

Park Medical Practice, Shepton Mallet

Our Superb Advanced Nurse Practitioners

About the practice

We are a relatively large practice of just over 11,000 patients situated in the old market town of Shepton Mallet in



Somerset. Like many other practices we are continually looking to improve our services and manage the increasing demands on the practice. We were particularly keen to explore ways of meeting the needs of a growing number of patients who request same day services and about 5 years ago we introduced our first Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP). The role has developed incrementally and we now employ 4 ANPs who provide 3 whole time equivalent of cover and manage the majority of our on-the-day requests. With the national and local shortage of GPs, our growing population and the huge potential that ANPs offer, we thought it a wise decision and haven't looked back.

How the ANP roles work here

ANPs see almost all of the same day demand, around 25 patients each per day each. Standard appointments are 10 minutes long. The nurses cover 9.00am to 5.00pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and 10.00am to 7.00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Each nurse has 3 bookable routine appointments and 1 "catch up slot" to cater for admin or overruns. In addition, 1 appointment with each GP is retained for patients referred directly by the nurses. Our ANPs are able to manage 95% of on-the-day patients without additional support.

They also:

- Undertake home visits
- Provide long term condition clinics e.g. COPD and women's health clinics
- Visit local nursing homes on a weekly basis and undertake annual visits to nursing homes with a pharmacist

What has made the roles work well for us

- The nurses are all non-medical prescribers and have the same level of professional indemnity as the GPs, via the Medical Defence Union
- Access to the Duty Doctor and other GPs is available at any time throughout the day. The nurses don't have to wait outside the GPs rooms for advice between patients.
- We hold a daily lunchtime meeting involving the whole clinical team during which the nurses often check out issues and gain advice.

- We provide regular training and development sessions for the ANPs with the GPs on specific topics. Most recently these have covered head injuries, gastric problems, IT, EMIS templates
- The nurses all have advanced knowledge in certain areas e.g. Long term conditions, Women's Health, Dermatology. We play to these strengths and direct patients accordingly
- The nurses do not wear uniforms, just like the GPs
- Choosing the right person is key. Good clinical skills as well as being able to work as part of the team are really important. With the right support, the ANPs can manage a lot of patients' needs
- We have found that patients have quickly got used to seeing the nurses but information and education for patients about these roles is essential

Benefits of the roles

The roles have freed up GP time and enabled us to have a really effective duty doctor system. Patients say they like being seen by the nurses and it has improved access to on the day appointments. The ANPs have broadened the range of professionals and perspectives at the practice which also feels positive.

Quotes from patients

Person 1: "they fit you in quickly, I called this morning and was seen this morning"

Person 2: "the nurse gave me all the advice I needed"

Person 3: "just like a GP they can prescribe, they are caring and can deal with most things"

View from one of our GPs: They are "brilliant, good team players, enthusiastic, hardworking, willing to take on challenges, great at building rapport with patients" - Dr Amelia Randle

Future developments in support of ANPs would include: National recognition and definition of the role by the Royal College of Nursing, more specific local training for ANPs, opportunities for ANPs in Somerset to network.

To find out more: To find out more about the team please contact either: Debby Hellard, (Lead Advanced Nurse Practitioner) debby.hellard@nhs.net Andrew Dorgan (Practice Manager) andrew.dorgan@nhs.net or Dr Geoff Sharp (Senior GP Partner) geoff.sharp1@nhs.net