



Clinical Fellowship in Lochgilphead

The Practice

Ours is a mid-sized remote and rural GP practice on the beautiful Argyll coast, and an ideal place to experience the challenges and rewards of rural medicine. We have eight GPs and one ANP and serve some 7000 patients.

The practice is based within the new Mid-Argyll Community Hospital, and we provide medical cover for the adjoining A&E department and a 15-bed inpatient ward, including out-of-hours. The building also houses the full range of allied health professions, visiting specialist clinics, a labour unit, nurse specialists, dentistry, social work, and a psychiatric unit. This makes for unrivalled continuity of care and cohesion between the professions, as there is a healthy culture of accessibility between departments. Admitting a patient to hospital often involves a journey down the single corridor straight into a bed, where they'll be looked after by clinicians that know them well.

Our A+E is small but well-equipped with a 2-bed resus room, 24h X-ray, and it is staffed by a team of highly experienced and self-reliant advanced nurses who manage around 50% of presentations independently. For admissions requiring ward-level care we generally keep patients here under our own care and seek specialist input as needed. For more unwell patients we have the option of transfer to Oban and Glasgow by road or air, and we work closely with the retrieval service.

Because of the geography of the area almost all house calls are done by the community team rather than GPs, and for the same reason we instituted a phone triage system some years before the pandemic. This is now well-established and popular with patients and staff, as it allows us to deal with almost all presentations the same day, by phone or in person as required. More recently we have also instituted a nurse-led walk-in clinic, which has removed most minor and self-limiting illness from the triage, allowing the GPs to focus on more severe or complex presentations.

The practice has a strong commitment to continuing education, with weekly teaching sessions and frequent undergraduate placements. We have also recently become a GP training practice, and have ALS and APLS instructors amongst the partners providing on-site simulation training.



The Fellowship

During the Fellowship 32 weeks will be spent working in Lochgilphead Medical Practice, with 12 weeks of study leave and 6 weeks annual leave, plus 10 public holidays. This means that the Fellow can really get to know our staff and community on this program, as there will be no relocations for the sake of service provision and no driving between sites is required.

Many of the GP partners find emergency work to be the most stimulating part of rural practice, and we'd be keen to share that opportunity with the Fellow if desired, however we also understand the need for a healthy work-life balance. The degree of OOH commitment would therefore be flexible by mutual consent, with substantial locum payments available for any shifts worked in excess of contracted hours. A night on-call is always followed by a rest day, and whilst on call the Fellow will have an experienced GP available to call on at all times. These shifts are a mixed bag; it's not uncommon to sleep all night, but equally you might have multiple sick patients with no helicopter available.

We are keen to tailor the Fellowship to individual learning needs and enthusiasms, in order to provide a comprehensive foundation for a career in rural medicine. We'll therefore take an active role in assisting fellows with the writing and fulfilment of their PDP and there are numerous local educational opportunities including courses in resuscitation, critical illness and pre-hospital care that run regularly. A study-leave budget of £2500 is supplied by NES.

Informal enquiries are welcome, email: jock.barge2@nhs.scot



The Area

Visitors are drawn to Mid-Argyll by its beautiful scenery, superb outdoor activities and slower pace of life.

The rugged intricate coastline produces a string of island-strewn sea lochs with quiet roads and scattered picturesque villages, rising to a mountainous interior. This creates an ideal landscape to explore through pursuits such as kayaking, sailing, climbing and mountain-biking.

Argyll remains sparsely-populated and unspoilt so you'll often have the beach to yourself, but the area's popularity with tourists has produced numerous hotels and restaurants, so such luxuries as high-end golf, spas, yoga, and fine-dining are all easily available.

At only two hours travel from Glasgow, Lochgilphead is comparatively accessible for such a rural area. It also makes an idea base from which to explore the West Highlands and The Hebrides.

