

*Clinical Staff update for 2017.*

*Goodbye to old friends:*

*As many of you will be aware Dr Margaret Ferguson and Dr Gail Cunningham have both left the practice to start new ventures in 2017. They have both served the communities on the West side of the island for many years and will be a great loss to the team but we wish them both well in their new ventures.*

*Welcome to new team members:*

*Recruitment to Medical and Nursing posts continues to be a real challenge for all the Practices in the Western Isles and we are no exception. In spite of a long running advertising campaign we have not been able to provide cover for all the clinics/visiting times that the departure of Dr Margaret Ferguson and Dr Gail Cunningham has created. We are however very fortunate in being able to welcome Dr Janice Gilmour to the practice from February 2017. Janice has worked for many years in the Western Isles being based until now at the Group Practice in Stornoway. Janice will be primarily based to cover the clinics and visiting at Borve and Carloway sites. In addition, we are also delighted to have recruited a new practice nurse who many of you will have met already, Marie Mackenzie. Marie also has extensive experience in several locations and is providing nursing services in Borve, Pairc and Leurbost.*

*As we have not filled all of the clinics previously provided we have made some changes to the clinical times at each site. These are outlined below for information. The main principle in any of the changes are that:*

- *The number of appointments at each site has remained the same or increased due to the increasing demands of our ageing population and the need to try and care for patients at home for longer due to patient preference and a relative reduction in long term care placements*
- *We will try to ensure consistency of clinician. Feedback from the community is that this is what matters when accessing primary care services. This has been done by ensuring that each clinician covers only 2 to 3 sites as a maximum during their working week. In addition, Dr Dave Rigby will work to provide relief cover for leave of the other clinicians. This means that whilst he will no longer have regular sessions the telephony staff will know which locations he will be covering on a daily basis for those patients trying to book an appointment. This will ensure that the employment of locums is kept to a minimum, again to improve consistency for patients.*
- *We will continue to develop our Nurse Practitioner service. Practice Nurse Alison Finlayson is completing advance training in clinical examination to*

*allow her to deal with a greater range of acute presentations in the community. In addition, we are working with a range of professionals such as pharmacists to provide a more appropriate response to patient queries.*

- *Finally, in association with NHS Western Isles we are developing a range of services using enhanced technology to allow remote access to support and reduce the need for referral to secondary care services. These will be highlighted as they are introduced but it is hoped that these will reduce unnecessary travel time for both patients and clinicians.*

*The attached table shows the new surgery times where applicable. It should be remembered that there is always clinical support available 8-6 Monday to Friday. We also ask all our patients to remember that the pressure for appointments and advice in primary care has increased over the last few years at an unprecedented and at times challenging rate. One of the consequences of this is that all clinicians need to work harder to maintain availability. This will mean that each site will not have a clinician in residence at all times as the workload at some sites is greater than others and clinicians must be available in a way that reflects this. We will, however, continue to provide support in a variety of ways to try and accommodate the increasing demands on the service.*

*Finally, whilst access to a particular clinician is always desirable, the increase in workload means that that may not always be possible on a particular day. If contact with a particular clinician is felt essential it must be remembered that, due to other commitments, this may take up to a week at times, and possibly longer with annual leave.*