

# **NHS Lothian ask relatives to help**

**After warnings that hospitals and GP services are being stretched beyond capacity NHS Lothian explains how relatives and carers can help.**

Calum Campbell, Chief Executive of NHS Lothian, said that ongoing delays in discharging patients who no longer need clinical care is continuing to intensify pressure across the whole healthcare system but there are ways that people can help.

He said: "Our services have been experiencing unprecedented demand for some time and we are doing everything that we can to increase capacity, provide essential care for patients and relieve pressure on staff."

"As we move into the New Year, we're asking people to play their part in easing this sustained pressure by helping to care for loved ones at home, managing illnesses properly and reducing the spread of infections, which can result in increased hospital admissions."

To help reduce waiting times and free up beds for new patients, NHS Lothian has been appealing to relatives and carers of patients who could be discharged to provide interim care for them at home. Dr Tracey Gillies, Medical Director of NHS Lothian, explains:

"Many of our patients no longer require hospital treatment but

can't go home until an appropriate care package is in place or a care home placement becomes available."

"We are urging families of these patients to please consider how they can help look after a loved one at home on a temporary basis. Our teams will be on hand to provide support and discuss their needs and will only allow patients to go home after a robust clinical assessment."

"People can also help by arranging to collect friends and family who have been discharged as early as possible."