

Varying roles within general practice nursing

Table: Examples of different roles and job titles

Instructions: job roles and titles vary in different locations. Use the outlined roles as examples and discuss them internally. You will then be able to complete the column at the end, which will provide you with a local interpretation of your primary care trust (PCT)/practice requirements.

Role	Outline of typical activities	Experience likely to be required	Qualifications that may be required	Local PCT or practice interpretation, title for this role and any additional activities included
Basic-grade general practice nurse (GPN)	Wide range of duties common within general practice nursing, including health promotion, advice, dressings, ear irrigation and vaccinations	Some post registration general nursing experience usually required	Registered general nurse (RGN)*	
Senior-level GPN/ nurse practitioner	As above plus team leadership, nurse led care without routine GP intervention and first-contact care (with some GP involvement)	Minimum 2 years' GPN experience usually required	RGN*, accredited degree-level course in practice nursing** (eg BSc Honours Specialist Practice – GPN)	

* Essential

** Highly desirable

Role	Outline of typical activities	Experience likely to be required	Qualifications that may be required	Local PCT or practice interpretation, title for this role and any additional activities included
Advanced nurse practitioner ***	Leads on creation of practice policies, clinical guidelines etc; first-contact care without routine GP intervention; clinical teaching for junior staff/ medical students; autonomous management of long-term conditions	Minimum 3 years' GPN experience; competence in clinical examination and assessment	RGN*, Honours degree or higher degree relating to clinical nursing**, extended/ supplementary prescribing qualification, leadership qualification**	
Nurse partner	Clinical activity highly variable but involves investment into a practice, income generation, proportionate share in profits, together with share in decision-making relating to the practice	Minimum 2 years' GPN experience usually required	RGN*, knowledge of financial systems in general practice**	
GPN facilitator/ developer	Works across practices to support the development of GPNs involved in mentorship and educational activities for GPNs	Minimum 2 years' GPN experience usually required	RGN*, first degree in practice nursing**(eg BSc Honours Specialist Practice – GPN)	

* Essential

** Highly desirable

*** Advanced nurse practitioner: From Autumn 2006, this title should be formally recognised by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) – currently pending Privy council approval for nurses who have undertaken significant advanced-level study, usually at Masters degree level. Often these nurses will also be able to prescribe. Nurses using this title will be trained to undertake physical examination and manage many conditions autonomously. The NMC plan to record this title as an additional component on the register. Once this happens there will be a transition period of 3 years during which time existing nurse practitioners can top up their skills to the requisite level to register with the NMC as an advanced nurse practitioner. Nurse practitioner: nurses who currently use the title 'nurse practitioner' will be unable to do so after the transition period has ended. Current nurse practitioners will need to prove to their professional regulatory body that they have the requisite skills to be registered as advanced nurse practitioners or undertake further study to progress to this stage.

Role	Outline of typical activities	Experience likely to be required	Qualifications that may be required	Local PCT or practice interpretation, title for this role and any additional activities included
GPN professional lead	Provides advice and guidance to the PCT or strategic health authority on professional issues; may be responsible for performance management/ clinical governance relating to GPNs	Minimum 3 years' GPN experience	RGN*, first degree in nursing or general practice nursing** (eg BSc Honours Specialist Practice – GPN), higher degree, leadership qualification**	
Specialist GPN	Runs nurse-led clinics in a specific disease area (eg coronary heart disease), provides advice and guidance to the practice on the creation of guidelines and policies relating to this area, designs and undertakes clinical audit; provides education for other GPNs and community nurses	Minimum 3 years' GPN experience	RGN*, first degree course in nursing or general practice nursing,** accredited course in disease-specific management* (eg asthma, diabetes), basic-level teaching/mentorship qualification**	
Lecturer in general practice nursing	Designs and delivers education programmes for GPNs; inputs education relating to GPN role into pre-registration nursing programmes	Minimum 3 years' GPN experience.	RGN*, first degree in nursing or general practice nursing** (eg BSc Honours Specialist Practice – GPN), higher degree,** teaching qualification**	

* Essential

** Highly desirable

Role	Outline of typical activities	Experience likely to be required	Qualifications that may be required	Local PCT or practice interpretation, title for this role and any additional activities included
Head of GPN education	Identifies development needs for GPNs and directs programme development; manages GPN lecturers, liaison with PCTs, workforce development directorates and deaneries	Experience in general practice nursing required	RGN*, first degree in nursing or general practice nursing** (eg BSc Honours Specialist Practice – GPN), higher degree,* teaching qualification*	

*Essential

** Highly desirable

Defining roles in general practice nursing: exemplar definitions

Advanced nurse practitioner

Currently the outcome of the Foster report on health professional regulation is eagerly awaited, following which the NMC will be able to move forward to formally recognise this qualification for nurses who have undertaken significant advanced level of study, usually at masters degree level. Nurses using this title will be trained to undertake physical examination and manage a range of conditions autonomously - many will also be able to prescribe.

