

# **NHS EDUCATION FOR SCOTLAND RURAL FELLOWSHIP IN GENERAL PRACTICE**



**INFORMATION FOR  
BENBECULA, NORTH UIST AND BARRA  
NHS WESTERN ISLES**

# BASE: BENBECULA MEDICAL PRACTICE



Benbecula Medical Practice is a remote and rural island practice in the Outer Hebrides, off the West Coast of Scotland. The practice looks after 2,300 patients on the island of Benbecula and part of the neighbouring island of South Uist. We are also a dispensing practice.

The practice also covers the community hospital. The GPs in the practice have extended roles and special interests, making this an attractive and stimulating post to experience different models of working as a GP, whilst getting experienced senior support.

# RURAL FELLOWSHIP - BENBECULA

## **Educational component**

- The Fellow will be based at Benbecula Medical Practice. When working in Benbecula Medical Practice, the Fellow will take an equal share in the intermediate and community hospital level of care. One of the practice partners will always be available to advise and assist in clinical care and decision-making. The Practice Quality Lead will be available to support any QI and Patient Safety projects during the year.

## **Service Commitment**

- For the service commitment part of the fellowship, the fellow will work for 22 weeks in the participating practices. These practices will be agreed at the beginning of the rural fellow year.
- Participating practices are based on Benbecula, South Uist, North Uist and Barra. Fellows may work in more than one of these practices, taking into account their annual leave and study leave.

## **Duties**

- Duties will include the full range of general practice duties during the Rural Fellow's time in any General Practice, including working in the local Community Hospital. The underlying principles will be that the Fellow will have a similar work pattern to the principals in the practice.

## **OOH**

- As part of their educational program, Fellows are expected to gain experience in Out of Hours and Emergency Care. The Fellow will be expected to undertake one weeknight shift for each of their 22 weeks of service commitment. On-call GPs are based at home, covering the community hospital and the patients from three practices (North Uist, South Uist and Benbecula). Additional OOH sessions outwith the fellowship arrangements may be available, remunerated separately.

# BENBECULA PRACTICE: SMALL PRINT

- 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, three part-time dispensers and a cleaner. All staff have a say in the running and planning of practice services. The nurses manage all chronic disease clinics.
- The branch surgery, in Daliburgh, is open two days a week.
- We provide placements for medical students from time to time. We also support local school pupils who wish to apply to medical school, with high levels of success.
- The practice has been fully computerised for many years, and currently uses EMIS PCS. Incoming mail and documents are managed using docman.
- The practice uses Jabber to allow island GPs to access meetings, and educational events.
- The community team includes three district nursing teams, health visiting and school nurse service, two community psychiatric nurses, two MacMillan nurses, a heart failure liaison nurse, diabetic specialist nurse, etcetera. Most of the community health team are based several miles away near the community hospital.
- The practice provides custodial and basic forensic support to the local police service, as well as responding to ambulance 'dual response' requests. The practice also provides primary care services to RAF personnel at the local military base. There is a military medical centre on St. Kilda; 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.
- Because of our remote location, we provide a very full range of services within the practice, often taking on community-based extended management to help patients avoid arduous trips to the mainland.
- The practice has a good working relationship with other practices in the area, and in particular, the practices 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/>

# UISTS AND BARRA HOSPITAL

Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh (Uist and Barra Hospital) is a community hospital located in Benbecula. It provides a local service for the populations on Benbecula, North Uist, South Uist and associated islands. Benbecula Medical Practice holds a LES to provide the medical services at the hospital.

The hospital currently has 16 beds, increasing to 20 if winter pressure requires this. The hospital provides care of the elderly, GP Acute and Midwifery led maternity services. Many of the Consultants from the Western Isles Hospital, and some from mainland Health Boards, visit the Uist and Barra Hospital to provide outpatient services. Two local GPs are employed as Hospital Practitioners, providing clinics for respiratory medicine and dermatology.



# HOSPITAL: SOME DETAILS

- The hospital is the only source of in-patient and emergency medical care locally; because of the location, it is the first point of call for all and any clinical condition from ingrown toenails to acute ischaemic heart disease and road traffic accidents. Patients whose care needs exceed local resources are then transferred on to the mainland.
- The health board employ all the staff who work in the hospital apart from the GPs, who work there under a LES . Services include physiotherapy, general nursing, midwifery, endoscopy, minor surgery lists, radiology, exercise tolerance tests etcetera.
- The community hospital is supported by consultants in Stornoway by telephone, and by the Ambulance and Air ambulance services and by the 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 under review; a new hospital service plan is about to be developed as a requirement of 'Community Strategy Refresh' which is part of the Scottish NHS 20:20 vision.
- Benbecula Medical Practice provides medical cover for all emergencies and admissions. Patients with serious conditions can be stabilised before onward transfer, either by air ambulance, or retrieved by the Emergency Medical Retrieval Service, who provide in-flight medical support. Resuscitation, stabilisation and emergency transfer of acutely unwell & trauma patients falls within the scope and remit of the GPs.
- The hospital and practice are also central to the management of major incidents and as a result the practice has input into local emergency planning.

