

Westray

Living and working as a GP



Contents

WELCOME

WORKING AS A GP IN WESTRAY

WORKING AS A GP IN PAPA WESTRAY

WESTRAY CARES

ISLAND INDUSTRIES

WESTRAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

ISLAND LIVING

NATURAL HISTORY

WESTRAY'S HERITAGE

PRACTICALITIES

TRAVEL

JOIN THE COMMUNITY

CONTACT INFORMATION

USEFUL WEB SITES

Welcome

Westray Community Council, on behalf of the Westray Community, are delighted that you are considering applying for the GP post in Westray and the neighbouring island of Papa Westray (Papay). This is a linked practice with one regular surgery in Papay each week. If you are reading this then the likelihood is that you are already strongly attracted by the prospect of working in a beautiful and unique area of Scotland within a working environment which offers the advantage of 'having time to do the job properly', as a previous incumbent put it.



Our 'introductory' leaflet has been prepared with the intention of providing more detailed information about our particular islands. We would like to showcase some of the additional attractions of living and working as part of our very dynamic and forward-looking communities. Included in our leaflet you will find information about aspects of life in Westray and Papay, and what we, as current residents, see as the significant strengths of our communities and the associated benefits for ourselves and our families. Our websites listed on the back page complement the material in this leaflet and are well worth a visit.

It is very important for us to recruit a skilled and committed practitioner who feels enthusiastic at the prospect of bringing his/her professional skills to these small, robust island communities.

We hope that you might be that person and that what you read here might reinforce your interest.

Adam Baird

Chair Westray Community Council



Westray Regatta

Working as a GP in Westray

The surgery is located at Trenabie House, a substantial building situated at Gill Pier in the north of the island, with fantastic views across the bay. Details of the surgery times and services offered can be seen on the surgery web site.

Westray Surgery



The caseload allows 15-minute appointments as standard and the schedule of appointments mean that longer can be taken when necessary. This helps reduce repeat visits to address different problems that many patients endure in modern practice. Having adequate time also helps reduce doctor stress. We are usually able to offer same day appointments. Westray patients are genuinely appreciative of the service they receive. After a short time, one can put a face to most patient names and be familiar with their past and current medical situations, which is very rewarding.

The Surgery team comprises 3 part time GPs, 2 part time Island Nurses providing 24/7 cover, 2 administrators and 1 relief administrator.

Westray Surgery



The three GPs who work consecutive shifts at the surgery share the comfortable living accommodation at Trenabie House. In the past, doctors have also purchased their own properties in Westray. These are some of the many advantages associated with practicing medicine in Westray.

View of Pierowall from the Westside



Working as a GP in Westray

In November 2015 the surgeries of Westray and Papa Westray were merged with 4 other islands (Sanday, Stronsay, Eday, and Hoy) to form the Orcades Practice, which is managed by NHS Orkney.

The merger was undertaken at the suggestion of the island practitioners to provide streamlining of administrative processes along with more efficient use of electronic and clinical systems. Instead of each island developing their own systems this can now be undertaken across the island practices. Management based remotely co-ordinates the running of the practice and supports the administrators and clinicians on the different isles with monthly practice and quality improvement meetings using Microsoft Teams.

The Orcades Practice is a further development of the Isles Network of Care (INOC), a system established in 2010 to provide greater support to the single-handed isles practices of Orkney. INOC health care practitioners meet for an hour each week using Microsoft Teams. The meetings are opportunities to discuss emergency cases and admissions along with other interesting cases, shared clinical guidelines or administrative issues. The sessions provide an excellent learning forum as well as a source of professional and personal support.

Use of telecommunication has reduced the professional isolation that island GPs experienced in the past, giving the practitioner ready access to remote learning as well as speedy second opinions. Learning opportunities are present locally, through virtual means and courses run on Orkney Mainland. This established experience of using virtual means for education, communication and professional support has been an advantage during the Covid pandemic.

Working as a GP in Westray is both refreshing and stimulating. Acute and chronic disease management, mental health care and supporting patients with social problems are all important aspects of the role. Palliative care in a community where the majority of people choose to be at home for end-of-life care is a very rewarding component of the job. In addition, pre-hospital emergency medical and trauma care extends the role of the GP in Westray. Access to investigations and external specialist advice is available by phone, email and video.



Emergency Response Resources on Westray

It's unusual not to go home for lunch!