The NMC plan to record this title as an additional component on the register. Once this happens there will be a transition period of 3 years during which time existing nurse practitioners can top up their skills to the requisite level to register with the NMC as an advanced nurse practitioner.

Nurse practitioner

Nurses who currently use the title nurse practitioner will be unable to do so after the transition period has ended. Current nurse practitioners will need to prove to their professional regulatory body that they have the requisite skills to be registered as advanced nurse practitioners or undertake further study to progress to this stage.

General practice nurse

A GPN is a registered nurse working in a GP practice to provide a wide range of nursing services, including screening, advice, and treatment to patients. The nurse is usually, but not necessarily, directly employed by the GP.

Job summary

- To undertake a basic health needs assessment of patients in the practice, both on an individual and a group basis
- To deliver health education, health screening and health promotion as both opportunistic and planned interventions
- To undertake clinical management of patients in accordance with practice protocols and evidence-based practice
- To contribute to determining the health needs of the practice population

Qualifications

- NMC registered nurse

Experience/skills required

- A minimum of 1 year's post-registration experience is highly desirable
- An introductory course in practice nursing should be undertaken within the first year of employment in this role

Accountability

- Professional – all registered nurses have professional accountability to the NMC and a commitment to work within their scope of practice
- Employment – accountability to their employer

Roles and responsibilities

- *Advise patients on general health, preventative health care and minor ailments, with referral to the GP as required*
- *Provide screening to the practice population*
- *Work according to practice guidelines, protocols and patient group directions*
- *Undertake delegated tasks under the direction of the GP. These are likely to include: venepuncture, cervical cytology, ear irrigation, blood pressure measurements, urine testing, dressings, immunisations and performing electrocardiograms*
- *Provide nursing treatments to the practice population, as required*
- *Maintain supplies and equipment used*
- *Provide health promotion advice within individual consultations*
- *Undertake monitoring and provide advice within chronic disease management, as directed by the GP*
- *Assist in the creation and maintenance of disease registers for the practice population*
- *Assist with minor surgical procedures*
- *Liaise with and refer to multi-disciplinary staff to provide optimal patient care*
- *Participate in the education and training of students of all disciplines working within the practice*
- *Assist with audit*
- *Undertake further education and training in order to gain or maintain competences within general practice*
- *Maintain personal professional status by ensuring current NMC requirements are met, including registration and indemnity with a professional organisation*
- *Comply with health and safety regulations, fire regulations and complaints procedures, in accordance with PCT guidelines*
- *Follow good practice for equal opportunities, culture and diversity, in relations with NHS colleagues and patients alike*

The following role definitions provide examples of what could be included in various GPN roles. They should only be used as examples and not as definitive parts of that role.

- Delegated duties – accountable to medical colleagues whose patients they may be assessing

A specialist practitioner is an experienced practice nurse who has undertaken further study in primary care enabling strategic management of patients and the ability to determine the health needs of the practice population.

Specialist practitioner (general practice nursing)

Job summary

- To initiate and deliver skilled nursing interventions in response to the needs of the practice population
- To monitor and improve standards of care within the practice setting
- To provide skilled, professional leadership

Qualifications

- First-level NMC registered nurse
- Recordable qualification of 'specialist practitioner' (NMC)
- If this title has been awarded after 1998 it will have been attained through the successful completion of BSc (Honours) specialist practice nursing (general practice nursing)
- If this title has been awarded between 1 November 1995 and 31 October 1998, it will have been attained through the successful completion of either A51 Diploma in specialist practice (general practice nursing) or portfolio accreditation from the English National Board (ENB)

Experience/skills required

- A minimum of 3 years' post-registration experience, 1 year of which should be in practice nursing
- Experience of audit

Accountability

- Professional – all registered nurses have professional accountability to the NMC and a commitment to work within their scope of practice
- Employment – accountability to their employer

