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**A ONE stop shop for children with multiple health needs has received major funding boost.**

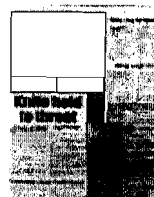
A cheque for £850 was presented to the Vale of Leven Hospital's Acorn Centre from charity St John Dunbartonshire (SJD).

The Acorn centre is a child development centre and paediatric ambulatory unit at the hospital.

Sheila Downie, children's services manager at the cen-

tre, accepted the cheque from Wing Commander George Campbell at the SJD AGM last week.

The Order in Scotland supports medical and rescue charities, in particular mountain rescue and palliative care. In recent years it has paid for the construction of bases for the mountain rescue teams at Arrochar and Drymen, and was the major donor for the latest Luss rescue boat. PICTURE BY DONALD FULLARTON



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## Health information

RESIDENTS throughout the Vale have been receiving a special NHS information guide through their door.

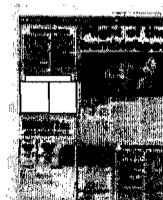
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (GGC) has produced a handy guide, entitled 'When you're ill, know who to turn to', for residents to let them know how to use the range of new and reintroduced services at the hospital and other NHS services available to them in the area when they are ill or injured.

Robert Calderwood, GGC chief executive, said: "After a decade

of uncertainty new arrangements have now been put in place to ensure that the Vale of Leven Hospital has a sustainable and vital future. Some people may not notice any changes as many of the hospital's services remain unchanged."

Some people who would have previously been treated at the Vale will now be taken direct to the RAH in Paisley.

This includes people who have had a suspected stroke, overdose or gastro-intestinal bleeding.



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# Death knell

By MARTIN GRAHAM

*editorial@dumbartonreporter.co.uk*

**HOSPITAL campaigners have slammed Health secretary Nicola Sturgeon and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (GGC) for supporting the continued closure of the Christie Ward.**

The mental health unit at the Vale of Leven Hospital was gutted by fire in July this year, and patients are now being sent to Gartnavel Royal in Glasgow.

Following the fire, the Vale of Leven Monitoring Group, which oversees the strategic development of the hospital, wrote to Nicola Sturgeon urging her to ensure that inpatient mental health services would be restored on a short-term basis until a decision on the long term future of the ward is made.

But she responded in a letter, saying that this was "not in patients', or local people's interests".

Now bosses at GGC have backed Ms Sturgeon's position after they decided at their October board meeting to maintain inpatient services at Gartnavel, rather than introduce a temporary service at the Vale while a review of community mental health services is carried out.

Jackie Baillie MSP, who sits on the monitoring group, has accused the Health secretary of effectively closing the ward.

She said: "This is another blow for the Vale of Leven Hospital. By her actions [Ms Sturgeon] is effectively sounding the death knell for the Christie Ward."

Jackie Pollock, of United Campaign group, said: "It is absolutely ridiculous — it's another service taken away from the Vale."

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## Death knell

### FROM FRONT PAGE

She added: "GGS has no insurance to rebuild the Christie Ward — it all comes down to finance.

"Sack the ones at the top of the health board, let's get some of their money and get the Christie Ward back into the Vale.

"Why bother putting the money into the Monitoring Group when the outcome is going to be the same?

"[The health board] hasn't listened to the Monitoring Group.

"The people round here who have relatives and friends who have a mental illness, they need to be near their relatives so they can visit them.

"There's too many pen pushers up [at the health board] who don't have a clue — they don't live in the area.

Ms Baillie, who is the shadow Health secretary, added: "There is no doubt that the decision not to reinstate the Christie Ward, the future looks very grim.

"I think the decision has already been taken, they know there will be no capital expenditure available next year.

"Unless the money is brought forward now then the ward will not be saved in the future."

Mental health services at the Vale Hospital are currently under review after a consultation process found that there was a need for 12 inpatient beds in the area.

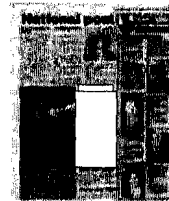
However, the GGC board believes that improvements in community mental health services have reduced the need for that level of inpatients beds.

A spokesperson for GGC said that the situation will be monitored for the foreseeable future.

They said: "The board agreed that beds continue to be provided at Gartnavel Royal Hospital and that the impact of community mental health services continue to be monitored for the next eight to ten months."

