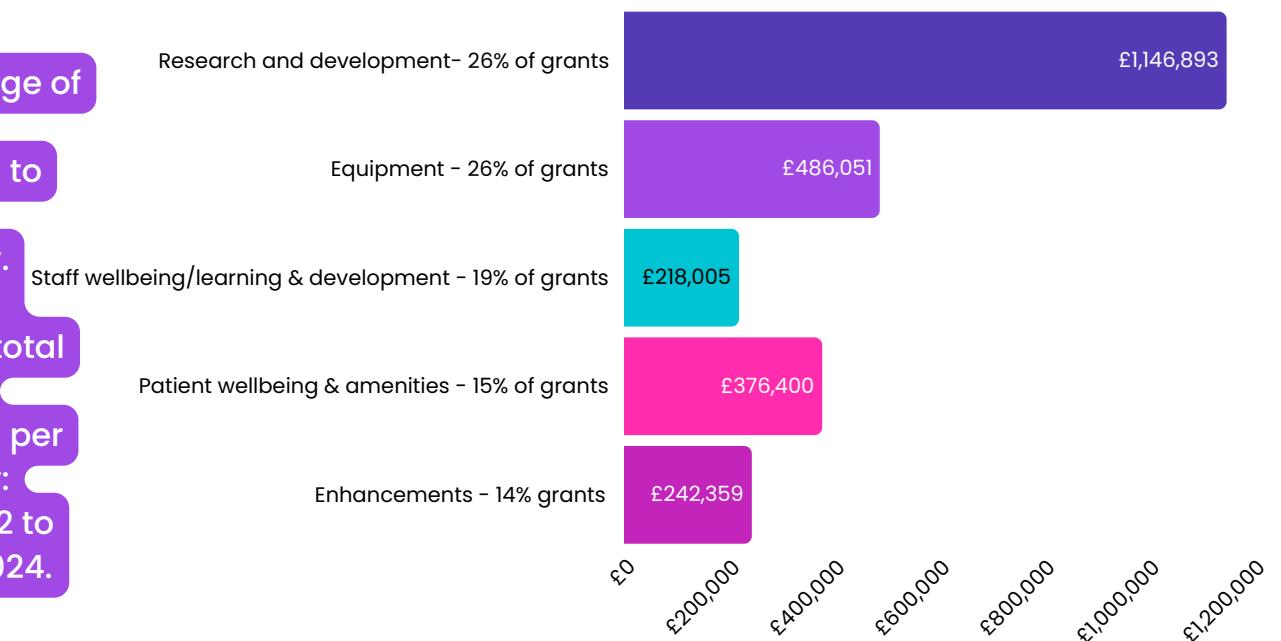


Over £5,000 Specific Funds spend between April 2022 – March 2024:

- 100 grants awarded
- £ 2,469,708 in grants awarded
- 74 Specific Funds accessed (18% of all the Specific Funds)

Percentage of grants awarded to each category.

Plus the total amount awarded per category: April 2022 to March 2024.



Grants over £5,000 awarded from Specific Funds

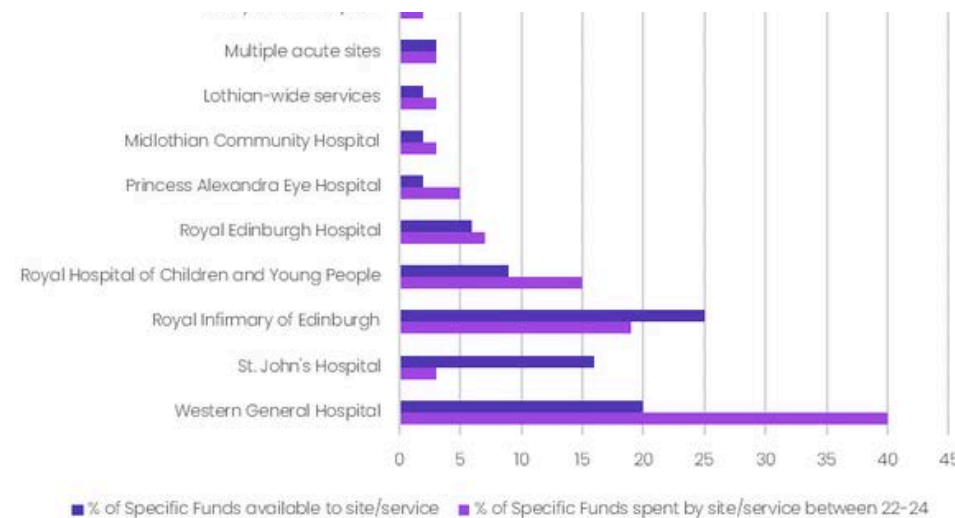
Sites across NHS Lothian using Specific Funds

In addition to being specific about the service, many donors are specific about the site they wish to benefit from their donation, often gifted to wards and departments in the larger acute sites in NHS Lothian.

