**Additional roles in primary care communications toolkit**

This toolkit is to help your practice explain the different available health professionals in primary care.

Although your workforce has been expanding in recent years, there’s limited public awareness of these different roles. At the same time patients may not be aware of receptionists’ role to triage them into the most suitable appointment and query the information they’re asked to provide when requesting an appointment.

If GP practices and PCNs promote the different health professional roles in different ways - both digitally and as part of conversations with patients -we can help improve people’s awareness and comprehension of GP teams in modern general practice.

The ICB has produced a toolkit to provide resources, and a steer, to support practices and PCNs with this communication. Many of you will not need all the information within the toolkit – it will be of most value to those who are refreshing information you already use e.g. on your website and other channels, or who are looking for a starting point.

**Objectives**

We want to meet these objectives with this information:

* More patients become aware of wider GP teams because it is explained clearly by GP practices and by the NHS
* There is better awareness of and confidence in the different roles and understanding of why they are there, building patients’ trust that they will see the right person for their needs
* Practices staff and patient groups feel supported to promote the additional roles and how they are playing a part in improving access (e.g. investment in telephony, recruitment, enhanced access)
* Patients visiting a practice are more receptive and willing to talk to reception staff about their symptoms to support effective triage to the additional roles

**How this toolkit has been ‘tested’**

The ICB communications and engagement team developed the toolkit and materials, which includes NHS England information about GP teams and care navigation, working closely with primary care and patients. Colleagues who include ICB Primary Care, GP and PCN leads reviewed the toolkit, and we also had feedback from our ICB’s Patient Engagement Forum who include members of local PPG groups and from our patient reader panel.

If you need further support or advice, please contact the ICB’s Communications and Engagement Team at [Hweicbenh.communications@nhs.net](mailto:Hweicbenh.communications@nhs.net)

**Guidance on using the toolkit**

We recognise that the additional roles available to patients varies between PCNs. We have created template leaflets, posters and social media posts that practices can easily adapt to suit them.

**Resources**

**Toolkit contents**

1. Poster
2. Leaflet
3. Information to include on your practice/PCN website
4. Waiting room screens
5. Voicemail message
6. Suggested approach when patient makes contact
7. Social media
8. Article for your patient newsletter
9. Descriptions of roles
10. **Posters**

Display these in areas people are likely to look such as reception or waiting areas, next to examination tables in a consulting room and the back of doors of toilet cubicles.

The templates in the Power Point attachment are a guide. Change the information according to your PCN and add branding if you have specific logos or colours that you use in-house.

We encourage PCNs to use names and photos of their local team, as this helps people to get to know them. Other templates you can use (including some ‘stock’ photos or graphics) are in this toolkit: <https://campaignresources.dhsc.gov.uk/campaigns/help-us-help-you-primary-care/nhs-general-practice-team/posters/>



1. **Leaflet**

Please print several copies and have these available in reception or waiting areas for people to pick up or have them in the consulting rooms so the clinician can hand one out at the end of an appointment. You can also upload the leaflet to use on your website, and please encourage PPG members to use them at events.

Instructions on how to edit this leaflet are on the last slide, please delete this before printing any copies.



1. **Information to include on your practice/PCN website**

**Meet our GP practice team\***

Our GP practice team is made up of GPs, nurses, and other trained and experienced healthcare professionals, as well as our reception team, who work together to help you get the right care as quickly as possible. The staff you talk with when you phone the surgery are also trained to support you to get the right appointment for your needs. They will ask you a few questions about what you need help with so that they point you to the best person. All our staff treat your information it in the strictest confidence.

You may be offered an appointment with a nurse, a healthcare assistant, a [insert examples of additional roles in your practice here] or another role if this is the best person to help you. Because some of these specialists work across a few different surgeries locally, you might be offered an appointment with them at another nearby surgery.

We will always offer you an appointment with a GP if that is the best person to help you and you also have the right to ask for an appointment with a GP if that is what you prefer. There will times where other health professionals will be able to give you more appropriate support.

There are different ways you can make an appointment:

* Use our online form [provide hyperlink to form]
* Use the NHS App
* Call us on [give phone number here]
* Drop in from <TIME> to <TIME>.

