



## Dr Charlotte Cant

Charlotte and her family moved to Fort William in her husband's native Scotland from Anchorage, Alaska and talks about the whole process of the move.

After years of debating whether or not to move back to the UK, and/or when, we've finally done it! This debate began when we first settled in the US together. My spouse is originally from Scotland and was excited to live in Anchorage, Alaska where I completed my family medicine (GP) specialty training.

We lived in Alaska for 12 years and during that time grew to be a family of 5. We made wonderful friends and went on many exciting adventures. Indeed, we filled our garage and more with "gear" necessary for living and enjoying Alaska including kayaks, pack rafts, skis, boots of all kinds, sleds, fishing gear, and even clamming diggers. Despite all of our enthusiasm for the amazing state, we found ourselves missing the Highlands. This became all the more palpable when flying 3 little ones countless of hours to the lower 48 or to the UK just to see their family once a year.

It was during one of these return visits to the UK in the spring of 2016 that our debate firmly became a decision. As we were thinking more and more about moving back, I decided to meet with a GP in the area and to hear more about life as a GP in Scotland. After a few minutes of pleasantries, my friend offered me a job with his local practice. This came as a surprise! Nonetheless, we returned to Alaska with a new and vigorous focus on an anticipated move to the Highlands.

The GP registration application became my so-called "work project" and consumed the summer of 2016 where I easily spent 300 hours gathering information, writing essays, and finalizing the application. My three children quickly learned not to open the office door between the hours of 6-11am.

Finally, after 7 months of daily efforts, I was contacted by the GMC and notified my application was complete. I then flew to London and was seen in person-whereupon I was granted full registration.

The next hurdle became that of acquiring a settlement visa. While awaiting a final decision by the home office, my husband and I sorted through all of our belongings and packed all items we felt should make the trek across the world in a 20 foot container- a container we waved good bye to and did not see again for months!

The visa arrived and 2 weeks later we were on a one-way flight to Glasgow. We initially stayed with family until we found a place to rent. We bought a car, enrolled the kids in school, and found a child minder. We then bought a sturdy 6 person tent, and spent most weekends exploring our new home (and avoiding midges).

Six days after arriving in Scotland, I began shadowing my colleagues in my new practice. After 2 weeks of shadowing and familiarizing myself with Vision, I began seeing patients on my own. Some days go very smoothly and I run into no questions or issues, but really that is unusual. At least once or twice a day, a new question arises for which I find someone in my practice who can give me guidance. I am very lucky to work with a patient group of individuals who are always willing to be interrupted for a "quick" question.

I have learned that the BMA (and BMJ) are an invaluable tool. The British and Highland Formularies are also extremely helpful. I reference NICE guidelines daily and frequently search guidelines on the NHS website. Short of that, I've learned to send letters to specialists requesting any information or recommendations regarding our mutual patients and have been fortunate to receive wonderful guidance. Most helpful of all, I've learned to discuss my patients with my colleagues at our morning meetings-I'm always given tips on how to approach things in a new and very different healthcare system and setting.