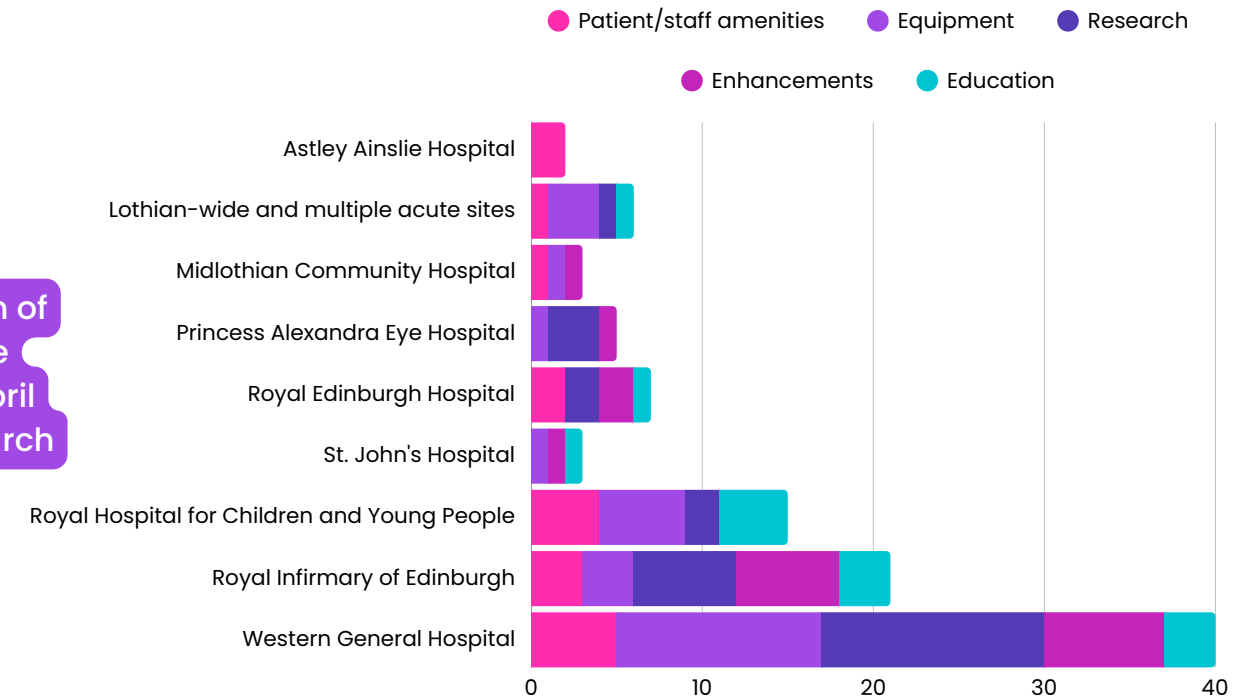
19 sites have access to Specific Funds.

Between April 2022 and March 2024 grants have been awarded to 10 of these sites (53%).

*Based on calculation of Specific Funds available on 28 February 2025



Breakdown of spend type per site, April 2022 to March 2024.



