



WORKFORCE REPORT

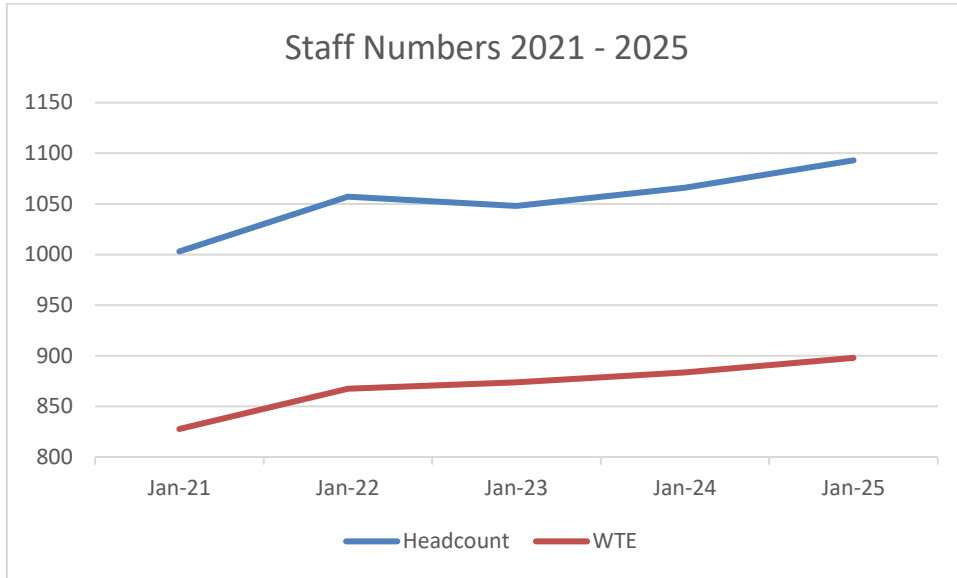
February 2025

1. WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

1.1 Staff in post – in-depth analysis

This workforce report provides a greater analysis on head count and WTE.

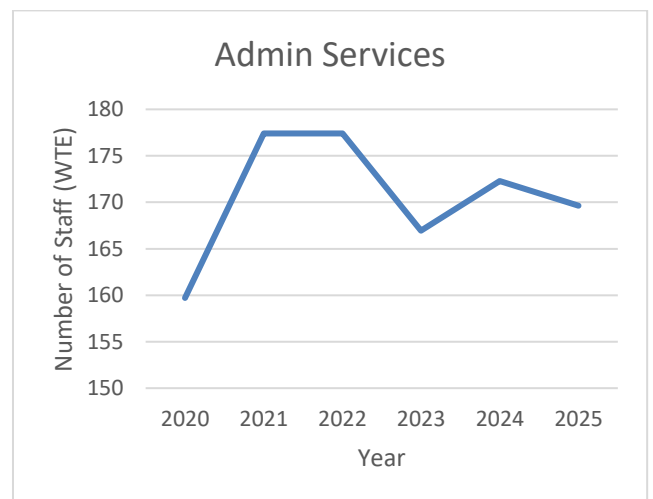
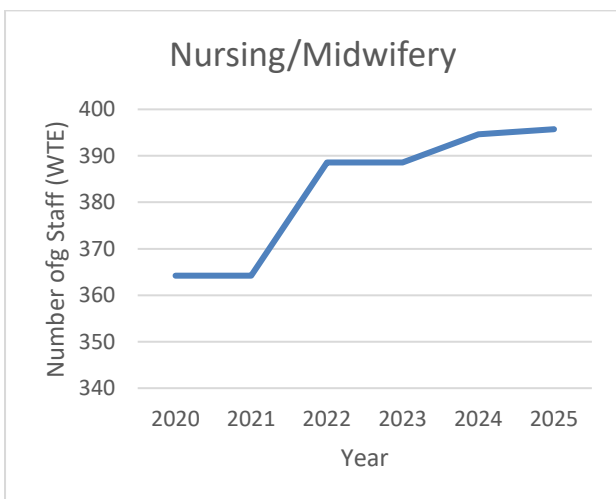
On 28th February 2025 NHS Western Isles has a total headcount of 1095 (899.54 WTE) employees.

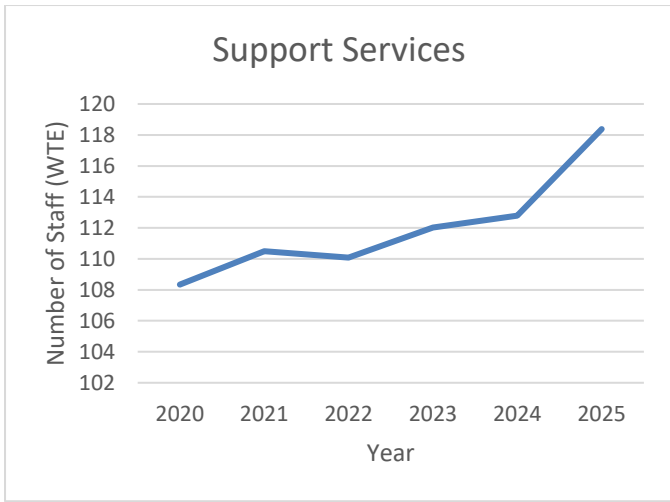


Staff numbers overall have increased. This was initially due to the covid response in terms of contact tracing and vaccinations. 2022 and 2024 also saw the transfer of staff from the medical practices in Barra and Uist.

There has been no change in the proportion of staff working part time. On average a staff member will work 0.82 WTE, this was the same in 2021 and 2025.

A breakdown of numbers in individual job families of nursing, admin and support services is provided below. These have been focused on as nursing is our largest job family and Scottish Government have asked that controls are on place on the administrative and support services job family.

