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Would you like to work in the Outer Hebrides in a small practice? Are you interested in Community Hospital work, maybe developing your clinical interests, and re-invigorating your love of General Practice and Medicine? As well as a varied and fulfilling job, we can offer a strong community, wild hills and huge beaches, exciting live music, wildlife and surf. We are looking for a full time GP partner to join the team.

Please note: this is not a standard GP job: it pays well, and our patients are fantastic. The job will provide clinical challenges, opportunities to work in extended roles, to develop services and to inspire the next generation of rural GPs. Small patient numbers and a strong nursing team means we have an interesting and manageable GP workload. Experience in A&E, BASICS training, and other acute speciality interests are an advantage.

Our dream applicant is someone who wishes to provide patient-centred care, and who is prepared to be innovative to ensure that safe, effective and timely care is available locally. Apart from being a trained GP, previous experience and training is not required. The right person will be supported develop their role and experience.

NHS Western Isles is a small board, and local GPs have opportunities to take on additional roles, leading development projects for the board, working with senior managers to develop health services across the region.

There is a Golden Hello of £10,000 for GPs new to rural practice, as well as up to £2,000 for relocation.

**BENBECULA MEDICAL PRACTICE:**

Benbecula Medical Practice is a remote and rural island practice in the Outer Hebrides, off the West Coast of Scotland. We are a dispensing practice, looking after 2,300 patients on the islands of Benbecula and part of South Uist. We aim to have three partners, as well as a salaried GP and regular locum support.

The ethos of the practice is to provide high quality patient-centred care, using extended clinical roles. We seek innovative solutions to ensure that care can be provided within our local systems. We also work with neighbouring practices, community health and social care teams to develop and maintain secure working arrangements to the benefit of patients. Because of our remote location, we often take on community-based management to help patients avoid arduous trips to the mainland.

The practice employs a full-time practice manager, two full-time administrators/secretaries, two full-time and one part-time nurses, a clinical support worker, two part-time dispensers and a cleaner. One of the nurses is extending her role to become an advanced nurse practitioner. All staff have a say in the running and planning of practice services. The nurses run the chronic disease clinics.

The work of the practice and a list of services that we provide is more fully described on the practice website [www.benbeculamedicalpractice.co.uk](http://www.benbeculamedicalpractice.co.uk). It is mobile friendly and updated regularly. During 2018, we are moving over to 15-minute routine appointments, which will require a redesign of our consulting schedules. In addition, the new Scottish contract means that we no longer depend on QOF for our income, and service improvement is arranged collaboratively at Quality Cluster meetings. Dr Dawson has an interest in Quality Improvement and data for improvement, and is the practice quality lead.
In the past, the practice was a training practice, but the current accommodation is no longer sufficient. Instead we provide elective placements for Scottish medical students, and FY1 and FY2 doctors who want to try out rural general practice. We also support local school pupils who wish to apply to medical school, with high levels of success. Incoming GPs with an interest in medical education would be supported to develop this further.

The practice has been fully computerised for many years, using EMIS since 1996. Incoming mail and documents are managed using Docman. We use a digital dictation system, and promote online access to practice information and appointments. Over the last decade, the health board has supported the use of VC technology to allow remote attendance for patients and staff. This is enabling GPs in the islands better access to meetings, and educational events, and is also allows patients to access consultant and AHP clinics remotely.

The main premises in Griminish are purpose built and were extended in 1992. They are rented from the Health Board. They consist of two consulting rooms, two treatment rooms, a dispensary, three offices, a staff room, reception and waiting area. The branch surgery in Daliburgh consists of two consulting rooms, a staff room, a reception/dispensary and a waiting area. Our premises do not fully meet the current needs of the practice, and we are based away from main centres of population. It is a long-term aim of the practice to move to Balivanich, next to the community hospital, to form part of a hub of clinical services which will see the co-location of a number of health and social care services.

