



# North Ronaldsay

Living and working as an  
Advanced Nurse Practitioner

# Welcome

We are delighted that you are considering applying for for the position of Advanced Nurse Practitioner on North Ronaldsay.

The likelihood is that you are already strongly attracted by the prospect of working in a beautiful and unique area of Scotland. You probably also relish the prospect of working in a situation that offers time to deliver a rewarding holistic medical service.

This leaflet has been prepared with the intention of providing more detailed information about our particular island, and about some of the attractions and realities of living and working here.

Included in our leaflet you will find information about aspects of life on North Ronaldsay, including what we see as the significant strengths of our community, and the associated benefits for ourselves and our families.

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If you have children of school age you will be pleased to know that there are excellent schools in Orkney. Links for both the North Ronaldsay Community School as well as Kirkwall Grammar School are overleaf

There is further information available on many websites, social media, and on youtube in addition to the many links that are included within this brochure.



It is very important for us to recruit skilled and committed practitioners who feel enthusiastic at the prospect of bringing their professional skills to this small, vibrant island community.

We hope that you might be such a person and that what you read about North Ronaldsay in this leaflet will reinforce your interest.



## WEBSITES LINKS

North Ronaldsay - island information

North Ronaldsay Bird Observatory

North Ronaldsay Trust

North Ronaldsay Community School

[www.orkney.com](http://www.orkney.com)

North Ronaldsay Sheep Festival

The Orkney Sheep Foundation

Rare Breed Survival Trust

Northern Lighthouse Board

Kirkwall Grammar School

Visit Scotland

Loganair

Orkney Ferries

Pentland Ferries

NorthLink Ferries

Orkney Islands Council

# Working as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner on North Ronaldsay

The surgery is located on the ground floor of Linklet House (the 'New Manse'), with a large well equipped consulting room, waiting room, and secure storage room for dispensing pharmaceuticals and other medical supplies. The waiting room contains a large screen for video-conferencing.

## So what's the work like?

- The pathology is pretty much the same as anywhere else in Scotland. But the organisation is different. Fifteen minute appointments are our minimum..
- We try to deal with everything at one sitting, reducing the bewildering array of repeat visits that have become the norm elsewhere.
- After a very short time, you can put a name to most patients' faces and be familiar with their past and current medical situations, which is rewarding for the Advanced Nurse Practitioner and patient alike.
- You'll do more home visits than usual because we have an elderly population and minimal public transport. But there are no queues, traffic jams or parking problems and the scenery is wonderful.
- The need for 24/7 cover restricts you to the island, and means that you will need to be contactable when on duty. But there's still plenty to do, and plenty of time in which to do it. Patients rarely call unless they really do need medical assistance.
- You do all the emergency care. Major trauma is uncommon but if you are called your other patients will understand if you are busy for a few hours. Minor trauma is more usual, farming, fishing and construction being the main culprits.
- In fact you do complete holistic care with a weekly visit from the Heilendi GP and ongoing advice over the phone during weekday hours and from the Balfour hospital and healthcare facility at weekends.
- The professional isolation that islands traditionally endured has been largely banished by the Internet with weekly Isles Network of Care video-conferencing meetings where the other islands practitioners share expertise, ideas, and stories.





- The Advanced Nurse Practitioner service is delivered with a 2 week on/ off rota which will also ensure the smooth running of the practice which includes reordering patients repeat medications, emergency and acute drug stocks and booking flights and accomodation for patients travel to appointments.
- You will have a permanent relief Advanced Nurse Practitioner when you are off duty which will provide important continuity of care.
- You can, if you wish, also be involved in teaching medical students with student placements from both Heilendi and NHS Orkney. This can assist in being part of your appraisal and revalidation.
- The generous leave allows you the freedom to attend, if you so wish, courses on Orkney mainland or elsewhere in Scotland.

By residing on the island you do become quickly enmeshed in the life of the island and the lives of your patients. After all, you are not caring for your patients but for your fellow islanders, and after a while, for your friends.

