

General Practice Nursing Fact Sheet

What is a General Practice Nurse?

General Practice Nurses work as part of a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) within GP surgeries and assess, screen, and treat patients of all ages. In addition to providing traditional aspects of nursing care such as wound care, immunisations, and administration of medicines, they run clinics for patients with Long Term Conditions such as asthma, heart disease and diabetes. They also offer health promotion advice in areas such as contraception, weight loss, smoking cessation, and travel immunisations. The role allows nurses to develop long term relationships with individuals and families, managing their conditions and improving physical and mental health and wellbeing. However, this is only possible when sufficient time can be invested to support patients to develop effective self-management and preventative measures.

Nurses working in General Practice are undertaking a wide range of roles, with experienced nurses assuming more of the traditional workload of GPs. For nurses working in primary care, this should be a positive development: for those seeking a challenging and rewarding nursing career, General Practice can offer this.

What do General Practice Nurses do?

- obtaining blood samples
- electrocardiograms (ECGs)
- minor and complex wound management including leg ulcers
- travel health advice and vaccinations
- child immunisations and advice
- family planning & women's health including cervical smears
- men's health screening
- sexual health services
- smoking cessation
- screening and helping patients to manage long term conditions

General practice nurses may also have direct supervision of healthcare assistants at the practice.

How do General Practice Nurses fit into the NHS workforce?

Every member of the nursing team, from the health care support worker to the nursing associate, practice nurse, specialist nurse and advanced clinical practitioner, has a vital role in delivering care. They also have a responsibility to lead change and add value so that improved outcomes, a better patient experience and more effective and efficient use of resources can be achieved. GPNs work with their GP colleagues, clinical pharmacists, mental health therapists,

physician associates, other allied health professionals, practice managers and receptionists, as part of the extended primary care team. However, like their GP colleagues, GPNs are under pressure from the rising demand for primary care fueled by the ageing population, the increase in long term conditions and the drive to shift the provision of care into community settings.

What training and qualifications do General Practice Nurses have?

GPN must be qualified and registered as an adult, child, mental health or learning disability nurse to work in general practice. They will also need to undertake further training and education or be willing to continue their professional development after being appointed. Some employers may ask for knowledge or experience in specific areas eg health promotion or working with patients with long-term conditions. It is recommended that registered nurses check with local employers and training providers to see what is on offer. With further training and experience, practice nurses can apply for more senior roles, such as senior practice nurse/nurse practitioner and advanced nurse practitioner positions. These roles require considerably more autonomy with the opportunity to move into education, management, teaching or clinical research.

Framework

General practice nursing roles need to be consistent to inform the commissioning of training. The [HEE General Practice Nursing Service: Education and Career Framework](#) must be at the core of proactive primary care workforce planning at all levels, from surgeries and training hubs to CCGs and STPs. This framework is aimed at enabling a nationally consistent approach to education and training. This must inform the commissioning process to ensure that the minimum professional and educational requirements for each role contained within it are met.

Programme

HEE commissions places on fundamentals programmes across the Midlands – this means that the university course fees are paid for. In the East Midlands De Montfort University (DMU) in Leicester is working collaboratively with Training Hubs, the Training Hub will identify nurses within their practices who are new to general practice and signpost them to DMU – this is optional however this programme is recommended by HEE to support new general practice nurses. DMU requires an employer contribution of £500 for each GPN enrolled on the programme – this pays for external trainer supervision. The DMU programme can be found [here](#).

In the West Midlands, several HEI's are commissioned to deliver the fundamentals programme these are:

- [Birmingham City](#)
- [Wolverhampton](#)
- [Staffordshire](#)
- [Keele](#)
- [Worcester](#)

To apply for the fundamentals programme the recruiting GP practice would need to liaise with the Training Hub or apply for a GPN fellowship place available via the Training Hub.

General Practice Nursing Fellowship

The GPN fellowship initiative is funded by NHSE/I. All areas Nationally have access to this funding, how the funding is utilised and the programme is implemented is decided by local areas.

What is the benefit of the fundamentals programme – Nurses

Nurses will learn the necessary skills to work as a General Practice Nurse, including essential clinical competencies such as venepuncture, ear care, wound management, and cervical cytology. The programme mirrors the competencies set out by the Royal College of General Practitioners' (RCGP) for General Practice Nurses. The programme lasts for 40 weeks, starting with 17 taught days over 16 weeks. Individuals will need to commit to achieving a theoretical knowledge base including academic assessments, demonstrate competency in clinical practice and undertake periods of self-directed study, including work in their own time. Nurses will be supported in their academic work through De Montfort University and in the workplace by an internal trainer (a practice nurse or GP within practice) and they will also be allocated to an external trainer. The external trainer is responsible for overseeing learning and objectively assessing competency. Upon completion of the programme nurses will be awarded either a Bachelor of Science (BSc) or a Post Graduate Certificate (PGCert) in Practice Nursing.

What is the benefit of the fundamentals programme – Practice

At the moment, most practices rely on recruiting experienced nurses from each other. Local workforce plans show the need to increase the number of nurses working in General Practice due to a significant number of them being over the age of 40 with almost half aged between 50 and 59. The fundamentals programme supports General Practice to meet the increasing demands. It offers employers structured training for nurses who have limited or no previous General Practice nursing experience. All the training is in one educational package eliminating the difficulties that managers and employers can experience in accessing reliable training. It equips nurses with knowledge and skills including:

- QOF and the need to ensure targets are reached
- cervical cytology screening
- immunisations and vaccinations
- long term conditions
- venepuncture and ear care

Clinical competencies are based on the RCGP competencies in General Practice nursing. Recognising the success of the GP training model, nurses will be supported by an external trainer. The external trainer is responsible for overseeing learning and objectively assessing competency. This model of training is invaluable in providing evidence for CQC and NMC revalidation requirements. The programme lasts 40 weeks and starts with 17 taught days over 16 weeks. The course is available twice a year. Supported internally, the nurse will achieve competency within 40 weeks. Successful completion of the programme also includes an award

of either a Bachelor of Science (BSc) or a Post Graduate Certificate (PGCert) in Practice Nursing.

Who can provide Support?

Within HEE several colleagues can provide support, if you require support please see the list below:

East Midlands - Gillian Beardmore Gillian.beardmore@hee.nhs.uk

West Midlands: Heidi Davis Heidi.Davis@hee.nhs.uk

Generic enquiries: midlands.traininghubs@hee.nhs.uk

Links to further information

Please visit: The [HEE website](#) for information on general practice nurses

The [Health Careers](#) website for information for potential general practice nurses

The [NHS Employers](#) guide to general practice nurses