

Participant Information pack – General Practices (Phase 1)

General Practice Nurses: articulating
their role and their value

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General Practice Nurses: articulating their role and their value

NHS England/NHS Improvement, and Sonnet should like to invite your practice to take part in our research study. Before you decide, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read this information, and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information, please ask us.

Legal basis for research for studies

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1. What is the evaluation about?

We are exploring and articulating the role General Practice Nurses (GPNs) play within General Practices, in the wider healthcare system, the effect of GPNs on services to patients, and their effect within the wider community, including the benefits their presence and work brings to other public service agencies. The results will be used to inform and promote future development of the roles of GPNs in practices in England.

2. Who has commissioned the evaluation ?

The research has been commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement as part of their GPN 10 Point Plan programme of work.

3. Context and objectives of the study

GPNs for many years have been an important part of primary care services. They have been the mainstay of the workforce in primary care that have delivered on the QoF. In the current context of the lack of GPs the role of the GPN is even more important. Many practices have realised that they bring more value than that, and support community wellbeing in wider ways.

However, that value has not been articulated, and no measurement framework has been put around their roles to evidence it. It is understood that the public values their presence, but why: what is it about them that is so special ? What is the effect on the patient, on the practice, and on the community ? How does that effect arise, and what could make them more effective ? How can opportunities for improvement within Primary Care Networks (PCNs) be identified and embraced ? How can we best maintain and develop GPN-led services and support ?

An evaluation is proposed that will develop answers to these questions and more. The findings will inform action, and will meet the following objectives:

- Recognise and articulate the value that GPNs bring to the practice and the wider PCN and the communities within which they sit

- Identify the enablers and blockers to GPNs delivering that value so that they may be addressed
- Develop the profession's voice and influence
- Grow the inflow of expertise into this branch of nursing
- Encourage investment in the further development of the role of GPNs
- Develop guidance for PCNs as to how to get the best out of the presence of GPNs
- Provide a foundation for leadership and other training.

4. *How will the evaluation be approached ?*

It will do that through a mixed method study in two phases:

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| ■ Phase 1 | From July to early October 2020 | Developing the outline view and framework of impacts achieved, together with selected relevant metrics |
| ■ Phase 2 | From mid October 2020 to February 2021 | Testing that view with a different group of participant practices to challenge it, develop it further, and explore it in different social and demographic contexts |

Phase 1 (covered by this information sheet) will have as its core three Action Research (AR) Groups of six or seven GPNs drawn from the participating practices, so probably spanning three or four practices to get the numbers. Each of the three will be drawn from different areas of England so that the evaluation team can gain insight into what are the common experiences, and the differences between them. They will meet twice, for a half a day each time to explore together, with facilitation by the Sonnet team:

- In workshop 1: Their own, and shared experiences of working in their roles within the practices, drawing out themes, focusing on the value being delivered and for whom, and what enablers and blockers they encounter, and tackle, in delivering that value.
- In workshop 2: Looking at the findings from the study at the end of that phase and considering whether that fairly reflects their views and experiences, and, drawing on that and their own further thoughts since the first workshop, what changes of view they have had.

The AR Groups will look at the effects the GPNs are having in three arenas:

1. Within the practice itself
2. Amongst patients and their families
3. Within the wider community and amongst other public service agencies and services.

The Sonnet team will guide the discussions with structures for approaching them to encourage the exploration. They will also be drawing upon systems thinking in looking at how the GPNs within the practices operate within existing systems and structures (human, financial and infrastructure) within their local area and how that helps or hinders their impact.

The themes and structures coming from the AR Groups will be further explored by the Sonnet team after the first workshop by:

- A focused literature review
- Interviews with other professionals within the participating practices – two or three of these, with a GP, the Practice Manager, and possibly one other
- Interviews with external professionals, agencies and officers spanning the fields within which the GPN is possibly having an effect. These will be expected to include schools, police, social care, and local authority (children's services or more generally), but that list will be adapted or expended depending on the themes coming out of the

AR Groups. For example if one practice has an important joint project with schools, Sonnet would want to talk to a representative from the schools involved.

- Analysis of practice financial and operational information to understand the cost-benefit enjoyed by having GPNs in place. *We will explain below the safeguards put in place to protect your privacy around practice information.*
- Analysis and synthesis of information by the Sonnet team.

A Steering Group, predominantly made up of senior nurses, and partly drawn from the GPNs Regional Board and NHS England will be supporting the research by reviewing and commenting on findings as they emerge. They will not have access to practice-specific or person-specific data.

Phase 2 will review the findings from phase 1 through a similar process, and with a similar three area-based groups of GPNs sharing their experiences. It, too, will be supported with interviews and financial analysis, as well as seeking input from Patient Representative Groups for the participating practices in phase 2.

5. Why has my general practice been asked to take part?

We are asking General practices across England that employ GPNs to take part in this study.

You have been approached by your Regional GPNs Lead for NHS England because you are a practice which is known not just to employ nurses, but to be exploring how they can fit within and bring real value to the practice and the community it serves. This is an important project for the Health Service, and we need to draw upon your experience, and to test with you and like-minded practices how to develop those roles positively for the public good and the benefit and sustainability of the practices in which they fit.

