**Spread and Adoption Programme - General Practice Assistants**

**Update May 2019**

**Background**

The role of General Practice Assistant (sometimes known as Medical Assistants) was initially developed in the United States, to safely deliver a combination of routine administrative tasks and some basic clinical duties in the general practice setting. The focus being on supporting General Practitioners in their day-to-day management of patients, specifically aimed at reducing the administrative burden and making best use of consultation time.

In line with The General Practice Forward View (2016), HEE established a national working group to test how General Practice Assistants (GPAs) might support general practice, including ‘proof of concept’ sites in the North West and London/South East. Each site has taken a different approach to introducing GPAs based on local need, with both clinical and non-clinical versions of the role being developed.

There is early evidence to suggest that GPAs have the potential to:

* ‘improve patient access and release highly qualified staff to concentrate on treating and managing patients with more complex conditions’ (HEE GPA Working Group report 2017)
* ‘improve patient flow within surgery hours, increasing the time efficiency of appointments, and reduction of waiting times; supporting patient experience by ‘translating’ or reiterating information from the GP’ (University of Cumbria 2017)
* have a positive impact on GP retention and job satisfaction (HEE video case study: Medical Assistants in Primary Care, 2017).

**The GPA spread and adoption programme**

Growing demand for workforce solutions in primary care and the evolution of Primary Care Training Hubs presented an opportunity to replicate the GPA role at scale nationally.

The ‘5 Step Approach’ to spread and adoption, supported by HEE’s Transformation Collaborative, was used to design a programme for wider spread of GPAs across England.

In February 2019, following expressions of interest, a ‘lead’ Training Hub was identified to host and co-ordinate the spread of GPAs across each of seven regional footprints (see table below).

Each ‘lead’ Training Hub will host and co-ordinate the introduction of a cohort of 40 GPA learners representative of their region.

Support to adapt and implement the GPA role across the seven regions will be provided by HEE’s national workforce transformation team, to include ‘pump prime’ funding, tools, expertise and networking opportunities.

The spread and adoption programme is due to run for 12 months from April 2019, following a launch event in the Spring that brought ‘lead’ Training Hubs together for the first time.

An online ‘Teams’ site has been established to provide Training Hub leads with a forum for ongoing discussions and sharing of resources.

The LeaDER Evaluation Framework will be used as a consistent approach, to measure the impact of GPAs against the quadruple aims of patient experience, population health, sustainable costs and staff wellbeing.

For further information about the spread and adoption programme, please contact transformation@hee.nhs.uk

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