**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. GPs, Practice Managers and Nurses created the framework, with the aim to support a standardised approach to practices upskilling their team. After the successful pilots across the Northeast, Cumbria, and Yorkshire, we are now on our sixth year of the GPA programme.

NHSE have funded 156 places for the 2025/26 GPA programme and applications are now open. This year there is an ad-hoc application process and submissions can be made throughout the year. Learners will be enrolled straight away if successful with the aim of starting the programme the 1st of the following month. The closing date for this programme is 31st March 2026.

***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 in-house experiential programme that is led by a GP at the practice. The GP will work through the competencies within the framework with the GPA, and the GPA will write up evidence gained to show competency and understanding, for the GP to mark and sign off. The GP may return the work with comments and feedback; this is normal and gives the GPA an opportunity to improve submitted work.

Sysco will provide the GPA and any assigned mentors with logins to an online facility called the *‘Learning Assistant platform’* where the competency framework is located; the GPA will upload written work to this portal.

The GP mentor will use their login to regularly mark the work uploaded and can manually set notifications to create regular checks to review work. The Training Hub does have sight of the GPAs progress throughout the programme as we have a login to the platform also and we will provide monthly progress updates to keep the GPA, and the practice updated, highlight any concerns, and to keep momentum. Once the portfolio is completed and signed off as competent by the GP mentor, this then goes through the verification process and onto certification if successful.

The practice will need to allocate one full day a week to the rota, for the GPA to dedicate time to the programme. Half a day working through the competencies, writing up work/reports, uploading and cross-referencing evidence onto the portfolio, and half a day gaining firsthand experience with the GP mentor/secondary mentor/nurse/secretary etc. The GP mentor may second you to the practice nurse or others in the team to help train in areas relating to simple clinical duties, such as blood pressures but the GP mentor will be responsible for signing you off as competent.

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

The full GPA programme covers 5 units, which include clinical outcomes. The GPA will be required to complete all 5 units successfully to gain the full qualification.

**Clinical GPA** – All 5 domains in the framework must be completed, within a practice setting and the learner will be awarded with an accredited certificate on successful completion from Pearson’s, which is equivalent to 10 credits at level 4 BTEC. This route is funded by NHSE, monitored for completion by the practice who is responsible for the GPA being competent and takes 9 months to complete. The total time commitment expected for the clinical route is 100 hours.

This pathway offers progressive training supported by a strong internal verification process, aiding career advancement. Once qualified, this option allows for cross-functional collaboration.

Please note that this qualification is not regulated by Ofqual or SQA or any other regulatory body in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The qualification is a Pearson’s Self-Regulated Framework (SRF).

**Non-Clinical GPA** – The clinical domains are removed from the framework and the other three admin domains must be completed. This can be completed against the framework within a practice setting in the same way as the above route, but the learner will receive 3 credits and certification from Pearsons covering the admin units only.

The funding available for the admin-only route is £636, with an expected completion time of 6 months - compared to 9 months for the full programme. The total time commitment for the admin route is approximately 30 hours. We would recommend allocating up to half a day per week for the learner to complete the required activities, including shadowing (where appropriate), uploading evidence, and engaging in self-directed learning.

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

Applications must be from an individual who is in an NHS role. 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.

The learner, workplace and support should be fully aware of the framework requirements. 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, this is required at the time of applying. The learner and mentors must be computer literate.

***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 appoint a secondary mentor to support them and the GP mentor throughout the course. Please note, the secondary mentor can only sign off the admin units within the framework.

The GPA needs to have a valid enhanced DBS check in place, if this was issued over 3 years ago, a new check will be required.

***What funding is available?***

This is a NSHE fully funded programme. The practice will be eligible for £2120 in total (for the full programme, £630 for the reduced admin only curriculum); £1,700 per applicant, to cover backfill for the learner doing 1 day a week of study/training for 9 months and 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 or care certificate for example. 50% of the funding will be paid to the practice on receipt of application form/DBS etc, receipt of signed MOU, completion of the pre-evaluation survey and evidence being uploaded onto the Learning Assist platform timely. 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 9 months. However, as there is a new application process, should a GPA finish ahead of the 9 months, early verification can take place

***When does it start?***

Once the application process has completed, we will email successful applicants, their GP mentors and practice managers to confirm the place on the programme. An acceptance email is required from the learner to secure a place on the programme.

A recorded webinar will be included within the welcome email as a link, which will explain a bit more about the programme and have a short demonstration of the Learning Assist platform. Please note there is no other welcome/induction session. Login details will then be emailed out to applicants and mentors on receipt of acceptance from the learner. We then expect everyone to have logged on to the Learning Assistant platform and have started the framework by the *1st of the following month*.

Any questions are welcome; everyone involved is encouraged to fully read the documents provided with the login details prior to starting so you are fully informed about the programme and framework.

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

This will be up to the practice how the day is planned. The practice 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.

Have a look here at how Natasha has developed since joining and successfully completing the programme in 2024.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FMqbL4vSotIgQPYF\_WLU-xTTSZY31Ch-/view?usp=drive\_link

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 a practice to upskill an existing member of the team to become a GPA.