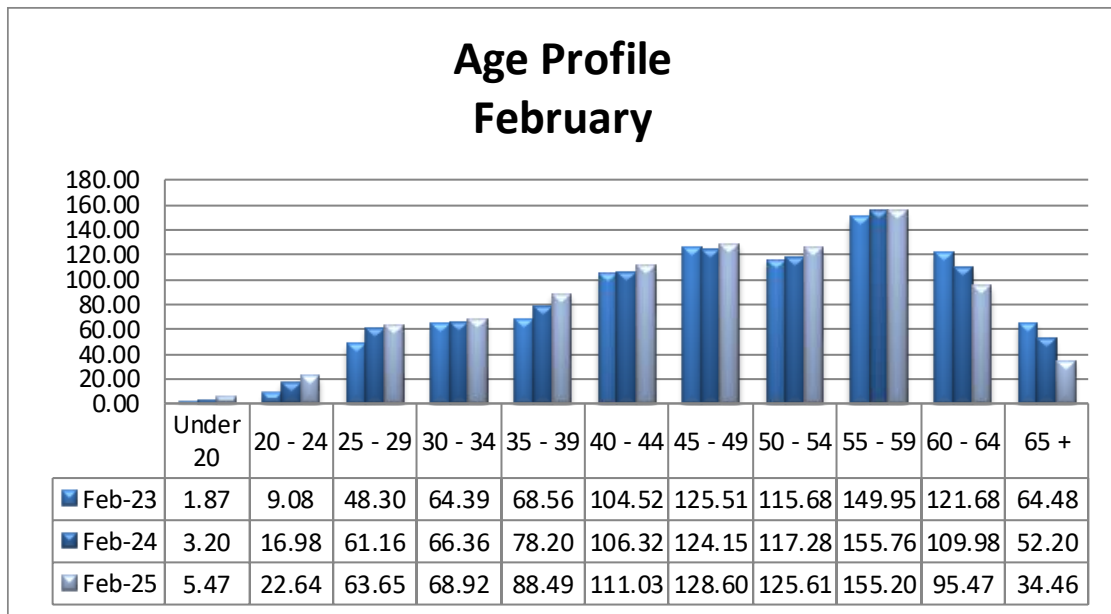




There was a steep rise in nursing staff in 2021 which relates to the covid response. Nursing and Midwifery staff have been maintained and increased levels.

Administrative staff numbers also increased through covid but are starting to reduce.

1.2 Age Profile

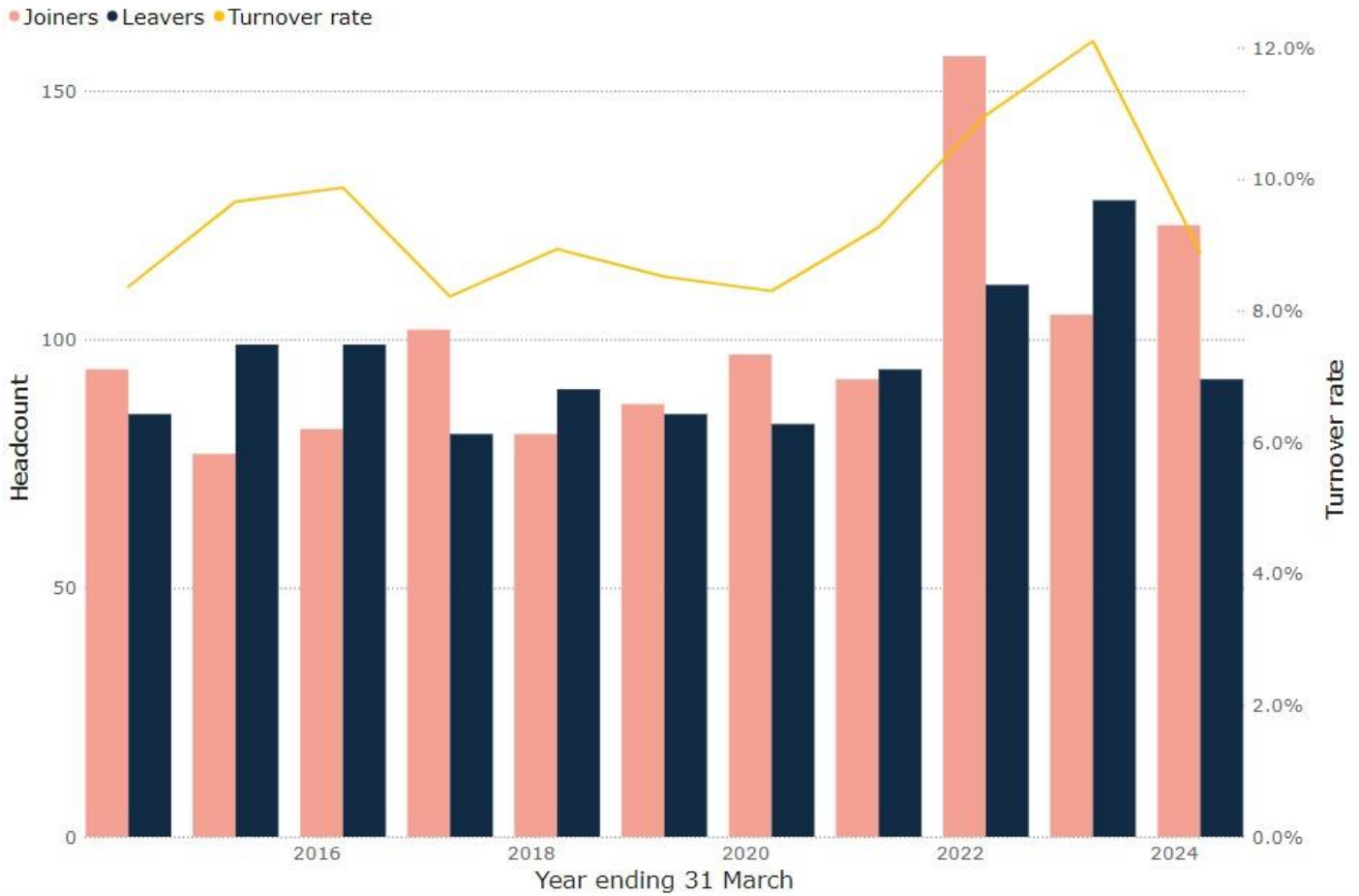


The workforce is ageing with 46% (down from 48% in 2022) of employee's aged over 50 and the highest proportion of employees is in the age 55-59 category. The median age of the workforce is 48 compared to an NHS Scotland median age of 44 years. The normal pensionable retirement age continues to rise to 67 (previously 60 for women and 65 for men) which means that people are having to work longer to access pension benefits.

1.3 Turnover

High rates of employee turnover in an organisation can indicate a loss of organisational knowledge, increased costs in recruitment of new employees and costs of induction and training. Turnover rate at 31 March 2024 was 8.9%, down from 10.6% in 2024. There were more joiners than leavers through 2023/24.

Turnover over time



Historically the NHS has had low turnover rates but this has increased since the Covid 19 Pandemic. The increased use of fixed term contracts for specific projects with non-recurring funding and Retire and Return also affects turnover.

1.4 Retire and Return and Partial Retirement

Options for retirement have expanded in the last 3 years to include partial retirement and retire and return. These provide a variety of options for accessing pension benefits and changing posts and work patterns for those approaching retirement age.