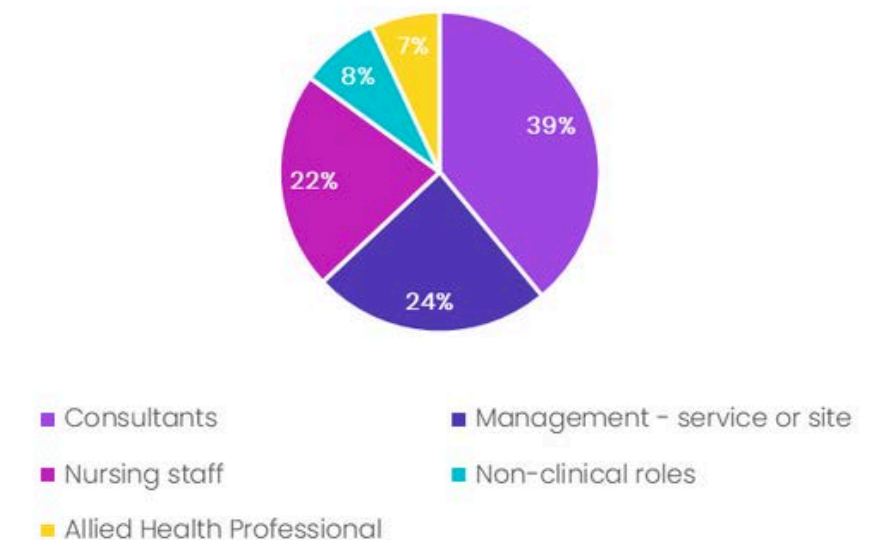
What one site purchased

From April 2022- March 2024 staff at The Royal Hospital for Children and Young People made 15 purchases over £5,000, totalling £384,108 from Specific Funds.

- Patient wellbeing and amenities made up 33% of total purchases, e.g. Bereavement support services
- Staff wellbeing, learning and development made up 33% of total purchases e.g. Neonatal staff and manager wellbeing and communication training
- Equipment made up 27% of total purchases, e.g. Sensory equipment for patients in the Crichton Ward
- Research made up 7% of total purchases, e.g. Paediatric Asthma Digital Dashboard Discovery

This chart shows the different categories of job roles that were awarded Specific Funding and total funds awarded.

8 applicants were awarded funding more than once between April 2022 to March 2024.



Under £5,000 purchases made with Specific Funds

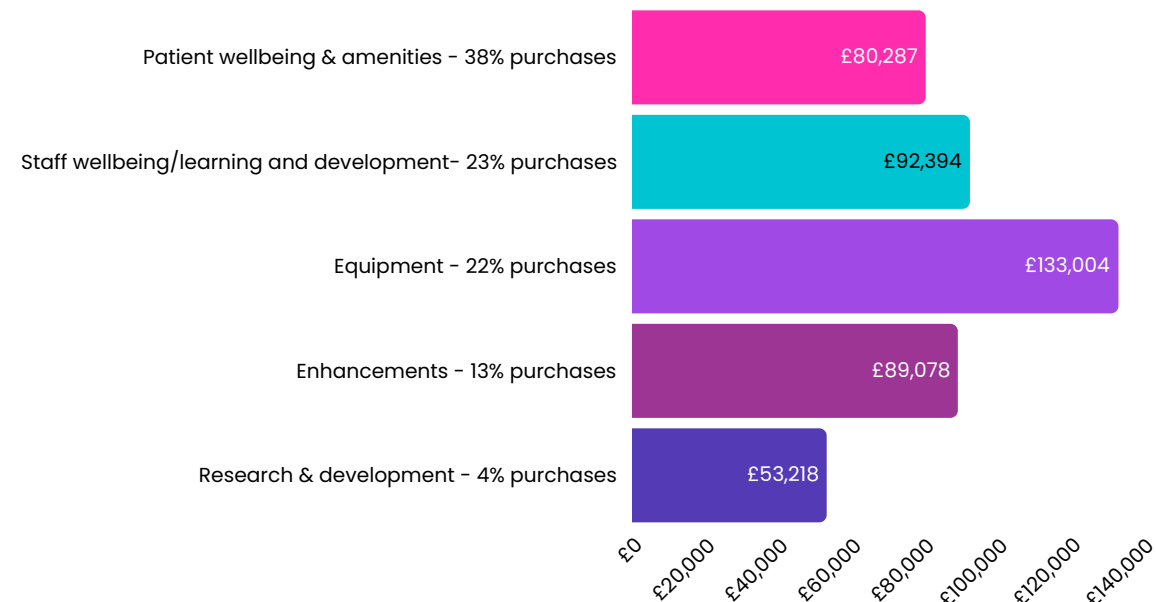
How purchases made with Specific Funds under £5,000 work

To enable the fast and efficient purchase of impactful lower cost items, NHS Lothian Charity does not require a formal application for the purchase of items under £5,000. Items can be purchased from NHS Lothian procurement process, orders and approvals managed through PECOS or educational bookings made through NHS Lothian's travel team. To ensure good governance and maximum impact, these are approved by Service Management and Fund Stewards. Examples of items purchased include:

- £15 for a gym membership to support the rehab of a patient with cystic fibrosis
- £250 for therapy ponies to visit Hawthorne Ward, Ellen's Glen House
- £1,600 for two manual recliner vinyl chairs for the High Dependency Unit
- £4,095 for 39 Edinburgh Breast Unit staff conference attendance

Percentage of
purchases made
with per category.

