

General Practice Assistant

Overview of the role

AfC Band 3 / 4 dependent on experience

Reimbursement not available for this role

As part of the wider team in general practice, General Practice Assistants provide a support role, carrying out administrative tasks, combined in some areas with basic clinical duties. They focus on supporting General Practitioners in their day-to-day management of patients, specifically aimed at reducing the administrative burden, making the best use of consultation time and supporting those particularly vulnerable to isolation who are regular attenders at the practice.

Development of the role depends on a range of factors - patient needs, existing skills mix, culture and having the staff, time and financial resource to invest in work-based learning, mentorship and supervision.

Funding

A national programme was set up by HEE in April 2019 to support wider spread of the role. This is led by a Primary Care Training Hub in each region to host and coordinate the introduction of 40 learners across each regional footprint, with further expansion planned in 2020/21.

The aim is to provide a consistent approach to developing the role, underpinned by a defined job description and competency framework to support work-based learning.

Training/Development

- A work-based learning programme has been developed that typically takes 6-9 months to complete. Learning takes place in the practice, led and assessed by a GP mentor
- Learners are usually existing staff with some experience of general practice (such as HCAs or receptionists) who are upskilling to the GPA role
- Learners are expected to have 1 day per week of protected time to learn their new skills. This includes time to work with their GP mentor, for teaching and 'hands on' experience (half a day) and time to upload their evidence of competence to the online platform (half a day).
- A GPA certificate is awarded on successful completion of the competency-based portfolio.

Activities Undertaken

Skills and Competencies

- Sorting all clinical post and prioritising for the GP in terms of actions. Signposting some post to others such as Clinical Pharmacist etc.
- Extracting all information from clinical letters that needs coding and adding to notes
- Arranging appointments, referrals, tests and follow up appointments of patients
- Preparing patients prior to going in to see the GP, taking a brief history and basic readings in readiness for the GP appointment.
- Dipping urine, taking blood pressure, ECGs & phlebotomy
- Completing basic (non-opinion) forms and core elements of some forms for the GP to approve and sign such as insurance forms, mortgage, benefits agency forms etc.
- Explaining treatment procedures to patients
- Helping the GP liaise with outside agencies e.g. getting an on-call doctor on the phone to ask advice or arrange admission while the GP can continue with their consultation(s)
- Support the GP with immunisations/wound care

Please note that in some areas the role combines administrative tasks with basic clinical duties. In other areas, the focus of the role is on non-clinical activities.

- Basic clinical skills
- Administration
- Effective communication
- Managing health records

Supervision

Practice Manager
Clinically [Lead GP]

Educator Providers

Chester University – accreditation of work-based learning and GPA certificate

Practice Managers Association – development of non-clinical online training modules currently underway

Job Description

Case Studies

<https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/general-practice-assistant/>

<https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/general-practice-assistant/>

Additional Resources

<https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/general-practice-assistant/>

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/gp-assistant>