The GPs at the practice have the option of joining the Out of Hours rota. This is currently covered by four local GPs, and regular visiting locums. OOH work is undertaken outwith the partnership, and any income from OOH is retained by the individual GP. While OOH is optional, it is a large part of covering the medical services locally, and the practice aims to maintain some commitment to this work for local GPs.

We also provide custodial and basic forensic support to the local police service, for which we have an FME training program. We have a LES for responding to ambulance ‘dual response’ requests. The practice provides primary care services to RAF personnel at the local military base. There is also a military medical centre on St. Kilda, to which we provide telephone support to the duty nurse. These additional roles are supported by extended training in emergency medicine, pre-hospital care, online forensic training etcetera, supported by the NHSWI.

The practice has a good working relationship with the practices in the area, in Barra, South Uist and North Uist. We organise joint educational opportunities, and occasionally socialise together when the opportunity presents.

http://www.benbeculamedicalpractice.co.uk/
https://www.facebook.com/groups/BMPPPG/
Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh (Uist and Barra Hospital) is located in Benbecula, and was officially opened in 2001. It provides a local service for the populations on Benbecula, North Uist, South Uist and associated islands. The hospital currently has 16 beds, rising to 20 when winter pressure requires. We cover acute medical admissions, A&E, some rehabilitation and care of the elderly, and Midwifery led maternity services. Consultants from the Western Isles Hospital and elsewhere within Scotland visit the Uist and Barra Hospital to provide outpatient services. Local GPs with special interests also undertake clinics; currently we have GP-run clinics for respiratory medicine and dermatology.

The hospital is the only source of in-patient and emergency medical care locally; because of our location, we are the first point of call for all and any clinical condition from ingrown toenails to acute ischaemic heart disease and road traffic accidents. We are also central to the management of major incidents and as a result the practice has input into local emergency planning.

We are supported by consultants in Stornoway by telephone, and by the Ambulance and Air ambulance services and by the ScotStar Emergency Retrieval Service. The health board intranet also provides a range of policies, guidelines and treatment pathways to support our in-patient clinical work.

Medical cover and clinical leadership for the hospital are provided under a Local Enhanced Service agreement with Benbecula Medical Practice. At present the services provided by the hospital are being under review; a new hospital service plan is being developed as a requirement of ‘Community Strategy Refresh’ which is part of the Scottish NHS 20:20 vision.
WESTERN ISLES HEALTH BOARD:
NHS Western Isles (NHSWI) is the organisation responsible for providing healthcare to the population of the Western Isles, which is made up of approximately 26,500 people. The board employs over 1,000 staff.

NHSWI works alongside mainland Health Boards, the local authority (CnES) and third sector organisations to provide services to the local population. Where possible, services are provided in the Western Isles, but for specific procedures and more specialist services, patients travel to the mainland, usually to hospitals in Glasgow or Inverness. There are nine different GP Practices in the Western Isles working from 14 sites.

NHSWI has a number of statutory committees, including the GPSub, Local Medical Committee, Area Medical Committee, Area Drugs and Therapeutics Committee etcetera. The practice actively supports these committees; at present, one of the partners (Dr Dawson) chairs the GPSub/LMC and AMC, and is a member of the Area Clinical Forum. If any new GPs wished to become involved, this would be supported by the partnership.

LOCAL HOSPITALS:
There are three hospitals run by NHS Western Isles. The largest is the Western Isles Hospital, a Rural General Hospital located in Stornoway. The Western Isles Hospital was opened in 1992 with a range of hospital acute specialties.

Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh (Uist and Barra Hospital) is an acute community hospital located in Benbecula, and was opened in 2001. It is supported by the local GP practice through a LES.

