

CASE STUDY

Enhancing Cancer Care: Scalp Cooling at Broadford Hospital

IDENTIFYING THE NEED

Chemotherapy treatment, while lifesaving, often comes with side effects that can significantly affect a patient's wellbeing. One of the most visible and distressing of these is hair loss. For many, the loss of hair represents more than a physical change, it can be an emotional burden, impacting confidence, dignity, and self-identity at a vulnerable time. Until recently, patients receiving treatment at Broadford Hospital on the Isle of Skye did not have access to scalp-cooling technology, which can often help to reduce chemotherapy-induced hair loss.

THE CHALLENGE ON THE GROUND

Cancer patients on the Isle of Skye and surrounding areas faced the difficult prospect of undergoing treatment without the option of scalp cooling. While the therapy was available in larger hospitals across NHS Highland thanks to our donors who funded units elsewhere, Skye patients receiving chemotherapy couldn't access it.

This created inequality in access to supportive treatments, leaving patients with fewer options to manage this side effect of care. The dedicated cancer care team were determined to address this gap and provide local patients with the same options available elsewhere in the region.

HOW WE RESPONDED

Thanks to local supporters of the cancer team, £13,650 was granted for a new scalp-cooling system. This system reduces scalp temperature during chemotherapy, slowing blood flow to hair follicles and helping to preserve hair. The purchase was made possible by the generosity of the Skye community and surrounding areas, who supported fundraising for local cancer services. Their contributions ensured that patients on the island could access this important treatment close to home, enhancing comfort and dignity during a challenging time.



THE CHANGE WE ACHIEVED

- **For Staff:** Cancer care staff gained an important new tool to support their patients holistically. The system allowed them to offer not only effective medical treatment but also meaningful emotional support, improving the overall quality of care. Staff were also empowered knowing they could provide the same treatment options available in larger centres.
- **For Patients:** Patients now benefit from the option to aim to preserve their hair during chemotherapy, reducing one of the most distressing side effects of treatment. This helps maintain dignity, improves self-confidence, and provides emotional relief at a time when many aspects of life may feel outside their control.

“Hair loss can be one of the most challenging aspects of cancer treatment for many patients. The introduction of this scalp-cooling system offers a real opportunity to ease some of that burden and provide comfort during a difficult time. We are immensely grateful to the donors whose generosity has made this possible.”
– Barbara, Cancer Nurse Specialist



THE JOURNEY AHEAD

The arrival of the scalp-cooling system is another step forward for cancer care on Skye. The hospital team will continue to build awareness of the treatment among patients and families, ensuring it is offered as a supportive option to all eligible individuals. As fundraising and community support remain vital, the charity and NHS Highland will work together to maintain and expand access to innovative treatments that improve not just clinical outcomes but also the lived experience of patients.

“The generosity of the people of Skye has ensured that funds raised for Skye cancer services are directly benefiting local patients and their families. The charity has been able to support the purchase of scalp-cooling systems at our other main hospitals across the Highlands and Argyll and Bute, so it's terrific to see this technology now available on Skye.”
– Catherine, Charity Lead Officer