**NHS Highland**

**Context**

NHS Highland covers the largest geographical area of all of the Health Boards in Scotland (41% of the mainland). The population served by NHS Highland, including Argyll and Bute, is over 310,000. It is considered to be an area of outstanding natural beauty and one of the last great Western European wilderness areas; however, Inverness, the capital of the Highlands (population 70,000) has everything that one could want from a modern city, with smaller towns equally famed for their popularity with visitors and residents alike. Inverness is a coastal city with beaches within easy reach; yet within half an hour you can be climbing mountains, or skiing down them! The range of outdoor activities on the doorstep is only limited by ones imagination. In addition, Inverness has a thriving and award-winning arts, theatre, film and music scene to sate most tastes. Due to the vastness of the Highlands, most small towns also have their own flourishing range of artistic offers; during the summer this includes various festivals, and for the very remote areas, a visit from the travelling mini-cinema, showing the latest films, an experience all of its own.

NHS Highland is divided into two areas, North Highland, which is further sub-divided into the following regions: Caithness & Sutherland; Skye & Lochalsh; Wester & Easter Ross; Lochaber; Inverness; Nairnshire and Badenoch & Strathspey. The South Highland area comprises Argyll & Bute.

**Psychological Services**

The placement will be within the department of Psychological Services, Adult Mental Health (AMH) division. The professional lead for AMH is Dr Alyson Jack, Consultant Clinical Psychologist. Trainee Clinical Associates in Applied Psychology (MSC PTPC) are managed by a Clinical Psychologist. The line manager for this trainee will likely be Dr. Andrew MacDougal, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, and Local Area Tutor for NHS Highland. The clinical supervisor for this trainee will likely be Professor Ken Laidlaw, Consultant Clinical Psychologist.

The main base for Psychological services is at New Craigs Hospital, Inverness. CAMHS services operate from the Phoenix centre at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness; OA and LD at the Drumossie Unit, New Craigs Hospital, Inverness; General Adult services, New Craigs Hospital and the locality CMHT’s; all of these specialities offer peripatetic services across Highland. In addition, both clinical and counselling psychologists and qualified CAAPS offer services across a wide range of contexts.

There is also a Psychology service in Argyll & Bute, where placements are offered. If you secure a place in Argyll and Bute you will be based here for the whole of your training, similarly North Highland (Inverness and area).

**Placement opportunities**

The Department of Psychological Services is in a position to offer a good placement experience under the supervision of Clinical Psychologists.

Placements in **North Highland** are usually in Inverness or other clinical sites within a radius of approximately 30 miles. CAAP trainees are currently based in a large office in the Drumossie Unit, New Craigs hospital, Inverness, shared with Clinical Psychology trainees, Health Psychology trainees and assistants.

**South Highland**, trainees are based with the appropriate psychology service in the Argyll and Bute area.

**Teaching:** Ordinarily teaching for the Adult CAAP courses is undertaken through regular teaching blocks at the appropriate university. Travel and accommodation costs are paid when trainees attend teaching. However, teaching has been via remote delivery during the pandemic, and may continue in this or a blended manner.

**Living in the Highlands**

Most trainees choose to live in Inverness which has a vibrant award-winning arts and music scene, and wide range of sporting and outdoor opportunities. Whilst the Highlands is an area of outstanding natural beauty it is quite isolated from the rest of the country, some people embrace the lifestyle, whilst for others it can be a struggle, particularly over the long winter. However, microclimates abound, such that the town of Nairn, just 18 miles from Inverness, is one of the driest and sunniest places in Scotland.

Both the Universities of Dundee and Stirling are just under three hours travel by car (between 2 hrs 45 and 3hrs 15 by train), whilst Glasgow is about three and a half hours travel away (train or car); Edinburgh a little less. For those looking to travel further afield, Inverness airport flies to a range of UK towns and cities, and some European destinations also.

**Finally**

The Highlands is a wonderful place to live, particularly if you like the wild outdoors, but there is something for everyone. Come to train, and discover what the Highlands has to offer, who knows, at the end of training you may decide to stay, as many of our past trainees have done.

If you would like further information please do not hesitate to contact myself 01463 704686, or email andrew.macdougall@nhs.scot

Dr Andrew MacDougall

Consultant Clinical Psychologist/ Local Area Tutor (NHS Highland)