Roles and responsibilities

- *Develop specific clinics or services to meet the identified needs of patients, with a focus on quality, range and accessibility of services*
- *Develop, initiate and manage a variety of nurse-led services*
- *Work with GPs and other professionals to continually develop clinical skills, standards, protocols, guidelines and patient group directions to ensure safe and appropriate care*
- *Undertake and maintain a practice profile to identify the needs of the practice population*
- *Ensure the needs of the practice population are being addressed through co-ordinated input from the multi-disciplinary team*
- *Be responsible for the referral and signposting of patients to appropriate agencies and discharge patients from episodes of care on completion of treatment*

- *Ensure the delivery of nursing care within the practice is evidence-based and that practice is clinically reviewed through episodes of reflection and clinical supervision*
- *Liaise with other specialist practitioners (eg health visitors and district nurses) to create a unified strategy for the management of patients with chronic disease*
- *Participate in the development and implementation of new initiatives within primary care*
- *Manage, support, supervise (where required) and teach other practice nurses employed within the practice*
- *Ensure the developmental needs of practice nursing staff are formally identified and endeavour to create opportunities to meet these needs*
- *Develop the role of specialist practitioner in consultation with the GP, nursing team and PCT*
- *Demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning linked to the changing needs of patients*
- *Actively engage in multi-disciplinary and multi-agency referral processes*
- *Lead in audit processes and incorporate patient involvement in standard settings*
- *Attend and participate in staff meetings, case conference and other meetings, as required*
- *Maintain personal professional status by ensuring current NMC requirements are met, including current registration and indemnity with a professional organisation*
- *Assist in the maintenance of a safe environment and identification of potential risks for all patients and personnel within the practice setting*
- *Comply with health and safety regulations, fire regulations and complaints procedures, in accordance with PCT guidelines*
- *Demonstrate active participation in clinical governance*
- *Follow good practice for equal opportunities, culture and diversity, in your relations with NHS colleagues and patients alike*

- Delegated duties – accountable to medical colleagues whose patients they may be assessing

An advanced nurse practitioner is a registered nurse, educated to Masters degree level, who works autonomously, undertaking a variety of roles that would be beyond the normal scope of registered nurses. They will also have a leadership function and be pivotal in pioneering new ways of working.

Advanced nurse practitioner

Job summary

- To develop evidence-based nursing interventions through the application of critically evaluated research
- To play a key role in the education of the primary care team
- To provide expert clinical skills, undertake physical assessment and formulate diagnoses to initiate treatment/ advice in a primary care setting

Qualifications

- NMC registered nurse
- Honours degree in clinical nursing that incorporates assessment skills or a higher degree in advanced clinical nursing that incorporates advanced assessment skills

- Extended/supplementary nurse prescribing

Experience/skills required

- A minimum of 5 years' post-registration experience
- Experience of undertaking research
- Experience of teaching
- Physical-assessment skills

Accountability

- Professional – all registered nurses have professional accountability to the NMC and a commitment to work within their scope of practice
- Employment – accountability to their employer

Roles and responsibilities

- *Undertake individual physical assessments and formulate differential diagnoses for patients with a range of conditions*
- *Provide or recommend appropriate treatments according to differential diagnoses and identified/negotiated patient needs*
- *Undertake first-contact work and implement treatment programmes within your scope of practice*
- *Develop the role of advanced nurse practitioner in consultation with the GP, nursing team and PCT*
- *Disseminate relevant research findings in order to ensure that evidence-based care is dynamic*
- *Be responsible for the referral and signposting of patients to appropriate agencies, including secondary care, and discharge patients from episodes of care on completion of treatment*
- *Initiate the development of clinical standards, protocols, guidelines and patient group directions with input from other health professionals to ensure safe and appropriate care*
- *Identify the needs of the practice population and develop an implementation strategy*
- *Advise on the management of nurse-led services at a clinical and operational level*
- *Participate in the development of nursing strategies within the PCT*
- *Provide clinical leadership to the nursing team and promote collaborative working relationships between all members of the multi-disciplinary team*
- *Undertake teaching sessions and develop educational packages for nurses within the practice and the PCT*
- *Provide advice, motivation and leadership for audit and research within the practice*
- *Lead and participate in staff meetings, case conference and other meetings, as required*
- *Maintain personal professional status by ensuring current NMC requirements are met, including current registration and indemnity with a professional organisation*
- *Comply with health and safety regulations, fire regulations and complaints procedures, in accordance with PCT guidelines*
- *Adopt the lead role for clinical governance and research within the practice*
- *Follow good practice for equal opportunities, culture and diversity, in your relations with NHS colleagues and patients alike*