

# General Practice Assistant (GPA) September 2022 Programme

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# About the programme...



Norfolk and Waveney  
Clinical Commissioning Group

General Practice Assistant (GPAs) roles were initially developed in the United States and inspired a pilot training programme to commence in the North West in England in 2018/19.

The GPA programme focusses on safe delivery of a combination of administrative and basic clinical duties within a General Practice to support GPs with their day to day responsibilities.

The aim of the role is to support GPs by reducing the administrative burden and improve consultation time, and has since demonstrated further benefits to Practices across the country.

In completing all five domains of the programme; Care Certificate; Clinical; Communications; Administration; and Managing Health Records, an award of 10 credits and Level 4 is achieved.

The GPA Programme can support Primary Care colleagues in broadening their skillsets, presenting a wider experience within General Practice and act as a stepping stone towards further qualifications and career pathways.

## **The GPA Role may include, but not be limited to:**

- Triaging all clinical post
- Information extraction from clinical letters for coding
- Directly dealing with routine clinical post (i.e. DNA letters)
- Arranging of appointments, referrals and follow up appointments for patients
- Preparation prior to patient GP appointments, including recording brief history and basic readings
- Dipping urine, taking blood pressure, ECGs & phlebotomy
- Completing forms for GP approval and signature (i.e. insurance forms, mortgage forms)
- Explaining treatment procedures to patients
- Assisting the GP to liaise with external agencies (i.e. arranging an admission during the GP consultation or contacting an on-call doctor for the GP to seek advice)
- Support the GP with immunisations and wound care

# About the programme...



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- Health Education England has committed to support 30 learners in 2022 within the East of England.
- Learners must be committed to completing this self-directed online study programme over a 6 month period.
- The GPA Programme is well suited for those in the following roles – Receptionist; Phlebotomists; Secretaries; HCAs; Administrators; etc. banded 3-4 (AfC).
- Each GPA is required to have a GP Mentor who can provide mentorship, guidance and supervision to the learner as well lead on the signing off of all programme work submitted to the learner's online portfolio.
- There is also a requirement for each GPA to have a Secondary Mentor who can sign off non-clinical programme work, i.e. a Practice/Assistant Manager; Team Leader/Supervisor; or Senior Non-Clinical Staff. However, primary mentoring and oversight must be provided by the GP Mentor.
- An online learning portal is utilised by the GPA learners to submit all work electronically. The portal is also used to mark the learner's submissions as competent by the GP and Secondary Mentors.
- Each GPA **must be provided 1 day every week** as protected learning time (PLT). This should consist of ½ a day of self-motivated study, learning and shadowing, and ½ a day with their mentor(s) for supervision.
- Within each region, there is a GP Lead who undertakes an external verification of 10% of portfolios to ensure learners have achieved the competencies required to complete their work-based learning.
- Once the external verification has been completed, all portfolios will be verified by the University of Chester, whose tutor will supply feedback on each portfolio, confirming whether the work has been completed to the appropriate level or requires any further improvements or evidence.
- The programme includes a mandatory evaluation programme that learners and mentors must all participate in.

# Benefits and Costs



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## The following have been identified as benefits to Practices:

- Reduction to the hours GP's work over their contracted hours
- Reduction to the time GPs spend completing administrative tasks in and after consultations, such as completing forms, referrals, patient notes, etc.
- Reduction to the average waiting time for patients
- More patient satisfaction
- More job satisfaction to staff
- Impact on QOF
- Improved efficiency in patient management tasks

## Costs

The GPA Programme is a HEE funded project.

Practices are eligible for £1,700 per learner to support the six months training period of a GPA. This can be used towards backfill for PLT and utilised for any external training required, i.e. Phlebotomy courses.\*

Practices are also eligible for an additional £420 in recognition of clinical and administrative time provided to support the learner.\*

There is no cost to the learner to take part in the programme.

*\*Invoices will be accepted upon completion of all evaluation aspects of the programme*

# Eligibility and Requirements



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- GPA Applicants must have the full support of their Practice, Line Manager and their prospective GP Mentor
- GPA Applicants and Practices must both be fully aware of the requirements and dedication needed for the duration of the programme
- GPA Applicants must already be demonstrating competent patient care within their employment
- Practices must ensure that a current enhanced DBS check is in place and valid for the duration of the programme
- GP Mentors must be identified and confirmed before submitting an application form
- GP Mentors must be aware of the commitments required for mentoring and competent in using IT software
- All Mentors and GPA Applicants must be committed to complete the programme
- Application forms must be completed and submitted by the deadline and will be shared with your local Training Hub
- Study and Mentor time must be identified ahead of the programme start date, as well as the identification of an appropriate study environment for PLT
- All Mentors and GPA Applicants must take part in the evaluation process of the GPA Programme
- GPA Applicants and Mentors must escalate any concerns or issues immediately to the GPA Programme Lead

# GPA Programme Timeline



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| Deadline  | Event  | Description   |
|---|--|---|
| Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> February 2022           | Online Webinar                                   | MS Teams event hosted by Norfolk & Waveney Training Hub presenting information regarding the GPA Programme and an opportunity for questions.  |
| Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2022 – 10:00am | Deadline for submitting GPA Application Forms    | Application forms must be completed by the Practice/Business Managers in conjunction with the GPA Applicant and GP Mentor and submitted to <a href="mailto:norfolkwaveneytraininghub@nhs.net">norfolkwaveneytraininghub@nhs.net</a><br><i>For Practices outside of Norfolk &amp; Waveney, please ensure your local Training Hub is copied into your email.</i>  |
| W/C 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2022                | Virtual Meetings with each applicant and mentors | Invites will be sent on Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> February 2022. An informal conversation will take place between the Training Hub, the GPA Applicant and the Mentors to discuss requirements and expectations during the programme, as well as identify any support that may be required.  |
| Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> March 2022                | Enrolment Finalisation                           | Enhanced DBS checks must be evidenced and Memorandums of Understanding signed and returned. Pre-programme evaluation to be shared to applicants and mentors for completion.   |
| Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> March 2022                | Sysco set-up                                     | Applicant and Mentor details shared with Sysco (online learning platform). Sysco provides GPAs and Mentors with log in details and guidance materials. 1:1's available.   |
| Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> March 2022                | GPA Programme Launch Event and Start Date        | Pre-programme evaluation to be completed prior to starting date of programme. GPA Learners will begin the programme. PLT arranged within each Practice for each learner with regular mentorship, supervision and shadow opportunities provided.   |
| April –September 2022                             | Monthly Support Meetings                         | Monthly peer support groups are set up for the GPA Learners to meet, discuss the course and provide peer support. Drop-in sessions are also arranged monthly for GP Mentors and Practice Managers to join to discuss any queries or concerns they may have.   |
| Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> September 2022            | GPA Programme Completion                         | GPA Learner will have completed all 5 domains of the programme for external verification to be conducted and then final verification by the University of Chester tutor and feedback shared. Post-programme evaluation is undertaken. A certificate will be received to award 10 credits at level 4 foundation degree. Practices will be able to invoice retrospectively for monies available for participation in the programme. |