

**A heart failure specialist nursing service in NHS Tayside delivers high-quality, patient-centred care at home that improves patient outcomes, cuts hospital admissions and avoids costs of over £250,000 per year.**

### **Understanding the service**

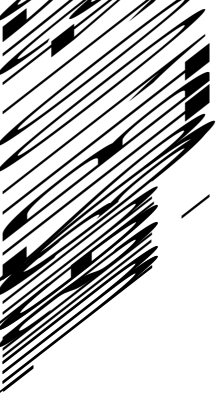
Chronic heart failure is a major public health problem in Scotland. Patients often require frequent, prolonged and costly admissions to hospital and readmission rates can be high<sup>1</sup>. Symptoms, such as fluid retention, breathlessness, reduced physical capacity and mental health issues

delivering care to national best practice clinical guidelines on the management of chronic heart failure<sup>3</sup>. There is a strong focus on working in partnership with patients, family and carers, in order to support patients to self-manage their condition. The service has a rapid response facility and liaises closely with GPs, district nurses, pharmacists and social care, as well as specialist palliative care services.

The HFNLS operates out of Ninewells Hospital and provides a resource covering the NHS Tayside area. Tayside is a large region covering both urban and rural areas with a population of just over 400,000. In 2011-12, the period

compared to 26.7% in 2011-12). The avoided costs from reducing admissions is **£303,518<sup>5</sup>**.

Those patients managed within the HFNLS who are readmitted have a shorter length of stay in hospital



failure specialist nurses in the HFNLS work at an advanced level of nursing practice, with the clinical expertise, knowledge and experience to make complex and autonomous clinical decisions about their patients' care. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Scotland recently highlighted the vital contribution that nurses working in these senior clinical decision-making roles play in improving outcomes for patients and the health service as a whole<sup>8,9</sup>.

With pressures on the health system growing, these types of nursing services are increasingly important. The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties in Scotland and RCN Scotland have voiced their concerns on the future sustainability of the NHS in Scotland<sup>10</sup>. They have called for action, including new ways of delivering care and improving inter-professional working, both of which the HFNLS delivers.

Services such as HFNLS should not be considered a luxury, but as an essential that will improve the sustainability of the health service and help achieve the 2020 vision at a national level and at an individual level for every patient who may need it<sup>6</sup> ( )TJETqBT1 c33(e)-3(li)4(v)10