# NEIGHBOURING PRACTICES

## **North Uist Medical Practice (participating 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.
- Practice population around 1,400
- OOH is covered by the Uists and Benbecula team on a rota
- <http://north-uist-medical.co.uk/wordpress/>

## **South Uist Medical (not participating at present):**

- South Uist Medical is a 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
- Practice population around 1,400
- OOH is covered by the Uists and Benbecula team on a rota
- <http://www.southuistmedical.co.uk/>

## **Barra Medical Practice (participating practice):**

- Barra Medical Practice is a dispensing practice based in Castlebay. Barra is not connected to the other major islands. There are two GPs sharing the job. Only one GP is on duty at any one time.
- The practice also covers St Brendan's Hospital, a small acute medical unit of five beds and an A/E facility. There is a good team approach involving the Practice, St Brendan's and the District Nurses.
- Practice population around 1,200
- The GPs undertake their own on-call
- <http://www.barramedicalpractice.co.uk/>

# EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

**Small group learning:** We have a small PBSGL group, as well as occasional educational meetings organised by and for local clinicians, covering personal interests, teach-back from courses, new guidelines, and updates from visiting consultants. We also link into RCPE lectures on a webstreamed link.

**Quality improvement:** One of the GP partners has additional training in Quality Improvement methodology and will be available to support a QI project during the course of the attachment.

**Local courses:** Courses such as BASICS, European Trauma Course, SCOTTIE and EPALS are provided on the islands, usually in Stornoway on the island of Lewis. Fellows will also have the opportunity to get involved in planning groups for trauma pathways, major incident responses etcetera. The board will also support linking in to BASICS distance learning and portfolio teaching.

**Practical learning:** There will be opportunities to get involved in GP led acute care, care of the elderly, midwife-led obstetrics, palliative care and attachments with GPWSI and visiting consultant clinics. Visiting consultants and GPs with special interests undertake a range of clinics including dermatology, respiratory medicine, ENT, psychiatry, obstetrics and gynaecology, ophthalmology, orthopaedics, general surgery and general medicine. Unscheduled care sessions will allow for observation of aeromedical evacuation. There are also endoscopy and minor surgery sessions led by a visiting surgeon. The Fellow will also have an opportunity to participate in the annual MAJAX exercise.

**Protected educational time:** This will be organised in conjunction with the service elements of the posts and with the Rural Fellowship Co-ordinator. Fellows will have the opportunity to negotiate additional experience in secondary care, remote practices and to undertake specific course activity as available. Fellows will also be expected to attend the meetings of the Scottish Rural Fellows Group three times during the year.

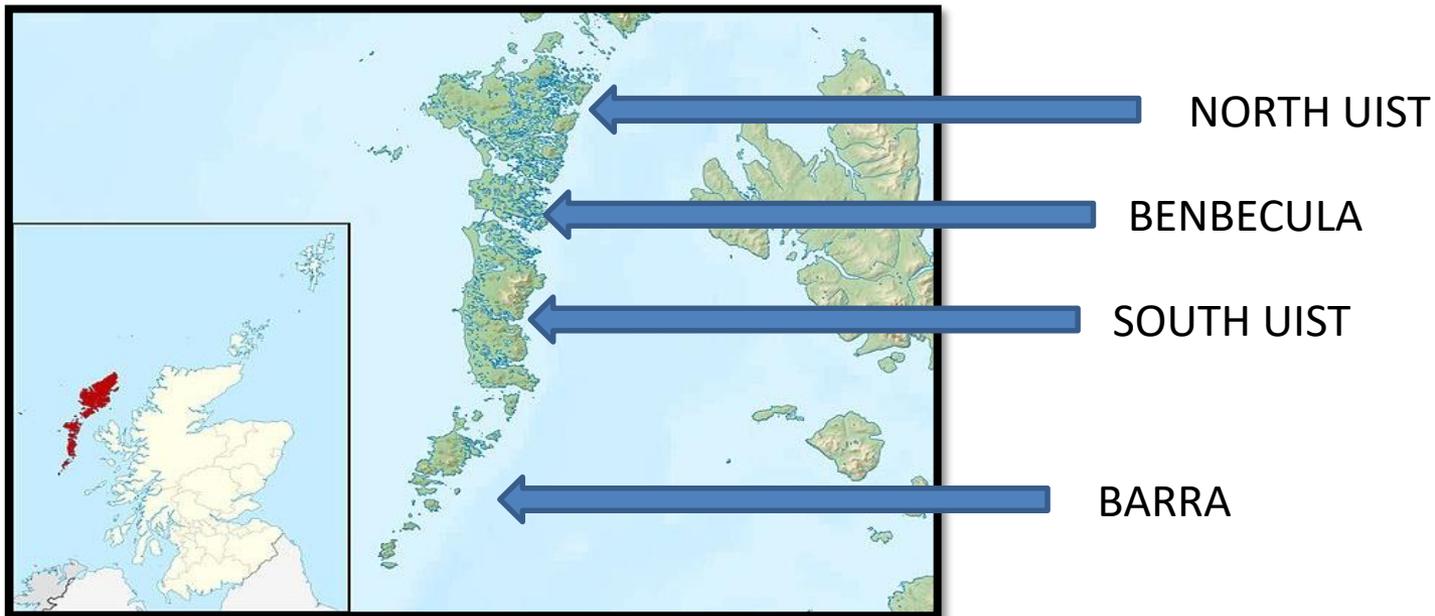
# AT THE TOP OF BEN MOR IN SPRING



**SEA EAGLE AND GOLDEN EAGLE**

# LOCATION

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. Travel to and from the islands is by air or ferry. There are causeways between the islands in the Uist chain, and a ferry from South Uist to Barra.