Plus spend per
category, April 2022
to March 2024.



Under £5,000 Specific Funds spend between April 2022 – March 2024:

- £44,7981 spent in total
- 395 purchases
- 67% of purchases cost under £1,000
- Up to £100 was the most frequently accessed amount



What Specific Funds were used for purchases under £5,000

Staff made purchases from 104 Specific Funds, 28% of all Specific Funds available. 10 Specific Funds were accessed more than 10 times for purchases, for example the Fighting Against Cancer Edinburgh & South East Scotland (FACE) Fund, 20 purchases, and the Cardio-Thoracic Department Fund at the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh, 17 purchases, spent on equipment, enhancements and patient amenities. 28 Specific Funds made grants of over £5,000 and purchases under £5,000.

What one service purchased

In 2022/2023 staff from the Lothian Eating Disorder Service at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital made six purchases totalling £2,437 from the Lothian Eating Disorders/Rivers Fund. £679 was spent on a range of books, including self help books for patients and treatment manuals for clinicians to use, and a 12-month Recovery app license for 10 clinicians costing £1,758. A staff member shared: "The books allow us to lend to patients so they don't have to buy them which provides equality across the service and a better experience for patients. The app has given our clinicians a new way of supporting patients through their therapy and staff gained new knowledge and skills using it."

Improving clinical outcomes for patients

NHS Lothian Charity supports projects that improve clinical outcomes for patients, this can be with research projects that aim to treat and cure many health conditions through innovative new methods, or items of clinical equipment that diagnose, treat diseases or improve outcomes after surgery or during rehabilitation.

Spotlight on – Point of Care Device has a big impact for patients

The Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) team at the Western General Hospital can now speed up access to results for blood clotting problems. Previously, identifying blood clots in patients was a slow procedure and where the risk of blood clots was increased, medication was given to reduce the risk until the results came back to decide the course of action. However, the Lumera Point of Care Device that the team is using quickly and non-invasively detects veins and blood clots in patients.

By quickly identifying the location and severity of a blood clot, doctors can begin treatment sooner and with greater precision, cutting out the potential need for unnecessary medication and potentially saving lives. 10 more patients a day can be attended to, helping to ease the burden on the Emergency Department and its staff. Dr Rachel Sutherland explained: "This also had a knock-on effect regarding patient scanning, giving the department more lead time to allocate an available ultrasound, improving the likelihood of same day scanning so less waiting time for patients."

We can now do the test and give the appropriate advice all before we close at 8pm. Prior to this the patient would have gone back to a ward and stayed overnight until the labs opened in the morning."

– Nurse,
SDEC, Western General Hospital



Lumera Point of Care Device

Reduced waiting time for support means patients are exhibiting less signs of stress and distress, and an improved environment for staff to detect deteriorating patients."

– Dr Sutherland,
SDEC, Western General Hospital

Spotlight on – Research into tailoring treatment for prostate cancer

Prof. McLaren, Consultant Clinical Oncologist, Urology and has undertaken a 3 year study with men in early stage prostate cancer at the Western General Hospital. Radiotherapy can cure prostate cancer, however, all patients are exposed to potential treatment related toxicity that can affect ongoing quality of life. The aim of this study, funded by the Charity through a Specific Fund, was to develop a blood test that can measure the amount of normal tissue cell free DNA and prostate cancer cell free DNA released into the blood during radiotherapy treatment. The cell free DNA will act as a biomarker to predict the onset of side-effects before they become clinically apparent so further treatment can be tailored to the patient.

Prof McLaren explains: "The Charity has awarded £67,851 for a radiotherapy tracking system called RayPilot® and the HypoCath catheters required to treat each patient within the study. The system continuously tracks the prostate position throughout the treatment and has allowed the safe introduction of delivering curative radiotherapy with only five highly targeted doses without the need for additional hormone therapy. This is compared to the current standard of 20 doses over four weeks. The ability to adjust radiotherapy doses to personalise the patient's treatment will be transformational for patients."

The findings will be produced in medical journals the team have been awarded a grant by Cancer Research UK to further the study.