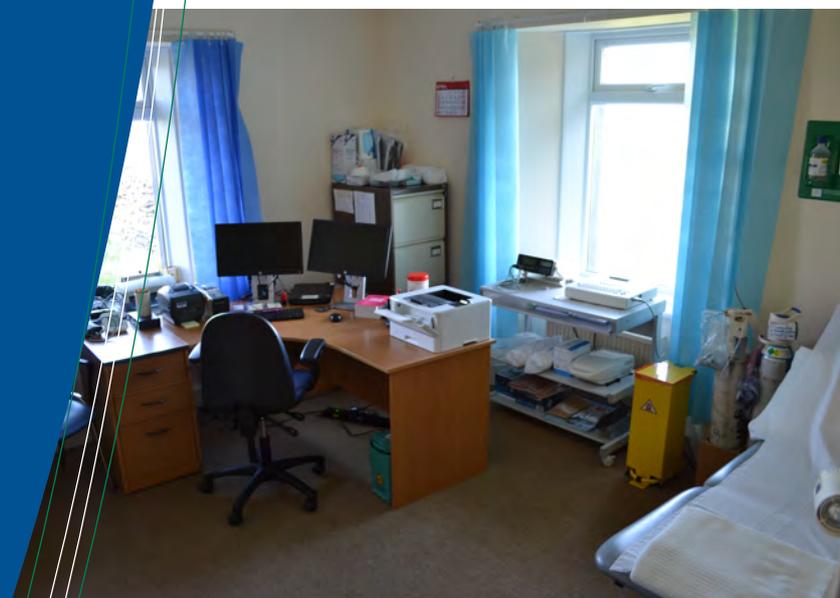
The island is a safe and civilised place to live and work, and a wonderful place to bring up children.

# Working as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner on North Ronaldsay

- A key element in the working environment is the support given by fellow practitioners on neighbouring islands at weekly Islands Network of Care video conference sessions. These routinely involve discussion of admissions and emergencies, shared clinical guidelines, organisational issues, etc. We work very closely with Heilendi Practice and discuss any issues we may have about a patient's ongoing care.
- The sheer variety of the work is refreshing and stimulating. Chronic disease, mental health problems and social problems are as prevalent as anywhere but are often met with a stoic practicality unusual in modern Britain.
- You have the opportunity to take your involvement in care further than in mainland practice. Sometimes because resources are fewer and distances greater but often simply because sick patients want to stay on the island.
- Access to basic investigations is good, usually involves a trip to Orkney mainland or to Aberdeen which may mean a night off island but accommodation can be arranged in the Red Cross house
- Repeat prescriptions are dispensed in town and shipped across for us to deliver. But we hold a good stock of drugs for immediate use and emergencies.



- Volunteers man our ambulance and will transport patients to the mainland on the ferry or to our helicopter landing ground.
- Support can also be obtained from the island Fire Service who can be called upon for both first aid and manual handling issues
- Additional support for islanders requiring home care is covered by the island home care team
- Everyone of working age has more than one job, sometimes three or four. So don't be too surprised if you see the same person wearing three different uniforms!



**it's unusual not  
to go home for  
lunch**



- North Ronaldsay residents seem to appreciate their good fortune in receiving the kind of close, personal attention that we can offer. But they don't abuse the system.
- Coupled with the courtesy and common sense that are the norm, this means that the out-of-hours work is infrequent. But when called, it's usually important. We advise against using NHS 24 as it simply wastes time.
- The island is also equipped with four defibrillators strategically placed around the island and registered with the Scottish Ambulance Service. This is in addition to the defibrillators carried by the Scottish Fire and Rescue vehicle, and the Advanced Nurse Practitioner

The practice is generally well equipped and includes:-

- A 4-wheel drive vehicle, essential for carrying emergency equipment and dealing with farm tracks.
- Mobile phones for duty Advanced Nurse Practitioner.
- The current IT system is Vision
- Wide screen video conferencing, for discussions and meetings, for remote consultation with specialist services, and education.
- Emergency equipment to the Sandpiper / BASICS standard and beyond, suitable for dealing with major injury.
- ECG, Spirometer, defibrillators, palliative care equipment to provide nursing at home, and emergency evacuation equipment
- SAS ambulance used for patient transport. Equipped with stretchers, splints, vacuum mattress, etc

# North Ronaldsay



North Ronaldsay is approx 3.5 miles long by 1.5 miles wide with a coastline of just over 13 miles. A unique island to explore and enjoy, from the ancient seaweed-eating sheep that graze around the foreshore. The sheep managed by the ancient Sheep Court are kept on the foreshore by a drystone Sheep Dyke, itself a scheduled monument with Historic Environment Scotland. The island has two lighthouses that stand proud at the north of the island, guiding the shipping. The current operational lighthouse, built in 1854 is the tallest land based lighthouse in the UK at 42 metres high. The Old Beacon was built in 1789, only the second lighthouse to be built in Scotland and is also a scheduled monument with Historic Environment Scotland.