There have been 41 accepted applications in total for retire & return and partial retirement since the policies were introduced in 2022 and 2023.

There have been 11 partial retirements.

The table below shows that staff in most job families have made use of the policies.

	2023	2024	2025
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	1	2	2
ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSION	3	2	0
DENTAL SUPPORT	3	0	1
HEALTHCARE SCIENCES	1	0	0
MEDICAL AND DENTAL	0	0	0
MEDICAL SUPPORT	0	0	0
NURSING/MIDWIFERY	8	7	2
OTHER THERAPEUTIC	0	0	0
PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CARE	0	0	0
SENIOR MANAGERS	0	1	0
SUPPORT SERVICES	4	3	1

*This data is provided on a January – December year.

1.5 Overtime

1.5.1 The table below shows overtime hours in each roster location for the month of February.

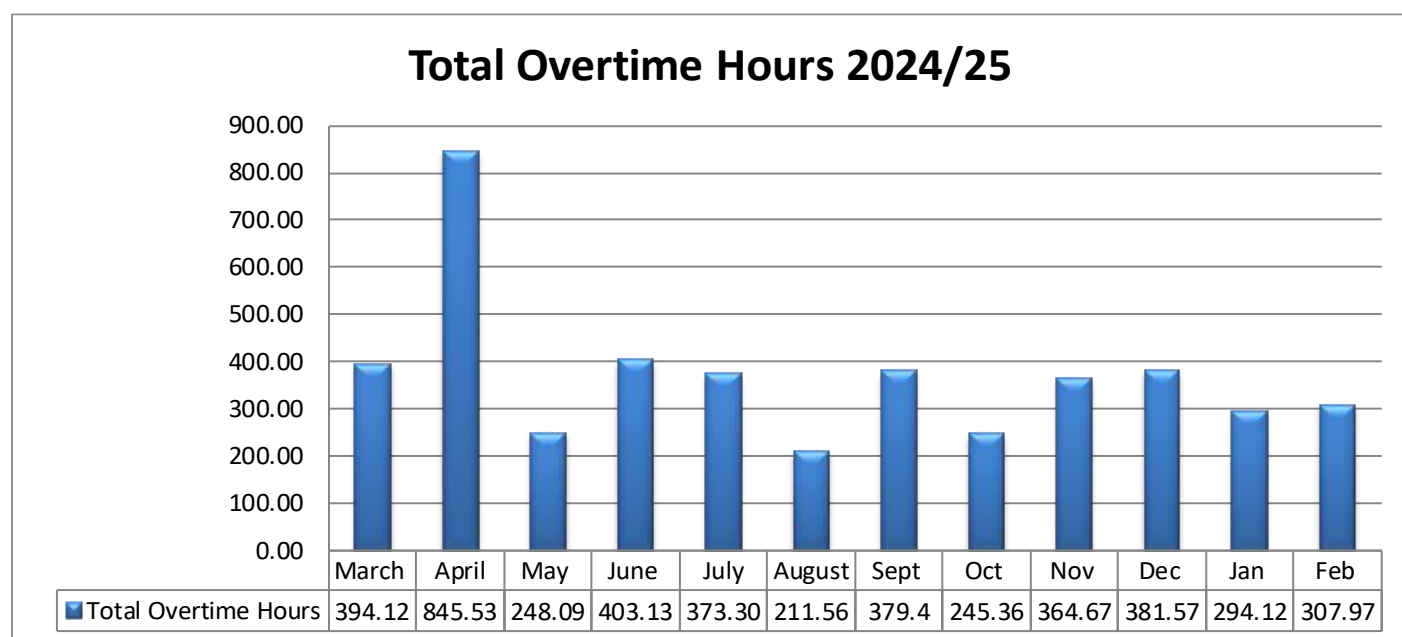
Roster Location	In Post Avg WTE	Overtime T 1/2 Hours	Overtime T2 Hours	Total Overtime Hours
WIHB-A&E	14.15	57.90	0.00	57.90
WIHB-Barra Medical Practice	6.92	1.05	0.00	1.05
WIHB-Comm. SI Uists & Benbecula	12.81	7.31	0.00	7.31
WIHB-Dietetics	7.47	34.06	0.00	34.06
WIHB-Finance & Corporate Services	18.61	1.41	0.00	1.41
WIHB-Hotel Services - Catering	17.57	16.23	0.00	16.23
WIHB-Hotel Services - Domestics	33.36	20.85	0.00	20.85
WIHB-IT	12.82	1.04	0.00	1.04
WIHB-Maternity	20.03	27.50	0.39	27.89
WIHB-Occupational Therapy	24.51	22.60	0.00	22.60
WIHB-Porters	7.91	10.37	0.00	10.37
WIHB-Reception	4.76	9.15	0.00	9.15
WIHB-U&B Hospital - Hotel Service	12.62	44.98	0.00	44.98
WIHB-Works Building	6.81	3.77	0.00	3.77
WIHB-Works Engineering	9.80	44.80	0.00	44.80

The highest levels of overtime is in A&E and Works.

Domestics and Catering use overtime due to vacancies and additional demands. The overtime under Dietetics relates to catering.

