

## Stronsay Medical Cover

This is an update to notify of a likely gap in GP cover on Stronsay between 1815 Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021, and 08:40 Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021.

We wish to reassure residents that we at NHS Orkney work tirelessly to ensure continuity of service within all isles branches of our GP practices. We have, to date, always achieved this at times relying on existing practice staff being redeployed, use of our local locum bank, or as a last resort through use of Agency staff.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, it appears we have now exhausted all available avenues and remain with a gap in on-island GP medical care. Whilst we will continue working to cover this gap, we are now enacting our business continuity plans to ensure support is still available to all patients remotely, as described below:

### In Hours

In hours service (defined as 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday), will be provided by another GP within the Orcades practice, from either the Hoy, Sanday, or Westray branch of the practice. Community Nursing cover will remain in place on-island, allowing for continued care of patients within their usual caseloads, as well as supporting in-person observations on behalf of the GP when required. Repeat prescriptions should be ordered in the same way however if patients are aware that they are due to order these then if these could be ordered before Friday this week that would be helpful.

**Patients should therefore continue to phone their normal practice number during the weekdays.**

Remote consultations will take place where possible.

### Out of Hours

Out of Hours service (defined as 18:00 to 08:00 seven days per week, plus 08:00 to 18:00 (Saturday and Sunday)), will be provided in the first instance through the NHS 24 service

**Patients will need to dial '111' telephone number during evenings and at the weekend.**

Cases will be triaged in the first instance by the NHS 24 clinicians, and if any cases require a patient to be reviewed locally these will be passed to the local Orkney Out of Hours GP team situated in The Balfour. The on-call GP will have access to a direct number to contact Scottish Ambulance Service if required.

### Emergency Response

Local fire services, first responders, community nursing, and Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) have been briefed regarding the situation on-island and will be prepared to respond in an emergency. SAS have been notified to be on high alert in event of any incidents occurring on Stronsay during this period, to ensure priority assistance will be provided.

### In Summary

We are continuing to source locum cover. There are significant challenges across Scotland, and I have had discussions today with our counterparts in Western and Shetland Isles who are in the same

position. We likewise understand this issue will cause a degree of anxiety. We do however wish to reassure you that a lot of work has gone on behind the scenes to ensure we have appropriate clinical care in place for you albeit from a neighbouring island who will have access to your medical record. We likewise have ensured enhanced emergency support is available if required.

I wish to further thank Nurse Shirley Whiteman and Katrina Kent for being so accommodating over this issue for being so willing to support this way of working should the need arise.

We will provide a further update on Friday afternoon around whether we have been successful in recruiting locum support, but I feel it is only fair to be honest and upfront that I think this will be unlikely now.

*Maureen Firth, Head of Primary Care, Balfour Hospital, Kirkwall (01856 888066)*