The beautiful sandy shores to the east and south, the rugged coastline to the west and north, and the peaceful centre enable wonderful tours taking in the beautiful scenery, and wildlife.

Where the old traditions and customs still prevail and embrace the 21st century. It is still an honour in Orkney to be invited as a guest speaker for the island's Harvest Home and Burns Supper.



## Accommodation - successful applicant

The reserved accommodation that will be made available for the successful applicant is The Lighthouse Keeper's Cottage, North Ronaldsay

One of two newly refurbished, Grade Two-listed self-catering cottages located at the north end of the island, situated at the base of the UK's tallest land based lighthouse, and with beautiful views all the way to Fair Isle.

Once home to the Lighthouse Keeper on the island, this warm and welcoming cottage consists of one double and one twin room (sleeping up to four), a sitting room with open fire, kitchen, bathroom with bath, additional WC and shower in adjacent building, and a laundry room (shared with one other cottage).



£500 per month, plus utilities.

For more information contact  
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# Island Industries

The principal industries in North Ronaldsay used to be crofting and creel fishing, however, with a decline in population, there are no local boats fishing regularly now.

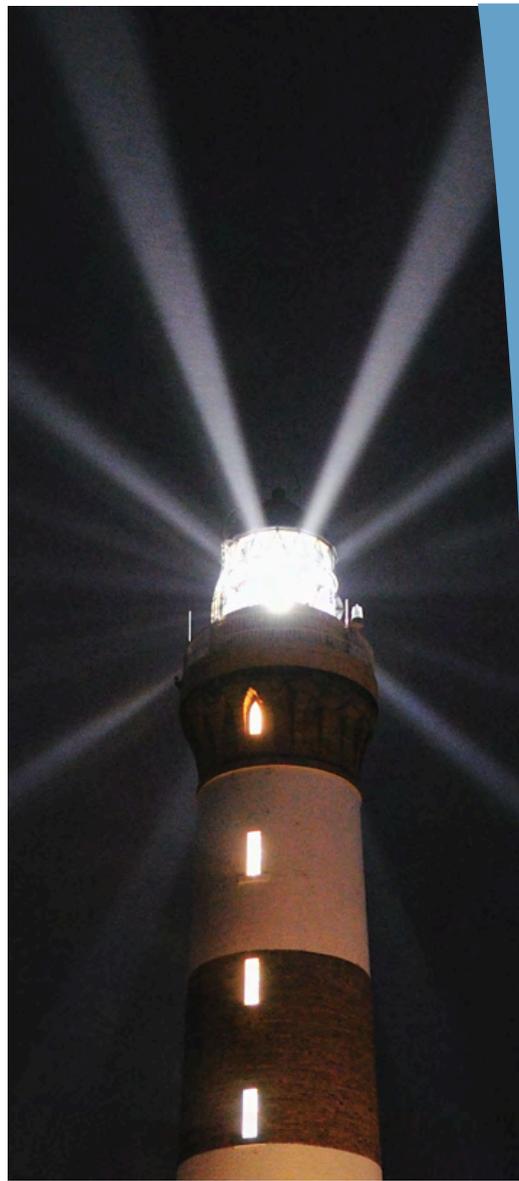
The main crofting activities are livestock which is mainly beef cattle with silage grown for winter feed and some sheep, with the majority being the famous rare breed of North Ronaldsay seaweed-eating sheep. The other main industries are the local wool mill and tourism.

The wool mill processes the local fleeces and feeds the local craft industry as well as selling the yarn worldwide.

Tourism is currently mainly between April and September and is supported by a variety of guest houses and self catering options. There are two main catering outlets, both being licensed.

