

NHS Education for Scotland
GP Fellowship Posts 2025
Rural Fellowships in General Practice – Job Information

Background

Rural Fellowships in General Practice were established by NES in 2002. A maximum of 8 Rural Fellowships will be available for the year commencing August 2025, organised in partnership with local NHS organisations. Each Fellowship will last up to one year. Both 'standard' and 'acute care' rural GP fellowships are available from August 2025 in a variety of rural locations across Scotland, details of locations and post descriptors at:

<http://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/your-development/gp-fellowships/>

Local post descriptions vary between the different geographical locations. The detailed guidelines for the Rural Fellowships are appended.

Purpose & Structure of Fellowships

See attached Guidelines

Terms and Conditions

Salary

Salary will be £79066 This figure is based on the trainee base salary point 03 on the salary scale £54528 plus 45%. This arrangement reflects the unique educational nature of the post. Superannuation is payable on the base part of the salary only. Any 2025/2026 salary uplift will be applied.

If the post holder does not hold a valid UK driving licence, the ability to travel and organise suitable alternative transport will be necessary. Travel expenses incurred because of the need to travel will be reimbursed.

Subsistence and Removal Expenses

It is anticipated that each Fellow will declare a home base at the beginning of the Fellowship. Relocation expenses from previous locus to base will be paid in accordance with employing Health Board relocation policy

Study Leave

See attached Guidelines

Disclosure

Pre-employment checks may be undertaken, and all appointments will be subject to satisfactory clearance according to the employing Health Board Arrangements.

Health Screening

All appointments will be subject to satisfactory health clearance and pre-employment health checks may be required according to the employing Health Board Arrangements.

Maternity Leave and Pay

Any maternity pay that may become applicable will be paid according to the employing Health Board Maternity Arrangements.

Medical Defence

The fellow will be responsible for notifying their Medical Defence Organisation (MDO) of the expected programme to ensure that there is a good understanding of the programme on which to base membership

fees. Most MDOs have dealt with Rural Fellows' subscription needs in the past. Advice can be sought from Dr D Miller, Rural Fellowship Coordinator and subscription fees will be reimbursed by NES.

Holidays

Annual leave and public/local holidays will be in line with the employer's contractual terms and conditions.

Sick Pay

The contractual employer's policies and procedures will apply.

Discipline, Grievance and Complaints Procedures

The contractual employer's policies and procedures will apply.

Supervision

Fellows will be accountable to the Fellowship Co-ordinator.

Fellows' Personal Development Plans for the fellowship year will be determined in negotiation with the Fellowship Coordinator. The Fellows will be required to attend the Fellows' meetings held during the year that will be organised by the co-ordinator.

Appraisal

The Fellow will undergo an appraisal according to the Scottish GP Appraisal System. Arrangements will be via the employing Health Board. [SOAR | Medical Appraisal Scotland](#)

The Terms and Conditions above are for information purposes only and may be subject to variation. They do not form the basis of a legal contract.

Support and Accountability of Fellowship

See attached Guidelines

Further Information

For further information please contact the Rural Fellowship Co-ordinator, Dr Debbie Miller Debbie.miller@nhs.scot and discussion with current post-holder(s) and mentors can be arranged if desired

Rural Fellowships in General Practice – Person Specification

FACTORS		CRITERIA	MEANS OF ASSESSMENT		
			Application	Interview	Other e.g. presentation
Education and Professional Qualifications	Essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An appropriate range of previous experience in hospital posts. Anticipated completion of General Practice Specialty Training by August 2025 	<p>Ö</p> <p>Ö</p>		
	<i>Desirable</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previous experience of rural/remote practice 	Ö	Ö	
Experience/Training (including research if appropriate)	Essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate of Completion of training (CCT or CEGPR) prior to commencing Fellowship Experience of working in UK NHS 	Ö		
Specific aptitude and abilities	Essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence / demonstration of self-directed learning Good communication skills Can articulate the core values of general practice Evidence of personal initiative in achieving educational objectives 	<p>Ö</p> <p>Ö</p>	<p>Ö</p> <p>Ö</p> <p>Ö</p> <p>Ö</p>	Ö
	<i>Desirable</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insight into areas requiring further training Evidence of exceptional achievement personal/professional 		<p>Ö</p> <p>Ö</p>	

Interpersonal skills	Essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible approach to working arrangements • Willing to travel to various locations • Some understanding of the range of problems facing a remote and rural CHP or general practice • Commitment to collaborative and partnership working • Commitment to working in rural/remote practice 	Ö	Ö	Ö
	<i>Desirable</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptable to working in a variety of workplaces over the fellowship period • Affinity for “rural or remote way of life” • Evidence of delivery of core values in general practice • Evidence of awareness of own development needs 		Ö	
Other factors		<p>This post involves travel to areas which may not be served by public transport. If the post holder does not hold a valid UK driving licence, it will be necessary to organise travel arrangements and suitable alternative transport. Reimbursement will be available for necessary travel as per employer guidelines.</p>			

Doctors from overseas wishing to be considered for these fellowships will need to achieve an overall score of 7.5 out of 9 in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test.