*List the roles available at your practice here, using the descriptions in section 9 (page 6).*

Our advice: Provide names and photographs where possible. Consider adding in the qualifications and training for each role. Not everyone will be aware of how much training other professionals need to undertake to be qualified. Emphasising this can help build assurance that the person they’re seeing has good professional credentials

1. **Waiting room screens**

The communications and engagement team upload graphics onto the waiting room screens of GP practices in Hertfordshire and west Essex where we have access. Below is a generic slide that can be adapted for your practice. If your practice would like a bespoke slide, please contact the Communications team who can help you. Email: [Hweicbenh.communications@nhs.net](mailto:Hweicbenh.communications@nhs.net)



1. **Information about additional roles as part of your telephone ‘hold’ messages**

Consider including some brief information about signposting to additional roles as part of the information that patients hear when they contact your practice for help or to make an appointment.

This is an example of the type of information you could include:

‘We will ask you some questions about why you are calling today. The information you give us will help us to work out which member of our team is the best person to help you. This might be a GP, a nurse or one of our specialist and trained healthcare professionals who are part of our team here. ‘

1. **Suggested approach when patient makes contact**

Additional roles remain an unknown for many patients. When they have been triaged as needing to see someone who isn’t a GP you need to consider getting across it would be helpful to explain the following:

* WHY they are being offered an appointment with that professional
* WHAT that role is about. Use the role descriptions in the appendix to do this. briefly explaining what the role in question does
* WHO is the person they are being referred to. Provide their name so they know who they will be seeing or hearing from.
* WHERE and WHEN the appointment will be. Be clear on this, with many locations on offer as well as face to face or over the phone it is important the patient knows where they should go.

Draft call template:

'Based on what you've told me the person who I think will best be able to help you will our [***title of ARRS role, name of person***]. They specialise in / their job is to [***briefly describe role***] and I could offer you an appointment with them [date] at [location]. '

Example of it in use:

“Based on what you've told me I’m going to arrange for you to see/speak to our physiotherapist, [name]. They specialise in treatments for long standing pain issues. They can assess your pain and help your or check for anything that may need further treatment or assessment with a GP. I could offer you an appointment with them in 2 weeks at Church Street Surgery.”

1. **Suggested social media content**

If you don’t currently use social media, it is straightforward to set up – perhaps another practice in your PCN can help, or contact the ICB communications and engagement team [Hweicbenh.communications@nhs.net](mailto:Hweicbenh.communications@nhs.net)

Consider:

* emphasising what happens when someone contacts the surgery
* emphasising the benefit to them about seeing another health professionals
* telling a story e.g. feature a different ARRS role colleague each week or feature them every day for a week doing different things. Please gain consent from any patient or member of staff you might want to feature in this content so they know how their image is being used and where.

A graphic to use with messages about the different roles is attached. Just save as a jpeg to use on social media.



There are also national social media resources available: [GP Access social media asset | NHS General Practice Team | Campaign Resource Centre (dhsc.gov.uk)](https://campaignresources.dhsc.gov.uk/campaigns/help-us-help-you-primary-care/nhs-general-practice-team/gp-team-social-media-assets/)

These focus on five roles:

* Mental health practitioner
* Paramedic
* Physio
* Receptionist
* Social Prescriber

1. **Article for your patient newsletter**

**Basic article:**

**Meet your local GP practice team**

Our GP practice team is made up of more than just GPs. We have nurses and other trained and experienced healthcare professionals, as well as our reception team, who work together to help you get the right care as quickly as possible.

The staff you talk with when you phone the surgery are also trained to support you to get the right appointment for your needs. They will ask you a few questions about what you need help with so that they point you to the best person. All our staff treat your information it in the strictest confidence. If you complete an online form on our website a review will be completed byclinical professionals to offer you what you need.

However you contact us you may be offered an appointment with a nurse, a healthcare assistant, a [***insert examples of additional roles in your practice here***] or another role if this is the best person to help you. Because some of these specialists work across a few different surgeries locally as part of our primary care network, you might be offered an appointment with them at another one of our surgeries [***if one alternative then name it here***].

We will always offer you an appointment with a GP if that is the best person to help you and you also have the right to ask for an appointment with a GP if that is what you prefer. There will be times where other health professionals will be able to give you more appropriate support. This means that GPs are available to support people with more complex needs.