The cheapest option for reinstating the ward is to use the least damaged East and West wings to house mental health inpatients at a cost of £500,000, with a completely new ward coming in at £3m.

A deadline of June 2011 has been set to prove that the facility is sustainable in the long term.



# Blind stroke victim in Vale hospital limbo

By Marc McLean

**A FRAIL pensioner has been left languishing in hospital for 18 weeks because his council house is no longer fit for him to live in.**

Malcolm Blair's family fear the pensioner may die in the ward because he has "given up" over his hospital hell.

Since being admitted to Vale of Leven Hospital with pneumonia in July, the 77-year-old also suffered a stroke, lost his sight, and picked up a hospital acquired infection.

Medics passed Mr Blair fit to return home nine weeks ago - but he cannot return to his flat in Gray Street because it is riddled with damp and has no disabled facilities.

His wife Jean, 79, said: "We've been married 51 years and never been apart until now. If he picked up another infection it would finish him.

"If he had a place to go to everything would be fine because he would get all the help he needs.

"We just want him home."

Daughter Jean Moore, of Sutherland Gardens in Alexandria, added: "My dad just wants to be home with my mum.

"He's got to get out of there. Since he's been in hospital he's gone blind, he now needs a wheelchair and he's got diabetes.

"His whole world has been turned upside down."

Mr Blair has spent much of 2010 in hospital with repeated bouts of pneumonia, which have been exacerbated by the widespread dampness spores in the Gray Street flat.

He was first admitted in January and re-admitted on a further two occasions, with the last taking place in July.

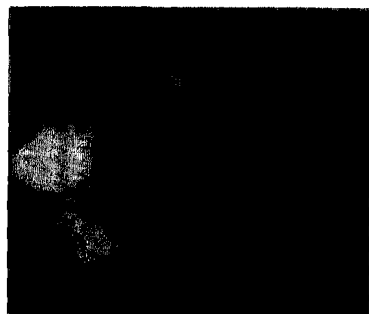
After suffering an optic nerve stroke he lost his sight, and his health deteriorated again when he picked up a hospital-acquired infection.

Doctors said Mr Blair was physically fit to go home nine weeks ago as long as his disabled needs were catered for and he was not living in the previous damp environment.

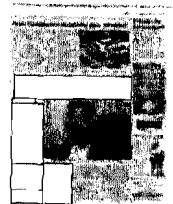
damp environment.

However, the council has been unable to provide a suitable house so far.

Daughter Christine Fabiani, of



**HAPPIER AND HEALTHIER:** Jean and Malcolm are pictured alongside council leader Ronnie McColl celebrating their golden wedding at Dumbarton Masonic in September last year.



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Burnbrae in Alexandria, said: "Dad is stuck up there in a Catch 22 situation and he is really worried he is going to pick up another hospital infection."

"Over the past month we've really seen a decline with my dad."

"Last week was the first time we've cried when we visited him at the hospital."

"Every day he is giving up a wee bit more; we can see it in him."

"It's not too much to ask just to go back to a house that's not going to make you ill again."

Dumbarton MSP Jackie Baillie,

shadow health secretary, said: "I am disappointed that Mr Blair has not yet been resettled into his home. It is evident that such a prolonged stay in hospital is proving detrimental to his health and is causing real concern for his family."

