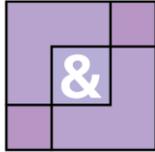


Cheshire & Merseyside
Health & Care Partnership



Primary Care Transformation Cheshire and Merseyside Communications toolkit – workforce roles

Version 2, February 2019

FOR USE BY GENERAL PRACTICES AND CLINICAL
COMMISSIONING GROUPS



"Be the reason someone gets better care today"

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Introduction

In December 2017, we issued the first version of this toolkit to practices and CCGs across Cheshire and Merseyside.

The toolkit included a number of resources to help you tell patients and the wider public about the new and developing roles which are being introduced to widen the general practice multidisciplinary team.

Patients will be happier and more willing to see different healthcare professionals if they understand the roles and know what to expect when they attend appointments.

As some time has now passed, and the commitment outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan is clear that investment will continue to bring more workforce roles into general practice, we have updated the toolkit to share some of the new resources available to you.

How to use this toolkit

You can help patients to understand more about the expanding general practice workforce by using the information and templates in this toolkit, for example:

- Use the poster templates to put information about new roles in your practice on your noticeboards
- Include ready-to-use content in newsletters or bulletins for the public/your contacts/service users
- Share key messages through your social media channels and website
- Promote key messages to staff and patient participation groups so that they can share with patients, friends and family

- Display adverts on TV screens in waiting areas

National recruitment campaign – ‘We are the NHS’

In July last year, the NHS launched the first national NHS recruitment campaign. Initially the campaign focussed on nursing, specifically primary care nursing; both general practice and community, learning disability and mental health nursing. The campaign has also recently rolled out to include IT support teams.

There are editable materials available for use on the [Public Health England Campaign Resource Centre](#) and they can be accessed by anyone with a @nhs.net or @gov.uk email address. Materials can be amended to suit individual needs. If you need any support please contact Philippa.rowley@nhs.net.



Key messages

These messages can be adapted according to the individual roles you have in your practice or CCG area.

- The NHS is investing in the general practice workforce to ensure it is strong and sustainable for the future.

- There are a wide range of health professionals in general practice who can treat you quickly and effectively, without needing an appointment with your GP. However, you will be able to see a GP when you need one.
- Your practice care navigator / patient advisor can help you choose the most appropriate person to see for your clinical need, first time.
- GP / medical assistants work to support your doctor in the smooth running of their surgery by handling the routine administration and some basic clinical duties enabling the GP to focus on the patient.
- Physician associates and advanced clinical practitioners are clinically trained across a wide range of conditions to a very high level. This means they can diagnose and treat children and adults with a range of health problems.
- Clinical pharmacists work as part of the general practice team to resolve day-to-day medicine issues and consult with and treat patients directly.
- Paramedic practitioners use their expert and unique skills to assess patients in their own homes and in surgeries for acute health complaints and minor illness.
- Physiotherapists are able to manage and treat many muscle and joint conditions thus saving the need to see multiple practitioners before accessing treatment.
- General practice nurses are working with the public to drive further action on chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma and even cancer. Their work is tackling inequality in healthcare and improving the nation's public health.
- Having these extended roles within GP practices means GPs can focus their skills where they are most needed, for example on diagnosing and treating patients with complex conditions. This in turn will help GPs manage the demands on their time and ensure local populations have access to a wide range of health services.

Resources

This section of the toolkit includes:

- descriptions of the new job roles which are being rolled out in general practice for you to add to your websites or include in practice leaflets or posters
- video case studies for you to use on your websites and/or in practice staff and patient participation group meetings

- Template posters about the different job roles, with scope to add individual staff photographs and names. If you need any guidance or advice when personalising content, please contact Philippa.rowley@nhs.net.

<p>Editable poster publicising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical pharmacists • Care navigators • Physician associates • Paramedics • Social Prescribers • Blank template <p>Click on the icon on the right to download the posters. You can add in the names of your team and pictures of them.</p> <p>If you need any help editing the posters, please contact philippa.rowley@nhs.net</p>	 <p>Workforce posters - editable.pptx</p> 
Clinical Pharmacist video (public facing)	https://youtu.be/hya5fx5C9G8
Clinical Pharmacist video (staff facing)	https://youtu.be/7j4NXR4WRWU
Physician Associate video	https://youtu.be/9YPpfl6fuQA
GP / Medical Assistant video (courtesy of HEE – long version)	https://youtu.be/T-GVx4dcRPw

The NHS England YouTube channel has several other case study videos available for practices to use. Click [here](#) to view the channel.

New Roles in General Practice

Care navigator

Care navigators are GP practice staff, who have been given specialist training to help them direct patients to the right health professional first time. When patients contact their general practice, the care navigator will identify what their query is and which healthcare professional they need to see. Far from restricting access, this is about *improving* access to primary care for patients and addresses concerns patients frequently report about not understanding which services are available and which to use when.

