

Professional development and employment standards for general practice nurses

A recent national survey of general practice nurses sponsored by the 'Working in Partnership Programme' (WiPP) indicated that some nurses do not have access to appropriate education or professional development and their employment terms can be very variable. This booklet offers 'at a glance' information on the essentials for support that should be available for all general practice nurses.

The standards are divided into four sections. Each section identifies the relevant standards that nurses should be entitled to.

All nurses in general practice should:

Employment

- Have a robust contract, given to them within two months of commencing employment
- Have a comprehensive and accurate job description
- Have current Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) registration
- Satisfy the NMC Post Registration Education and Practice (PREP) requirements
- Have their pay linked to Agenda for Change through the Knowledge and Skills Framework
- Have a clear line of managerial responsibility
- If responsible for managing others, have appropriate training
- Have protected time for professional development
- Have a clear study leave policy
- Have an annual appraisal

Training and Education

- Complete an in-house induction programme for the first two weeks with an identified member of staff responsible for this
- Complete an accredited practice nurse foundation course within one year of employment
- Have access to an identified mentor; a more senior practice nurse to give them support in their new role
- Compile a Personal Development Plan (PDP) within which any difficulties have agreed goals and action plans
- Complete training courses relevant to the level of the job they are employed to do (see grid below)
- Receive annual mandatory training (e.g. anaphylaxis, Basic Life Support, infection control)
- Received appropriate training for any new or advanced roles

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Professional development support

- Regularly attend practice team meetings with GPs
- Have a source of professional advice and support available through the PCT
- Belong to a professional organisation or union
- Be supported to work within their scope of competence
- Have access to regular, formal clinical supervision
- Belong to a local practice nurse forum/ group

Quality

- Have their competence in a new role assessed by a qualified assessor or the equivalent
- Regularly update protocols based on the latest national guidance
- Maintain a 'competence file' providing a safe record of what they can and cannot do
- Engage in peer review
- Take a full part in accreditation processes
- Contribute to 'Development and Quality Practice Award' if appropriate
- Carry out regular audits
- Evaluate patient satisfaction with nursing care

Training Grid showing preparation and support required for different roles

New GPN	Foundation practice nurse course with practice assessment for competence	Access to mentor, practice nurse trainer and clinical supervisor
Experienced GPN	Level 3 courses on aspects of care, e.g. asthma, diabetes, wound care etc. Regular study days to update knowledge	Access to regular formal clinical supervision and professional advice and support from PCT and/or professional organisation
Specialist Practice Nurse	BSc Specialist Practice and post grad diploma in specialist area Regular study days to update knowledge	As above

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Advanced Nurse Practitioner	MSc Advanced Practice, Nurse Practitioner course, nurse prescribing qualification	As above
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These standards are based on elements of the 'GPN Toolkit' produced by WiPP, an on-line resource for general practice nurses. For more information and guidance on any of the standards and related issues, go to www.wipp.nhs.uk

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