Merry Christmas to the NHS
Thanking those at the heart of our health service.

Health Secretary Shona Robison has paid tribute to the hard work and dedication of NHS staff and volunteers, and thanked them for their commitment to patient care throughout 2015.

Ms Robison said: “I am immensely grateful to all our staff, and volunteers, working in the health service who ensure that we care for patients with such compassion, professionalism and dedication.

“I know that all of the NHS and social care workforce, throughout these organisations, work incredibly hard throughout the year to keep our health and care services running. I want to take this opportunity to offer my gratitude. It makes a real difference to the experience patients and families receive and is why our NHS is a much-loved organisation.

“This is particularly evident when it comes to the hard work and commitment that has gone in to driving down long waits in A&E and reducing the delays for patients waiting to be discharged from hospital. When it comes to A&E performance we are currently in a stronger position going into this winter than last and we couldn’t have achieved this without the dedication of staff from across the NHS and Social Care working together.

“Indeed these improvements are a tribute to the efforts of people working across the whole system – from our GP and primary care teams right through to social care staff. By improving care in the community, and shifting the balance of care through reforms like integration, we can ease demand on our acute hospitals. It is teams working incredibly hard in our communities across Scotland that are making this a reality.

“Delivering the highest quality of care for patients, round the clock, is at the heart of what we do across the whole of our health and social care system - and it is the staff that are at the forefront of making this a reality.

“Christmas is a time to look back over the year just past, and there is no doubt that there is much to be proud of within our NHS.

“The NHS in Scotland has come a long way this year. We have made real strides in bringing together health and social care for the first time and begun the process of transforming primary care. These are two key priorities that will help ensure we have an whole healthcare system able to provide quality care for generations to come.

“We have also opened one of the largest acute hospitals in the UK – NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde’s Queen Elizabeth University Hospital – which was a massive undertaking with staff from three hospital sites working together to make the transition to the new campus as smooth as possible. In addition, our hospitals are safer with our world-leading Patient Safety
programme driving down hospital deaths and infections, and innovative new healthcare treatments and technologies are being rolled out across the health service.

“Christmas is also a time to look forward to the new year ahead and 2016 brings plenty of promise. The health budget in 2016 will reach a record high, with an investment in services of almost £13 billion. This will include an additional £250 million to further support health and social care integration which will help ease demands on our health system.

“Of course there are challenges ahead. We are committed to driving down waiting times for patients and increasing the community care and support for our most vulnerable citizens, which remains a key priority for this government.

“However, I know we can rely on our dedicated workforce – across the whole health and social care system - to ensure that the NHS in Scotland continues to deliver the highest quality of care to patients and that the right decisions are made to meet future demands.”