

General Practice Assistant (GPA) September 2021 Programme

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Introduction



Norfolk and Waveney
Clinical Commissioning Group

- General Practice Assistants (GPAs) roles were initially developed in the United States before being rolled out in England
- The role focussed 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
- Aim of role is to support GPs by reducing the administrative burden and improve consultation time
- Health Education England (HEE) have commissioned 40 places in 2021 for GPAs within each region and provide financial support for education and training during the programme
- 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

- 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

Benefits of a GPA for Practices



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- 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

GPA Case Study

A success story from the first cohort of GPA's included the case of H.

H was working in a large rural practice in Norfolk and had a GP Mentor for their GPA training.

H embraced all 5 domains of training, covering all clinical and administrative roles. They worked closely with the GP Mentor throughout and learnt from real patient cases and feedback from their Mentor.

Administrative skills developed to aid and assist the GP with the requesting of tests, processing documents and liaising with the administrative teams regarding appointments and referrals.

Clinical skills were also developed, enabling the GPA to prepare patients for face to face consultations. H learnt to take short clinical histories, perform clinical observations and procedures such as urine analysis and phlebotomy. They were able to act as a chaperone for examinations and assist in some management plans such as dressing applications.

Both of these skill sets helped the GP Mentor to manage their workload and allowed the opportunity for working in a team, and not in isolation. The GPA developed several skill sets to provide a varied working day. The patient at the heart of this project was able to have a more holistic and one stop appointment

H gained 10 credits at level 4 upon completion of the GPA Programme which can act as a stepping stone towards further qualifications to support their career.

About the Scheme



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- Health Education England funds this project and has committed to support 40 learners in 2021 per region. 16 learners started in June 2021, which leaves 24 remaining opportunities for learners to start in September 2021.
- There is no cost to the learner and 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 time spent learning.
- Practices are also eligible for £420 in recognition of clinical and administrative time provided to support the learner.
- Various roles can apply, i.e. Receptionist, Phlebotomists, Secretaries, HCAs, Administrators banded 3-4.
- Requirement of a mentor for Clinical and Administrative modules of learning – this can be shared between the GP Mentor and a senior administrative role.
- An online learning portal is utilised by the GPA learners to submit work and by GP Mentors to mark the learner's submissions as competent.
- GPA Learner's work is formally verified by the University of Chester upon completion.
- Learners are awarded 10 credits at Level 4 upon completing and passing all 5 domains of the programme

Eligibility & Criteria

- Candidates can be put forward by their GP Mentor and Practice Manager
- Candidate must already be demonstrating competent patient care within their employment
- Candidates will be subject to an enhanced DBS check
- GP Mentors must be identified and confirmed before submitting application forms
- GP Mentors must be aware of the commitments required for mentoring and using Sysco
- Application forms must be completed and submitted by the deadline and be shared with your local Training Hub
- Candidates and Practices must both be fully aware of the requirements and dedication needed for the duration of the programme
- Study and Mentor time must be identified ahead of the Programme start date

GPA Enrolment Timeline



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Deadline	Event	Description
13 th July 2021 (TBC)	Online Informational Event	MS Teams event hosted by Norfolk & Waveney Training Hub presenting information regarding the GPA Programme and an opportunity for questions.
23 rd July 2021	Deadline for submitting GPA Application Forms	GP Mentor must be identified before applications forms are submitted. Application forms must be completed by the Practice/Business Managers in conjunction with the GPA Candidates and submitted to norfolkwaveneytraininghub@nhs.net <i>For Practices outside of Norfolk & Waveney, please ensure your local Training Hub is copied into your email.</i>
16 th August 2021	Enrolment Finalisation	An informal conversation will take place between the CCG, the GPA Candidate and the Practice/Business Managers to discuss requirements and expectations during the Programme, as well as any support that may be required. Enhanced DBS checks must be evidenced and Memorandums of Understanding signed and returned.
August 2021	Sysco set-up	All GPA learners will be provided access to Sysco, the e-learning portal in which all work is to be submitted via. Learners will be provided user guidance.
1 st September 2021	GPA Programme Begins	GPA learners and GP Mentors will receive their Sysco log in details and user guides. GPA Learners will begin the programme, utilising one day per week to receive mentoring from their allocated GP Mentor and use Sysco to progress through the programme.
September – February	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.
February 2022	GPA Programme Completion	GPA Learner will have completed all 5 domains of the programme and obtain final sign off from University of Chester tutor. A certificate will be received to award 10 credits at level 4 foundation degree.