

2026



Shetland Acute Rural GP Fellowship

Lerwick

For an informal discussion please contact:
Dr Pauline Wilson, Clinical Associate Medical Director (NHS Shetland)
or Lisa Watt, Primary Care Manager (NHS Shetland)

Amongst the greatest concerns of the prospective Rural General Physician is the potential for encountering acute emergencies or covering medical services without specialist support on-site.

As a fully trained general practitioner Fellowship applicants have the skills necessary to deliver generic rural general practice care. However the prospect of dealing with the challenges of acute medicine/trauma/surgery may be daunting and the ability to gain further experience in these extended roles is often limited within current medical training.

If you have an interest in working as a Rural Emergency Physician in a rural hospital setting the Acute Rural Fellowship, twinned with the GMC approved Credential in Rural and Remote Health Care can be an attractive option. The Fellowship offers hands-on experience in managing critically ill patients in low-resource, high-stakes environments which directly aligns with the demands of rural practice. The GMC approved credential increases expertise in acute care, enhances professional credibility and opens pathways to senior clinical leadership, and teaching roles. This combination not only improves patient care in rural settings by equipping practitioners with the necessary skills to manage emergencies independently but also enhances career prospects by aligning with NHS workforce priorities. This strengthens both individual career growth and the overall resilience of rural healthcare services.





Clift Sound

Shetland life

Shetland offers a rare opportunity to practice medicine in a place where your skills truly make a difference, with a supportive healthcare network, fulfilling lifestyle and the chance to develop meaningful connections with patients and colleagues. Working in Shetland is both professionally rewarding and personally enriching. You will find a welcoming and appreciative population along with modern medical facilities that ensure high-quality care for all residents.



Meal Beach

Beyond the workplace Shetland is a paradise for outdoor lovers boasting rugged coastlines, breath taking landscapes, abundant wildlife including puffins, seals, and orcas. You can enjoy a vibrant cultural scene with world-renowned music festivals, rich Norse heritage, and a strong sense of identity among locals. Whether your preference is for hiking, sailing or simply soaking in the tranquillity of island life Shetland offers an attractive work-life balance. With excellent schools, safe communities, and a strong spirit of camaraderie Shetland isn't just a place to work, it's a place to call home.



Gilbert Bain Hospital, Breiwick, Lerwick

Gilbert Bain Hospital

The Shetland Acute Rural Fellow post will be based in the Gilbert Bain Hospital in Lerwick, a well-equipped rural general hospital with facilities including CT and MRI scanning. The hospital has thirty-four inpatient beds including a two-bedded high dependency unit, emergency department, surgical theatres, a consultant-led obstetric unit, outpatient department, dialysis unit, day care unit, radiological and laboratory services. The emergency department sees all emergency presentations, assesses GP referrals and provides a same day emergency care service. Teams work closely with the emergency medical retrieval service (EMRS) and Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, which is our major trauma centre.

The hospital accepts a wide range of patients for initial assessment and can care for the large majority of these on-site. If a patient requires more specialist care or intensive care they are resuscitated and stabilised before being transferred to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, approximately 200 miles away.



Helyer MRI Suite

There is currently an Out of Hours (OOH) Primary Care service covered by GPs and Advanced Nurse Practitioners. However, the majority of out of hours patients are triaged to the emergency department within the Gilbert Bain Hospital, which functions as the primary care emergency centre.

As a Shetland Acute Rural Fellow you will work alongside the consultant team (medical, surgical, emergency medicine, obstetric, psychiatric and anaesthetic consultants). This involves dealing with the full range of emergency department work for both adults and children, mental health assessments, medical and surgical inpatient care, OOH primary care centre work and the occasional obstetric emergency. You will also work alongside the resident doctor team; Foundation Doctors, Internal Medical Trainees, Acute Care Common Stem Trainees, Core Surgical Trainees, Rural Track GP Trainees and Clinical Development Fellows. There are also Advance Nurse Practitioners based in the emergency department and Clinical Nurse Specialists who work across the hospital and community settings.



Sumburgh Head

Duties

The hospital provides an excellent environment for anyone wishing to develop independent working skills in a supportive environment. The hospital post provides exposure to unselected acute patient attendances to offer broad experience within a relatively short period of time. Whilst working independently within the emergency department you will always have senior support.

During the rural GP placement your role will include the full range of general practice duties. Fellows will provide the majority of their service commitment in practices, specifics of which will be agreed at the beginning of the year. Some practices may be a single-handed dispensing practice to give the Fellow the opportunity to experience all aspects of rural general practice. They will be expected to play a full part in all aspects of the practice and work alongside other members of the extended primary care team.



Noss

Out of Hours (OOH) element

Fellows are expected, as part of their educational programme, to gain experience in OOHs and emergency care. This is a very useful aspect of the Gilbert Gain Hospital role as it includes a wide range of acute / emergency care experience from a full range of unselected emergency presentations.

Supervision in practice

A principal in one of the practices and a hospital-based consultant supervisor will be identified as your mentor/supervisor and will be available to the Fellow throughout the year.



Fair isle

Education in practice

Fellows will be expected participate in the educational activities available within the hospital and practices in which they work.

Educational opportunities

There are a multitude of possible educational opportunities available during your placement and the opportunity to develop the post around your own needs and interests. Hospital based education opportunities include:

- Acute medicine
- Acute surgical presentations
- Paediatrics
- Psychiatry
- Pre-hospital care
- Fracture clinics
- Hospital at Home
- Medical, surgical and paediatric outpatient clinics
- Obstetrics
- Palliative Care
- Evacuation/ transfers
- Airway management skills
- Minor surgery (weekly lists)
- Visiting clinics in a variety of specialties

As a hospital based Rural Fellow frequent exposure to acute care allows for hands-on involvement and responsibility enabling skills and confidence in managing such cases. Such training should enable the Rural Fellow to work confidently in hospital-based or GP-led services. It also provides an excellent opportunity to gain acute skills useful when working in rural general practice within the UK or abroad.



St Ninian's Isle

Service commitment

This Fellowship is designed to meet the needs of the individual in:

- Addressing and achieving acute care competencies
- Gaining confidence in the management of the acutely ill /injured patient
- Equipping with the skills required in the acute aspects of rural general practice.

Although much of the post is hospital-based you will also gain general practice and OOH GP experience.

Fellows will receive their appraisal through general practice, thus avoiding problems with revalidation in the future.

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