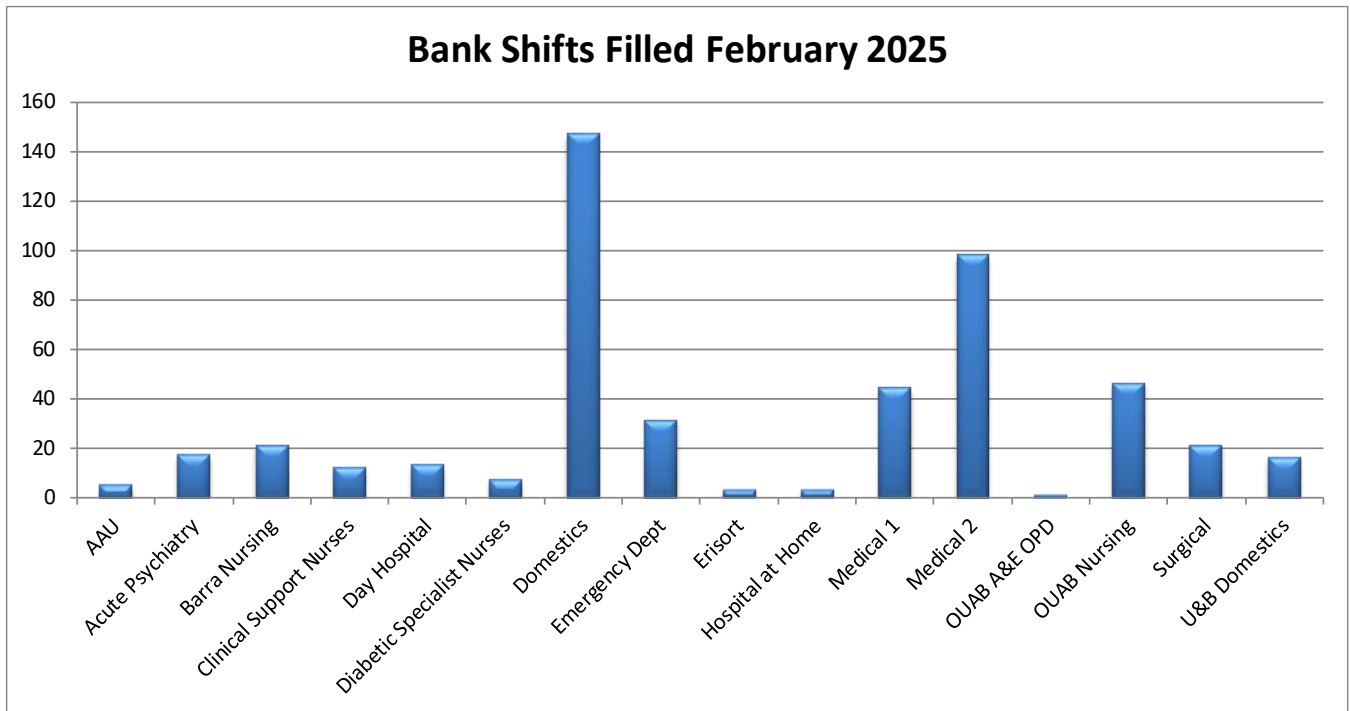
1.5.2 Total Overtime

The table below shows an analysis of overall overtime per month for the last 12 months. April was skewed due to in implementation of the reduced working week.

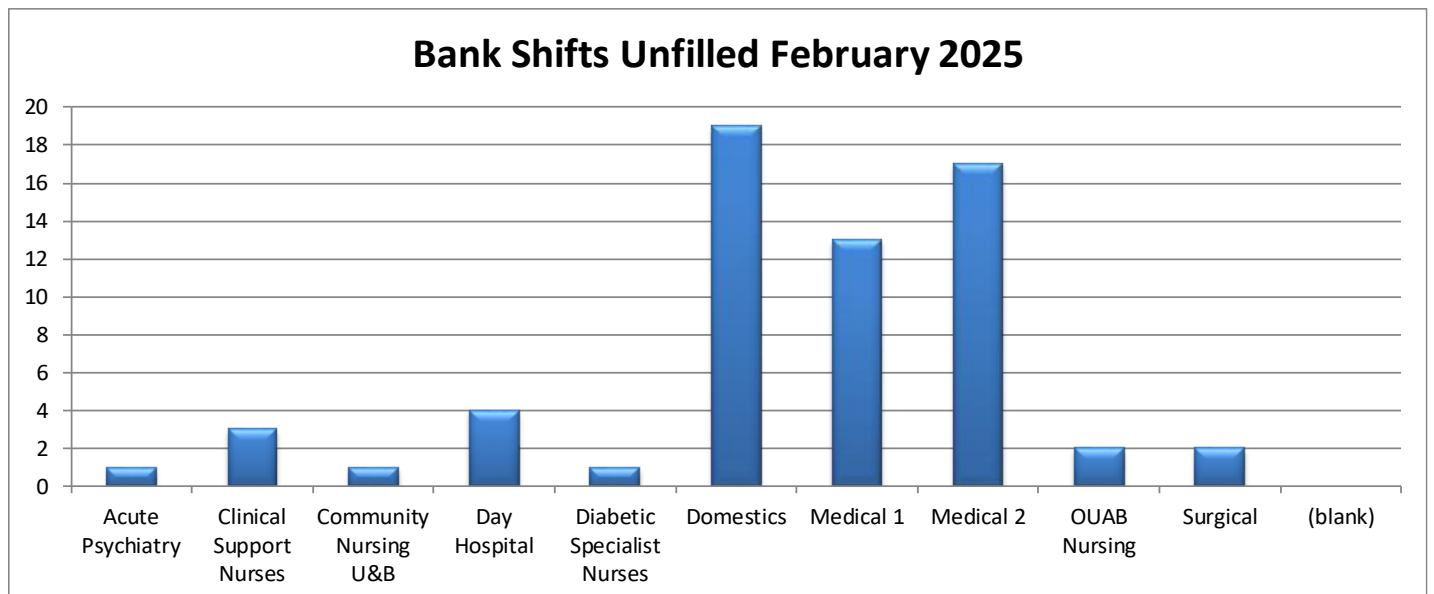


1.6 Bank Usage

1.6.1 The table below shows the number of Bank shifts filled in February 2025. The highest level of Bank Usage is in Domestic Services due to vacancies and high sickness absence. Inpatient wards have the next highest levels of Bank usage (Medical 2, Medical 1, OUAB and Surgical).

