

Annex 2

Example 2: Revitalising Recruitment and Retention to Orkney's Island Practices The Orkney Isles Network of Care

Our Vision

To make NHS Orkney a centre of excellence in Remote and Rural Healthcare.

Problem

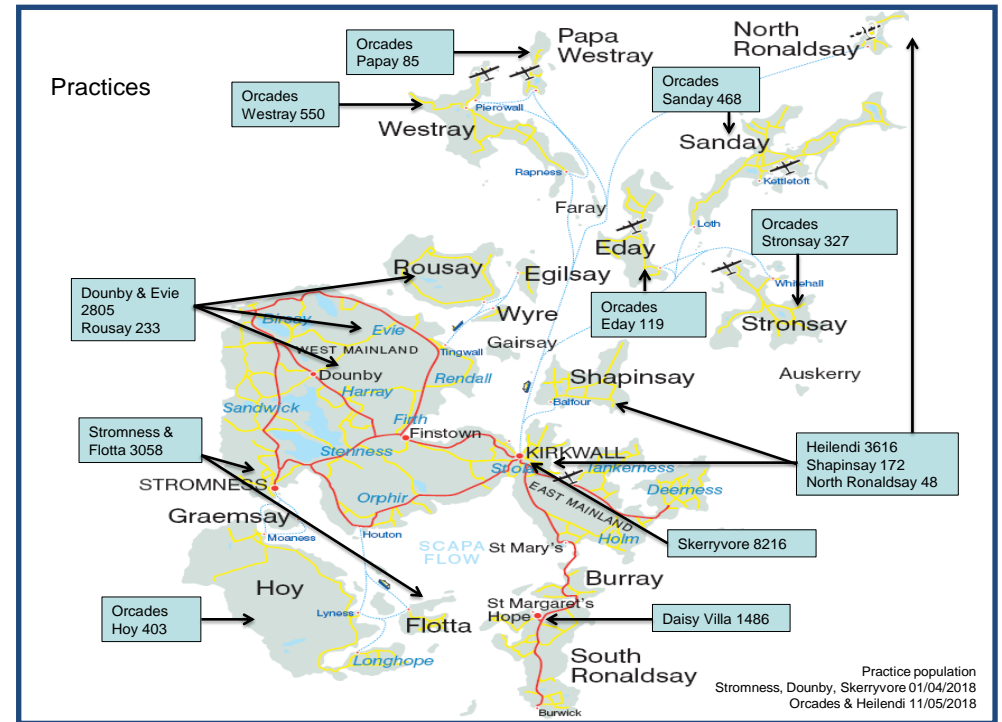
Across its' islands, NHS Orkney had a number of practices run by single-handed GPs. By 2009, all 8 posts were vacant.

This led to increasing, unsustainable locum costs, breakdown in continuity of care and deterioration of services. This was coupled with the realisation that the existing recruiting process was unsuitable.

Principles and Objectives

- Improve patient safety with a strong clinical governance structure that allowed efficient and effective use of clinical time.
- Provide better support and reduced risks for clinicians working in isolation.
- Provide continuity of care to the island communities.
- Create a recruitment model that was effective, sustainable and affordable.
- Provide opportunities for community input into how services are delivered.

We worked extensively with the community to redesign the service, on four islands; changing from a GP model of care to a Nurse Practitioner model.



Barriers to change

- Attracting the right candidate to fit the remote setting.
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- Utilising the MDT in remote and rural settings.
- Meeting the changing needs of GPs.
- A challenging national recruitment landscape.

Solutions

We identified the concerns of GPs considering a move:

- Lack of confidence in providing emergency care.
- Professional isolation.
- Feeling supported by the community and understanding the facilities available in the community.

We pioneered the Isles Network of Care to:

- Hold weekly videoconferences between island practitioners (GPs, Nurse Practitioners and Community Nurses) to discuss patient care.
- Provide a forum for mutual support and reducing isolation. Supporting clinicians to raise awareness of isles related issues within NHS Orkney.
- Develop shared protocols and procedures, particularly around emergency care.

We engaged the community when recruiting to the new service and refreshed our recruitment processes:

- Tailoring adverts to focus realistically on the role, showcasing the positives and acknowledging the challenges.
- The Nurse Practitioner employment model changed to 2 weeks on and 2 weeks off, with study leave built in
- Developing comprehensive information packs for prospective applicants.
- Encouraging early telephone contact with a senior clinician.
- Involving the community in pre-interview activities such as hosting the candidates for a meal, providing tours, visiting the schools, healthy living centres and local amenities.

Outcomes and continuing success

We believe this model succeeds because we recognised the challenges and built systems to address them. Geographically isolated practitioners are part of a supportive and cohesive “virtual” team and working patterns allow practitioners to continue living off island when not on shift. The communities are involved in recruitment and make applicants feel welcome. There is a defined system for emergency care.

- All isles GP and Nurse Practitioner posts have been filled since 2015, despite a challenging national recruitment landscape.
- A Rotating Team Model of GP and Nurse Practitioner Care has proved popular.
- Experienced, highly motivated GPs older than 50 are particularly attracted to these posts.

Adapting to change

- We changed contracts to provide an additional 2 weeks holiday in recognition of the 24/7 nature of remote GP working.
- To maintain knowledge and skills, whilst providing opportunities for external peer review, we contracted to provide 2 weeks study leave and 5 weeks working on the Orkney mainland, both in practices and at the Balfour Hospital.

Modifications were implemented in 2015 in response to feedback from staff and potential applicants.

- Full-time GP posts that attracted no candidates were adapted to part time posts and successfully filled.
- The Nurse Practitioner employment model changed to 2 weeks on and 2 weeks off, with study leave built in.

Bright Spark Idea

“We achieved results by listening to, and responding to, the needs of recruitment candidates”

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