GP / medical assistant

A GP assistant (GPA), sometimes also known as a medical assistant, is a new role that has been created to help relieve some of the pressure on GPs. The GP assistant works directly with the doctor to support them during consultations and beyond.

This could mean that the GPA will see you prior to your appointment to run some routine tests like a blood pressure check, dipping urine and blood tests, taking a brief history and basic readings in readiness for the GP appointment.

It takes six months to train a GP assistant, with the programme developed with practice nurses, practice managers and doctors all involved. It is accredited by the University of Chester.

The GP assistant gets involved with many elements of a doctors day to day work, both administrative and clinical. They help the GP liaise with outside agencies, for example getting an on-call doctor on the phone to ask advice or arrange hospital admissions while the GP can continue with other consultations. Supporting the GP with immunisations, wound care and helping to explain treatment procedures to patients including arranging follow up appointments are also key parts of the role.

General Practice Nurses (GPNs)

General practice nursing (GPNs) teams provide care and treatment for people from birth to end of life. General practice nurses work with their GP colleagues, other health professionals and practice staff as part of the extended primary care team.

There is a wide range of nursing staff working in general practice. These range from Health Care Assistants (HCAs), who can manage tasks such as blood pressure and NHS health checks, to Practice Nurses (PNs), who are qualified nurses that look after chronic diseases such as asthma and diabetes as well as holding specialised clinics such as travel, baby immunisations, wounds and women's health for smear tests and contraception advice.

GPNs are leading the way in improving the health and wellbeing of patients. Evidence shows these teams are saving lives through improving health and fitness, reducing obesity and decreasing rates of heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

Advanced Clinical Practitioners (ACPs)

ACPs (sometimes called Medical Associate Professionals) are highly trained and experienced clinicians with the knowledge and skills to manage all aspects of patient care. ACPs have advanced qualifications (such as a Master's degree) and significant experience to work independently without direct guidance from a superior. ACPs work alongside other clinical team members such as GPs, nurses and other practice staff to provide care to both adults and children.

ACPs come from a range of professional backgrounds such as nursing, physiotherapy, pharmacy, paramedics and occupational therapy. Despite their wide range of background qualification, all ACPs will have completed similar Masters grade training allowing them to practice at an advanced level.

ACPs can manage your care in partnership with you and your carers. They'll listen to your concerns and work with you to make decisions and ensure you get the help you need. They can prescribe medication, order tests, interpret results, diagnose your health problems and organise and create an appropriate treatment plan. Some ACPs hold patient lists and sit on the leadership team for their practice and local NHS. These ACPs are working with others to develop care in response to the changing needs of different population groups.

ACPs are not a substitute for a doctor but they complement the medical workforce meeting patient's needs and improving population health.

Physician associate

A physician associate (PA) is a healthcare professional who, while not a doctor, works under the supervision of doctors to deliver care and treatment with the general practice team.

Within general practice, qualified physician associates work to help take the pressure off doctors and provide patients, especially those with long-term conditions, the continuity of care they need. Some PAs will have their own patient list, which they will manage and look after. They are able to diagnose problems, order tests, interpret the results, make referrals and make a treatment plan with a patient.

Physician associates have an increasing role to play in primary care as part of a multi-skilled workforce, alongside ACPs nurses and other allied health care professionals. Physician associates are generalists; medically trained across a wide variety of conditions. This means they can diagnose and treat adults and children with a range of clinical problems.

Physician associates can help manage some of the general practice workload to increase flexibility and availability of GPs. This means that GPs are freed up to focus on the patients that need them the most.

Click [here](#) to view a case study.

Clinical pharmacist

A clinical pharmacist is the person to see for expert advice around medicines. If a condition needs diagnosing, you will usually see a GP, advanced clinical practitioner (ACP) or physician associate (PA) first, who may then refer you on to a practice nurse or clinical pharmacist.

If you have a condition such as asthma, type 2 diabetes, arthritis or high blood pressure, clinical pharmacists can discuss the medicines you're taking to make sure they're working for you. They can also help you with lifestyle changes to help you manage your condition better.

If you are experiencing side effects from your medicines, you and the clinical pharmacist can discuss this and work together to find a solution, such as changing your medicine or the dosage. If you are taking several different medicines, the clinical pharmacist can help make sure they are working well together.

If you are taking medicines over the long term, you should be seen for a review at least once a year. The clinical pharmacist can review all your medicines, discuss how they are working for you and carry out health checks, such as taking your blood pressure. They can also arrange for you to have blood or other tests.