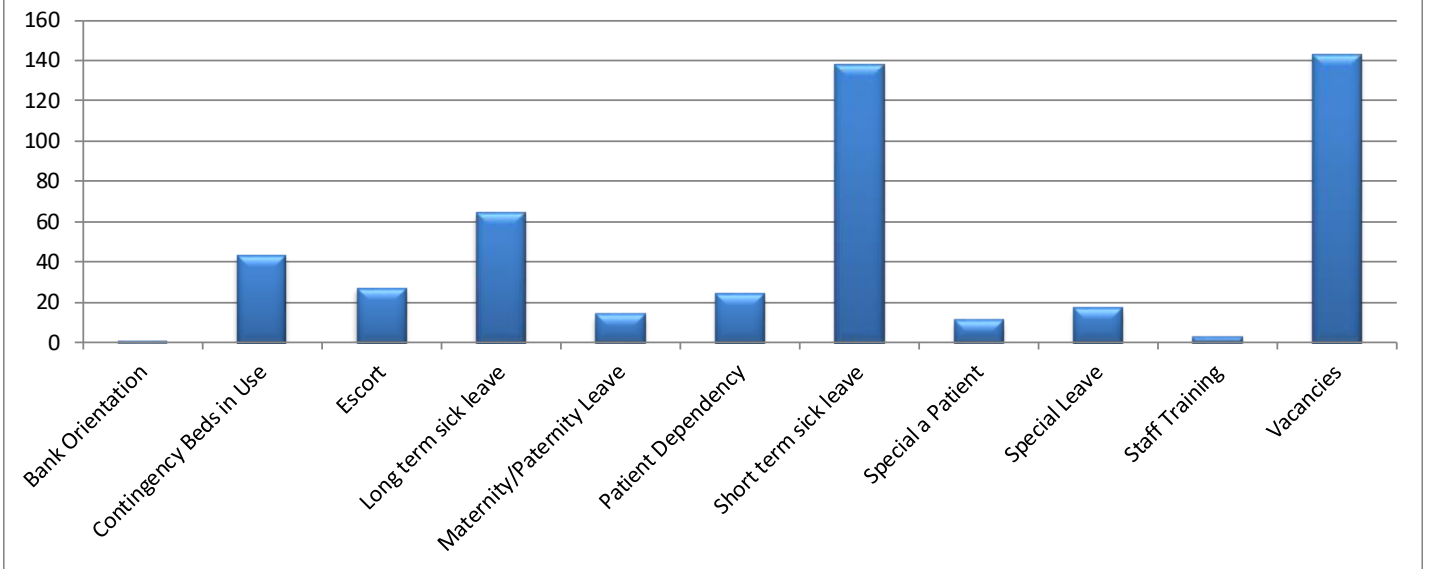


1.6.2 The table below details Bank shifts that were not able to be filled in February.



1.6.3 The table below details the reason for Bank use with vacancies and sick being the most common reason for Bank shifts. Using bank for contingency beds continues to be lower than October.

Bank Request Reason February 2025



1.7 Agency Usage

Agency/Locums are primarily used to cover long term Consultant vacancies in Psychiatry, General Medical, General Surgical, Paediatrics and Radiology. There was greater use in Anaesthetics in November due to staff absence.

There is no significant fluctuation in the use and cost of agency. All agency contracts are reviewed on a three month basis to ensure best value and strict controls are in place when engaging agency with sign off through the Chief Executive.

A review of Out of Hours arrangements is underway for Lewis and Harris.

Applications were received for the three vacant general surgery posts.

An advert is being run for GP's in the Benbecula Medical Practice.

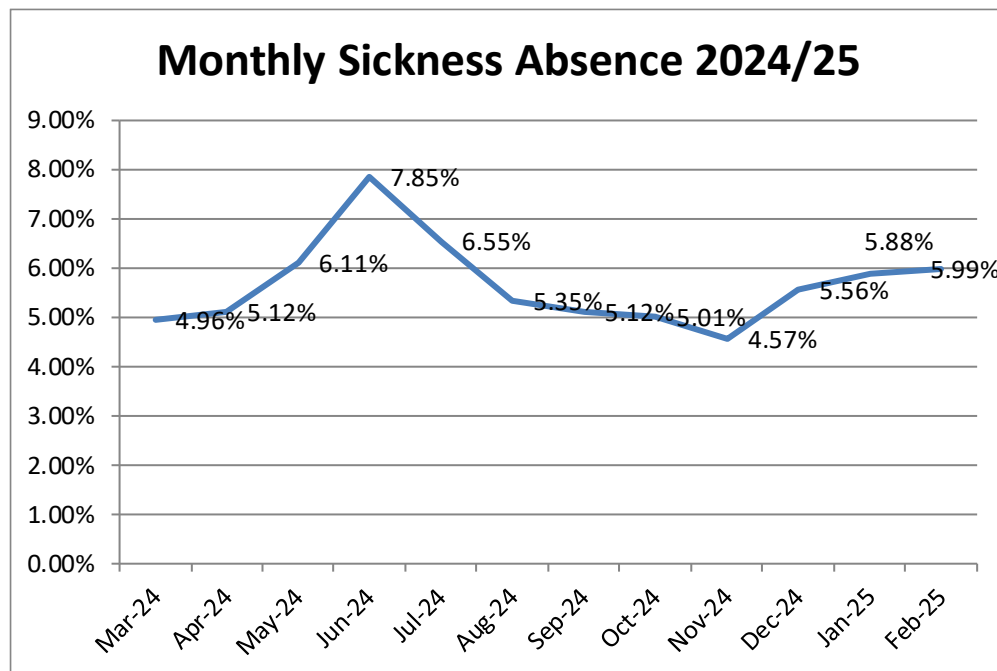
Department	Cost (£)	Reason
General Medical	73,632.07	Vacancy 24/7 Cover
Gen Surgical	52,126.92	Vacancy 24/7 Cover
Paediatrics	45,557.24	Vacancy 1:2 rota
Radiologist	15,404.18	9-5 Service
Speciality Doctors	33,354.69	24/7 Cover A&E
Out of Hours	34,550.35	OOH GP L&H (Direct Engagement)
Psychiatry	76,464.00	24/7 Cover
Maternity	13,807.68	Vacancy cover
X Ray	1,980.82	Vacancy cover
Pharmacy	13,011.14	Vacancy cover
Waiting Times	21,521.47	Vacancy cover
2C Practices	83,442.29	Vacancy cover
Dental	6,803.85	
Total Spend February	470,225.40	

ATTENDANCE

2.1 Sickness Absence

2.1.1 Sickness absence rate over time

The graph shows the sickness absence trend over the past 12 months.



November 2024 saw the lowest sickness rate in the past three years at 4.57%. December, January and February levels increased slightly to 5.56%, 5.88% and 5.99% respectively.

