**GPA Programme**

***What is it?***

The General Practice Assistant (GPA) is now an established national role which was created to relieve some of the admin burden from doctors within General Practice. Former RCGP Chair Dr Maureen Baker says the assistants would be ‘a cross between a healthcare assistant and a doctors PA’ which could provide ‘short term injections of support’ for general practice.

After the successful pilots across the Northeast, Cumbria, and Yorkshire, we are now on our fourth year and National Health Service England has commissioned a fantastic 78 places.

Places are now extremely limited for the second cohort on ***19th February 2024***, and we ask that only those who are serious about completing the framework and who are supported fully by their practice, apply.

***What do GPAs do in practice?***

GPAs support doctors in the smooth running of their surgery by handling the routine administration and some basic clinical duties enabling the doctor to focus on the patient.

As a GPA you will be trained to help with:

* Sorting all clinical mail and prioritising
* Extracting all information from clinical letters that needs coding
* Dealing with all routine clinical mail directly e.g., DNA letters, 2WW etc
* Arranging appointments, referrals, 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 for the GP to approve and sign such as insurance forms, mortgage forms e.g. ESA113 etc
* Explaining treatment procedures to patients including arranging follow up appointments
* Helping the GP liaise with outside agencies i.e., 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

***How is the GPA framework delivered?***

The GPA framework is an experiential course that is led by a GP at your practice. They will work through the competencies within the framework with you, in a tutorial and you will write up your evidence of your understanding for them to mark.

We will provide you with an online facility called the Learning Assistant where the competency framework will be stored, and you will upload your written evidence to this portal. Your GP mentor will have their own login and will use this to mark your work. We will have sight of your progress throughout and externally verify your evidence via this portal.

You will need to dedicate one full day a week to the framework. Half a day working through the competencies on the online portal and writing up your evidence and half a day gaining hands-on experience with your GP mentor. You may find your GP mentor will second you to the practice nurse or others in the team to help you train in areas relating to simple clinical duties, such as blood pressures but the GP mentor will ultimately be responsible for signing you off as competent. This can take time and we recommend that this is done regularly and not left to the end of the framework. We would expect work to be sent back frequently to the GP for verifying so timings are important. We will offer an element of funding to the practice for this mentor/marking time.

You will need to be supported by a GP who will act as your mentor. Assuming you meet the entry requirements (detailed below) your GP mentor can put you forward for the GPA Certificate.

The framework has been created by GPs, Practice Managers and Nurses with the aim to support a standardised approach to practices upskilling their team.

***What is the difference between a Clinical and a Non-Clinical GPA?***

**Clinical GPA** – All 5 domains in the framework must be completed and the learner will be awarded with an accredited certificate of completion from Pearson’s, which is equivalent to 10 credits at level 4 BTEC.

**Non-Clinical GPA** – The clinical domain will be removed from the framework. The other domains in the framework must be completed and the learner will be awarded with a certificate of completion. This can be done against the framework within a practice setting and the learner won’t receive anything from the awarding body Pearson’s.

***What are the entry requirements?***

On the closing date, if not before, applications will be reviewed for consideration. The aim of this programme is to support the spread and adoption of this role so initially, priority will be given to ensure places are shared equally across all ICB areas within the Northeast, Cumbria & Yorkshire. In addition, priority will be given to applicants who are already within a GPA role, an ARRS funded role and those who have started collecting evidence towards their e-portfolio. The learner, workplace and support should be fully aware of the framework requirements and candidates can be put forward by the GP who will be mentoring them and the

Practice Manager. The GP mentor will be required to provide a CV for the awarding body verification requirements.

***We would expect that the candidate is already considered competent in good patient care from their experience within General Practice and be DBS checked to an enhanced level****.*

The applicant must have a named GP mentor who will be responsible for supporting them through their competencies. Should a GP mentor not be able to guarantee regular tutorials then this framework is not achievable. In addition, the applicant can also appoint a secondary mentor to support them and the GP mentor throughout the course.

