



**Healthy London
Partnership**

Salaried Trainee Practice Manager Programme

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Confederation**



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Background

Practice manager burn-out is a recognised problem in the primary care setting, and one that is discussed widely on various forums and networks. With this in mind we looked at ways in which we could address the current practice management workforce issues.

We have also been looking at the future ability to increase the workforce capacity to ensure primary care is able to respond to the changing NHS landscape and effectively contribute to the transforming primary care agenda, the care closer to home vision, and the primary care and community contribution to the transformation agenda.

City and Hackney GP federation created a training programme that would give individuals the skills to do the Practice manager role and feel equipped when carrying out their duties.

Challenges and opportunities

Salaried Trainee Practice Manager Programme

Challenges

- In City and Hackney many of our GP practices are managing a number of practice manager vacancies, some for over 12 months.
- The turnover of the practice manager workforce locally and nationally is increasing.
- A number of our current practice managers will be looking to retire over the next few years.
- The practice manager role requires a wide range of skills, and over recent years has become more complex as primary care has expanded and the health economy becomes more integrated.
- The old model of 'learning on the job' isn't a sustainable one for the future.

Opportunities

- Opportunities for those who want to go into leadership and management in primary care e.g. non-clinical staff.
- A sustainable model for the future of practice manager recruitment.
- Home grown talent of Practice managers and retaining them in our practices to address turnover and vacancies.
- A well-run, structured and accredited programme that balances practical and theory. This will help to prepare Practice Manager trainees for a role that requires a wide range of skills, and over recent years has become more complex.
- An opportunity for Practice Managers to work, learn and share best practice and resources across practices in our confederation, building our organisational capabilities.



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Salaried Trainee Practice Manager Programme

The programme developed by City and Hackney GP Confederation, and accredited by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) is the only competency based 'Salaried Trainee Practice Manager Programme' in the UK that incorporates both theoretical and practical learning, as well as ongoing trainee support. The programme consists of:

- A 12 month modular Programme – a different topic is covered each month.
- Theoretical and practical learning (1 day per week theory & 4 days per week with their host Practice Manager mentor in General Practice).

Each trainee has a Practice manager mentor, and they are provided with additional learning opportunities (e.g. monthly facilitated Learning Sets, peer learning, conferences), a competency workbook and project assignments. Theoretical support is usually provided by highly skilled, experienced and competent trainers sourced from various backgrounds including NHS, business and industry.

Previously, the role was learnt on the job. This pilot would train, equip and skill up practice managers so they understood budgets, income generation, quality improvement, managing change, modelling the workforce, staff management and the many variables that the role can bring.



Salaried Trainee Practice Manager Programme

IMPLEMENTATION

We received funding through our community education provider network (CEPN) to pilot the programme to help us with our succession planning.

We explored across the country for similar programmes, existed but we found nothing that met our needs so we developed a bespoke 12 month programme.

We advertised on the NHS job site for six candidates and had to close the post after a week due to an overwhelming number of applications

RUNNING THE PROGRAMME

The programme ran from September 2017 to August 2018. The programme comprised of twelve modules, one day a week. Each module covered a four week period, tailored to specific subjects including HR, workforce and managing patients and staff. It also involved exposing trainees to transformation and sustainability approaches.

We also recruited a co-ordinator for the programme. This was invaluable. This person played a vital role in the successful delivery of the programme and in supporting our host practices. We also had a practice manager who acted as a mentor to the trainees. Both the trainees and the co-ordinator were employed by the GP Confederation to ensure consistency in the experience and participation of trainees in the programme.

The co-ordinator liaised between the practices involved, the trainers and the training providers. This built up a library of resources such as presentations and training schedules. They were also pivotal in getting the programme accredited with the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP).

We are now doing an evaluation of the programme and are keen to roll this out to other localities.

Achievements and lessons learned

Salaried Trainee Practice Manager Programme

Achievements

The key to the success of this programme was the collaboration between the GP Confederation and the training providers, having shared resources and trainers, host practices, a co-ordinator to manage the process and a mentor to support the trainees over the twelve months.

We have retained two of our trainees in City and Hackney who are secured posts in their host practices. Two of the remaining trainees have secured practice manager roles in localities in London and one has secured a practice manager role in a private wing of an NHS organisation.

Lessons Learned

The challenge we faced was keeping the programme practical and relevant, ensuring that what was learnt in the 'classroom' was easily applicable to being on the job. Also, the feedback from the participants, which we are looking to incorporate into the programme, was that they would have found it useful to see and play about with mock finance systems that were similar to the ones currently in use at practice level.

The trainees were keen to incorporate practice sessions to test out systems and processes which we build into the programme where appropriate for example the trainees had a day on EMIS provided by an EMIS trainer. They also practice doing a mini mock CQC inspection in their practice and fed the outcome back to the other trainees.



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Testimonials

Salaried Trainee Practice Manager Programme

Practice Manager Trainee (2017/18)	<i>This training course has been an invaluable experience for me. The theory days have provided me with an extensive knowledge of the Practice Manager role and having a Practice Manager Mentor has enabled me to gain the confidence to put this knowledge into practice.</i>
Grace Neal – Programme Coordinator	<i>I feel very privileged to have coordinated and delivered such an innovative, comprehensive and forward thinking bespoke programme, that addressed both the practical and academic aspects of Practice Management. We delivered on our commitment to produce high quality practice managers of the future.</i>
Sue Neville - Host Manager	<i>For me the Practice Manager Trainee programme was a big success. I was very lucky to get a candidate who was exceptionally talented and who quickly became indispensable. We worked very well together and I was pleased that at the end of her training she was more than ready to take on a role as Practice Manager. The training itself was comprehensive and enhanced by the trainees being in practice on a daily basis, preparing them for the real world! (Unlike other training programmes). My trainee is now happily employed in a Practice and I know that she was grateful to be given the opportunity to take the course and enhance her career choices. The concept of working in conjunction with training is novel in the world of Practice Management but as the majority of trainees now have management posts it obviously works. A very rewarding year all round.</i>
Representative from City and Hackney GP Confederation	<i>It has been a pleasure and privilege to deliver some of the training and action learning set facilitation on this programme, and I have been impressed by the calibre of the trainees. The structure of the programme enables trainees to put regular classroom based learning into practice and reflect each month through peer learning on their experience and learning. The support provided to the trainees from the Programme Co-ordinator and host Practice Manager mentors has been exceptional, and I can think of no other programme I have been involved in which has provided such a high level of development support and input. The programme is a great example of a GP Confederation and member GP practice working collaboratively to tackle a critical workforce challenge.</i>



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Contact details

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