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| cheshire training hub |
| General Practice Assistant Education and Training Support Pack |
| Sub-category of Governance Framework for Training and Education in Primary Care |
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| **Heather Glover Cheshire Training Hub** |
| **5/15/2020** |

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| This role has emerged in response to increased demands placed on general practice. This support pack aims to guide practice managers in providing a consistent approach to developing the role, a defined job description and competency framework to support work-based learning. |

**Introduction**

**Background**

**Developing the Role**

**Application Process**

**General Practice Assistant Education and Training Support Pack**

**Introduction**

From 2018, through the development of [The Cheshire Training Hub](https://www.cmthub.co.uk/) (CMTH), the 5 Training Hubs in Cheshire and Merseyside have been working collaboratively. The [Training Hubs](https://www.cmthub.co.uk/cheshire-merseyside/)  are a resource of further information and guidance for each of the primary care networks, in order to engage and develop their workforce to ensure future success and sustainability. The purpose of this training support pack is to guide and direct practice managers and employees, and assist in the successful development of the growing number of roles within primary care.

General practice and primary care is becoming increasingly complex. The primary care workforce therefore, are developing and expanding the roles and expertise offered, with greater collaboration within Primary Care Networks (PCN) to address the current challenges. Growing demand for workforce solutions in primary care and the existence of Training Hubs presents an opportunity for workforce development with the necessary support networks in place.

In order to support General Practitioners in their day-to-day management of patients, and smooth running of their surgeries, specifically the handling of routine administration and basic clinical tasks, the role of General Practice Assistant, also known as Medical Assistant was developed. This role aims to make best use of consultation time and allow the GP more focus on the patient. The GPA enables safe delivery of a combination of routine administrative tasks and some basic clinical duties in the general practice setting.

**Background**

In line with The General Practice Forward View (2016), Health Education England established a national working group to test how General Practice Assistants (GPAs) might support general practice. This new role has emerged alongside others, in response to increased demands placed on general practice. However, a consistent approach to developing the role, underpinned by a defined job description and competency framework to support work-based learning is required.

The General Practice Forward View (2016), committed to support the employment of a minimum of 5000 extra staff, and described the GPA role as one method that helps support doctors in primary care. With that, each ‘lead’ Training Hub was to host and co-ordinate the introduction of a cohort of 40 GPA learners representative of their region. Support to adapt and implement the GPA role across the seven regions would then be provided by HEE’s national workforce transformation team, to include ‘pump prime’ funding, tools, expertise and networking opportunities.

**Developing the Role**

Developing the GPA role depends on a range of factors – patient needs, existing skill mix, culture and other ethos of the practice; having the staff, time and financial resources to invest in appropriate training and supervision. However, there is early evidence to suggest that GPAs have the potential to improve patient access and release highly qualified staff to concentrate on treating and managing patients with more complex conditions, to improve patient flow within surgery hours and time efficiency of appointments, and to have a positive impact on GP retention and job satisfaction.

Further information about the national programme is available through contacting the HEE Transformation team on [transformation@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:transformation@hee.nhs.uk).

The course needs to be completed in 6 months. The learner and the supervisor need to have protected time and it is recommended that the GPA learner has 1 day a week where possible (½ day teaching, ½ day where the learner writes and uploads their evidence).**Career Path Potential from GPA**

Further training and development will be guided by the PCN or business need and the individual’s personal development plan. However, there are a number of new opportunities available to GPAs who are looking to progress and develop within their career. It is now possible to work up to a band 4 or 5 role following different pathways.

Assistant Practitioner is an 18 - 24 month course leading to a foundation degree and a band 4 role once qualified. APs take on more responsibilities than health care assistants, under the supervision of registered colleagues but are not registered practitioners themselves.

The Nursing Associate (England only at present) requires a 2 year course leading to a foundation degree as a Band 4 role. It was designed to bridge the gap between an HCA and registered nurse, to deliver hands-on, person-centred care as part of a multidisciplinary team in a range of different settings.

The Nursing Degree Apprenticeship (NDA) (England and Wales only at present) will enable individuals to train "on the job," to become a graduate registered nurse through an apprentice route, meaning students are paid whilst training. The 4 year course leads to a degree, nursing registration and a band 5 role.

**Personal Development and Career Progression**

Below is a table to provide a visual illustration as to some examples of the different tasks / capabilities expected of the various unregistered health care roles. The career progression in primary care from an HCA, GPA, an AP to a Nursing Associate (NA), and development of capabilities and responsibilities, and how the role expands, is demonstrated for some clarity. Some NAs may continue on to undertake their Registered Nurse Training. Different levels of study are required at each level depending on the job role as indicated below.

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| **Training Requirements / Capabilities / Tasks** | **HCA** | **GPA** | **AP** | **NA** |
| Care Certificate | √ | √ | √ |  |
| B-tech National Diploma, Level 5 apprenticeship |  | √ | √ |  |
| 2 year University Apprenticeship, Entry onto NMC Register |  |  |  | √ |
| Clinical tasks: BP, ECG, Phlebotomy, Urinalysis, Height & Weight etc | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| New patient checks | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Administration of vaccines (\* only with PSD) | √\* | √\* | √\* | √ |
| Diabetic foot check | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Diabetic management |  | √ | √ | √ |
| Processing of samples | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Ordering of supplies / stock control management | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Equipment Sterilisation | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Supervision of junior apprenticeships, new HCAs |  | √ | √ |  |
| Supervision of student nurses |  |  | √ | √ |
| Clinical post sorting, prioritising, arranging appointments, outside agency liaising |  | √ | √ |  |
| GP support with immunisations and wound care |  | √ | √ |  |
| Brief patient history taking and basic readings |  | √ | √ |  |
| Complex wound care |  |  | √ | √ |
| Delivery and monitoring of holistic patient care |  | √ | √ | √ |
| Revalidation requirement same as registered nurse, outcomes to meet in the CODE |  |  |  | √ |
| Collaborate, contribute and communicate with the multidisciplinary team |  | √ | √ | √ |
| Identify risks, take appropriate action and improve quality of care |  | √ | √ | √ |
| Cervical screening |  |  |  | √ |
| NHS Health checks | √ |  | √ |  |
| GPA training | √ |  |  |  |
| Infection control | √ | √ | √ | √ |

**Resources**

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

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

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/your-career/hca/career-paths-for-hcas>

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/236212/Cavendish_Review.pdf>