

# Media Release

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## **PEACE AND SAFETY LANDING ZONE: STATE HOSPITAL, CARSTAIRS. YOU CAN'T ARGUE WITH NATURE!**

Scotland's coastline is home to thousands of Eurasian Oyster Catchers birds - but right now is when flocks of them head inland to seek out safe and peaceful sanctuary to make their nests.

These distinctive black and white wading birds make their nests at ground-level on grassland and they rely on instinct to locate the safest spots from the threat predators and disturbance. For hundreds of pairs this means a short migration to what would seem like a highly unlikely location ... Scotland's high security State Hospital at Carstairs.

The NHS facility may be home to men who have committed some terribly violent crimes because of their extreme mental ill-health... yet this is where the birds know they are assured of peace and safety to hatch their young.

This is a hospital that is dreadfully misunderstood and represented in the public consciousness ... it is, in fact a place of hope and safety - a place of care and healing. And the Oyster Catchers are testament to that. There is no danger here to these feathered friends... not even a fox can breach the sophisticated security systems that blend in effortlessly into the surrounding countryside perimeters.

Bristling with the very latest in high tech equipment this purpose-built hospital is not a prison... even the security staff who support the clinical teams are mostly made up of re-trained nurses with patient care at the heart of their motivation and skills.

It's in the peaceful acres of grassland in the hospital grounds that staff and patients alike delight to witness the arrival of the cheerful Oyster Catchers on their annual pilgrimage to nest and hatch their young before the return to the sandy estuaries of the coast when the chicks are able to fly.

- Ends -

### **Notes for Editors:**

- Link to video - <https://youtu.be/XJVhJzgTPzc>

- Security is paramount to ensure safety for the patients, the staff and the public...but it is also a top priority to ensure that safety does not compromise treatment and the rehabilitation of men who are desperately ill from the most extreme mental health conditions such as schizophrenia. Nestled close to the village of Carstairs in deep rural Lanarkshire the modern facilities unique blend of patient focused high-secure care is delivering remarkable rehabilitation results that have attracted the attention of those working in this most challenging field of psychological care right around the world. ... and its peace and security by the natural instincts of the Oyster Catchers too!
- For further information on The State Hospital please visit [www.tsh.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.tsh.scot.nhs.uk)

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