The findings from the study could potentially benefit all patients receiving radiotherapy and not just for patients with prostate cancer."

– Prof. McLaren,
Consultant Clinical Oncologist, Urology



RayPilot®HypoCath devices used in trial

Enhancing patient and carer experience

Approx. 280 projects/initiatives, made possible by Specific Funds, have directly benefitted patients and carers across NHS Lothian. Service areas that don't have access to a Specific Fund have the opportunity to enhance patient experience by applying to the Small Grants Programme and/or the annual Patient Christmas Grant Programme. More information can be found via the [NHS Lothian Charity Website](#).

Spotlight on – Entertainment and distraction for hundreds of children in the Royal Hospital of Children and Young People

NHS Lothian Charity funded 5 new gaming carts for the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People to provide an opportunity for them to play age-appropriate games on Xbox or log in to streaming services. Hundreds of Children have been able to use these and they have had a big impact. Staff reported that gaming can help to reduce stress, anxiety and improve the mood of children going through treatment. It can also provide a sense of normality and belonging in a hospital environment, where everything can seem strange and unfamiliar. As well as providing children and young people with the opportunity to play games, watch movies and connect with friends, the carts also offer a way to escape the stresses of being in hospital and provide a welcome distraction for children who need it the most.



Oatient gaming

These carts have been a lifeline for those children who have been in long-term to bring some normality into their hospital experience. They were able to game with their peers, watch their own TV programmes, and log into their own gaming accounts. They have simply been a game changer in hospitalisation for children and young people."

Margaret McEwan, Play Services Co-ordinator
Royal Hospital for Children and Young People

Spotlight on – Supporting families with bereavement

Every year, the Fighting Against Cancer Edinburgh (FACE) volunteers take children and their families who have been impacted by cancer to Lapland, giving them a magical day where they met the 'real' Santa. In 2022, a group of 40 went on the trip. The annual trip supports patients and their families by reducing feelings isolation experienced with bereavement, and encouraging social interaction and peer to peer support where they meet others experiencing something similar, especially at Christmas, which can be a difficult time.



Family in Lapland

We all had the most magical time in Lapland...thank you for creating these fantastic memories for children who have been through such sorrow."

Family member



Family with santa Lapland

Spotlight on – 'Dementia friendly' Medicine of the Elderly Wards

Medicine of the Elderly wards 101 and 201 in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh were refurbished using 'dementia friendly' principles to support the wellbeing of patients with dementia. To reduce falls, a light coloured flooring replaced a dark green flooring (which some patients confused with grass) throughout the entirety of the ward. Each of the four bays in the ward were freshly painted each a different soothing colour to create a calming environment and support patients to identify what bay they are in.



Flooring , Ward 101, before

The enhancements have provided a fresher and more welcoming feel to the ward for patients and their families."

– Staff member, Ward 101
Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh



Flooring , Ward 101, after

Improving community health/reducing inequality

Health needs and the ability to actively and effectively engage with services to address them are not equal across all communities. Many people in the Lothians are faced with health inequalities and Specific Funds can be used to address these.

Spotlight on – Delivering maternity care in local communities

In response to the Best Start programme outlined by the Scottish Government, Maternity Services in NHS Lothian have established two Community Midwifery 'Hubs' at Sighthill Health Centre and East Lothian Community Hospital. The 'Hubs' allow the teams to deliver more in-depth assessments to women in their local area, saving them the journey to an acute hospital site. To support this, the Charity has funded Butterfly IQ scanners. Pauline, Clinical Manager, explains: "The scanners are used by Community Midwives to determine if a baby's lie is breech or cephalic. Previously women would have had to attend a hospital site for this to be confirmed which often has time and cost implications. The scanners have shown to aid clinical decision-making and reduced wait times for a main ultrasound machine which is supporting women to have better engagement in their pre-maternal care." Lucy, a Community Midwife in East Lothian, shares: "It's so rewarding to be able to provide this service, now I don't have to send ladies to Edinburgh to be scanned which is far less stressful for them and gives a continuity of care throughout their pregnancy."



Lucy, Midwife, scanning Rachel in the community

It's a huge impact having this scan done by Lucy today. This has taken 10 minutes but would have taken a whole morning if I had to go to Edinburgh to have it done meaning I would have also had to arrange childcare for my other 2 children. What a great service for mums like me who live in East Lothian."