# LIVING ON OUR 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. 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.

**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 cornbuntings 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.

**Education:** There are several local primary schools and a secondary school. There is also a local college that is part of the University of the Highlands and Islands. Class sizes are small, and offer Gaelic medium as well as English-based education.

# MIST & SUNSET, BALIVANICH



# 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, Sollas 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 Sollas, 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 and University of the Highlands and Islands 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, at the south of the island.
- Tagsa Uibhist is a local third sector organization based in Benbecula that provides support 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

# HOWMORE BEACH, SOUTH UIST



# 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 has a supermarket, post-office and a primary school.
- The south end also has a supermarket as well as a primary school, two post offices, South Uist Medical Practice, and a branch surgery run from Benbecula Medical Practice.
- Eriskay has recently been connected to South Uist by causeway. It has its own shop and community hall.
- There is a care home in Daliburgh 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.

# BARRA

- Barra has a population of around 1,200 people. It is connected by causeway to the smaller island of Vatersay.
- Barra has a lively and independent population. Many local groups use island-related puns, creating events like the Barrathon, and headlines about Barradise.
- There is a Scottish co-op and several small independent shops on Barra.
- Barratlantic, a fish factory on the North of the island, provides employment locally.
- Barra's airport uses the beach as an airstrip. There are regular flights to Glasgow, and the flight is a tourist attraction for many. Travel to South Uist etc is by ferry.
- Cobhair Bharraigh is a local charity that provides day-care, home support for carers and a holiday respite service.
- Gaelic is widely spoken, and traditional music is popular, with accordion, fiddle and bagpipes.

# LOCH SKIPPOR, SOUTH UIST



# TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATION

Getting to the islands is either by air or sea.

- **Ferry:** There are regular ferry sailings between North Uist and Uig on Skye, and between South Uist and Mallaig. There are also regular inter-island ferries between Barra and Eriskay; and Leverburgh (Harris) and Berneray (North Uist). It is quite a long drive to the ferry terminals from Edinburgh and Glasgow.
- **Flights:** There are daily flights from Glasgow to Benbecula and Barra, and inter-island flights between Benbecula and Stornoway three days a week with onward connections to Inverness.
- **Roads & driving:** The roads are a mixture of single and double-track, generally well maintained. Most of the islands are connected by causeway. A car and driving licence are essential for work as a General Practitioner.
- **Telecoms:** Mobile phone coverage in the islands is improving, with a roll-out of 4G EE coverage on the way. At present Vodafone provides the best signal. Broadband is also limited to BT in some areas, and Hebrides.net in others.

# USEFUL LINKS

<b>Local Council (CnES)</b> <a href="http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk">www.cne-siar.gov.uk</a>	<b>NHS Western Isles</b> <a href="http://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk">www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk</a>
<b>Travel</b> <a href="http://www.travelinescotland.com">www.travelinescotland.com</a> <a href="http://www.calmac.co.uk/timetables">www.calmac.co.uk/timetables</a> <a href="http://www.loganair.co.uk">www.loganair.co.uk</a>	<b>Property</b> <a href="http://www.uistproperty.co.uk/">http://www.uistproperty.co.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.andersonbanks.co.uk/listings/">http://www.andersonbanks.co.uk/listings/</a> <a href="http://www.kenmacdonaldproperties.co.uk/">http://www.kenmacdonaldproperties.co.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.rightmove.co.uk/property/Western-isles.html">http://www.rightmove.co.uk/property/Western-isles.html</a>
<b>Tourist information</b> <a href="http://www.visitscotland.com/destinations-maps/outer-hebrides">www.visitscotland.com/destinations-maps/outer-hebrides</a> <a href="http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/benbecula/benbecula/">http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/benbecula/benbecula/</a>	

# FURTHER INFORMATION

- **Further information at :** [www.benbeculamedicalpractice.co.uk](http://www.benbeculamedicalpractice.co.uk)
- Applicants with a potential interest in the Benbecula post are encouraged to make contact for further discussion by phone, email, or arrange a visit to the practice.
- **Contact:**
  - Dr S K Dawson (partner) [kdawson@nhs.net](mailto:kdawson@nhs.net)
  - Ms Sheena MacKinnon (practice manager) [Benbecula.wi@nhs.net](mailto:Benbecula.wi@nhs.net)