

Training in Argyll & Bute: An experience like no other



Clinical Psychology in NHS Highland:

This year NHS Highland has places for five D.Clin.Psy. trainees, one for Argyll and Bute and four for North Highland. **This description is for trainees in Argyll & Bute.**

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.

NHS Highland is divided into two areas, North Highland and the South Highland area of Argyll & Bute (A&B). Argyll & Bute has a population of around 24,000 and is divided into four areas, Helensburgh; Cowal and Bute; Oban and the Isles; and Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay. It covers a large geographical area including urban hubs, rural life and some 30 islands offering a unique career experience and an opportunity for an excellent work life balance. It also hosts Naval bases and their communities, and on the east side the patch is close enough for a day trip via ferry to the metropolis of Glasgow City.

Clinical Psychology

The department is led by a Director of Psychological services, based in Inverness, who oversees the delegation of management to service heads, in addition to board level liaison and consultation. The psychologists in Argyll and Bute, whilst not formally housed within the Department of Psychological Services, have contact and working relationships with colleagues in North Highland. The Director of Psychological services has clinical leadership for all psychologists across NHS Highland and works closely with Argyll and Bute colleagues in the development and provision of psychological services in the south.

Within Argyll & Bute psychologists are managed separately across the different disciplines of adult mental health, child and adolescent mental health and learning difficulties. Whilst the psychologists in the different specialties do not share line management structure, we are a cohesive & supportive group who meet regularly for CPD.

Within Adult Mental Health there is a Psychological Therapies team managed by a Consultant Psychologist and comprising clinical and counselling psychologists and cognitive behaviour therapists. As well as being housed within this structured and managed team, Adult Mental Health psychologists are also valued members of the CMHTs in Dunoon, Lochgilphead and Oban, working closely with our colleagues in these teams as well as with the Primary Care Mental Health teams and Emergency & Urgent Care Mental Health teams. This structure offers trainees the opportunity to get valuable experience working alongside other mental health professionals.

CAMHS have MDT bases in Helensburgh, Lochgilphead and Dunoon. The CAMHS team is a Tier 3 team with close links to Primary Mental Health Workers. The team also offers services to Care Experienced Young people and those needing Paediatric Psychology input.

The Learning Disability Team provides an Argyll-wide service with MDT bases in Helensburgh, Dunoon, Lochgilphead and Oban. It is part of an integrated health and social care team and has links with autism, mental health and physical health practitioners. The team offers a community-based service to adults with a diagnosed learning disability, their families and statutory/third-sector support services.

Placement Base

All services in Argyll & Bute use hybrid working – a mix of face-to-face clinical sessions and office work as well as remote access provision using video calls. This allows us to offer services flexibly across the area. In their first year adult mental health placement, the Argyll and Bute trainee will usually have a clinical base in Dunoon (although there can be flexibility in this) as well as using remote access as described. This base can be maintained through the three years of training, with some commuting to other bases as required. Trainees are also very welcome to be more mobile during their training with us should they decide that they would prefer to be able to easily choose their placements across the whole of Argyll & Bute. This can be discussed and accommodated flexibly throughout your time with us.

Dunoon is a rural town based on the shores of the river Clyde. It has the benefit of two ferry services which allow for easy access to the larger town of Gourock, and to rail and road services to Glasgow. Nestled under the Cowal hills it also offers excellent opportunities for outdoor pursuits, and the exploration of the historical towns and castles in the area.

Placement opportunities

As noted above the successful candidate will be based initially in Dunoon, with all their core placements in these areas or within a reasonable commute, or can build their placements flexibly across Argyll & Bute if they prefer.

Specialist final year placements are available in a range of areas with supervision from an Applied Psychologist. These include - LD Specialist Challenging Behaviour and systemic practice; specialist paediatrics; Care Experienced Young People; specific AMH populations, such as complex trauma; in addition, the opportunity to specialise in certain therapies is available, including ACT; CAT & CBT. It is anticipated that the opportunities will continue to grow as the service in Argyll and Bute develops and the value of clinical psychology working into a range of services is increasingly recognised. Furthermore exciting developments in line with Scottish Government funding are likely to see Clinical Psychologists appointed to other services across both mental and physical health settings in the coming years.

Research/ Thesis opportunities

There are a range of research interests, and thesis opportunities that include, but are not exclusive to, the specialist placements above.

Teaching: For Highland trainees, teaching is offered through a combination of remote video, and face-to-face at the University, comprising teaching blocks in Glasgow in first and second year, together with weekly video-teaching and up to a day a month teaching in Glasgow. Travel and accommodation costs are paid when trainees attend face-to-face teaching.

If you would like further information please do not hesitate to contact -

Dr Andrew MacDougall, Clinical psychologist/ Local Area Tutor (NHS Highland)
telephone 01463 704686, or email andrew.macdougall@nhs.scot

Dr Ishbel Dumughn, Clinical Psychologist in AMH, Oban, Argyll & Bute
Telephone 01369 763790, or email ishbel.dumughn@nhs.scot