GUIDELINES FOR THE OPERATION OF THE GP RURAL FELLOWSHIP (Jan 2025)

AIMS

1. To promote rural general practice as a distinct career choice.
2. To help GPs to acquire the knowledge and skills required for rural general practice
3. To help those GPs who wish to develop skills to provide acute care in remote hospitals develop these competencies
4. To provide the opportunity for GPs to experience rural community living.

The fellowship is aimed at recently qualified GPs who are offered a further year of training in, and exposure to rural medicine. Part time fellowships will be considered. Two distinct fellowship options will be included in August 2025:

- The 'standard' GP Rural Fellowship option based on the curriculum for rural practice developed by the *Remote and Rural Training Pathways Group (GP sub-group Final Report Sept 2007)*.
- The GP Acute Care Rural Fellowship option based on the GP Acute Care Competencies work following from the agreement of the *Framework for the Sustainability of Services and the Medical Workforce in Remote Acute Care Community Hospitals*

More information relating to both these options can be obtained by e-mailing Debbie Miller, the fellowship coordinator at Debbie.miller@nhs.scot

As fully qualified GPs fellows are expected to organise their own professional development (attend courses, arrange clinical attachments etc) based on a PDP derived from needs assessment mapped to the relevant curriculum and agreed with the fellowship coordinator. Individual PDPs are supported by three meetings that are organised by the coordinator during the year to help fellows meet learning needs that cannot be easily met by personal study.

STRUCTURE

The fellowship is currently run as a cooperative venture between the rural Health Boards in Scotland and NES with the funding being provided on an approximately 50:50 basis (local variations to this do occur but are subject to prior negotiation and agreement). This joint funding arrangement is organised as follows: -

1. Health Boards provide their funding share from Board Administered Funds or other funds. Boards' investment in the fellowship is returned through the service commitment that the fellows provide. It is a condition of the fellowship that such service commitment should be in rural environments; rural practices (for instance providing locum cover to remote practices) or rural out of hours services for the 'standard' Rural Fellowships, or in Rural Hospitals for the Acute Care Rural Fellowships. The objective is that the service commitment contributes to the training aspects of the fellowship and provides experience of rural practice. Fellows are expected to spend approximately a half of their time working in these environments.
2. The funding share from NES allows fellows to have protected educational time to meet their educational needs in relation to rural medicine. They are allocated a base practice in the area in which they will be working and are expected to spend approximately a quarter of their year working in this practice. This relates both to Standard Rural Fellowships and to Acute Care Rural Fellowships; it is crucial that the latter group maintain their general practice competencies and experience through the year despite a focus on gaining acute care competencies. Base practices should be chosen for their proven record of good organisation, of teamwork and of supporting educational initiatives (see annex 2). They do not have to be training practices. They should be sited in or within reasonable travelling distance of the area in which the fellows are expected to fulfil their service commitments. The remaining educational time is spent attending courses, clinical attachments (both in hospital and in primary care) and study, depending on the needs of

the individual (see annex 1). All fellows are expected to undertake a project during their fellowship year on a relevant topic of their choice.

3. Each fellow is allocated a contact/mentor in their area of work to help with any local difficulties that may arise (problems with local duty rosters, timetable clashes etc). This contact person should normally be a GP in their base practice for the Standard Fellowship option or a GP or Consultant in the acute care service for the Acute Care option, but if this is not possible this function would normally default to the Rural fellowship coordinator. Base practices and mentors should be determined and arranged before the recruitment cycle begins so that job descriptions are clear and specific.

4. Apart from overseeing the general administration of the fellowship the role of the fellowship coordinator is to ensure that all fellows have a relevant and achievable PDP for the year, to liaise with fellows during the year to monitor progress and to organise the three fellows' meetings during the year. The meetings provide an opportunity for the fellows to discuss and share experiences, to fulfil those learning needs that are best met by group study and to meet rural medical specialists and others who have a special interest in remote and rural medicine.

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT.

1. Recruitment is organised by NES with representatives from the participating Health Boards included in the interview panel. The cost of the recruitment process is met by NES.

2. Contracts are issued by the Health Board in the area the fellows are working. There is a nominated administration officer in each employing board whose task it is to make sure that contracts are issued and signed timeously. Contractual and administrative arrangements, including the nomination of responsible administrators, should be determined in advance of the recruitment process so that once appointed the fellows will know who to contact should difficulties arise.

3. Contracts should be standardised with Health Board specific job descriptions. Job descriptions will vary depending on current circumstances in a given Health Board area, but contracts should not vary between Boards.

4. Employment issues such as sick leave, poor attendance and unauthorised absence. The resolution of contractual issues such as these should be led by the NHS Board officer responsible for the employment of the rural fellow concerned. It would be expected that the board officer would discuss such issues with the local mentor, the fellowship coordinator, Dr Debbie Miller or Lead Dean Director, as appropriate and that decisions should, if possible, be agreed by all concerned.

5. Clinical performance issues should be reported to the fellowship coordinator who would be expected to discuss any possible action with the local mentor, Dr Debbie Miller and Lead Dean Director in collaboration with the employing Health Board.