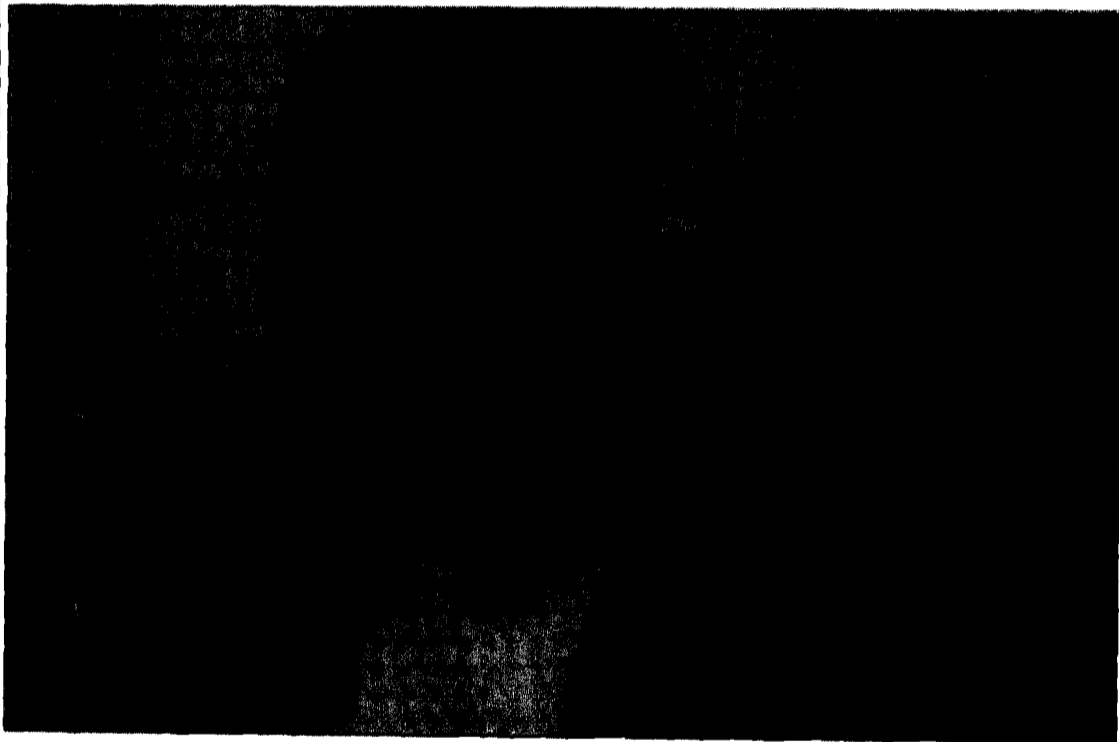
"I would urge West Dunbartonshire Council as a matter of priority to identify suitable accommodation that would allow Mr Blair to leave hospital and be reunited with his family."

"It is cases like Mr Blair's that has led to Labour's policy to create a National Care Service. Such a service

would mean people like Mr Blair are afforded the dignity of obtaining care closer to their home and more appropriate to their needs."

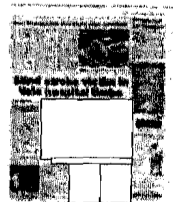
A council spokeswoman said: "The council understands Mr Blair's housing situation and has been actively looking for alternative accommodation for him as a matter of urgency."

"Mr Blair's request is a priority and once a suitable property becomes available, it will be fully assessed by an occupational therapist to ensure that it fully meets Mr Blair's requirements."



**SAD TIMES:** Malcolm can't return home from hospital as his house needs repaired.

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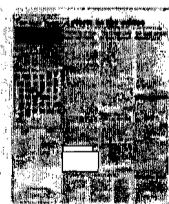
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## Thanks to all

DUE to the generous donations at the flu jag days at Dumbarton Masonic Hall, £390 was raised for Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS) at Balloch.

Many thanks to doctors, nurses and Masonic Hall staff for their help. Special thanks to all the tea ladies, and to John from the Vale of Leven Hospital.

**Name and address supplied and withheld on request**



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## Ward to stay closed

HEALTH bosses have signalled the death knell for the Vale of Leven Hospital's Christie Ward

At a meeting last week, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde voted in favour of plans to keep the ward closed.

Demand for the inpatient mental health unit at the Vale of Leven Hospital was being assessed following a fire in the unit in July this year.

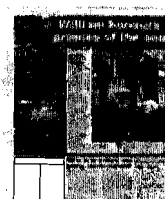
Although the final decision on the ward's future will rest with health secretary Nicola Sturgeon, she has previously made it clear that she was not in favour of reinstating the ward.

Plans were in place before the blaze to transfer the in-

patient service provided at the Vale to Gartnavel Royal in Glasgow.

MSP Jackie Baillie, who has backed campaigners the Vale Monitoring Group in their fight to save the Christie Ward, said the health board's decision was yet another blow for the Vale Hospital.

She added: "There is no doubt that, with the decision not to reinstate the Christie Ward, the future looks very grim. Local people value the Christie Ward and view it as an integral part of the hospital. Unfortunately this view does not seem to be shared by the NHS board or the health secretary."





## Advice for patients in hospital's new guide

HOMES throughout the Vale of Leven Hospital's catchment area will soon be receiving a special NHS information guide through their door.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) has produced a handy guide for residents to let them know how to use the range of new and reintroduced services at the hospital and other NHS services available to them in the area when they are ill or injured.

Robert Calderwood, NHSGGC chief executive, said: "After a decade of uncertainty new arrangements have now been put in place to ensure that the Vale of Leven Hospital has a sustainable and vital future.