Working as a GP in Westray

Complex medical problems are often managed within the community and we enjoy excellent Consultant support from both the Balfour Hospital, Kirkwall, and Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. This further helps increase the sense of job satisfaction.

There is ample opportunity to become involved in community events as well as representing and advocating for the community. The monthly island newsletter provides opportunity to convey health messages and news. Close liaison with the community school offers an opportunity to tackle child health issues both in the school and home environment.

Westray residents appreciate the accessibility to high quality holistic health care provided by Westray Surgery. For residents and practitioners alike continuity of care is a priority. The combination of accessibility and continuity of care limits the number of out of hours GP calls.

The practice is well equipped, partly through the generosity of the island community, with the “Friends of Westray Surgery” co-ordinating purchases of additional equipment.

View of Gill Pier from the Pierowall



Working as a GP in Westray

Equipment includes:

- Electronic patient records using the Vision system with results and letters uploaded using Docman. There is direct access to centralised results and letters held electronically between Aberdeen and Orkney. This facilitates rapid access to information. X-rays can be viewed from the surgery using the electronic PACS system.
- The surgery owns a point-of-care ultrasound device
- We are currently trialling point-of-care blood testing for CHEM8 and Blood gases.
- Near patient blood tests for INR and d-dimer are available. Otherwise, blood samples are taken three times a week and flown into Kirkwall. Urgent blood samples can be sent in daily either by flight or ferry, when required.
- There is comprehensive emergency equipment – supplied by NHS Orkney, BASICS Scotland and some with the financial support of the island community.
- A retained ambulance crew and their ambulance supports the urgent transfer of patients to the airfield for helicopter evacuation. The ambulance is well equipped with stretchers, splints, and monitoring devices and is used on average twice a month.

The Westray GP is a busy, but intensely satisfying and rewarding job. As GPs we feel fully supported by the friendly, caring, and progressive community of Westray and enjoy living and interacting with our patients daily.

The three GPs working in Westray organise the rota themselves, with each shift generally lasting for three weeks. This equates to 17/18 weeks of work in Westray each year. The arrangement provides capacity for individuals to pursue portfolio GP opportunities, if they choose. A handover between GPs over a 24-hour period allows time to discuss the clinical workload and debrief. An evening meal shared together during that time encourages the development of informal supportive relationships. The pro-rata salary remains above national average for a full-time GP, reflecting the on-call commitment that comes with the job. Pay is linked to the national settlements for NHS employed staff.

The GPs enjoy the unique challenges of providing comprehensive healthcare to an island community and feel privileged to be able to work in a traditional, rural GP role.



Symbolic burning of a viking longship the evening after the Regatta

Working as a GP in Westray and Papa Westray

The practice also serves Westray's closest neighbour Papa Westray (Papay) with the doctor travelling over from Gill Pier to Papay on a small ferry every Wednesday morning for their clinic.

Papa Westray has 2 Nurse Practitioners who provide 24/7 cover for 2 weeks at a time. They contact the GP when advice and support is required. In an emergency a boat can be used to take the GP to Papa Westray Papa Westray

The Golden Mariana



The Knap of Howar



St Boniface Kirk



The Golden Mariana at Papay Pier



Westray Cares

Westray is one of the largest of Orkney's Outer North Isles. The island, nearly 12 miles long by a mile wide, is 80 minutes away from Kirkwall by ferry and has around 600 inhabitants.

Following the Westray Conference in 1998, the Westray Development Group (now Trust) was set up to look into the sustainability of the island. One of the main outcomes was the need for a care facility to serve the ageing population. As a result, Kalisgarth Care Centre was built to house six residents in need of long-term care as well as providing one space for respite. It has a kitchen, large lounge/dining room and six private rooms.

In 2013 a further two separate buildings were added to allow for supported living.

The facility is run by the Orkney Islands Council with a highly qualified Westray resident in overall day to day charge. A very active "Friends of Kalisgarth" group attends to the wellbeing of the residents. Visitors are always encouraged (appropriate to pandemic regulations).



Kalisgarth



Wall panels designed by a young Kirkwall artist.



Above: the stained glass window designed by island youngsters.

Island Industries

Livestock farming is one of the main industries with top quality beef cattle being predominant and sheep rearing coming a close second. Westray is known for its fishing, now mainly creel fishing for lobster and crab, which are landed at Gill Pier and processed at the crab processing factory, Westray Processors. This provides a good source of employment. In addition, there is a large salmon farming industry, which recently expanded and is now a major employer.



