Recruitment and Retention

NHS Orkney

1. In what areas are you experiencing the greatest difficulties in recruitment and retention?

NHS Orkney experience’s the greatest difficulty in recruiting and retaining Consultants and other non training grade medical staff. We also have had to date some challenges in nurse recruitment notably in theatres and community nursing.

2. What are the key barriers to recruitment in your area?

The geographical location and cost of living can be a significant barrier for applicants. The location results in high travel costs associated with island living and for some the lifestyle choice of living on an Island can be daunting. The range of health care services NHS Orkney provides to support routine, acute and life threatening presentations can be a challenge as employees require a varied and generalist skill set and wide ranging experience. However the chance for them to put these skills into practice is an opportunity, the down side is maintaining skills given our critical mass issue and the associated costs to the Board to support and maintain skills development to support high quality care and interventions.

3. Please provide examples of incentives/initiatives that have shown positive results in recruiting?

NHS Orkney offer assistance with making travel and accommodation arrangements for applicants attending interviews as well as reimbursing expenses associated with attending interviews.

Successful candidates receive a relocation allowance of up to £8,000 (subject to eligibility) and all employees receive Distant Islands Allowance of up to £1,148 per annum pro rata. A Recruitment and Retention Payment has also been approved by the Scottish Terms and Conditions Committee for Estates staff until 2018 in order to keep their salary more in line with rates paid by other local employers. NHS Orkney currently meets costs associated with approximately 40 employees living out of Orkney travelling to NHS Orkney to carry out their work, additionally, accommodation may also be provided. The expenses are paid to support recruitment/retention and encourage people to undertake work on the island in recognised hard to fill posts.

There are a significant number of examples of links with mainland Boards to ensure staff skills can be maintained and updated. Examples include Consultants being given the opportunity to spend 2 weeks working within a larger hospital on the Scottish Mainland. We also recruit to joint appointments and have recently in working with NHS Highland appointed to Clinical Development Fellows.
Where service needs allow we consider different ways of working e.g. annualised hours.

4. **What are the key barriers to retaining staff in your area?**

   Experience gained during employment at NHS Orkney can seem quite limited as specialist services are restricted due to being provided in mainland Boards. There can be less career opportunities for employees than may be available in larger boards. The geographical location is also a barrier as sometimes island living is not what the employee expected and the additional costs of both travel and living on island put people off staying and create retention issues.

5. **Please provide examples of incentives/initiatives that have shown positive results in retaining staff?**

   Estates staff receive a recruitment and retention payment to recognise the salary differences in the public sector and private sector, in order to retain skilled employees (see above – we have a buoyant construction industry). There are becoming increased opportunities for staff to undertake funded qualifications and training to develop their skills, examples include 9 staff undertaking an SVQ 3 in Business and Administration and other SVQ's throughout the organisation. NHS Orkney takes part in the Childcare Voucher scheme and Cycle to Work Scheme and has agreement with local businesses for staff discounts. NHS Orkney has increased its availability of Modern Apprenticeships by 6 since 2014 which is helping to recruit and retain a younger workforce. We are about to pilot a generic worker on one of our Islands and offer/support MOD rotational placements.