"Some local people may not notice any changes as many of the hospital's services remain unchanged.

"For others, a range of new and

reintroduced hospital services will mean the convenience of attending your local hospital instead of travelling to Paisley or Glasgow for treatment."

The biggest change to existing services involves the care provided to patients whose condition is not serious enough to require a trip to accident and emergency but sufficiently urgent that they cannot wait for a routine hospital appointment.

Some people who would have previously been treated at the Vale will now be taken directly to the RAH in Paisley. This includes people who have had a suspected stroke, drug overdose and gastro-intestinal bleeding. These are people who are at most risk of becoming more ill and may at any time need access to specialist hospital services.

Entitled "When you're ill, know

who to turn to" the guide covers a wide range of local health care topics including A&E, unscheduled medical care, out-of-hours services, the hospital's minor injuries unit and transport arrangements through to local pharmacy, dental, GP and optometry services.

Mr Calderwood added: "There is a very comprehensive range of local NHS services both at the hospital and throughout the catchment area and the guide had been produced so that people can choose the right medical assistance when they need it."

The guide will be distributed door-to-door as well as throughout local health centres and other NHS linked facilities.

● Log on to <http://www.nhs.gov.uk/content/default.asp?page=s1508> to download a copy.



# The future is bright

By **ANDREW GIBSON**

[agibson@dumbartonreporter.co.uk](mailto:agibson@dumbartonreporter.co.uk)

**THE outlook for health services in the area is looking brighter as the Vision for the Vale continues to take shape, say campaigners.**

That was the positive message following the latest meeting of the Vale of Leven Monitoring Group (VLMG), which was set up to monitor implementation of the changes to local health services.

Members of the group were told of the progress being made in virtually every aspect of the Vision just as the Reporter went to print last week.

It was announced at the Monday meeting that six of the seven additional consultant posts are now filled either through permanent appointments or long-term locums — work continues to fill the final post.

An agreement has also been reached on the GP model and out-of-hours service for the Vale of Leven Hospital, with the six GP specialist training posts also filled.

According to a report, it is estimated that around 80 per cent of patients who travel by ambulance to Glasgow or other out of area hospitals would now only require transport to Vale of Leven, freeing up resources to provide a more efficient transfer service, and additional journeys to and from the Royal Alexandra Hospital.

Bill Brackenridge, VLMG chairman, was "delighted" with the overall progress being made on the ambitious improvements to health care.

He said: "There are big strides being made towards implementing the Vision for the Vale.

"We're almost there on the changes to acute services and the GP model.

"Important steps are being taken to communicate the changes to the people who will use the services, and it's tremendous to hear that eighty per cent of patients who have had to travel by ambulance for treatment will be able to go to Vale of Leven Hospital.

"Overall, it's a very encouraging picture, but the group will retain its focus until the Vision is fully implemented."

Grant Archibald, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's director of emergency care and medical services, said the "key components" were now in place, and the changes to the unscheduled medical care service at the Vale could be implemented in November, or early December.

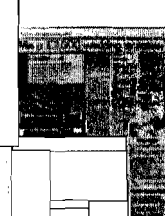
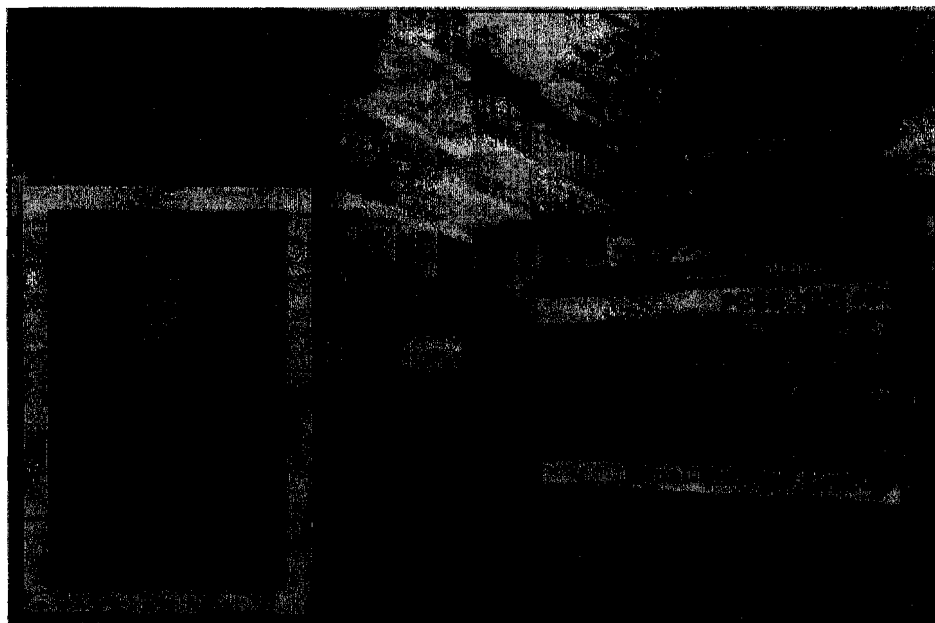
Mr Archibald praised the quality of the new medical recruits, and said he had been very impressed by their enthusiasm and commitment.