An application form should be completed and submitted to [wy.traininghub@nhs.net](mailto:wy.traininghub@nhs.net)

***What funding is available?***

This is a NSHE fully funded project. The practice will be eligible for £1,700 per applicant, to cover backfill for the learner doing 1 day a week of study/training for 6 months. Also, in recognition of the clinical time given to support learners there is a further training grant of £420. This funding may also be used to contribute towards any training outlay, such as phlebotomy, you may decide to undertake. 50% of the funding will be paid to the practice on receipt of application form/DBS etc, receipt of signed MOU and confirmation of uploaded evidence. The remaining 50% will be paid on successful completion of the GPA programme and post evaluation survey.

***How long will the programme take?***

We expect learners to have completed the programme in 6 months.

***When does it start?***

The closing date for this cohort is 12th February 2024. We will email successful applicants, their GP mentors and practice managers to confirm the place on the programme. Login details will then be emailed out to applicants and mentors, and we expect everyone to have logged on to the Learning Assistant and have started the framework, week commencing 19th February 2024.

***What does a working day look like for a GPA?***

Ultimately this will be up to the practice how the day is planned. You may already have systems in place to deal with certain pieces of work and may just want to fill in the gaps. Alternatively, you may want a complete a system change practice wide. The choice is yours. The GPA Framework will provide applicants with the tools to offer a variety of services to support the GP.

Watch how one General Practice in the Northwest developed a new GPA role in the early stages, transforming the way they work and practice.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-GVx4dcRPw&feature=youtu.be>

***IMPORTANT POINTS TO NOTE:***

* **We do not provide a GPA; we do not pay their salary, and this is not an employment scheme.** This is a programme which provides a framework for you to upskill an existing member of your team to become a GPA.
* **There are no external courses/workshops/training provided.** The learning is experiential. We provide resources for you to tap into as a mentor to work through with your learner and provide the framework to meet the competencies to become a GPA. In addition, we provide up-to-date guidance, legislation, and tutorial content where appropriate.
* **The programme can be completed within practice.** The learner will login to a web-based portal which houses the framework. They will submit evidence which supports their understanding.
* **The mentor has to provide time to support the learner.** The GP mentor needs to dedicate time to work through the modules and teach the learner. This can be outsourced to other members of the team such as Practice Nurse for certain clinical areas or the Practice Manager for certain admin areas for example. Remember though, the GP mentor and secondary mentor will be logging onto the portal and marking the learner as competent, so they need to be suitably assured.
* **The course needs to be completed within 6 months.** It is important that you plan to start the programme as soon as you receive your login details. 6 months is achievable to get through all the modules.
* **The learner and the mentor need to have protected time.** We recommend 1 day a week where possible for the learner - ½ a day teaching/shadowing/practical and ½ day where the learner writes and uploads their evidence. Please do not put an applicant forward if you cannot afford them this time or are unable to mentor.
* **Both the learner and the mentor need to be relatively proficient with IT.** Both the learner and the mentor will be provided with a username and a password to access the Sysco Portal. You will also be provided with a user guide, which will show you how to log on, access the programme content, access where to upload evidence and where the mentors access their learners work for marking as competent.
* **Support is available.** Both the PCWYTH, (Training Hub) and Sysco, (the Learning Assist team), have a dedicated email address for programme content queries and any issues you may have.
* **All modules must be completed.** Even if a learner is an existing HCA and has completed certain elements of the course previously, they still need to upload their evidence to demonstrate this. Of course, there may not be any need for the learner to be mentored in this area if they already have a good understanding and they can go straight to uploading their statement of understanding.

Additionally, there may be some modules that you do not plan to utilise in your practice, however, these will need to be completed in full to pass the entire programme.

***Next steps:***

Places are limited. Priority will be given to geographical areas and meeting entry requirements as stated above. You will be informed via email if you have been successful in securing a place.

For expressions of interest contact [**wy.traininghub@nhs.net**](mailto:wy.traininghub@nhs.net)