

REMOTE AND RURAL GENERAL PRACTICE WORKING GROUP



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Joint Statement from the Scottish Government and British Medical Association.

On 2nd September 2019 the Scottish Government and BMA published a joint statement to reflect concerns expressed by rural GPs. The Joint statement '[The GP Contract and Remote and Rural General Practice: Our Shared Principles and Approach](#)' set out the next steps that would be taken by the renamed 'Remote and Rural General Practice Working Group.

Latest Remote and Rural General Practice Working Group Meeting

The Rural Working Group met for the sixth time on Thursday 26th September 2019 in Edinburgh. Following a successful event at our last meeting on 4th June, the Group is focusing on a workshop format to talk through issues our members want to explore. Group members held discussions on pressing issues for rural GPs and staff, including: challenges and opportunities in transforming primary care through the GP Contract; how the Scottish Government (SG) and other stakeholders can best help GPs, Health Boards and Integration Authorities achieve this vision. Here's what we discussed at the meeting:

- **Group Terms of Reference (TOR)** – final comments were received from Group members on the draft revised TOR. The Group is no longer designated as 'short life' and has a wider remit, going forward. The final agreed version can be accessed [here](#).
- **Rural Fund 2019/20** – an update on proposals for were shared with the Group members. The Rural Fund is intended to target resources directly at supporting transformed primary care service in rural communities. Examples of Rural Fund projects include: Support for rural GPs for their work delivering pre-hospital emergency care (BASICS); support of remote consultations (NHS Near Me/Attend Anywhere) seeking to avoid unnecessary travel (in some cases for long distances) for patients, GPs and other clinicians.
- **Rural Flexibility/ Options Appraisal** – As set out in the Joint Statement published by Scottish Government and BMA, and guided by the Rural Group, the Scottish

Great discussions at the SG Rural General Practice Working Group today. Thanks to all who attended. Lots of ground covered!

Update to follow soon at:

gov.scot/groups/remote-.... @SG_PrimaryCare



8:28 AM - 26 Sep 2019

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Government will shortly publish joint guidance providing more clarity on how Primary Care transformation can be delivered in remote and rural areas. The Rural Group provided input on a near-final draft, and SG will share this guidance shortly.

- We also heard presentations from Professor John Gilles from the Scottish School of Primary Care, and Dr David Heaney – who have both been commissioned by the Group to develop papers on the “*Distinct role of rural GPs*” and “*Rural MDT in Primary Care in developed countries*” respectively. Both papers are informing the Group’s future direction of work.
- Most of the workshop involved shared group discussions on the draft recommendations to be included in a Remote and Rural Report. The report will be published in November 2019.

The Remote and Rural Working Group plans to meet next on the 16th of January 2020.

Papers and bulletins from all Rural Group meetings can be accessed [here](#).

Dispensing Working Sub-group

The Dispensing Working Group met for the third time on Tuesday 17th September . The Sub-group discussed a number of issues, including the proposal to support dispensing practices in 2019/20 with continuing practice staff training and implementation of the [Falsified Medicines Directive](#). £300,000 has been allocated from the Rural Fund to support this work in this financial year. Further information on how practices can access this funding will be issued shortly.

Members also discussed concerns about the impact on Dispensing practices of the potential EU Withdrawal (Brexit) on 31st October, particularly the impact of possible medicines shortages. Current and future eHealth/ IT issues affecting Dispensing practices were also discussed.

Members also agreed to explore the development of guidance to support Dispensing practices to continue to deliver a safe and sustainable service. NHS Highland has agreed to support and to take forward this work, building on existing local and national (Dispensing Doctors Association) Guidance. The group also agreed to explore the development of a bespoke Scottish Training Programme for practice staff in dispensing practices.

Further information on the Dispensing working group is available on its [website](#).

Rural Engagement

Since our last bulletin, the team have been busy taking part in a range of practice visits and engagement events across remote and rural Scotland (see more details below).

Orkney

In August, the Scottish Government team visited Orkney for three days. They visited the new Balfour Hospital, as well as attending a local GP Cluster meeting. They met with the Chief Officer and Chief Executive of NHS Orkney as well as members of Orkney Health & Social Care Partnership.

They were also able to visit a number of practices in the area:

- Skerryvore Practice, Kirkwall
- Heilendi Practice, Kirkwall
- Islands View Surgery, Rousay
- Hally & Walls Health Centre, Hoy
- The Surgery, Stromness

The team would like to thank everybody they met on their visit including the First responders on Rousay and crew members of the Kirkwall Lifeboat: RNLB Margaret Foster,



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Argyll & Bute

Sir Lewis Ritchie, Dr Charlie Siderfin and Fiona Duff visited Argyll & Bute in April. They visited:

- Dr Eric Jespersen and colleagues at Lorn Medical Practice, Oban,
- Dr Rebecca Helliwell and colleagues at Lochgilphead Medical Practice
- Dr Alida MacGregor at Tighnabruaich Medical Practice.

We would like to thank the practices for their warm welcome and for frank and open discussions.



Invitation

Do you want to get involved with the Rural Group? Do you have a view or a comment to bring to the Group's attention? Is there a great initiative in your area that would be an excellent case study? Would you like team members to visit your practice? Please feel free contact us at PCRural@gov.scot.

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