Pierowall Hotel

In addition to these typical Orkney industries, Westray also has many diverse occupations which include building, pottery, artists, writers, photographers. Artisan chutney is known and appreciated throughout Orkney. Car repairs are in safe hands if you have a breakdown.

Broadband, in various forms such as fttc, 4G, satellite & Cloudnet, ensures that IT is well provisioned for. The hospitality industry is well supplied with cafes, hotel, hostel, self-catering establishments, and B&Bs. The Pierowall Hotel is open all year round and serves lunchtime and evening meals, together with a take-out service.

Generally speaking, there is no unemployment on the island, folk are either working or have retired to enjoy the peace and tranquillity the isle offers.



Westray Junior High School

Even if you do not have children of school age, you may be interested to see what a happy, caring, and vibrant school we have here in Westray.

Westray Junior High School caters for children from 3-16 years of age. All pupils follow the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence. Pupils start Nursery at 3 years of age, moving to Pre-school year the following year. We have 3 classes in the Primary Department: covering junior middle and upper primary classes. Pupils from S1 - S3 (12 - 14 years) follow the Broad General Curriculum before entering their Senior Phase in S4, when they take their final qualifications which are called Nationals. Our senior pupils almost always achieve well above the Scottish National average.

We are well served with travelling teachers for specialist subjects such as Food Technology, Woodwork, P.E., Art, and Music. There is a wide range of after school clubs, run by volunteers, which include football, rugby, and netball. We also have an adjoining swimming pool.

We were the second school in Orkney to achieve Fairtrade accreditation – Papa Westray was the first! We are also linked to Chitengu School in Malawi. Two pupils from Malawi have visited Westray, which was an enriching experience for both visitors and hosts alike. We regularly fundraise to support Chitengu school. This includes paying for materials for new classrooms. The most significant development was the sinking of a borehole to provide clean, easily accessible water for the entire village. Pupils' enthusiasm for fundraising reflects the generous nature of the island.

We regularly take pupils to the Orkney Mainland for day trips, to visit places such as Skara Brae, Maeshowe, and the Italian Chapel, as well as taking part in the annual Orkney Science Festival in September each year. Senior Pupils undertake a variety of residential trips.



Westray Junior High School

We have Papa Westray as our feeder primary, with pupils travelling daily by boat once they start Secondary School. The P1-3 class visit Papay most years in June to see the Knap of Howar which is the oldest man-made building in NW Europe – older than the Pyramids! This is also the ideal time to get to know our friends at Papa Westray Primary, who will go on to become classmates in S1.



Westray Playground

The school is very fortunate to receive additional funding from Westray Development Trust, which is really helping to enhance pupils' learning. An education at Westray Junior High ultimately prepares our pupils for life beyond school, whether that be in the world of work, Orkney College, or Kirkwall Grammar School.

We are delighted that so many former pupils return to live and work on the island, helping make it a successful, go-ahead, thriving and enterprising place in which to live and bring up children.

Island Living

(Pre-pandemic restrictions) Westray has an enthusiastic community, especially concerning sport which includes football, netball, rugby, and badminton.

Out past the school and opposite Noltland Castle there is a superb 9-hole golf course which has been lovingly refurbished in recent years and it is open to all who want to take in the glorious scenery on this links course. It lays claim to the longest hole in the UK with a par six at a hefty 738 yards (675m).



Noltland Castle

Westray Golf Course



Noltland Castle



Music plays a large part of the island culture. The Westray Connections festival weekend which takes place biannually, draws musicians here from all our islands and northern Scotland.



Natural History

Noup Head at the north-western corner of Westray in May or June is one of the most spectacular experiences in Orkney. The cliff ledges will be home to large numbers of seabirds including guillemots, puffins, kittiwakes and gannets. The air will be full of wheeling birds and a variety of raucous cries.

The island's western cliffs house the largest seabird colony in Orkney. On the maritime heath behind the cliffs will be breeding Skuas and Arctic Terns.

Seabirds are not the only wildlife to enjoy on Westray. The freshwater lochs and surrounding vegetation are home to a variety of waterfowl and waders. The island's beautiful beaches are great places to enjoy flocks of Sanderling, ringed plover, and bar-tailed godwits. Many migrant birds pass through in spring and autumn. In recent years, these have included some real rarities such as red-flanked bluetail and Ross's gull.