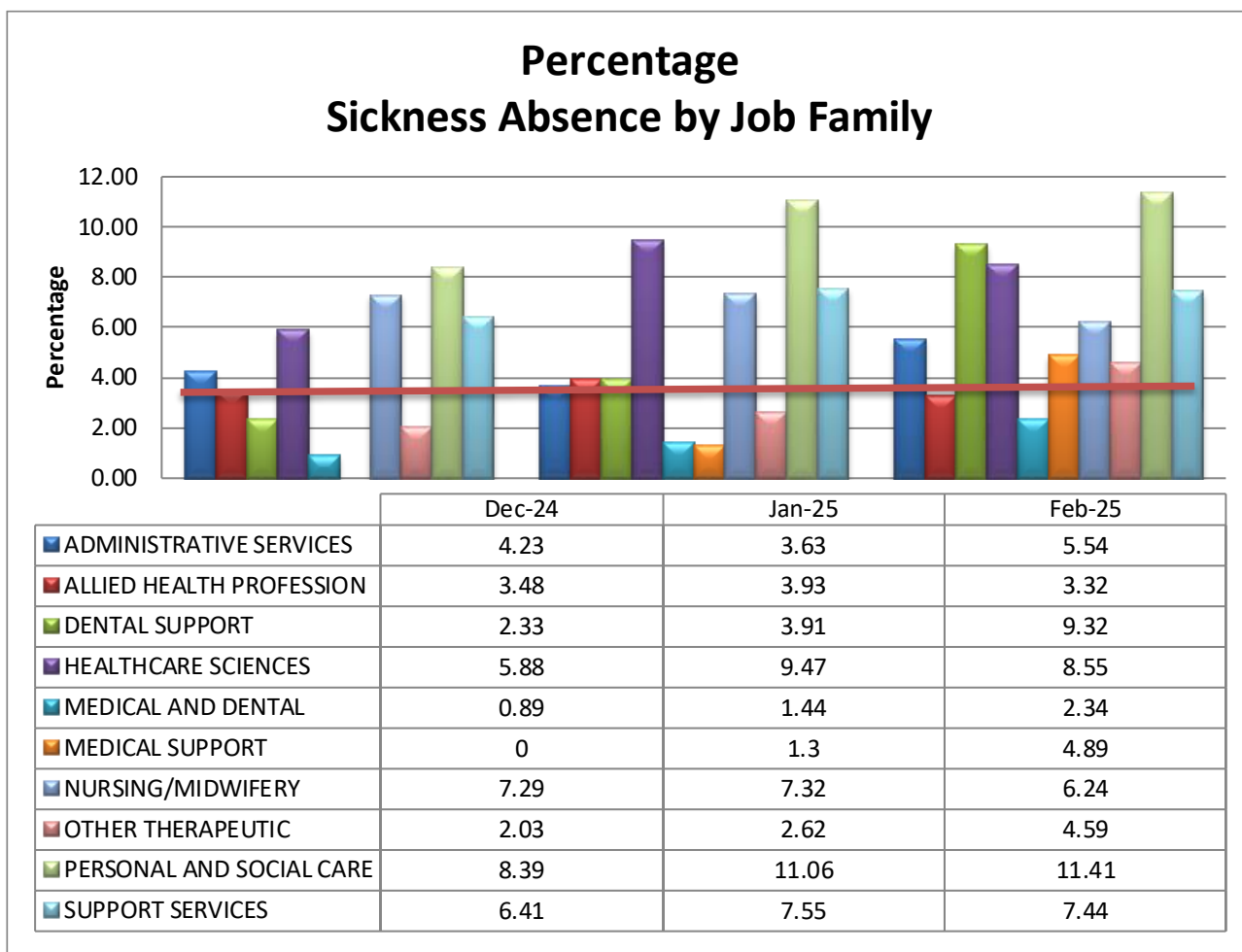
National data shows that NHS Western Isles has the 3rd lowest rate of absence of all territorial boards for the period 1st February 2024 to 31st January 2025.

Employee Relations Officer's and Occupational Health are working closely to monitor absence and ensure all absences are being managed. A monthly meeting is held to analyse absence and follow up with managers on any absences that are not being managed appropriately.

Performance review of senior managers includes management of sickness absence.

The Director of HR and Workforce Development has met with managers during October and November in areas with the highest absence to ensure all possible actions have been taken. There is a high level of assurance that the attendance management process is being applied consistently to staff who have met triggers.

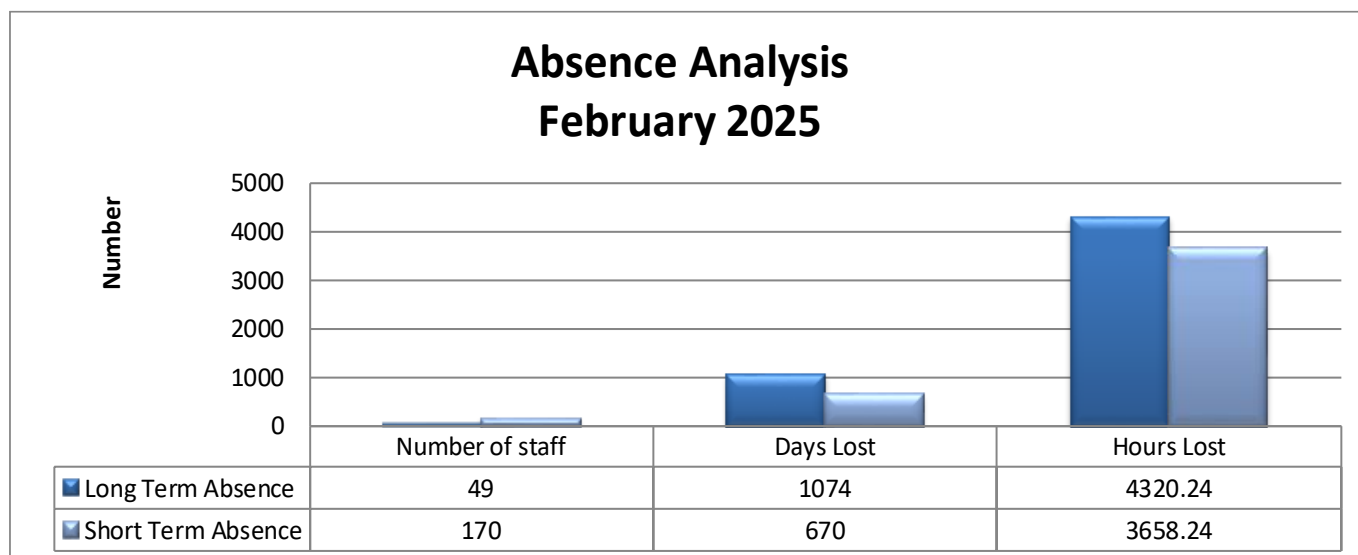
2.1.2 Sickness Absence by Job Family 1st December – 28th February 2025



Nursing/Midwifery is the largest job family and therefore has the greatest overall impact on sickness absence. Support Services includes Domestic staff where we know sickness remains high. HR is working closely with the service to manage this absence.

Personal and Social Care and Health Care Sciences have smaller numbers of staff so the average rate can fluctuate.