After a stay in hospital if your medicines have been changed while you were in hospital, the clinical pharmacist can help explain these changes and ensure you get the maximum benefit from these medicines.

If you are suffering from a common illness such as a cold, hay fever, diarrhoea or an eye infection, you may see the clinical pharmacist instead of your GP. The clinical pharmacist may be able to prescribe medicines to treat your condition. You will always be referred to a GP, ACP or PA if there is a need. Click [here](#) to view case study.

Paramedics working in general practice

Paramedics are currently working within a variety of roles within general practice to help ease pressure on GPs and the wider practice team.

Their background in pre-hospital care means they can assess, examine, treat and manage patients of all age ranges with a variety of acute illnesses – those that come on quickly, from coughs and injuries such as broken bones, to more serious conditions such as asthma attacks and heart attacks – as well as chronic conditions, which are long-lasting, like arthritis and diabetes.

Paramedics working in primary care have or are undertaking additional education at postgraduate level. Patients may encounter paramedics in many general practice activities. This may include, but is not limited to, routine or urgent appointments, telephone triage (assessment of urgency of illness or injury) or telephone consultations, home visits, managing long-term conditions and coordinating the care of those patients who are at end of life. The roles of individual paramedics will vary depending on their experience and level of education, but they are capable as a profession of diagnosing, prescribing, referring to specialities, ordering tests, interpreting results and working with the patient and their families to create a care plan.

Physiotherapists in general practice

Muscle and joint conditions, also known as musculoskeletal, are estimated to account for 20-30% of GP consultations. Physiotherapists working in general practice provide patients with expert diagnosis and treatment for these types of conditions and can prevent the need for referral to hospital. These physiotherapists can free up GP time by arranging swift access to a specialist where necessary and offer direct treatments. Some physiotherapists who hold advanced level training (advanced care practitioners) can manage complex conditions, arrange tests such as scans, diagnose problems and work out a management and treatment plan such as joint injections that would previously have been organised by a GP.

Social prescribers in general practice

Social prescribing involves helping patients to improve their health, wellbeing and welfare by connecting them to community services which might be run by the council or a local charity. For example, signposting people who have been diagnosed with dementia to local dementia support groups.

In general practice, social prescribers can take the time to talk about what matters to patients and support them to find suitable activities that are a better alternative to

medication. They connect people to community groups and services for practical and emotional support.

Social media

Below are some examples of social media posts which can be used by practices. You may want to develop your own social media posts. If you do, please add the hashtag #NHSLongTermPlan

- Have questions about prescribed medicines? Our practice clinical pharmacist can help. Find out about clinical pharmacists at https://youtu.be/sf_En4rKD00 #NHSLongTermPlan
- Our care navigators have been given specialist training to help direct patients to the right health professional, first time #NHSLongTermPlan
- With a clinical pharmacist, our GPs can focus their skills where they are most needed. Find out about clinical pharmacists at https://youtu.be/sf_En4rKD00 #NHSLongTermPlan
- Our clinical pharmacist helps resolve day-to-day medicine issues and can advise and treat patients directly. https://youtu.be/sf_En4rKD00 #NHSLongTermPlan

Below are some examples of social media posts that can be used by CCGs:

- We are supporting our member practices to be strong and sustainable for the future #NHSLongTermPlan <https://youtu.be/7j4NXR4WRWU>
- Our area is running a pilot scheme for care navigators. Find out more information on our website [insert link] #NHSLongTermPlan
- Many of our GP practices now have clinical pharmacists. Ask your practice for more information #NHSLongTermPlan

Frequently Asked Questions

Will it be harder for patients to see a doctor?

Patients will still be able to see a GP if it is more appropriate to see a doctor. Expanding the general practice workforce means that already stretched and busy GP's will have time freed up to see the people who need them most. It is about patients being able to see the most appropriate healthcare professional for their need at the right place and time.

Why is there a need for new and expanded roles in general practice?

We acknowledge that there are real challenges recruiting new doctors into general practice. Training new doctors also takes a lot of time. There are also a lot of doctors and practice nurses ready to retire. Expanding the workforce means that there is a wider range of highly trained health professionals available to see patients.

A doctor isn't always the best person to see. For example, if patients have a question about medication, side effects of medicine or want to know if you can take different types of medicines together, a clinical pharmacist is the expert in this.

Further information

If you have new or expanded roles in your practice or are doing anything innovative within your practice and would like to be used as a case study or to support communications activity moving forward please contact Philippa Rowley, Communications and Engagement Manager, Philippa.rowley@nhs.net.

If you would like to find out more about funding, bid to have new roles in your practice or find out more about what the GPFV can do to support your practice, please contact Peter Groggins, GP Forward View Programme Officer, peter.groggins@nhs.net.