

General Practice Nurse (GPN) Ready Scheme

Information Pack for Primary Care



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What is 'GPN Ready'?

General Practice Nurses (GPNs) need support and development when they first work in a primary care environment. They need to consolidate their skills, practice working independently and with a great deal of autonomy, and formulate a development plan that will start them on their journey to a long and productive career in one of the key (and growing) parts of the healthcare economy.

Supporting the development of a new nurse to be 'GPN ready' is crucial- and Health Education England, working across Yorkshire and the Humber have a new scheme to incentivise and encourage this important development work.

Introduction

Health Education England, working across Yorkshire and the Humber have identified a way of assisting primary care to facilitate new nurse registrants being employed with them in their first post, and supporting provision of a solid foundation of education to prepare them for a long successful career in General Practice Nursing.

This document describes Health Education England's offer to General Practices to encourage them to employ new nurse registrants in their primary care environments, and facilitate the first two years of their new nurse's learning journey.



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Background

General Practice is at a major crossroads; it needs to meet the needs of a growing and ageing population who have more complex and long term health conditions than ever before.

Treatment is no longer acute, or routinely provided in big general hospitals; GP services are being called upon to provide more care to people in community environments- from every child who requires the best start in life, to those individuals who are reaching the end of life and wish to do so in the comfort of their own home, surrounded by those who care for them.

At the same time, the primary care workforce too is ageing, with staff recruited not matching the numbers who have left- or soon will. New staff are not entering the profession at the same rate as those leaving, and many are reaching retirement age soon. A 2016 QNI report¹ highlighted that 33.4% of General Practice Nurses are due to retire by 2020.

There are already high profile campaigns to encourage new medical staff to consider a career in general practice, the creation of the new role for a Physician's Associate in this area, and work to examine what role pharmacists can play in the management of a patient's overall condition. Lots of new opportunities also exist for the vital non-registered parts of the workforce; apprenticeships and healthcare assistant roles already receiving extra support.

In nursing, Yorkshire and the Humber's primary care environments have led the way in being the first to introduce a scheme to give adult student nurses access to a GP practice placement as part of their pre-registration training. Called the 'advanced training practice' or ATP scheme, nurses now qualify in Yorkshire and the Humber already often having had experience of working in primary care whilst they were training.

Both student nurses and the GP practices where they have their placements for feedback very positively about their experiences in working together to learn and gain valuable experience in primary care.

Ongoing Challenges

The ATP scheme has been massively successful in giving student nurses the opportunity to have a placement in a GP surgery during their training - but on its own, has not promoted a change in the nursing workforce profile to the extent required for the future.

GP practices continue to recruit nurses who are already established practice nurse staff, so this means that they are in essence moving the workforce around rather than attracting the next generation. There are some examples of practice nurses completing return to practice programmes and then being employed in a GP surgery- but these are not present in the numbers required to make a substantial difference. Some nurses are also choosing to join primary care from a post in secondary care- but we are mindful that our secondary care colleagues also have significant nurse shortages, and recruiting staff from there doesn't create an overall increase to the available nurses in the NHS.

Overall, none of strategies, however practical and immediate, provide new staff to the workforce and protect the NHS long term.

¹ The Queen's Nursing Institute (2016) *General Practice Nursing in the 21st Century: A Time of Opportunity*

A Supportive and Facilitative Proposal from HEE

Health Education England's local office in Yorkshire and the Humber has been consulting with GP practices in the region for some time, having already established a network of colleagues through the ATP scheme.

HEE understand and appreciate that primary care is a highly specialised, complex and diverse working environment, which requires its staff to have solid and robust learning experiences that relate to the types of patients seen there.

Although nurses are deemed fit to practise at the point of registration within any environment where nursing activity occurs, this is always within the scope of their particular skills and experience. Nurses in primary care routinely help manage long term conditions, perform immunisation and vaccination procedures, manage sexual and women's health interventions, and navigate complex multiple packages of care across the entire life span of a patient.

The Offer

Health Education England will provide funding to those GP practices who offer to appoint a new NMC registered nurse to work in their practice. The nurse will have registered with the NMC no earlier than 1st August 2016.

The understanding will be that the practice will use these funds to support and supervise the new nurse in a package of formal academic and experiential supervision and learning over a period of not less than two years.

In the first year, this will be an appropriate educational plan, agreed between the new nurse employee and their supervisor at the practice, to consolidate and strengthen the nurse's practical clinical skills. In year two, this plan will continue, but will also include an NMC approved mentorship programme (often called Supporting Learning in Practice or SLiP).

What this scheme is NOT

This scheme is not intended to be used to support any of the routine activity involved with employing a new member of staff. Induction and orientation programmes would apply equally to any new employee, regardless of whether they were newly registered.

Equally, routine professional development (for instance, when a new intervention or technique is recommended in primary care, that requires additional training for any member of the workforce), is not covered within this scheme.

How will HEE know the scheme is successful?

Success of the scheme will be readily identified if the workforce data tells us that after only one year, the number of new nursing registrants working in Yorkshire and the Humber's primary care environments has increased.

After two years, more new nurses working in GP surgeries across Yorkshire and the Humber will additionally have an NMC recognised mentor qualification, further securing the successful future of General Practice Nursing.

How will the scheme work in practice?

In 2016, the scheme has been limited to 50 places. General practices will very soon be invited to apply for one of those places.

Who is eligible to apply?

An application form will be required from any practice within the Yorkshire and the Humber region wishing to take part in the scheme, and who can assure HEE that they can;

- Advertise for a new NMC registrant to work at their practice
- Provide that new nurse a good quality learning environment which involves the whole practice team providing a positive supportive culture of learning
- Allocate their new colleague a named, formal educational supervisor who is an experienced Practice Nurse and who has the skills and time to support and guide them
- Provide the nurse access to a range of experience appropriate for a career in primary care
- Work with the new nurse to identify and access training courses and/or university modules appropriate for their learning and development
- Afford the new nurse time to complete any additional programmes of study
- Assist the new nurse to access an NMC approved mentorship programme in their second year at the practice
- Inform HEE at regular intervals when requested on the progress of the scheme, and advise of any issues at any time during the scheme

In return, HEE will;

- Work with regional general practice 'hubs' to fund the learning and development of 50 new registrant nurses in general practice in 2016
- Provide each practice, via the hubs, a total of £8,000 for each new nurse, to be used to support their learning and development over the first two years of employment with the practice
- Work with local Universities and other Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) to facilitate a number of appropriate formal educational opportunities across Yorkshire and the Humber, including those approved by the NMC as mentorship programmes
- Organise reviews of the scheme, collecting data from hubs, individual practices and new nurses employed whenever is appropriate to ensure the effective progress of the scheme

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HEE will additionally require the support of established Advanced Training Practice (ATP) hubs to assist them using the established network already in place for both pre-registration student nurse activity and Healthcare Support staff recruitment to;

- Invoice and pay individual practices for this new element of support
- Provide local intelligence and information about regional variation in the requirements and individual needs of specific practices when applying for the scheme and engaged in its implementation

Contact for questions

The scheme is still in development, and very soon we will be taking applications from practices who wish to be considered.

We appreciate that you may have questions about the scheme, and in the first instance please direct them to the Project Lead, who is **Rebecca Burgess-Dawson, Placement Development Manager within the Education and Innovation Team**. You can contact her on 07920 703 373 or at rebecca.burgess-dawson@yh.hee.nhs.uk at any time.