GP Assistant

What is it?

The GP Assistant (GPA) is a role that was created in order to relieve some of the pressure on GPs. Former RCGP Chair Dr Maureen Baker says the assistants would be 'a cross between a healthcare assistant and a doctor's PA' which could provide a 'short term injection of support' for general practice.

After another successful September cohort NHS England have commissioned a further 75 places across the Southeast in conjunction with six Training Hub: NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICB, NHS Hampshire and Isle Of Wight ICB, NHS Frimley ICB, Kent and Medway ICB, NHS Surrey Heartlands ICB, NHS Sussex ICB.

Places are extremely limited and we ask the only those who are serious about completing the framework and who are supported fully by their practices apply.

What do GP Assistants do in practice?

GP Assistants (also known as Medical Assistants) support doctors in the smooth running of their surgery by handling the routine administration and some basic clinical duties enabling the GP to focus on the patient.

As a GP Assistant you will be trained to help with:

- Sorting all clinical post and prioritising
- Extracting all information from clinical letters that needs coding
- Dealing with all routine clinical post 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 GP Assistant framework delivered?

The GPA framework is an experiential course that is led by a GP at your practice. They will work through the competencies within the framework with you in a tutorial and you will write up your evidence of your understanding for them to review.

We will provide you with an online facility the University Shared point portal you will upload your written evidence. Also you will have access to University student blackboard to access the course content. Your GP mentor will have access and will use this to review your work. We will have sight of your progress throughout, and we will externally verify your evidence via this portal.

We highly recommend you dedicate one half day a week to the framework. Working through the competencies on the online via the University Shared point portal and writing up your evidence and gaining hands on experience with your GP mentor. It would help to dedicate time outside work, as with all studies.You may find your GP mentor may second you to the practice nurse to help you train in areas relating to simple clinical duties such as blood pressures, but they will ultimately be responsible for signing you off as competent. This can take time and we recommend that this is done weekly also and not left to the end of the framework. We would expect work to be sent back on occasion for revision, so timings are important. We will offer an element of funding to the practice for this mentor/marking time.

You will need to be supported by a GP who will act as your mentor. Assuming you meet the entry criteria (detailed below) your GP mentor or practice manager can put you forward for the GP Assistant Certificate.

The aim of the framework is to support a standardised approach to practices upskilling their team.

What are the entry criteria?
This course is open to existing staff in roles such as receptionists, administrators, phlebotomists, secretaries, and new HCA. Not suitable for experienced HCA Places will be allocated on a first come first serve basis and will have to be shared equally across all PCN areas within the SE. The application deadline is **2nd September 2025.** There will be a short interview over MS Teams to ensure the learner, workplace and support are fully aware of the framework requirements. Candidates can be put forward by the GP who will be mentoring them and the Practice Manager.

We would expect that the candidate is already considered competent in good. patient care from their experience as members of a GP practice.

The candidate 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.

Expression of Interest form should be completed and submitted to
GeneralPracticeAssistant@bucks.ac.uk

What is the cost?

This is a NHS England funded project and as such bares no cost to the practice/learner. In fact your practice will be eligible for £2000 per candidate in recognition of the clinical time given to support learners and any training outlay, such as phlebotomy, you may decide to undertake. This will be paid to the practice on completion of the GPA Certificate and any reporting requirements have been met.

How long will it take?

We expect learners to have completed the framework in 6 months.

When does it start?

We will hold a launch event on Tuesday, **9th September,2025,** for learners, mentors, and managers. The course starts on **16th September 2025**.

What does a working day look like for a GP Assistant?

Well ultimately this will be up to the practice. You may already have systems in place to deal with certain pieces of work and may just want to plug gaps. Alternatively you may want a complete system change practice wide. The choice is yours. The GPA Framework will provide candidates with the tools to offer a variety of services to support the GP.

Watch how one GP practice in the North West has developed a new Medical Assistant role, 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 course which provides a framework for you to upskill an existing member of your team to become a GPA.
- **There are no external courses/workshops/training provided.** The learning is experiential. We provide resources for you to tap in to as a mentor to work through with your learner and we provide the framework in order to meet the competencies to become a GPA. In addition, we provide up to date guidance, aand tutorial content where appropriate.
- **The learner does not have to leave the practice to complete the course.** The learner will log in to online portfolio by shared point portal which houses the framework. They will submit evidence which supports their understanding.
- **The mentor has to provide time to support the learner.** The GP mentor and secondary mentor need to dedicate time to work through the modules and teach the learner.

This can be outsourced to other members of the team such as Practice Nurse for certain clinical areas or the Practice Manager for certain admin areas for example. Remember though, the GP mentor will be logging on to the portal and marking the learner as competent, so they need to be suitably assured.

- **The course needs to be completed in 6 months.** It is really important that you plan to start the course as soon after receiving your log in dates as possible. 6 months is not long to get through all the modules.
- **The learner and the mentor need to have protected time.** We recommend ½ day a week where possible this can be used for teaching and where the learner writes and uploads their evidence. Please do not put a candidate forward if you cannot afford them this time or you are unable to mentor.
- **Both the learner and the mentor need to be relatively proficient with IT.** Both the learner and the mentor will be provided with online access to the University Shared point portal. You will be provided with a mentor guide, learners will access the course content via the university student blackboard, and the University Shared point portal to upload evidence and where the mentor accesses their learners work to mark them as competent.
- **Support is available.** We will hold monthly meeting and online dropping session for mentors and learners. We have a dedicated email address for any Learning Assistant 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 this. Of course, there may not be any need for the learner to be mentored in this area if they already have a good understanding and they can go straight to uploading their statement of understanding.

  Additionally, there may be some elements that you do not plan to utilise in your practice such as phlebotomy for example. Again, this module will need to be completed in order to demonstrate the framework competencies.

Next steps:

Places are limited to 1 learner per practice. Priority will be given to geographical areas and/or practices that HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN PART OF THE PILOT AND HAVE NO GPA IN PLACE. You will be informed via email if you have been successful in securing a place. If successful, You will receive an email stating that you have been shortlisted for an interview.

Contact us on the email address below to express your interest, and the application deadline is **2nd September 2025.**

Contact: GeneralPracticeAssistant@bucks.ac.uk