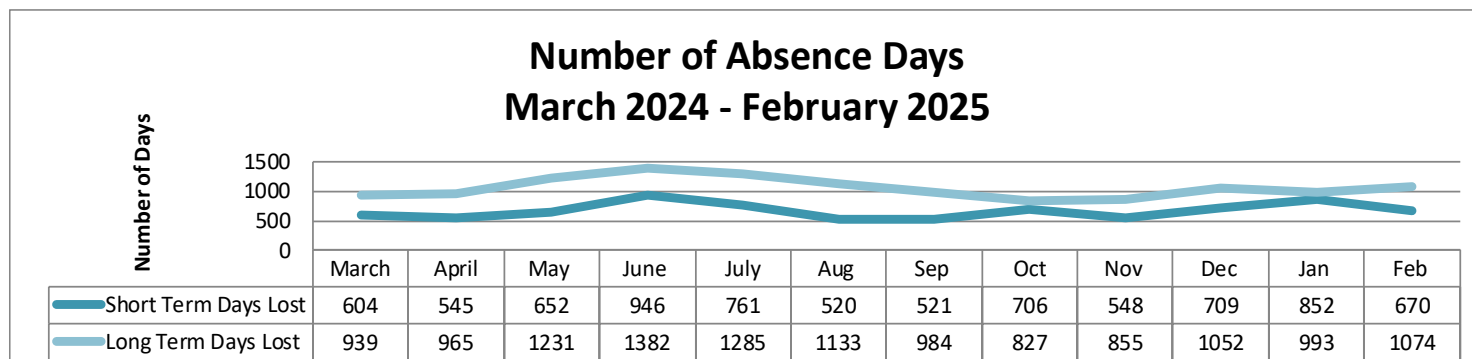
2.1.3 Short Term and Long Term Absence



Long term absence is an absence greater than 28 days. Whilst there are a greater number of staff recording short term absence, long term absence accounts for a greater proportion of days/hours lost.

Short and long term absence

Both long term and short term absence reduced between June and November. The increases in short term absence in October and January are due to winter illnesses as there was higher reporting of colds, coughs and flu and gastrointestinal reasons for absence.



2.1,4 Sickness Absence by Reason – February 2025

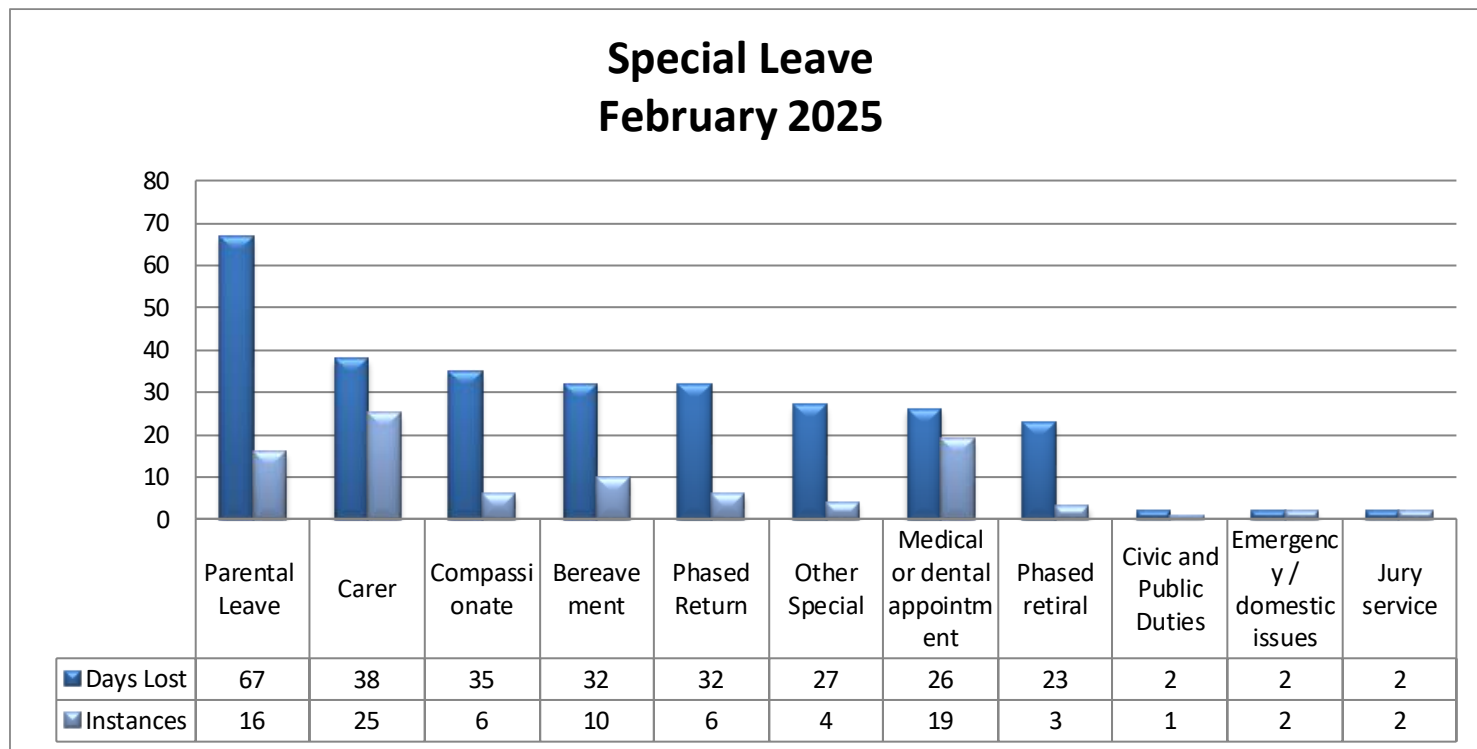
Whilst we had lower levels of absence due to anxiety/stress/depression/ other psychiatric illness over the last 6 months it has increased in February. Musculoskeletal problems and winter illnesses are the other main reasons for absence.

Managers who have input 'unknown' reasons for absence have been contacted with an instruction to input an absence category. NHS Western Isles has the lowest number of 'unknown causes' of absences across all boards over the last year.

	Feb-25
Absence Reasons	Days Lost
Anxiety/Stress/ Depression/Other Psy Illness	465
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	298
Cold, Cough, Influenza	189
Gastro- Intestinal Problems	122
Back Problems	118
Benign Malignant Tumours	111
Injury/Fracture	104
Other Known Causes not Otherwise Classified	59
Heart, Cardiac, Circulatory Problems	56
Nervous system disorders - exclude headache, migraine	56
Chest & Respiratory Problems	47
Eye Problems	44
Ear, Nose, Throat	40
Headache/Migrane	11
Unknown Causes/Not Specified	8
Dental, Oral Problems	7
Genitourinary & Gynae Problems ex Pregnancy	7
Pregnancy Related Disorders	2