**There are no external courses/workshops/training provided.** The learning is experiential. We provide resources for everyone involved to tap into and work through with the learner to complete the framework outcomes to ensure the competencies, to become a GPA are met. In addition, we provide up-to-date guidance, legislation, and tutorial content where appropriate.

**The programme is completed within practice.** The learner will log in to a web-based portal which houses the framework. They will submit evidence which supports their understanding.

**The mentor must provide time to support the learner, and the practice must be supportive in planning in time for the learner to progress on the programme and for the GP to provide this support.** 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 a 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 must be completed within 9 months,** so it’s important that the GPA begins the programme as soon as login details are received.

In extenuating circumstances, an extension of up to 3 months may be granted beyond the initial 9-month period. Progress will be monitored by the Training Hub throughout the duration of the course. If an extension is deemed necessary, a request form will be sent to the practice manager. This form will require:

* A summary of the learner’s progress through the programme
* A clear explanation of why the extension is needed
* Details of the additional support that will be given to help the learner complete the programme within the proposed revised timeframe.

**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. This day does not have to be at the same time, it can be split to suit practice needs, for example ½ a day on a Monday afternoon shadowing a nurse in clinic and a medical secretary, and ½ a day on a Wednesday morning writing reports and uploading evidence. Please do not put an applicant forward if you cannot afford them this time or are unable to mentor. The breakdown of hours per unit is below.

1 Providing Administrative Support - 10 hours

2 Providing Person-centred Care - 30 hours

3 Providing Clinical Support - 40 hours

4 Communicating with Patients - 10 hours

5 Managing Health Records - 10 hours

Both the learner and the mentor need to be relatively proficient with IT. Both the learner and any assigned mentors will be provided with a username and password to access the Sysco Learning Assistant 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.

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 their understanding. Of course, there may not be any need for the learner to be mentored in this area if they already have a good understanding - they can go straight to uploading their statement of understanding and any evidence to support this.

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

***Phlebotomy***

1. If phlebotomy is delivered within a practice, then the Nurse or GP can train the GPA on site. The GPA must also need to understand theory through their own self-directed learning. Once they are deemed fully competent by the GP, this can then be signed off by the GP Mentor.

2. If phlebotomy is not delivered within a practice, then the GPA could check if there is a nearby/sister practice where another GPA is being trained and where they could possibly train alongside.

3. If phlebotomy is not delivered in a practice or nearby practice, then the GP practice will need to source a training course which could be covered by the funding offer.

***Feedback***

**Feedback for Mentor Impact Survey Responses (GP Mentors)**

94% of GP mentors said the GPA programme had a positive impact on them and their surgery.

75% of GP mentors said because of implementing a GPA it has led to a reduction in waiting times for HCA/nurse appointments.

83% of GP mentors said that they think the long-term impact of having a GP Assistant in practices will reduce the increasing burden of work and GP’s.

81% of GP mentors said they would recommend their practice upskill further staff to become qualified General Practice Assistants.

**Feedback for Mentor Impact Survey Responses (Learners)**

100% of learners said they are currently working as an established General Practice Assistant with the role title and responsibilities.

96% of learners said the GPA Programme had a positive impact on them and their career.

100% of GPA’s said they now routinely undertake supporting with basic clinical duties (e.g. taking bloods, blood pressures and ECG’s).

96% of GPA’s said they now routinely undertake completing patient notes.

92% of GPA’s said they now routinely undertake supporting with QOF reviews.

88% of GPA’s said they now routinely undertake reviewing reports and updating patient records (referring to GP when necessary).

83% of learners said because of completing the GPA programme they feel they have improved their communication skills.

83% of learners said because of completing the GPA programme they feel they have improved their confidence.

87% of learners feel like their job satisfaction/motivation has improved because of the GPA programme.

96% of learners said they would recommend the GPA programme to a colleague.

***Next steps:***

We may phone you to discuss your individual applications so it is important that you provide us with a contactable mobile number, however, you will be informed via email if you have been successful in securing a place.

Please complete an application form (link below) or email **wy.traininghub@nhs.net** to express your interest on one of the above intake dates.

The Practice Manager needs to complete and sign the first page of the form (one form per applicant), upon pressing the submit button, the form will then be emailed automatically to the GP Assistant for them to complete and sign their information (DBS details are required at this stage).  Once the GP assistant completes their information and submits the form it will automatically go the GP mentor for completion (CV is required at this stage).  After this it will come to us here at the Training Hub who will contact you in due course regarding the next stage in the process, and let you know if you have been successful in gaining a place on the course.

[APPLICATION FORM LINK HERE](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fremote.ipegs.co.uk%2Fwebforms%2FNDQyMTI%3D&data=05%7C02%7Cjodie.warden%40nhs.net%7C3961279db4534e38c38308dda75ed3eb%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638850747906536847%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=6Qr0M8mgiCnAjbr4J0Fa2rneH35JtVHgKQcRiAP52pg%3D&reserved=0)