



**PWYLLGOR DIWYLLIANT, POBL A DATBLYGU SEFYDLIADOL  
PEOPLE, ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CULTURE COMMITTEE**

<b>DYDDIAD Y CYFARFOD: DATE OF MEETING:</b>	15 February 2024
<b>TEITL YR ADRODDIAD: TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	General Practice Physicians Associate Development Programme
<b>CYFARWYDDWR ARWEINIOL: LEAD DIRECTOR:</b>	Jill Paterson, Director Primary Care, Community and Long Term Care
<b>SWYDDOG ADRODD: REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Alexander Maiello, GP-PA Development Manager

**Pwrpas yr Adroddiad (dewiswch fel yn addas)**

**Purpose of the Report (select as appropriate)**

Er Gwybodaeth/For Information

**ADRODDIAD SCAA**

**SBAR REPORT**

**Sefyllfa / Situation**

Members are asked to note the work undertaken as part of the General Practitioners Physicians Associate (GP-PA) Development Programme formally established under the former Pacesetter Programme, as well as an update on the recruitment of GP PAs into Health Board Managed Practices as part of the implementation of the Primary Care Model for Wales.

**Cefndir / Background**

The GP PA Development Programme was originally developed and implemented as part of the former Pacesetter Programme, however due to challenges in recruitment and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a delay in being able to appoint the GP PA Development Manager, who was eventually appointed in June 2021. Following their appointment and as part of the Pacesetter programme the GP-PA Development Manager had a placement within a GP Practice in North Ceredigion where they received mentorship and clinical oversight from the lead GP who had been part of the initial programme to scope the potential to support the development of PAs in General Practice.

The programme however was implemented with the development of a two-year Primary Care Physician Associate Development Pathway for post qualification enhanced training, educational and professional support for PAs who were looking for a career in General Practice, thus enabling them to become more autonomous and well-rounded clinicians in all aspects of clinical practice. The original Pacesetter project was aimed at recruiting Band 7 GP PAs into the Ceredigion Clusters to align with Powys Teaching University Health Board where there was a similar programme in development. The aspiration of the programme was also aligned to the principles of the Primary Care Model for Wales as well as seeking to support workforce sustainability in GP Practices. Within the two-year programme it is anticipated that by their eighteenth month there will be the opportunity for substantive employment through one or more of the GP Practices.

The programme enables qualified PAs to work across a number of clinical areas in secondary care including Accident and Emergency (A&E) and Mental Health, with further experience

sought from Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Paediatrics and Sexual and Reproductive Medicine (where opportunity arises) for part of their week (two days) with six month rotational placements, with other three days working in GP Practices within the Cluster with a period of rotation every eight months so that they are able to maximise the development of their skills within a supportive environment. The scope of practice is attached at *Appendix 1*. Professional development and leadership is provided through the GP-PA Development Manager and additional clinical leadership is provided through the hosting GP Practice.

Again, due to the pandemic recruitment into the programme has proven to be challenging and despite significant initial interest only two GP PAs have been recruited in line with the original aspirations of the pilot. The North Ceredigion Cluster has remained committed to the programme and have continued with the project when the Pacesetter funding ceased. The first GP PA started in April 2022, and the second in December 2022. There are aspirations to recruit a third GP PA into the programme.

Alongside the GP PA Development Programme, two further GP PAs have been recruited to work in Ash Grove Surgery and Meddygfa Minafon/Sarn. As part of their development, as they had been recruited outside of the GP PA Development Programme a commitment was given to support their ongoing education and development by providing some sessional time in the Minor Injuries Unit in Prince Philip Hospital. Whilst this was an initial success, due to workforce pressures in Managed Practices that started to emerge in August/September 2022, this arrangement came to an end. Professional supervision is still through the GP-PA Development Manager with clinical supervision provided through the Clinical Lead GPs within both Practices.

Through working with HEIW who have shown significant interest in this programme through initial conversations about the establishment of Primary and Community Academies, the Development Manager has secured the use of the GP Medical Appraisal and Revalidation System (MARS) pilot portal which allows for in-depth oversight and support to those PAs participating in the programme.

The General Medical Council (GMC) have been asked to regulate Physicians Associates and are in the process of progressing this, with consultation anticipated to be undertaken in 2024 which will be followed by Regulation.

The GMC have released outlines for ongoing professional development, with a mandate to provide written portfolio evidence of CPD, in-line with those required of doctors. This replaces the previous system of annual Continuing Professional Development (CPD) portfolio evidence, with a requirement to revalidate their qualification by sitting the written portion of the PA National Exam. The efforts made between the Health Board and Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) to employ MARS GP Portal as a formalise CPD and annual appraisal review system has pre-empted this change and instilled a well-designed, familiar and ergonomic system in place for future GP-PA annual appraisal and professional revalidation.

To spearhead PA integration and role development in Wales, the PA Role Group was created between Health Board PA ambassadors across Wales, with close support and input from HEIW. This group meets twice monthly and is attended by the GP-PA Development Manager and a Workforce representative. The aims for this group include post identification and recruitment planning, role overview and promotion and wider role development and engagement, with the inclusion of future role planning to further inform HEIW and set expectations for course place commissioning in Bangor and Swansea Medical Schools for PA-students.

