



ACUTE / GP RURAL
FELLOWSHIP 2025

Fellowship available for:

Caithness General
Hospital supported by
Pearson Practice, Wick



Unique Experience

This innovative one-year fellowship will be based in Caithness General Hospital linking in with a single-handed GP practice alongside established teams for a multi-disciplinary educational experience in a rural setting.

Rural Fellows will work 22 weeks at Caithness General Hospital where you will join a team of 6 Rural Emergency Physicians from a variety of backgrounds including doctors who have recently completed the fellowship. 11 weeks will be spent working in the Pearson Practice and there will be 11 weeks of educational training time.

Caithness General Hospital

Caithness General Hospital serves a local population of 44,000 which significantly increases in the summertime due to the runaway success of the North Coast 500 tourist route.

The hospital is comprised of 2 wards, one surgical and one rehabilitation. Additionally, there is a small midwife led maternity unit, dialysis unit, infusion suite and various out-patient services.

The Emergency Department sees around 11,000 patients a year. We take all presentations, often for immediate resuscitation prior to transfer to larger centres for definitive care.





The Pearson Practice

This unique Rural Fellowship placement would appeal to those of a truly altruistic nature. The Pearson Practice belongs to a single handed GP who runs a family Practice that has looked after the population of Wick and surrounding area for many generations.

The Practice Manager has a wealth of knowledge having been in post since January 1975. Visiting staff and patients feedback positively on the care provided by this practice even though the area has challenges with areas of deprivation and rurality.

This single-handed GP practice hosted a GP fellow in 2024-25 with excellent feedback.

Remote and Rural Acute Care Training

We have been closely involved in the development of the GMC approved remote and rural acute care credential with two of our REPs being amongst the first 7 “champions” to be awarded the accreditation.

The structure of the fellowship will allow the fellow to meet the learning needs required for accreditation. A recent GMC inspection of Caithness General commented on the supportive training environment provided to both medical students and trainee doctors. The fellow will be working directly with Rural Emergency Physicians ensuring they develop the skills and attributes required to fulfil this role independently in the future.





The Caithness Area

Wick and Thurso are the main towns in Caithness. There are regular trains and buses to Inverness as well as direct flights to Aberdeen. Residents benefit from the Air Discount Scheme giving significant savings to standard air fares.

There are a wide range of outdoor activities possible nearby including hillwalking, golf, bird watching, surfing, diving, sea-kayaking and exploring mile upon mile of unspoilt landscape. Less physically strenuous activities include a thriving folk music scene (one REP plays the fiddle in a local group), arts and craft clubs, crofting, seafood, gin and whisky distilleries and a surprisingly good selection of places to get a decent coffee.

Rural Support Team

A unique feature of this fellowship is the connection with our Rural Support Teams. The team in this area may consist of a mix of healthcare professionals; GPs, Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Unscheduled Nurse Practitioners and Paramedic Practitioners, all these disciplines either work or will work together providing healthcare to the populations within the North Division.

The fellow will be supported to engage with these teams during the 11 weeks in The Pearson Practice, providing a completely new perspective on the provision of services in rural areas – for the benefit of both the fellow and the teams!





11 Weeks Education

Educational opportunities are flexible and too many to list. The fellow's educational plan will be organised in conjunction with the service elements of the posts and with support from with the Rural Fellowship Co-ordinator. Fellows will have the opportunity to negotiate additional experiences and undertake specific course activity as available.

Fellows will also be able to attend the regular meetings of the Scottish Rural Fellows.

Service Commitment

We will work with the fellows to balance both service needs and their own aspirations, therefore flexibility will be provided to allow for your personal preferences.

If the fellow is required to travel to an area away from their normal base, accommodation will be arranged, and travel expenses reimbursed.



A BIT OF DETAIL

Duties

The fellow will predominantly base themselves in the Emergency Department under the direct supervision of a Rural Emergency Physician. During this time they will treat patients within the limit of their skills and have senior help available when required. In addition to this the fellow will work a full range of the shifts including nightshifts where they are the only doctor in the hospital. This will enable them to develop clinical skills for managing not only presentations to the Emergency Department but also deteriorating patients on the ward.

OOHs Element

Out of hours there will be senior on-call support from consultant physicians, surgeons, REPs and anaesthetists. In addition to the Emergency Department work the fellow will at times provide medical cover to the acute ward under the supervision of consultant surgeons and physicians. There will also be an opportunity to develop skills in geriatric medicine on the rehabilitation ward if desired.



Clinical and Educational Supervision

The designated supervisor for the fellowship completed an Acute Care Rural Fellowship in 2018. The knowledge and experience he gained from this will be useful to guide the current fellow as to how to make the most of their professional development time.

During clinical time direct supervision will be available from the duty Rural Emergency Physician or the duty Consultant Surgeon or Physician. The fellow will always have a senior person to call for advice. Out of hours the fellow may be the only doctor in the hospital with phone support from seniors (who can quickly come in for an emergency). This provides an excellent opportunity to improve acute decision making skills.

A BIT OF DETAIL

Other Local Opportunities

We would be keen for the fellow to develop or continue to pursue an established interest. Opportunities include simulation, fracture clinic (currently run by one of the REPs) geriatric medicine (another REP does a contributes to the Parkinson's service) and undergraduate teaching. We are open to any other ideas or interests you may have. We recognise the salary for the fellowship is less than available in non-educational posts. This is made up for by the large amount of educational time on offer.

Should the fellow wish to increase their earnings there are various locum opportunities available locally including GP in local GP practices or the potential to cover extra hours within CGH.



Fellowship meetings, clinical attachments and appraisal

Appraisal will be carried out by the Rural Fellowship coordinator ensuring the fellow meets the requirements of appraisal for General Practitioners. The fellow will be guaranteed leave to attend all required fellowship meetings.

We have a good network of contacts to help arrange clinical attachments for the fellow.

In the last few years the RPs have completed attachments at Glasgow Royal Infirmary, Ysbyty Gwynedd hospital (Snowdonia), Great Ormond Street, Borders General Hospital, Glasgow Children's Hospital and Raigmore. We also have contacts in Australia, New Zealand and Canada and it may be possible to arrange self-funded attachments abroad provided they have clear educational benefits

Speak to us

Thank you for reading about what we can offer.

For further information about the Acute aspects of the fellowship please contact:

Dr Neil Shepherd (Rural Emergency Physician and Fellowship supervisor) neil.shepherd@nhs.scot

And for any further information on the GP aspect contact:

Emma Rollo (Primary Care Manager) emma.rollo@nhs.scot