Rachel, Pregnant mum

Spotlight on – Breaking down financial barriers for liver transplant patients and their families

The Scottish Liver Transplant Unit Social Care Team provided financial support to 30 patients and their families towards travel and/or accommodation costs to be able attend liver transplant assessments, operations and clinic appointments at the Royal Infirmary. Aisling, a Social Worker from the team, shares; "Our patients have a chronic illness and some are significantly ill which means that they can experience many inequalities. This funding has allowed us to mitigate some of these disadvantages, and we can prioritise support for patients who are identified as being financially disadvantaged."

The cost of travel and accommodation has also been a barrier for families to attend important appointments or the week long assessment period. Aisling explains the positive impact of families being present: "Patients tell us they feel less isolated when a family member is able to attend clinics with them. For patients going through assessment, we are able to get a fuller and more rounded assessment when families are able to be there and it allows them to be part of the patients journey." She goes onto share: "Some patients can get quite distressed so having the family member there to support the patient means staff can focus more on the care of the patient. This funding takes the money worries away and provides an even playing field for all patients and their families being cared for at the Scottish Liver Transplant Unit."

This has significantly benefited patients, in some cases it allowed people who would have been unable to attend clinic or have to chose between the cost of travelling or paying basic bills."

– Aisling, Social Worker, SLTU



Aisling and Debbie



The Scottish Transplant Unit

Improving staff wellbeing and professional development

To support NHS Lothian staff deliver safe, high quality patient care, NHS Lothian Charity Specific Funds support projects that improve staff wellbeing and increase opportunities for staff to develop their clinical and non-clinical skills. Individuals and teams that work in an area that does not have access to a Specific Fund can apply for an NHS Lothian Charity [Elsie Inglis grant](#) for education or training and the [Microgrants programme](#) for staff wellbeing projects or initiatives.

Spotlight on – Supporting Doctors with a new work space

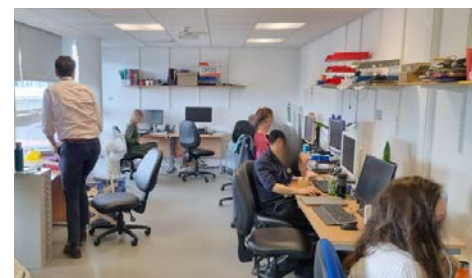
Over 20 Registrar Doctors from the Oncology Department, Western General Hospital, had been without a permanent office space for a number of months which had been disruptive and challenging to the doctors' daily working lives and had an impact on individual and team morale for a significant period of time. A suitable permanent location was identified and, to create a pleasant and comfortable working environment, funding went on new flooring, freshly painted walls and the purchase of 12 desks, chairs and pedestals, plus 24 small lockers to allow belongings to be kept onsite and safe while not staff not at their desks.

86%

staff strongly agreed or agreed the improvement to the space makes them feel valued

It was previously a semi-functional space, now it is a clean, beautiful and spacious place to be. It is such a treat being able to all work together."

– Oncology Registrar
Western General Hospital



Oncology Registrars in the new office

Spotlight on – Paediatric Audiologists learn about 'sharing the news'

During March 2024, 8 Paediatric Audiologists from the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People attended a 2 day course called 'Sharing the News'. Run exclusively for audiologists, the course helps build their skills and confidence in sharing the news about a child's hearing loss with families. Staff who attended the course shared how the course increased their knowledge and understanding as well as confidence to share difficult news, 60% of attendees are applying the knowledge/skills from the course on a daily basis and 40% frequently.

Staff rated their skills and knowledge out of 10 (1 = low, 10 = high), On average staff rated:

Before
5

After
8

After the course, I was able to share news with the family in a way that allowed more time for them to process the news before moving forward with a solution right away. This allowed the family time to process and address their emotions and we were able to move forward in a positive way."

– Paediatric Audiologist, RHCYP

I am using the skills I learned in clinic daily."

– Paediatric Audiologist, RHCYP

Staff rated their their comfort and confidence out of 10 (1 = low, 10 = high), On average staff rated:

Before
5

After
8

I feel I am now more confident to allow more pauses in communication which parents often fill with greater detailed responses. This allows for me to build quicker rapport and provide a better, more efficient service."

– Paediatric Audiologist, RHCYP

I am more confident in dealing with sharing the test result to new parents about their newborn child."

– Paediatric Audiologist, RHCYP

The difference made (now and in the future)

By attending the training in Japan, we will look into setting up a cryosurgery service at Edinburgh Breast Unit...this will benefit our patients in the future."