St Brendan’s Hospital, with 5 beds, is in Castlebay on the Isle of Barra and is in a shared building with a local authority care home facility. It is supported by the local GP Practice to provide care of the elderly and other services. There are plans to redevelop St. Brendan’s.

http://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/
https://twitter.com/NHSWI
https://www.facebook.com/NHSWesternIsles?ref=hl
THE UISTS AND BENBECULA:

The Uists and Benbecula form part of the Western Isles. The islands are located 40 miles off the North West coast of Scotland, 130 miles long from the Butt of Lewis in the North to the Isle of Barra in the South. The population of the Western Isles is approximately 26,500, spread over 280 townships. Around 22% of the population are over 65, proportionately one of the most elderly populations in Scotland. The islands are one of the last remaining strongholds of the Gaelic language in Scotland.

The islands are reached by daily flights from Glasgow, by daily ferries from Uig in Skye, or from Mallaig and Oban on the mainland. There are also regular ferries between Barra and South Uist, and between North Uist and Harris. There are week-day flights to and from Stornoway and on to Inverness.

NEIGHBOURING PRACTICES

North Uist Medical Practice
- North Uist Medical Practice is a dispensing practice based in Lochmaddy, providing general medical services to the population of North Uist and associated islands.
- Currently one principal GP, one salaried GP, one vacancy.
- Practice population around 1,300
- OOH is covered by the Uists and Benbecula team on a rota
- [http://north-uit-medical.co.uk/wordpress/](http://north-uit-medical.co.uk/wordpress/)

South Uist Medical
- South Uist Medical is a single-handed dispensing practice based in Daliburgh, at the south of South Uist, and provides general medical services to patients in South Uist and Eriskay.
- Currently one principal GP, one ANP
• OOH is covered by the Uists and Benbecula team on a rota
• http://www.southuistmedical.co.uk/

NORTH UIST:

North Uist has a population of around 1,300 people, with one main island and three smaller islands all connected by causeway. It is the northernmost island in the group. The main towns are Lochmaddy, Carinish, Sollar and Bayhead. There is a primary school based in Bayhead, as well as a nursery in the same general area. There is a Scottish Co-op in Sollar, and local shops in Bayhead and Lochmaddy.

Taigh Kersavagh is a large third sector arts organisation based in Lochmaddy, with galleries displaying art and local history. Craigard is a council-led establishment providing day-time activities for people with learning difficulties. It is based in Lochmaddy. There is a council-run care home called Trianaid, in Carinish.

BENBECULA:

Benbecula has a population of around 1,300 people, and lies between the islands of North and South Uist, connected by causeways. The main township is called Balivanich, on the north west of the island. The council offices, airport, main bank, post office and the headquarters of the military rocket range are all based there.

Further south on Benbecula, at Lionacleit, is the secondary school, which also includes a public swimming pool, library, sports facilities, fitness centre, and a small museum. The Lionacleit campus of Lews Castle College is based next door, as is the local office of Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

There are three supermarkets in Benbecula; two local shops in Balivanich, and the Scottish Co-op in Creagorry, also at the south of the island.

Tagsa Uibhist is a large third sector organization based in Benbecula that provides services to many groups of patients, including mental health support, transport for the disabled, respite care, a sitting service, personal care, as well as facilitating self-directed care packages.

SOUTH UIST:

South Uist is connected to Benbecula and Eriskay by causeways; it is a long island with mountains in the east and sandy beaches and machair land to the west, with lochs and rivers in between. There is a population of around 1,750 people, scattered along the island in at least thirty crofting townships. The north end of South Uist also comprises part of the main practice catchment area. The north end has a supermarket, post-office and a primary school. There is a small respite care home run by a local charity.

The south end also has a supermarket as well as a primary school, two post offices, South Uist Medical Practice, and a branch surgery from Benbecula Medical Practice. There is also a large care home with a dementia care unit run by the local authority.
Cothrom, a local third sector organization, is based in the middle district of South Uist. It provides opportunities for people who would otherwise struggle to find employment and supports people into work.

