

## Introduction

Equitable access to high quality simulation-based education has been a long-standing priority for NHS Scotland (Scottish Clinical Skills Strategy 2009, 2021). For remote communities such as the Shetland Islands, access remains challenging; even when the Mobile Skills Unit (MSU) visits Lerwick, many healthcare professionals cannot leave their island to attend “local” training. To address this, an ambitious multi-agency tour was undertaken spanning five locations across four islands, targeting local public services and providing school pupils with exposure to careers in health and emergency services.

## Methods

To enable the delivery of training to the maximum number of remote areas the MSU was specifically designed to travel on all major Scottish ferries.

Logistical challenges included ensuring driver availability throughout the tour, securing inter-island ferry payment arrangements with Shetland Council, and identifying suitable parking locations at community halls and fire stations.

Strong cross-sector collaboration was critical for coordinating delivery, ensuring safety and tailoring training to each island's needs.

## Results/ Discussion

The MSU visited five venues across four of the Shetland islands (Figure 1), delivering multi-disciplinary training across public and emergency services.

Sessions included:

Trauma simulations by the North of Scotland Trauma Team

School engagement via the NHS Clinical Skills Escape Room

Basic Life Support training for SaxaVord Spaceport staff

Specialist programmes :

ScotSTAR/EMRS Outreach Liaison Programme

Dental emergency refresher training

Joint injections, cannulation, intraosseous cannulation

Paediatric airway management

Attendance comprised NHS staff (118), emergency services (45), social care (7), other agencies (11) and school pupils (69).

The model demonstrated strong cost-effectiveness, with each session costing approximately £47 per NHS participant, reducing to £26 when all sectors were included.

Figure 1: The five Shetland Island locations visited in 2025 by the Mobile Skills Unit for public service training



Unst

Yell

Brae

Whalsay

Lerwick



## Impact

**98%** of people rated training delivered on MSU as excellent (84%) or good (14%)

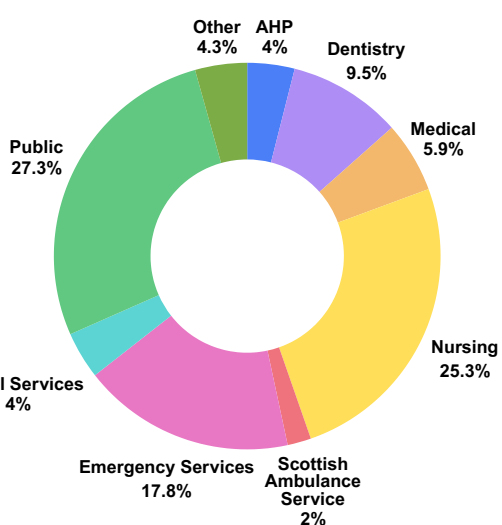
**98%** of people rated the MSU facility as excellent (80%) or good (18%)

**99%** of people said training on the MSU was of benefit to them

**90%** of people said the MSU provided training that otherwise they would not have access to locally

## Conclusion

The MSU Shetland tour demonstrates a scalable, cost-effective approach to delivering high impact, multi-disciplinary training to remote and rural public service staff. Bringing training directly to island communities enhanced equity, strengthened inter-agency collaboration and improved preparedness for trauma and emergency response. This model is readily transferable with a tour of the Orkney Islands planned in 2026.



Attendance on Mobile Skills Unit Shetland Visit 2025 training by job family (%)