There is a huge interest in bird watching, with the island being a key site for migration, recording a wide variety of common, scarce and sometimes extremely rare birds.

There are also plenty of seals around the shores and regular sightings of basking shark and cetaceans such as porpoises, dolphins and orcas (killer whales). There have also been two sightings of walrus in recent years.



## Schools

North Ronaldsay has a community primary school located next to the the Community Centre which has a large hall for indoor exercise. The facilities are outstanding and the education excellent. Small class sizes and personal attention for all are the norm.

As of Easter 2021 the community school has three students in attendance, and a further two of nursery age.

For Secondary schooling children from North Ronaldsay will attend the recently built Kirkwall Grammar School.

They will fly in on Monday and back on Friday residing in the new hostel where each pupil has a en-suite room plus plenty of common rooms for relaxing.

Educational provision throughout Orkney is excellent: school buildings and generously sized grounds are maintained to a level which would be envied elsewhere in the country. The county is unique in that specialist itinerant teachers travel by air to visit the isles primary schools to provide teaching in Art, Music and PE, supporting the local class teacher.

This contributes to Orkney's enviable reputation as a producer of graduates, sports people and particularly musicians. Above all though, our schools generally produce confident, articulate and mature young men and women.

**more to do  
than time to  
do it!**



# Island Living

North Ronaldsay enjoys a fundamentally tranquil lifestyle but the community is an active and dynamic one, whose clubs and groups offer a wide range of social, artistic and physical activities, all underpinned by hard-working enthusiasts.

You can walk, run and cycle on the flat or against the wind should you wish to simulate hills! If you'd rather be in the warm you can take part in the fit club with treadmills, rowing machines and more, plus yoga and pilates to finish off your session.



There is also a film-club, singing-club, book-club operating from the Community Centre which accommodates many other sports and pastime activities. The Astronomy Club is applying to have Dark Skies Status for the island, as there is so little light pollution. Annually, as part of the Orkney Science Festival, scientists from around the world visit to deliver fascinating lectures on astronomy and space.

Annually there is a Sheep Festival which focuses on the rebuilding of parts of the sheep dyke that surrounds the island. People from around the world book to volunteer for up to two weeks of work and other activities during the day, as well as traditional dancing and entertainment in the evening.

This is in addition to the annual Burns Supper and Harvest Home when halls get decorated in traditional style and guest speakers and bands are invited. Additional flights accommodate the many folk travelling from Orkney to attend these very popular events .

It doesn't end there as there are also a great many other social events throughout the year that bring the community together, many times ending in traditional music and dancing.

# Environment

Though only a small island with a low profile, North Ronaldsay supports an extremely rich and diverse population of wild flowers, mammals and birds. It lies on the migration crossroads, with birds making landfall here on their way towards Iceland, Greenland and Scandinavia. Thus from late March to early June and middle August to early November there are large concentrations of migrant birds visiting the island. All classes of birds are represented and several national rarities recorded annually. In summer, the island is alive with the calls of breeding birds. Areas of land are left uncultivated and corncrake may call from the hayfield. Common and Grey Seals are numerous, both breed around the island and are easily seen and have become quite tame since culling was banned. Other sea mammals such as various whales and porpoises are seen offshore. Inland, the island can broadly be divided into four distinct habitat types, foreshore, grazed links, marshland and agricultural land which together provide a wealth of opportunities for wildlife.



The islands archaeology is represented visibly by the Burrian Broch which is recorded having a variety of occupants through its lifetime. When excavated in 1870 by the then Laird William Traill who found a pictish artifact suggesting early Christian activity was found, the Burrian Cross, and this and other finds are now in the Scottish National Museum...'

There is also the 'Standing Stone' which stands 13 feet tall with a hole in it. It is suggested that this stone was an outer marker in association with further stones to the north of the island, perhaps a primitive sundial. There are also a variety of less visible archaeological sites around the island.

The archives inside the New Kirk next to the surgery contain further information about this together with a comprehensive record of the island's past.

# Practicalities

North Ronaldsay is an island. In fact it's an island off an island. Although a sick patient could be in Aberdeen via helicopter 3 hours after you've seen them, it may take a lot longer.

