

## FAQs

### Can I still see a doctor?

Based on your needs, you can still see a GP if that is the most appropriate point of action for you. Expanding the workforce with greater diversity of roles is about ensuring patients are able to see the most appropriate healthcare professional for their need at the right place and time.

### Why are these roles important for patients?

General Practices across the country are experiencing high volumes of demand from patients. It has become increasingly challenging to recruit new doctors into general practice and training takes a lot of time. By increasing the workforce, there will be a wider range of highly trained health professionals available to see patients, offering the right clinical skills at the right time.

### Where can I find out more information?

To find out more about whether your practice has the range of roles identified in this document please contact your GP practice or visit your practice website.



## General practice

A who's who guide so you can get the best care



## Your GP is evolving

Your general practice is constantly changing and growing for its patients.

GPs have increased their staff roles at local practices so patients are able to get advice and treatment more quickly. This leaflet will explain these roles and their responsibilities. Not all practices will have all of the roles outlined below so do check in with them next time you get in touch. In the future you may be able to receive treatment from the following:

### General Practice Nurses (GPNs)

General practice nurses are undertaking a wider range of roles. GPNs provide care and treatment for people from birth to end of life. They help dozens of patients every day. As a registered nurse they can do all sorts, from baby immunisations to helping people with diabetes and asthma. They can inspect any rashes you're worried about, talk to you about contraception.

### Nursing Associates (NAs)

Nursing associates bridge the gap between healthcare support workers and registered nurses. Nursing associates work with people of all ages who need help or advice but don't need to see a doctor or a nurse.



## Health Care Assistants (HCAs)

HCAs take on routine tasks that were previously undertaken by practice nurses like administering vaccines to patients, taking blood samples and taking measurements such as temperatures, respiration and pulse rates. They are an important part of the practice that have significantly reduced patient waiting times.

### Physician Associates (PAs)

Physician associates have a list of their own patients and can diagnose many conditions, order up tests and interpret the results, then make referrals if needed. They originally did a degree, then studied for another two years to become a Physician Associate, so I have a lot of skills that I can use to help people. This means I can take some of the load of the GPs, which also means less waiting time for patients

### Clinical Pharmacist

A clinical pharmacist helps patients to understand and get the most out of their medicines. They often also help with lifestyle changes to tackle long-term conditions, order blood tests where necessary and often advise patients who have just come out of hospital and need help with their new medications. Being part of the team here means our patients have an expert they can talk to pretty quickly when they need to.

## Dietitian

A dietitian is trained help with diet but also to spot health conditions which may be unrelated to diet, and work closely with colleagues to treat complex conditions such as diabetes, chronic fatigue and kidney failure. They advise patients on how they can improve or change their diet. A big part of my training is recognising how diet is part of the whole picture for a patient, and can improve a person's health and wellbeing.

## Occupational Therapist

Occupational therapists help people develop, recover and improve, as well as maintain the skills needed for daily living and working. They assess, plan, implement and evaluate treatment plans to increase patients' productivity and self-care. They also work really closely with patients through a shared-decision making approach to plan realistic goals.

## Podiatrist

Podiatrists work on prevention, diagnosis and treatment of conditions that affect the foot, ankle and leg. Podiatrists work in a variety of places and can work with a team of people including doctors, nurses and physiotherapists.

## Paramedic

A paramedic can deal with lots of different types of illness and injury. They have completed a extra postgraduate training so they can help even more patients. They do quite a few home visits and help to assess patients on the phone, so can help people get the right care as quickly as possible.

## Physiotherapists

Physiotherapists work with lots of patients who have muscle or joint problems. That includes people recovering from serious injuries or illness, and those with new injuries. They can book scans and tests, and even organise joint injections, which used to need a GP. We're also trained to spot 'red flags', which means we can recognise when a joint or muscle problem may be a sign of something more serious. This is great because patients can come to me without needing to wait for a GP appointment.

## Advanced Clinical Practitioners (ACPs)

ACPs work alongside GPs and other practice staff to provide care to both adults and children. They can prescribe medication, order tests, interpret results, diagnose your health problems and organise and create an appropriate treatment plan.

## Pharmacy Technician

Pharmacy technicians have a post-graduate degree in pharmacy and working with patients to help them understand and get the most out of their medications.





## Care Co-ordinator

Care Co-ordinators focus on providing a more joined-up and coordinated care journey for patients. They are the single point of contact for patients to navigate the health and care system, helping to break down traditional barriers between health and care organisations. They work with people who have long-term health conditions in particular.

## Health and Wellbeing Coach

Health and wellbeing coaching is about guiding and prompting people to change their behaviour, so they can make healthcare choices based on what matters to them. This also supports them to become more active in their health and care.

A Health and wellbeing coach play an important role in helping patients to achieve goals set out in a personalised health and care plan. They can also refer people to other health professionals within the practice.



## Social Prescribing Link Workers

Link workers help patients to improve their health, wellbeing and welfare by connecting them to community services which might be run by the council or a local charity. Social prescribers can take time to talk about what matters to patients and support them to find suitable activities that are a better alternative to medication. They connect people to community groups and services for practical and emotional support.

## Mental Health Practitioner

A Mental Health Practitioner provides a combined consultation, advice, triage and liaison function, supported by the local community mental health provider.

Mental Health Practitioners work with patients to make the best possible decision to manage their care and help them access treatment. They are a bridge between primary care and specialist mental health providers, providing care to patients with a range of needs. Patients who need specialist support can be seen with no formal referral, and can then go on to access a range of mental health service.