6. Travel and subsistence expenses incurred during periods of service commitment should be met by the employing Health Board, but educational expenses (T&S and course fees) will be met by NES subject to an agreed budget maximum (currently £2500 per fellow).

7. Removal expenses are met by the employing Health Board subject to the NHS terms and conditions of employment.

8. Medical defence fees are met by NES.

TIMELINE

A typical year is as follows:

1. The recruitment process: –

- a) Discussion re budgets for the coming year and invitations to NHS Boards to participate in the coming recruitment round –January/ February.
- b) Job descriptions and working arrangements (base practices, mentors, contracts etc) agreed February/ March.
- c) Advertisement –March.
- d) Interviews – end of April
- e) Appointments agreed, contracts issued, needs assessment interviews arranged – May /June

2. The fellowship year: -

- a) PDPs agreed prior to starting the fellowship in July or early August
- b) Start work at the base practice in August.
- c) Attend the first fellows' meeting of the year in September.
- d) BASICS PHEC (pre-hospital emergency care) course in September/October.
- e) Second meeting of the year in January.
- f) Third meeting of the year in May.
- f) Fellows' annual review in May, June or early July.
- g) Assessment of project work in May
- h) Feedback by questionnaire.

APPENDIX 1 – THE STRUCTURE OF A FELLOWSHIP YEAR.

1. Leave and public holiday commitment – 6 weeks plus 10 statutory holidays – leaves 44 weeks out of the year.
2. Service commitment – 50% = 22 weeks +/- 2 weeks to allow Health Boards to recoup their costs.
3. Educational component – 50% = 22 weeks divided into
 - a) 11 weeks minimum working in the base practice
 - b) Up to 4 weeks spent experiencing remote practice(s) preferably in areas other than that of the host Health Board.
 - c) 7 weeks to attend courses, arrange clinical attachments (hospital or primary care) or undertake study as agreed with the coordinator.

Notes: –

1. There must be flexibility in these arrangements to allow for the circumstances of individual fellows and the needs of Health Boards. For instance, service commitment could continue beyond 22 weeks if the fellow was working in remote practices that satisfied the educational needs of the scheme and if such an extension were compatible with the individual fellow's PDP for the year.
2. Potential conflicts between service commitment and educational need should be discussed between the coordinator of the scheme and the nominated officer of the Health Board. Experience has shown that such conflicts can be avoided by careful planning and negotiation at the start of the year.
3. Fellows are salaried employees, and their contracts are subject to the provisions of the Working Time Directive. In the past there has been considerable variation in the out of hours work that fellows have been asked to perform and the question of what is reasonable has been raised on several occasions. The following are suggestions to guide local discussion: -
 - a) If a fellowship involves regular out of hours work provision should be made for sufficient time off in lieu so that the WTD is not breached.
 - b) If a fellowship does not involve any out of hours work, then a fellow can be asked to undertake a minimum of 2 out of hours shifts per month at a PCEC in the area to help them maintain their emergency treatment skills. The cost of these shifts can be included in the service commitment part of the fellowship.
 - c) When on attachment to very remote practices that are still obliged to do their own out of hours care fellows should take part in the on-call rota so that they experience the peculiar stresses and strains of working alone in remote areas. They should not be asked to take part in an on-call rota that is more onerous than that worked by the resident general practitioners.
 - d) In single handed practices where the fellow will be required to work on a 24/7 basis provision will be made for the fellow to have "compensation" in the form of 2 days recovery time for every 7 days of 24/7 cover provided. No additional payments will be made to fellows for providing 24/7 cover under these arrangements.

APPENDIX 2 – THE ATTRIBUTES OF A BASE PRACTICE.

We would expect that all the base practices used to host GP Rural Fellows will be rural but not necessarily remote practices who have the following attributes:

1. Knowledge of, support for and a willingness to actively participate in the GP Rural Fellowship
2. A supportive environment with a strong educational ethos as exemplified by training practice status, active interest in service development or research work or proven track record of good quality education of previous rural fellows. Host practices do not necessarily have to be training practices.
3. Ability to nominate a GP in the practice who is willing and able to act as a mentor for a rural fellow.
4. Willing to facilitate and encourage rural fellows to participate in all areas of practice activity including partnership meetings, management, administrative and educational activities. Host practices must enable rural fellows to access the resources that they require for assessment purposes (for example administrative support for audit).
5. Willing to facilitate educational activities in the practice such as time spent with the practice manager learning about practice management issues. Host practices are not expected to provide regular tutorials in the manner that is required for trainees but are asked to make sure that rural fellows have access to all areas of practice activity for educational purposes.
6. Willing to provide support for the project that must be completed during the fellowship year.
7. Willing to provide a structured reference at the end of the year.

In return for this commitment base practices will have the services of a rural fellow provided free of charge in the practice for up to 13 weeks in the fellowship year. Rural fellows should be included in the practice rota with a workload equivalent to but no greater than that of a partner in the practice. They can be used to provide cover for holidays and study leave. Details of working arrangements should be discussed on an individual basis between the practice and the rural fellow bearing in mind that the demands of service provision and of education take precedence.