With that in mind, we are looking for:

In participant practices (phase 1)

- With one or more GPN, ideally spanning more than one of the five levels of GPN qualification
- Having been established in their area and community (with GPN in place) for at least two, and ideally five years
- Willing to let the GPN participate
- Willing to let two or three other professionals from the practice give an interview of up to one hour
- Willing to share and discuss financial data (in confidence (see 9 below)
- Willing to support the Sonnet team in engaging with other agencies and influencers in the local area

In participant GPNs (phase 1)

- In post in that participant practice, or another in that same area, for two or more years
- Willing to participate in two workshops of 2.5 to 3 hours each – late July, and September
- Willing to think about their role and the stories they are telling, and feedback further thoughts between the two workshops

6. What commitment are you seeking from this practice ?

The commitment from your practice needs to be to the whole of phase 1. In particular it involves:

- Allowing two of your GPNs to participate in the two workshops and to be willing to feed back any thoughts that may come to them in between the two; encouraging them to get involved;

- Providing financial and other practice information on a confidential basis as outlined in section 10 below, together with appropriate explanations to aid interpretation;
- Making two or three other staff available for interview;
- Supporting the team in contacting key stakeholders within other local agencies and organisations to be interviewed for the study.

7. What does being involved in this study require from my general practice?

We will be asking your practice to provide us with some financial and operational information about your practice. This is to help us understand how GPNs can be part of an effective general practice business model and to give context to the financial benefits of involving them.

We will invite also the GPNs in your practice to take part in two workshops of 2½ to 3 hours' duration. Under strict agreements of confidentiality they will participate with up to six other GPNs from other practices in your area, jointly exploring their roles within their practices, with patients and their families, and in the wider community, including their interaction with other public services agencies. We will also be asking to conduct a short interview with one or two other members of your practice's staff, further exploring the GPNs' roles.

We may also do some follow up calls with other staff members, such as your practice manager.

8. Where will this take place?

In order to keep everyone safe, and reduce travelling time for participants, we will hold the workshops 'virtually' via a secure video conferencing service. One-to-one interviews may be by video conference or telephone.

9. How often will my staff have to take part, and for how long?

We will provide you with a request for information in the next week and should be grateful for a response within two weeks.

There will be two participant workshops for GPNs, each lasting 2.5 -3 hours. The first will be scheduled for late July or early August, and the second for late September or early October.

The interviews will be of between 40 minutes and an hour each.

10. Will I be asked for commercially sensitive information? How do I know this won't be shared with other General practices?

We will be asking you for financial information such as management accounts, and some staff cost information. We will analyse this data to understand how employing GPNs contributes to your business model.

However we will not be sharing any of your financial information with third parties, or other participants or publishing it in any way. We will retain the data on secure systems without time limit and we will use it to analyse costs and produce a blended view of cost, working across all participating practices.

Financial and other practice information will be provided confidentially to Sonnet, which is a firm registered with the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, so covered by professional standards. All data will be securely stored. A confidentiality agreement is available if required. Such confidential material will be used by

the consultants for producing a blended analysis that will mean the original data is not shared outside Sonnet, and cannot be discerned from published results.

AR groups are conducted under the Chatham House rule. They will be recorded by the consultants, who will also take notes, but material drawn from them will not identify the person who provided it, nor will it quote directly from them, without their specific consent.

11. Are there any possible risks or disadvantages in taking part?

We do not believe there are any risks or disadvantages to taking part, but are happy to discuss with you any concerns or questions you may have.

12. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We hope that taking part in this research will help you and your team reflect on the role of GPNs, and how they can be used effectively within General Practice. Participating with other professionals in a controlled Action Research setting enables them to reflect on their own experiences in the company of others, so bringing the opportunity for wider learning. The practice as a whole gains the chance to reflect on how they could enhance the effectiveness of the GPNs within the practice, and how all the professionals could gain more from their presence. It should also be an opportunity to profile the practice positively within the local area.

13. When will I have the opportunity to discuss my participation?

We can arrange an opportunity for you to discuss with the team any questions or concerns you may have. Participant GPNs will get a further opportunity to discuss their involvement during a briefing on the workshops, held around a week before the workshop is scheduled.

14. Will anyone be able to connect me with what is recorded and reported?

The information and data, including any recordings of workshops or interviews, will be retained by Sonnet or its co-evaluators, Sheffield Hallam University, securely but without time limit. They can use the data, or share the results from its analysis, with NHS England/NHS Improvement, to inform future research and evaluation, or for updating or republishing this evaluation. All data will however be retained or shared within the limits of commercial and personal confidentiality imposed at the outset.

The data gathered from you, and from your team, will be used to underpin our findings, but will not be disclosed in the final report or supporting papers.

We will, however, with your consent, want to publish your name as a practice that contributed to phase 1, as one of the participators. If you prefer not to agree to that it is not a problem, but it may nevertheless, given the area being studied, be possible for a reader of the report to guess which practices were involved.

15. Who will be responsible for all of the information when this study is over?

The information and data will be retained confidentially and securely by Sonnet or Sheffield Hallam University.

16. How will you use what you find out?

The evaluation will be used to produce a report which articulates the role and value of GPNs, and a framework within which to measure the impacts of the role in future. The evaluation will be used by NHS England and NHS Improvement CNO Nursing Directorate to inform direction of the profession.

17. How long is the whole study likely to last?

This whole study will last for 9 months, but this covers two phases. The participation of a practice will be limited to half of that period. In the case of phase 1, that spans July to early or mid-October 2020.

18. How can I find out about the results of the study?

The final findings are expected to be published by NHS England/NHS Improvement.

Details of who to contact if you have any concerns or if adverse effects occur after the study are given below.

Researcher/ Research Team Details:

You should contact Jim Clifford OBE by email contact@sonnetimpact.co.uk if:

- you have a query about how your data is used by Sonnet Advisory & Impact CIC
- you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately)
- you would like to complain about how Sonnet Advisory & Impact CIC has used your personal data

Postal address: Sonnet Advisory and Impact C.I.C, 45 Flitwick Road, Ampthill, Bedfordshire, MK45 2NS

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