3. Special leave

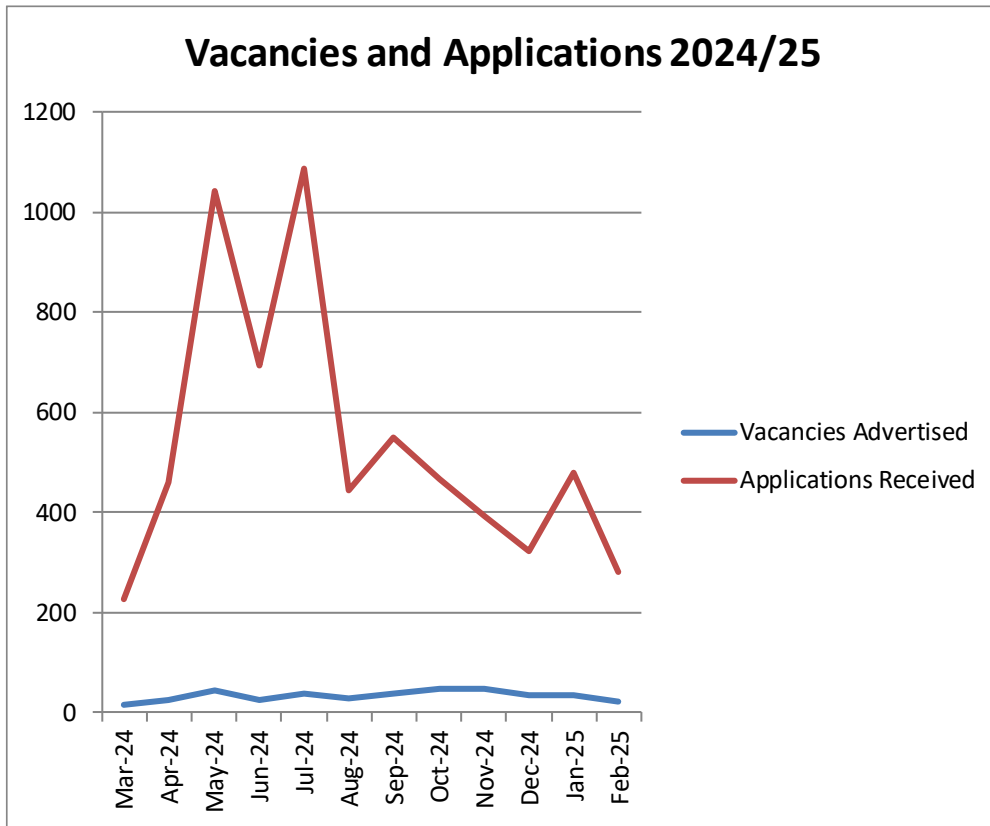
Special leave is allocated as per NHS Western Isles Policy.



3 RECRUITMENT

3.1 Posts Advertised

A total of 394 posts have been advertised over the last 12 months with 6448 applications received which is an average of 20 applications per post.



The number of overseas applications being received by NHS Scotland continues to increase, as it does for NHS Western Isles. The applications are often from internationals who do not have the necessary qualifications or professional registration.

Job Train functionality of 'killer questions' are used to filter out speculative applications from applications who do not meet the essential criteria. Whilst this can be effective to a certain extent applicants can circumvent the questions and submit applications. The HR team continue to assist managers sifting these high volumes.

Recruitment activity remains steady. According to national data NHS Western Isles currently has the fewest number of nursing vacancies across territorial Boards in Scotland

3.2 Vacancies advertised throughout February 2025

The table below shows vacancies that have been advertised in February. There are some that have been advertised several times and are difficult to recruit to. The themes in hard to recruit posts are specialist skills (medics, AHPs, mental health) with shortages across the country. It should be noted that Psychiatry has the most Consultant vacancies across the country (57.7 WTE at 1 June 2024). Those in a remote more isolated location (posts in Uist & Barra) are also more difficult to recruit to.

The Specialist Clinical Pharmacist is being advertised with a recruitment and retention premia and relocation expenses. It is currently being covered through agency.

February 2025 Vacancies Advertised	Times	Applications
Medical 2 Charge Nurse	2	8
Learning Disability/CAMHs Link Nurse Therapist	10	2
Catering Assistant	1	2
Medical 2 Registered Nurse	1	19
Catering Supervisor	2	5
Cook Chef	3	3
Bank Laundry Assistant	1	3
Bank Domestic Assistant	1	8
Catering Assistant	2	1
Domestic Assistant	1	9
Bank Catering Assistant	2	1
Bank Staff Nurse Uist and Barra	3	6
Staff Nurse Surgical	2	59
Senior Physiotherapist	2	31
Physiotherapist START	3	10
Health Protection and Screening Specialist	1	8
Specialist Clinical Pharmacist	9	0
Rural Acute GP	1	11
Clinical Support Nurse (ANP)	1	6
Clinical Support Nurse (ANP)	1	6
Radiographer	1	74
Community Mental Health Support Worker	1	10
Bank Catering Assistant	3	0

Actions taken to enhance recruitment include the following:

- Recruitment campaign for Consultant vacancies. This includes full page BMJ advert, BMJ enhanced online listings and accompanying communications.
- Use of international recruitment agencies for medical Consultant posts.
- Advertising vacancies with a local recruitment market in the local press.
- Collaboration with local Job Centre/DWP on marketing applications and supporting candidates with applications.
- Marketing benefits of working for NHS Western Isles in terms of leave, pension, flexible working and pay enhancements.
- Using social media to maximise reach and use of different advertising methods, including LinkedIn.

- Use of recruitment and retention premia where appropriate, for example, Pharmacy, Podiatry, Tradespersons and Catering
- International recruitment of AHPs.
- Advertisement of apprenticeships in Business Admin, IT, Catering and HR. A Catering apprentice and HR apprentice has been appointed.
- Requests for key worker housing from HHP resulting in suitable housing being identified for candidates.

3.3 Posts Appointed To

The table below shows all posts appointed to in February.

Appointed in February 2025	Start Date	Contract Type	Status
IT Project Officer	14/01/2025	Permanent	Current
Occupational Therapist Mental Health	18/12/2024	Permanent	New Starter
Bank Healthcare Assistant	15/01/2025	Bank	New Starter
Bank Healthcare Assistant	10/01/2025	Bank	New Starter
Community Nurse Carloway	22/01/2025	Fixed Term	Current
Community Nurse Westside	16/01/2025	Permanent	Current
Community Mental Health Support Worker	24/02/2025	Permanent	New Starter
Community Psychiatric Nurse Adults and Perinatal	05/02/2025	Permanent	Current
Clinical Support Nurse Development Post	03/12/2024	Permanent	Current
Medical Laboratory Assistant	11/11/2024	Permanent	New Starter
Procurement Officer	20/02/2025	Permanent	Current
Bank Healthcare Assistant	05/02/2025	Bank	New Starter
Bank Healthcare Assistant	05/02/2025	Bank	New Starter
Bank Laundry Assistant	18/02/2025	Bank	New Starter
Integrated Midwife	13/01/2025	Fixed Term	New Starter