**SCHOOLS & EDUCATION:**

The secondary school at Lionacleit has excellent facilities open to all and has a good academic record. It has developed links with two local primary schools to form a new community school cluster. This has led to the development of a partnership between education, health and social work for children’s services.

The Scottish education system has recently introduced the Curriculum for Excellence, a national curriculum covering education from 3 to 18 years of age.

For adults, evening classes are held in the winter, and the sports hall, swimming pool and library are available for community use. There is a satellite of Lews Castle College next to the secondary school, with facilities to access other further education support via video link to distant campuses. The college offers diploma and degree courses in health and social care, fine art and music, as well as several other courses.

http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/education/schools/index.asp
http://www.lews.uhi.ac.uk/about-us/find-us/benbecula-campus
http://www.lews.uhi.ac.uk/about-us/find-us/north-uest-campus#tab0

**HOUSING:**

There are opportunities to rent, buy or build your own home in the Hebrides. The property market has expanded in the last ten years. Please speak to the current partners as well as checking the local estate agents. Traditional housing may require extensive refurbishment, but there is an expanding availability of high-quality housing stock. It is also relatively easy to buy a plot of land to build your own home. Much of the local property market is transacted by word of mouth.

http://www.uistproperty.co.uk/
http://www.hebridean-estate-agency.co.uk/property-list.php
http://www.kenmacdonaldproperties.co.uk/
http://www.andersonbanks.co.uk/listings/

**LIVING ON THE ISLANDS:**

This is a wonderful place to live and work, and to bring up children. We have a supportive community, a diverse and rich natural environment, and a strong cultural heritage. There’s a lot of information on-line already. Here are the highlights:

- **Arts:** There is a strong musical tradition with summer feisean for children, and an internationally acclaimed traditional music summer school, Ceolas, [www.ceolas.co.uk](http://www.ceolas.co.uk). Piping is popular, and there are several traditional dancing clubs and dancing schools. The local college supports
diploma and degree-level courses in art, archaeology and music. The local art association also has a gallery in North Uist and runs an annual art trail called art on the map. The accordion and fiddle club is very active and The Westford Inn, in North Uist, has regular musical sessions.

- **Economy:** The local economy depends on a mixture of traditional lifestyles combined with service industry jobs. Large local employers include the NHS, the local council CnES and Qinetiq, who run a military research and training range. Fish farming is a source of employment for many. Traditional jobs include crofting and fishing. Tourism is also important to the economy in the summer. There are several excellent hotels and restaurants.

- **History and archaeology:** The Uists and Benbecula are covered in archaeological sites dating back to a thriving Neolithic community. There are beaker sites, bronze-age hoards, roundhouses, brochs, cairns and Viking settlements, medieval longhouses and ancient churches. There has been increasing local interest in developing access and interpretation to local sites. The University of the Highlands and Islands run an archaeology degree course.

- **Recreation:** There are many opportunities for out-door recreation, excellent fishing, windsurfing, sport diving, horse riding, climbing, cycling, walking and running. Organised sports are not so common. The most popular is football, with six local teams, athletics, volleyball, basketball and badminton. The local secondary school has a sports hub with a swimming pool and a fitness suite. There are two golf courses as well. There are regular Tai Chi and dancing classes at the local halls.

- **Environment:** The islands provide unique wildlife on the background of amazing scenery. Despite the northern latitude the weather is heavily influenced by the warming North Atlantic Drift. The islands are an ornithologist’s dream with many waders and raptors, including golden eagles, sea eagles, hen harriers. Corncrake and corn buntings breed here, and there are large flocks of greylag geese, and ravens are a frequent sight. The sandy grassland behind the dunes, known as machair, is packed with wild flowers and bumble bees. The rocky hills along the east coast provide spectacular views of the islands, and of Skye to the east. There is an active natural history society.

- **Shopping:** There is no high street shopping; if this is your thing, then trips to the mainland will be particularly exciting. Just about anything can be bought online, and the local shops provide a good range of groceries etcetera.