North Ronaldsay is fortunate to have an airport, with three runways and which is also the only island in Orkney to have night landing facilities. So if we need to evacuate a patient, dependent on patient condition and weather conditions we can use the normal scheduled service or a Loganair charter, SAS Air Ambulance based in Inverness, or the Maritime and Coastguard based in Shetland. There is also the Ferry service and on one occasion in the last 10 years the RNLI have been called.



The other vital practicality is shopping.

There is one licensed shop for food and other provisions located at the Bird Observatory in the south, a general store to the north, and a gift shop located at the Lighthouse Visitor Centre.

The island has two suppliers of petrol, diesel, heating fuel, and calor gas

Folk can also order online from shops and supermarkets and elsewhere in Kirkwall with the delivery being shipped to the island by Orkney Ferries arriving to the island by either ferry or plane.

Internet shopping works fantastically well.

Internet connections are through CloudNet at 10Mbps or BT at 0.48Mbps. Mobile connections are through Vodafone and O2.

Books are easy - there is a library at the local Community Centre, and it is also possible to order a box of books from the library in Kirkwall, the oldest public lending library in Scotland

And if something breaks, there is an island expert who will fix it.

The main pub is at the Bird Observatory with views across the North Ronaldsay Firth to the islands in the south. The Lighthouse Cafe in the north is open during the day from May to September and overlooks the joining of the Atlantic and North Sea as well as Fair Isle, and very occasionally the top of Foula

# Island Connections

There are two links between North Ronaldsay and Kirkwall being air and sea. the air service is operated by Loganair using an islander aircraft and operates approx 20 flights a week in summer and 16 flights in winter with return adult fares from the island being £14.50. Orkney Ferries operate a ferry once a week in winter and up to three times a week in summer, with a return adult fare currently being £17.70

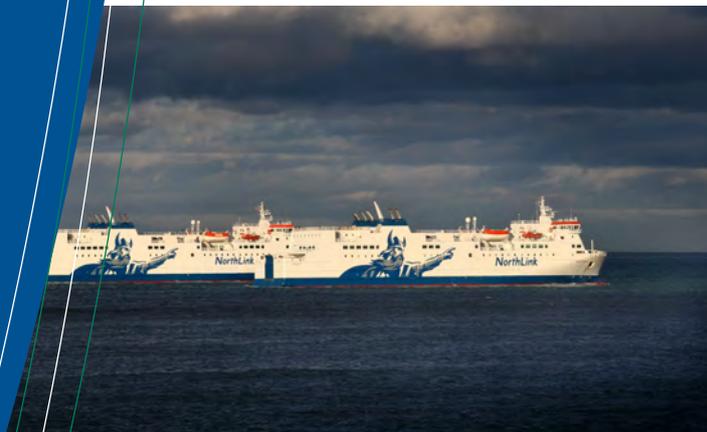


Transport links between Orkney and the mainland of Scotland are also excellent. Loganair operates flights daily between Kirkwall Airport and Scotland's main cities. The Air Discount Scheme gives residents a significant discount on flights within Scotland.

Pentland Ferries and Northlink Ferries both run daily ferry services across to the north coast of Scotland.

For those who prefer to cut down on driving time through Scotland, Northlink Ferries also operates an overnight service on the Kirkwall to Aberdeen route.

Patients can use these services free of charge to attend appointments on the Orkney mainland and on mainland Scotland, usually at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and Raigmore Hospital Inverness.





## Video Links

[Visit North Ronaldsay](#)

[Island Plans for the Future](#)

[Introduction from the ex-Nurse Practitioner](#)

After a time on the mainland of Orkney you may find that as pleasant as Kirkwall can be, it feels rather busy and hectic. You may find yourself gazing north wondering when the plane or ferry will depart home to the island.

You may watch the Scottish news and wonder what relevance it has. You may watch the news from London or New York with equal dispassionate disinterest.

It is then that you realise that North Ronaldsay is not remote, everywhere else is.



Many thanks to Dr Cromarty and Teresa Bird from Hoy and the Sanday Development Trust for the format,

- and to Bernie Holbrook, ex- Nurse Practitioner on the island, for all her support and help in putting together this brochure.

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