Lily Kennedy, from the West Dunbartonshire Public Partnership Forum, said these were "encouraging" developments. She added: "News like this makes people start to realise that the Vale of Leven Hospital is still there and will remain there."

As part of the effort to publicise the changes at the Vale, a detailed leaflet is to be circulated at the start of November across the region.

It will go out to around 42,500 households, with about 12,000 more copies available in libraries, GP surgeries, pharmacies and other buildings.

The next meeting of the group will take place in Dumbarton's Burgh Hall on Monday November 29.



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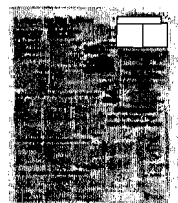
## C-Diff concerns

SHADOW health secretary Jackie Baillie insists lessons still have to be learned following Vale of Leven Hospital's C-Diff outbreak after more deaths from the superbug at a Glasgow hospital.

The Dumbarton Labour MSP said she is very concerned that two people recently died from the intestinal infection at Gartnavel Hospital and has called for a full investigation.

Ms Baillie said: "My immediate thoughts and sympathies are with the patients' families.

"Behind every recorded death is a personal tragedy, but these are particularly tragic because deaths from C-Diff are avoidable. I acknowledge that progress has been made, but I am concerned that the NHS has still not properly learned lessons from Vale of Leven."



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## Christie Ward motion lodged

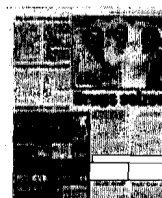
A MOTION calling on the reinstatement of the Vale of Leven Hospital's Christie Ward was presented to the Scottish parliament last week.

Jackie Baillie MSP put the member's motion forward on behalf of the Vale of Leven Monitoring Group, which describes the ward as "an integral part of inpatient mental health care" at the hospital.

The future of the ward, which was ravaged by a fire

earlier in the year, will be discussed at a meeting of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's Health Board today (Tuesday).

A Scottish Government spokeswoman said: "The health board and the group are to consider demand for the inpatient service, as well as the provision of enhanced community services, over the next eight to ten months, and will then submit a report to ministers."



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## New C-diff outbreak

LESSONS must be learned from the Clostridium difficile (C-diff) outbreak at the Vale of Leven Hospital — that is the message from the area's MSP.

Jackie Baillie has said she is concerned not enough has been done following the deadly outbreak in 2008, after two patients who died at Gartnavel Hospital recently, were found to have contracted the superbug.

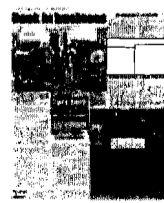
Ms Baillie, who is the shadow Health secretary, said: "I am very concerned to learn that two patients have died in an outbreak of the Clostridium difficile bug

at Gartnavel Hospital. My immediate thoughts and sympathies are with the patients' families.

"I acknowledge that progress has been made, but I am concerned that the NHS has still not properly learned lessons from the Vale of Leven."

Ms Baillie added: "Every family has the right to expect that when their loved ones go into hospital they will be treated in clean and safe conditions.

"This should be the Health secretary's [Nicola Sturgeon] single most important priority."



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# Ward could remain closed until summer

By Lorraine Waddell  
**THE Christie Ward looks unlikely to reopen before the start of next summer.**

The demand for the inpatient mental health unit at the Vale of Leven Hospital is being assessed following a fire in the unit in July this year.

Calls have been made to speed up repairs and resume the service, however, health secretary Nicola Sturgeon is against doing so while the ward's long term future is still uncertain.

This comes less than two weeks before the future of the Christie Ward is discussed at a meeting of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's Health Board on October 28.