Find out more about the different roles available on our website [***add website LINK***]

**Additional suggestions for newsletter content:**

There are various ways in which you can use your newsletter to promote additional roles. Frequently featuring additional roles in your newsletter will help build interest and familiarity:

1) Run a series of ‘getting to know you’ interviews with different members of the practice team. This could include questions such as:

* Name, age, have you grown up locally or have moved to the area
* What's your role and what does that involve?
* What training did you have to do to qualify to be a xxxxx and how many years of experience do you have?
* What do you like most about your role?
* A bit more about you – hobbies/interests etc.

These interviews will help establish a person's professional credentials and help patients to get to know a bit more about the additional healthcare workforce – so that when they’re offered an appointment with the person, they know who they are.

2) Announcements about a particular person joining the practice. Explain the person's role, what this entails and which days they will be working in the practice to support patients.

3) Updates on how many additional roles appointments the practice has provided over a certain period of time (e.g. a month or three-month period) and what this equates to in GP working days; link this to freeing up GP time to help other patients.

1. **Descriptions of roles**

These are reviewed simple descriptions of roles in primary care that you can use across any materials.

**Physician Associate**

Physician Associates are trained and qualified medical professionals who support our GPs in the diagnosis and management of patients. They can take medical histories from patients, perform physical examinations and diagnose illnesses.

**Practice nurse**

Nurses provide a wide range of services including dealing with dressings, checking over minor injuries, caring for wounds as well as some vaccinations and some health screenings.

Some are specialists in areas such as diabetes or respiratory care such as asthma.

**Advance Nurse Practitioner**

These nurses can see you if you have an undiagnosed medical condition (i.e. they can be your first contact about new symptoms), and they make treatment decisions, undertake appropriate home visits, and sign ‘fit’ notes. Some are qualified to prescribe medication for some conditions.

**Health Care Assistant**

Health Care Assistants carry out some clinical tasks, such as blood pressure checks, ECG, health checks, and flu injections.

They often help with the practice’s health promotion and infection control work.

**Paramedic**

Paramedics run clinics, provide clinical triage, and help with minor illnesses. A paramedic may visit your or a family member if housebound with a long-term condition.

**Care Coordinator**

A Care Coordinator helps prepare you for upcoming conversations about your health and care and supports you to understand and manage your care.

**Pharmacist**

Pharmacists are experts in medicines and offer health advice. They can review repeat prescriptions, make changes if needed and advise on possible side effects.. They will tell your GP if your medicines need to be changed. If you are on regular medication, the pharmacist will review this each year to see if it needs to be adjusted.

**Physiotherapist**

Physiotherapists treat people with physical problems caused by illness, injury, disability, or ageing. You can get an appointment with a physiotherapist if you are having pains in your back or limbs. They also promote good health and advise people on how to avoid injury.

**Social prescribing link worker or Community Navigator**

These roles connect you to nearby groups, activities, and services to meet your social, emotional and practical needs which affect your health and wellbeing. They will have an appointment with you to understand your needs and help you get the support you need. Examples include walking groups, cookery classes, volunteering or debt advice.

**Occupational Therapist**

Occupational Therapists provide rehabilitation for you to stay well at home and empower you to make improvements in your day-to-day life. They also support you to take control of your health and wellbeing.

**Dietitians**

They can diagnose and treat nutritional conditions and help you to make changes to prevent and support long-term conditions.

You may see a dietician if you need help supporting you to maintain a healthy weight.

**Mental health therapists and practitioners**

Our qualified mental health workers can assess your needs and help you access local services and resources to help with your mental health. If you have a mental health condition, they can provide advice and support to manage your condition.

**Receptionist team**

Our practice receptionists are often the first person you will speak to whether you phone or visit the practice. They are trained to ensure you get the right appointment.

We know some patients prefer not to discuss personal information, but the more information you give them, the better they will be able to help. They will treat your information in strictest confidence.

**GP**

GPs are experts at diagnosing and managing medical conditions and referring patients to other services for urgent or specialist care when appropriate. If you have a concerning symptom that won’t go away, they are the people you will speak with first.