The upgraded audiovisual system allows rapid toggling between scan, angiogram and live camera images. This was not possible before. This benefits patients who have their clinical details examined and considered in detail that was not possible before."

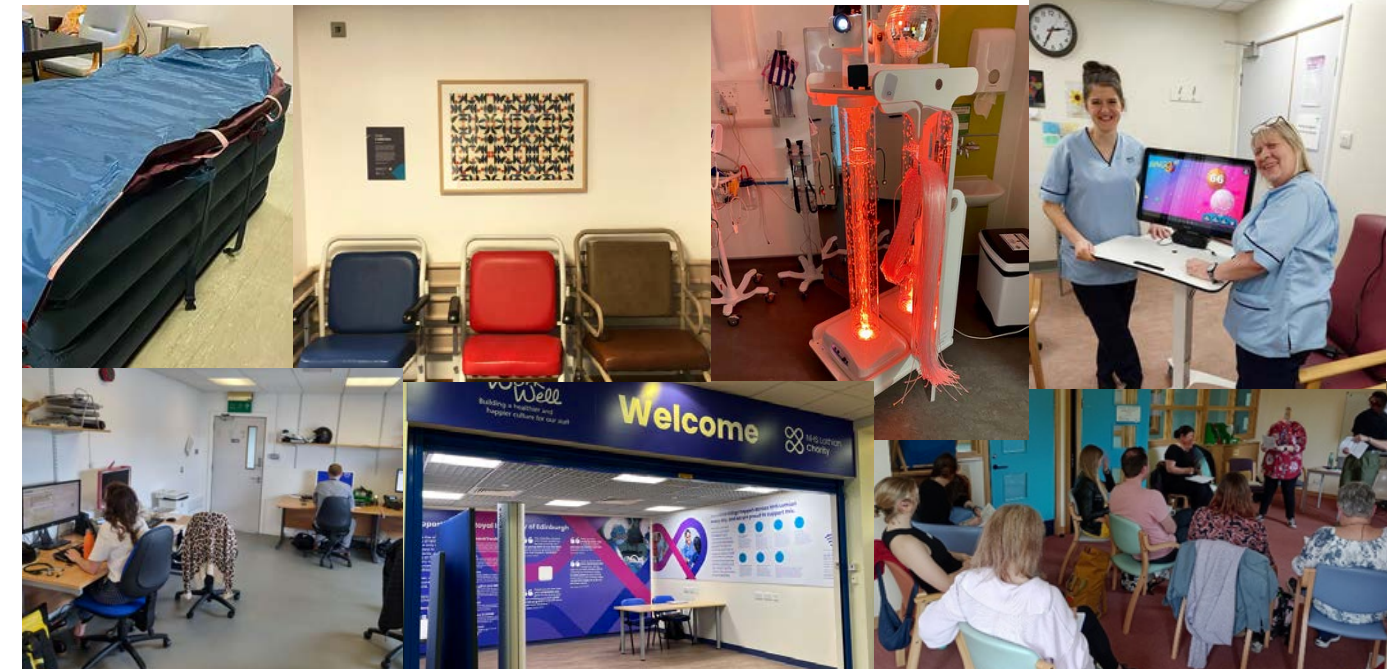
The additional machine means there is less waiting time and more prompt reviews. This has meant less heightened anxieties and less emotional frustrations associated with the long waiting times before."

The project has created a more relaxing and calming environment for patients undergoing invasive treatments. The new artwork has been well received by patients and upgraded TV with internet capabilities is a welcome distraction."

We now have a small team trained...the intention is to role this out across Lothian to reduce the development of eating disorders and the input from CAHMS in the future."

These chairs provide better comfort over long periods of time. The height and position is adjustable with an in-built table, all of which maximise the comfort of the patient."

Thank you for the funding, it really does make the difference when trying to explore new avenues of care for patients. We expect the discovery phase to lead to a significant change in the way patients with asthma are looked after in NHS Lothian."



Thanks to NHS Lothian staff members who have made a difference to patients and staff with their project or initiative funded or purchased with Specific Funds, and thank you to those who took part in this evaluation. Contact us to discuss a project or initiative that could be funded by a Specific Fund.

Thank you to those who kindly donated, without which this amazing work couldn't have been achieved. Find out how to [support NHS Lothian Charity](#).

Report compiled by Rebecca Caulfield, Evaluation Manager, NHS Lothian Charity