## Asesiad / Assessment

### **GP PA Development Programme**

Whilst the programme has been slower than anticipated to get started and has been mainstreamed through the substantive appointment of the Development Manager who now undertakes their clinical component within the Health Board Managed Practices, there has been limited interest from other Clusters in seeking to fund further posts into the programme. There is the potential that following a review of the Primary Care budgets, and in support to the proactive sustainability work undertaken by the team that part funding of posts could be considered for the two-year programme, which may assist in improving the scope and remit of the programme. Each GP PA post costs circa £53k per annum.

Further communications work on the scope and remit of the role needs to be undertaken and will form part of the Communications plan that is being developed for Primary Care. The Primary and Community Services Academy held a PA development day in November 2023 with a follow up session to be held jointly with Advanced Paramedic Practitioners in February 2024 which will promote the use of these roles in General Practice.

In practice, due to delay in recruitment to the initial posts, Pacesetter funding was not able to be used for the inaugural GP-PA Pathway cohort, and so the funding for the current three cohorts of three GP-PAs has been funded entirely by North Ceredigion Cluster. Pacesetter funding has subsequently ceased and is now referred to as the Strategic Programme for Primary Care Fund (SPPC) which has had revised categorisations for spending over the last two years.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that our current GP-PAs are as well-equipped and supported throughout their enhanced guided experience, we are now faced with the prospect of our first cohort completing the programme in March 2024. Thus far, we have no confirmed contract of employment for this GP-PA to take up a substantive role in a GP Practice in North Ceredigion.

### **Managed Practices**

Consideration needs to be given to the job planning for the GP PAs working in Managed Practices to ensure that they have education, training and development opportunities that allow them to build their confidence and range of skills. Unfortunately, due to workforce pressures and traditional ways of working this has not been re-established and discussions are being progressed to ensure that this is reconsidered and built back into their clinical time.

In Managed Practices, the PA workforce has established itself as a reliable, resilient and dependable arm of the medical team, and strong, trusting working relationships with supervising GPs have been formed. The PAs are counted as part of the clinical team when establishing rota's for the Practices, and are therefore an essential part of the clinical teams.

It is becoming clear that the PA workforce in these areas are capable and committed to ensuring improved patient care and access. There is discussion regarding individual PAs undertaking more special interest work associated with Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), Joint Injections and Palliative care pathway support, but there is currently no protected regular provision for Self-Directed Learning (SDL) which could allow and facilitate this wider education and skills development. A proposal to amend the Primary Care PA working contract to enshrine this provision would better support the wider engagement between colleagues, in addition to offering better retention prospects for our GP-PA workforce.

## Argymhelliad / Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the update on the GP PA development programme and the inclusion of GP PAs into the Managed Practice workforce.
- Consider the proposed amendment of the Primary Care PA contract for non-GP-PA Pathway PAs to established scheduled SDL (suggested 1x ½ day in each 3 weeks) to better support and incentivise wider career enhancing skill development and workforce retention.

<b>Amcanion: (rhaid cwblhau)</b> <b>Objectives: (must be completed)</b>	
Committee ToR Reference: Cyfeirnod Cylch Gorchwyl y Pwyllgor:	Grow and Train our Workforce Support and Retain our Workforce
Cyfeirnod Cofrestr Risg Datix a Sgôr Cyfredol: Datix Risk Register Reference and Score:	N/A
Parthau Ansawdd: Domains of Quality <a href="#">Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)</a>	2. Timely 3. Effective 4. Efficient 6. Person-Centred
Galluogwyr Ansawdd: Enablers of Quality: <a href="#">Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)</a>	5. Whole systems perspective 1. Leadership
Amcanion Strategol y BIP: UHB Strategic Objectives:	All Strategic Objectives are applicable
Amcanion Cynllunio Planning Objectives	2c Workforce and OD strategy 7b Integrated Localities
Amcanion Llesiant BIP: UHB Well-being Objectives: <a href="#">Hyperlink to HDdUHB Well-being Objectives Annual Report 2021-2022</a>	2. Develop a skilled and flexible workforce to meet the changing needs of the modern NHS

<b>Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol:</b> <b>Further Information:</b>	
Ar sail tystiolaeth: Evidence Base:	N/A
Rhestr Termiau: Glossary of Terms:	N/A

Partïon / Pwyllgorau â ymgynhorwyd ymlaen llaw y Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Pobl a Datblygu Sefydliadol: Parties / Committees consulted prior to People, Organisational Development & Culture Committee:	N/A
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<b>Effaith: (rhaid cwblhau)</b> <b>Impact: (must be completed)</b>	
<b>Ariannol / Gwerth am Arian:</b> <b>Financial / Service:</b>	N/A
<b>Ansawdd / Gofal Claf:</b> <b>Quality / Patient Care:</b>	N/A
<b>Gweithlu:</b> <b>Workforce:</b>	N/A
<b>Risg:</b> <b>Risk:</b>	N/A
<b>Cyfreithiol:</b> <b>Legal:</b>	N/A
<b>Enw Da:</b> <b>Reputational:</b>	N/A
<b>Gyfrinachedd:</b> <b>Privacy:</b>	N/A
<b>Cydraddoldeb:</b> <b>Equality:</b>	N/A