

# Healthcare Support Worker Case Study

Healthcare Assistant and Assistant Practitioner questionnaire

## **Please tell us your name**

Ann Witcomb

## **Tell us about your role, where you work and how long you have been in post**

Senior HCA at The Westerham Practice where I have worked for 10 years. Here I support & work with two Junior HCAs. Part of my role here is liaison between HCAs, the Lead Registered Nurse, Practice Manager & GPs. Alongside general clinics I assist with the training & mentoring of HCAs, devise HCA protocols and work on a variety of administration tasks such as keeping the anticoagulation register up to date.

I am also employed as Practice Nursing Assistant at Hildenborough & Tonbridge Medical Group. I have worked there on and off for 30 years but only 6 years in a clinical role. My work here is mainly clinical, general clinics and assisting in the Minor Ops clinic but I also order and organise stock such as medical instruments and pathology supplies.

## **What qualifications and experience did you have prior to coming into the role?**

In 1990 I attained the Association of medical secretaries, Practice managers, Administrators and receptionists (AMSPAR) Diploma in Medical Reception whilst working in a reception/admin role.

Clinical qualifications include Knowledge and Skills in Primary Care (KaSPaC) course plus a variety of courses & certificates related to clinical skills e.g. Ear Irrigation

## **Describe a typical working day**

Working in General Practice means that the shifts are fairly 'normal' working days, typically 8.30am until 6pm with an hour for lunch. I always try to arrive early so that I can get any equipment ready I might need. On a Monday I do a general clinic in the mornings. This could include seeing patients for procedures such as spirometry, ECG, blood tests, ear irrigation, dressings, INR testing, removal of sutures, BP checks, flu, pneumonia and B12 injections.

On a Monday afternoon I assist the GPs with a Minor Ops clinic. My work involves preparing the room, making sure we maintain a sterile environment, record keeping, preparing the patient and making sure they are at ease, getting the correct instruments ready for the GP, cutting sutures, dressing wounds & giving patients post op advice. At the end of the day I make sure all paperwork and records are up to date plus clean and tidy the Minor Ops room.

### **Describe how you make a difference**

Over the years I feel I have made a difference at both practices by moving the role of HCA forward. When I first started in a clinical role, HCAs were only expected to perform ECGs & blood tests. Since those days I have continually strived to develop the role and undertake as much training as possible to be able to undertake the wide range of clinical procedures I do today.

I also feel I make a difference in other ways by being a voice for HCAs within the team. From the patient's perspective I hope I am a reassuring, familiar face who can refer them on to other members of the team if necessary.

### **Tell us about the training, education and career opportunities you have**

We are lucky in Kent to have the KaSPac course as a foundation for HCAs in General Practice. The course now incorporates the Care Certificate. As the role of the HCA expands I am always on the lookout for courses to extend my skills. There are opportunities available to complete a Foundation Degree to become an AP and also with the appropriate training and academic qualifications there are routes into Registered Nursing.

- **Did you complete any training to prepare for your role?**

KaSPaC & other courses related to clinical skills

- **Are you currently undertaking any education/training programmes?**

Not at present

### **Thinking about your team**

#### **Describe the support you are given**

Registered Nurses and GPs are always willing to listen & support if needed

- **Do you mentor or support colleagues?**

Yes, I have assisted with the training of 4 HCAs of the years. This has included acting as a mentor.

### **What are your aspirations for the future?**

I want to continue to develop my role as much as possible whilst continuing to support HCAs new to the role. Making sure they get the correct training and support is something I am passionate about.

### **Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your role?**

The role of HCSW in General Practice is busy & tiring at times but always rewarding

**Are you a member of the RCN?**

Yes

**If yes: have you used any of our services?**

No

**If yes: do you have any feedback?**

N/A

**Thank-you for your participation**