However the final decision will rest with Ms Sturgeon.

A Scottish Government spokeswoman said: "The board has shared the results of its feasibility studies with the Scottish Government and, having carefully considered clinical, financial and logistical issues, the cabinet secretary believes there are

compelling arguments to support the view that the interim repatriation of the service is not in patients' or local people's interests."

Despite this, a motion was last week presented to the Scottish Parliament by Dumbarton MSP and shadow health secretary Jackie Baillie on behalf of the Vale of Leven Monitoring Group.

The motion calls for the reinstatement of the ward which the group cites as an "integral part of inpatient mental health care at the Vale of Leven Hospital."

It is recognised that, to achieve this, funding would have to be identified within this financial year.

The Scottish Government spokeswoman continued: "The cabinet secretary is fully aware of the strength of feeling in support of the Christie Ward and has been in correspondence with the monitoring group since the fire.

"No decisions have been made about the future of inpatient

mental health services.

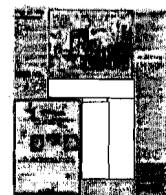
"The health board and the group are to consider demand for the inpatient service, as well as the provision of enhanced community services, over the next eight to 10 months and will then submit a report to ministers."

● ISSUES relating to the Vale of Leven Hospital were discussed on BBC Radio Scotland's Call Kaye programme last week.

The debate programme was focusing on whether the NHS should be completely protected from the impending public sector cuts.

Vale of Leven Hospital campaigner Jackie Pollock, of the United Campaign Group, spoke on the show about how health services in this area could suffer.

She said: "Our concern is that our services will be cut even further and centralised in Glasgow. We feel that cuts should be made at the top of the ladder of Greater Glasgow and Clyde."





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**Quick View Broadcast**

Date

11 October 2010

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**Hospitals**

Broadcast ID: 389054

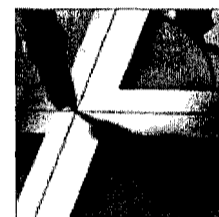
**Your Radio FM - Your Radio News - 11 October 2010**  
 Presenter: Lindsey Archibald,  
 Start Time: 16:02 Duration: 0min 53s  
**Next phase of public enquiry into C-diff outbreak at Vale of Leven hospital will resume in December.**  
 During the week the inquiry will hear further evidence from patients, relatives and from Dr Kevin Woods, the Director General for Health and Chief Executive of NHS Scotland. Michelle Stewart, Spokesperson for most of the families involved, comments.

Broadcast ID: 389010

**Your Radio FM - Your Radio News - 11 October 2010**  
 Presenter: Lindsey Archibald,  
 Start Time: 13:01 Duration: 0min 58s  
**It has been announced that the next phase of the public inquiry into the C-diff outbreak at the Vale of Leven Hospital will resume on 6th December.**  
 The inquiry will hear further evidence from patients and relatives. Family spokesperson comments.

Broadcast ID: 388919

**Your Radio FM - Your Radio News - 11 October 2010**  
 Presenter: Gary Pughes,  
 Start Time: 08:00 Duration: 1min 36s  
**The next phase of the public inquiry into the c-diff outbreak at the Vale of Leven hospital will begin on 6th December.**  
 The inquiry will hear evidence from patients and relatives. Dr Kevin Woods, director general of health and chief executive of NHS Scotland will also give evidence. Michelle Stewart, spokesperson for families, comments.



**Service Update**

Press Data is pleased to announce that all content sourced from the eClips database is now Blackberry-enabled.

All registered users on the Press Data portal will be able to access high-quality images of articles via Blackberry.

We hope that you find this service enhancement useful. For more details, please [contact](#) our Client Services team.

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Quick View Broadcast

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4 November 2010

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Hospitals

Broadcast ID: 393216

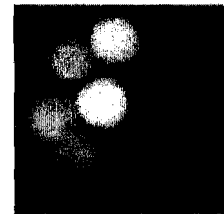
Your Radio FM - Your Radio News - 4 November 2010

Presenter: Sarah Toombe,

Start Time: 08:04 Duration: 0min 35s

**Some local health workers are in line for a major award.**

The cancer care team who work with the Vale of Leven out patients at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley have reached the final stages of the Scottish Health Awards 2010. Dr Roy Gardiner, Golden Jubilee National Hospital, has been short-listed in the heart care category. They will join other health professionals from around Scotland at the awards ceremony in Edinburgh.



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