Seals and pups at Wether Ness in October



Noup Head cliffs

Apart from the wonderful birdlife, animals to look out for include Seals, Otters and the Orkney Vole. On days when visibility is good and the sea calm, some very lucky folk will see porpoises, basking sharks and even killer whales. Rock pools are home to a range of creatures including starfish and hermit crabs whilst road verges and wet areas are worth examining for wildflowers, like marsh marigold, ragged robin and northern marsh orchid.

You might even find the rare Scottish primrose.

Such natural riches, combined with stunning coastal scenery and minimal traffic, make Westray an ideal destination for the birdwatcher and wildlife enthusiast.



Westray's Heritage

Westray, known as the 'Queen o' the Isles', has a thriving community of 600. It has a vibrant charm and genuine island spirit. Westray also boasts a wide range of visitor attractions making it a popular year-round destination.

Thanks to its outward-looking attitude, Westray has a growing community with a new generation of islanders who have planned their future on this beautiful isle. Westray was firmly put on the map in the summer of 2009 when a tiny carved stone figurine – the Orkney Venus but locally called the Westray Wife – was discovered. It is the oldest representation of the human form to be found in Scotland. Found at the Links of Noltland, this huge archaeological dig is producing great interest throughout the world, bringing new visitors each year to experience the island's heritage.

Westray Wife



Links of Noltland



Practicalities

Westray caters well for the needs of its inhabitants and visitors. There are three well-stocked shops that supply all you could wish for on a daily basis, from fresh vegetables to frozen food, milk, bread from the island's bakery, and two off-licenses. Fresh fish is available from Pierowall Fish. The Westray Bakehouse provides fresh products to Westray shops and throughout Orkney. Local meat, Westray cheese, and seasonal vegetables can be found in all the shops.



JACKS chip shop is open Wednesday and Saturday nights.

Two post offices help to ensure

connectivity. Local cafes serve meals and coffees in hours that alter in conjunction with seasonal trade.



Travel

Transport services between Westray and the Mainland of Orkney are very good. Orkney Ferries' Ro-Ro ferry makes two return trips a day during the winter timetable and three returns some days during the summer timetable between Kirkwall and Westray. There is a single return trip on Sundays.

The island also has its own airfield with hard runway and the Loganair plane makes two return trips from Kirkwall each weekday, with one return trip on Saturday and on a Sunday. The journey by air takes around 15 minutes and is usually much enjoyed by visitors.

The flight from Westray to Papa Westray is the shortest scheduled flight in the world taking less than 2 minutes. The flights from Westray regularly include the connection with Papa Westray on route to Kirkwall.

On both air and ferry fares, resident islanders benefit from favourable discounts.

Transport links between Orkney and the mainland of Scotland are excellent.

Flights operate daily between Kirkwall Airport and Scotland's main cities: Edinburgh, Inverness, Aberdeen and Glasgow.



All Orkney residents travel at discounted rates on both NorthLink Ferries' routes and an Air Discount Scheme has recently been introduced to provide residents with significant reductions on the cost of flights to Scottish mainland destinations.

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 operates an additional service with cabin accommodation on the Kirkwall - Aberdeen route.

Information protected by copyright of Open Government licence for public sector information

Join the Community

Left to right: Offices of Cooke Aquaculture (farmed salmon), Westray Development Trust office and the Höfn, young peoples' drop-in centre. The building on the right is the fire station.



Westray, Queen o' the Isles, once visited, never forgotten. The islanders welcome newcomers, the scenery is spectacular and the facilities here are excellent.

Join our community, experience the fellowship, and enjoy the homebakes with your cup of tea. It's the way we are, it's Westray.

The Castle o' Burrian rock stack, famous for its puffins



FOR MORE DETAILS, PLEASE CONTACT



Dr David Mazza

EMAIL: david.mazza@nhs.scot

MOBILE: 07909 581512

or

Dr Jutta Meiwald

EMAIL: jm.meiwald@nhs.scot

MOBILE: 07931 522469



Useful Websites

www.westraydevelopmenttrust.co.uk

www.westrayheritage.co.uk

www.ohb.scot.nhs.uk/westray-branch-arcades-practice

www.ohb.scot.nhs.uk/papa-westray-branch-arcades-practice

www.westraypapawestray.co.uk

www.westraak.co.uk

www.pierowallhotel.co.uk

www.wheeling-steen.co.uk

www.humesweethume.co.uk

www.westrayartgallery.co.uk

www.chalmersquoywestray.co.uk