

GP Recruitment event - Wigtownshire Dumfries & Galloway How it was organised (April 2018)

The problem

- Hardly any GPs responding to conventional GP recruitment advertising in Wigtownshire despite a growing number of vacancies.

The idea

- To attract GPs to the area to see for themselves what is on offer in terms of jobs, environment and lifestyle.



Specific aims

- To showcase the area.
- A chance for visiting GPs to meet local GPs.
- A chance for partners of visiting GPs to get a positive feel of the area.
- Opportunity for tours of local GP practices.

Secondary benefits

- Enabling Wigtownshire to stand out from the crowd in terms of trying something different with recruitment.
- Reassuring local community that we are trying our best to recruit GPs.
- Spending significantly less money on the whole weekend than it costs for one GP advert in most conventional publications.
- A chance to advertise the 8 GP vacancies in the area as widely as possible.
- Boost morale among local GPs.

The overall plan

- Invite potential GPs and their partners to stay for a night, all expenses paid, at the Creebridge House Hotel in Newton Stewart on Saturday 28th April 2018.
- They would be invited to join local GPs from the Machars area for a meal at the hotel on the Saturday evening
- They would be invited to join Rhins GPs for Sunday lunch at the Crown Hotel, Portpatrick.
- The rest of the weekend would be free but a timetable of GP practice tours would be on offer.

The result

- 7 GPs (4 qualified and 3 soon to qualify) and their partners attended the event from Scotland and England.
- Feedback was very positive and we are waiting to see if any of them decide to move to the area to work.

Advertising

- No money was spent on advertising.
- All advertising was done via social media and word of mouth.
- A Facebook page was set up: <https://www.facebook.com/gpjobsinwigtownshire/>

- A webpage for advertising Wigtownshire GP posts was embedded in the Wigtownshire section of the NHS website. This was in order that interested people would not come across GP posts from other areas while looking at the Wigtownshire GP jobs:
http://www.nhsdg.scot.nhs.uk/Wigtownshire/GP_Recruitment
- A Facebook 'event' was then set up for the weekend:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/422171898239461/> This was entitled "A free weekend away for GP's in beautiful Wigtownshire". The design of the Facebook event was intended to make it look like a free weekend away rather than a recruitment event, hence making it appealing to people to share this novel idea. Within days the event had been 'shared' more than 300 times, and reached over 29,000 Facebook users.
- Initial wording for an advert was sent to the NHS D&G Communications department who firstly made it into a slideshow with photos in the background, and then into a longer video (basically a slideshow but with more pages and music in the background).
- The slideshow was featured on the Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/gpjobsinwigtownshire/videos/152157618804604/> This was shared nearly 200 times and received 4,900 views.
- The video, which was made a week or so later, was also featured on the Facebook page and posted on YouTube to enable other websites such as www.ruralgp.com to more easily share it:
<https://youtu.be/NUTyu0luXJ4> Despite being arguably better than the slideshow, it was shared and viewed less times, but by the time this video was published, many people had already viewed the other slideshow and event. With hindsight, this video should have been published instead of the first one which was a bit wordy and less clear.
- All photos on the video were checked for copyright and we had permission from a local folk band to use their music in the background.
- The event and/or video were sent to numerous medical recruitment Facebook pages to be shared in addition to some key GP recruitment websites (all free).
- Twitter was also used.
- ITV Border News approached us in order to feature the event, and we were contacted by the Scottish Daily Mail who also wanted to feature it (not sure if they did) and also West Sound Radio who featured it on the weekend of the event. An independent TV company has also been in touch, considering making a documentary on recruiting doctors to rural areas.
- Email address of Wigtownshire GP Liaison Officer (lucy.gurling@nhs.net) was on the advertising as a point of contact for GPs interested in coming to the event.

Before the weekend

- Visiting GPs were sent details the week before, describing plans for the weekend and times of the optional GP practice tours.
- Local GPs from the 8 recruiting practices were invited to one of the two meals. Details were sent to them the week before. A handful of family members were also invited in order to make links with partners of GPs and two young children of one GP came to keep the atmosphere family orientated.
- Menus were agreed with the 2 eating places in advance. 3 courses plus coffee at Creebridge House Hotel, Newton Stewart (because 3 courses would be included in the dinner, bed and breakfast deal). 2 courses plus coffee at the Crown Hotel, Portpatrick.
- GP practice visit times were arranged for the weekend with the individual GP practices in order to accommodate people looking round all of them without time clashes if they wished.

The meals

- At each meal, name labels were given. People could sit where they liked but were encouraged to move seats after each course of the meal to enable networking.
- A five minute introductory talk was given by the Wigtownshire GP Liaison Officer just before food was served on the Saturday evening, outlining plans for the weekend, describing some demographics of the area and a personal account of moving to the area as a GP's wife.
- Alcoholic drinks could not be paid for by the NHS so people had to purchase their own (this was made clear in the information given in advance).
- A Wigtownshire map with GP practices marked was put on the wall for reference at both meals.

GP practice tours

- Not all visiting GPs opted to see round the GP practices, preferring to get a general feel of the area. The practice tours were appreciated by those who did go to them.

Feedback

- A feedback form was sent to all visiting GPs on the Wednesday after the weekend.
- The completed feedback forms were forwarded to the local GPs once received. See Appendix for comments from feedback forms.

Finances

Hotel accommodation for 11 (£70 each, DB&B)	£770
Hotel dinner for 7 local GPs (£23 each) plus soft drinks	£173
Sunday lunch (£16.50 each)	£429
Sunday soft drinks	£60
Total cost of weekend	<u>£1,432</u>

Source of funding for weekend

- Funding came from a fund originally allocated in 2015 by the IJB for Wigtownshire GP practices to use for practice development within Health and Social Care Integration.

14/05/18
Lucy Gurling
Wigtownshire GP Liaison Officer
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Appendix - Feedback from visiting GPs

Here are some of the comments from the feedback forms (these quotes are from 4 different GPs):

"I feel I had a good opportunity to speak to many of the local Doctors, lovely relaxed environment"

"We were able to see the local area. Speak to local GPs and learn about their experiences, both professional and personal, living in the area"

"Saw the area (which was looking fantastic in the sunshine), found out about the life of the local GPs"

[Referring to partner's experience of the weekend]: "Very positive! He was glad to meet (non-medical!) partners of other GPs either working in the area already or looking to move to the region."

"We were already set on moving to the area (in the process of house purchase). We were planning to delay moving until I complete my GP training next August, but I am now looking into the possibility of transferring the final year of my training to Galloway."

"Opened my eyes to the possibility of working in the area - could see our family there"

"Very much enjoyed meeting everyone. Lovely weekend, learned a great deal about the area."

"I felt the 2 locations gave a good chance to see different parts of the area"

"I think the seating rotation worked very well and meant that we all got the most out of the weekend"

"I would like to work in the area & plan initially to register on the performers' list for the area so I can do long term locums with a view to a permanent post. I am just waiting to find out about my husband's work from home applications before I can commit to this."

"I felt it was a great chance to meet several GPs in different practices. I was able to view the area with moving in mind. I learned what vacancies were available"

"Able to visit the nearest practice and explore more of the local area. Got a feeling of the camaraderie amongst local GPs. Now very much looking forward to living and working in the area."

"Good opportunity to meet various GPs from the local area and also others who are looking to move to the area. Allowed enough free time on the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning to explore the area and visit some of the practices. Very well organised overall."