

General Practice in Essex



See your
future in Essex



*Developing people
for health and
healthcare*

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Welcome to general practice in Essex

In this booklet, you will find information about some of the different careers available within general practice.

If you like helping people, there are few careers as rewarding or respected as those in the NHS. You will be part of a team of professional medical and non-medical staff delivering care to the highest standards at the very heart of the community.

If you have a passion for improving people's lives and the determination to achieve excellence in care then general practice is for you. There is a range of training and support available in Essex allowing you to progress in your general practice career.

General practice in Essex

General practice offers a range of exciting opportunities for people who are passionate about making a difference. If you want to work in an environment that is interesting, rewarding and challenging, then a career in general practice will give you plenty of scope to do exactly that.

General practice staff working in the NHS must be able to demonstrate the values of the NHS Constitution.

'There was no other option when I came out of university, general practice was the area for me.'

Jade Moore (Physician associate)

The future of general practice

As the provision of healthcare increasingly moves away from hospitals and into the community, the settings in which you can work will expand and change. General practice is central to this change and future career options are likely to include a greater amount of community-based roles for nurses, GPs and administrative staff working in multi-disciplinary teams.

Opportunities are also available for existing NHS staff, including those who are newly qualified, to work in general practice.



See your
Future in ESSEX



Bordering London, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Hertfordshire and the North Sea the county of Essex offers a great experience to live, work and study in the east of England. Essex has much to offer and has a long history of attracting both visitors and residents.

- High quality schools, colleges and 2 universities.
- Excellent road and rail links to London (30 minute train journey from Chelmsford), neighbouring counties or by air (Stansted and Southend) and sea (Tilbury and Harwich).
- Affordable housing and low unemployment.
- History and culture including stately homes, castles and the oldest recorded roman town in England (Colchester).
- Essex is famous for its nightlife with numerous bars, clubs and entertainment venues. It also hosts the annual V Festival in Chelmsford every August.
- Fantastic shopping at Lakeside as well as in the high streets and unique boutiques.
- 350 miles of coastline including the longest pleasure pier in the world at Southend.
- A wealth of picturesque rural villages.
- Football at Southend and Colchester United, county cricket and ice hockey at Chelmsford.

'We attract the top people from across the country and world to come here and we keep them here.'

Chris Rose (Locality Support Pharmacist)



General practitioner

GPs are the first point of contact for most patients. Work is carried out during consultations in the surgery and home visits. General practice allows individual doctors a wide choice of where to practice, with whom and how.



GPs call on an extensive knowledge of medical conditions to be able to assess a problem and decide on the appropriate course of action. They know how and when to intervene, through treatment, referrals onto a specialist, prevention and education, to promote the health of their patients and families. The variety of work in general practice is one of the major attractions. No other specialty offers such a wide remit of treating everything from pregnant women to babies and from mental illness to sports medicine. Individual doctors may develop special interests in diverse areas such as diabetes. General practice gives the opportunity to prevent illness and not just treat it.

Individual general practitioners can reach a relatively high income early in their career and it is one of the specialties most suited to part time and flexible working.

Most GPs are independent contractors to the NHS. This independence means that in most cases, they are responsible for providing adequate premises from which to practise and for employing their own staff.

Your work may involve:

- Assessing patients in surgery
- Visiting patients in their homes
- Visiting primary care emergency centres
- Working with patients, carers and healthcare professionals
- Minor surgical procedures
- Diagnosing physical and mental conditions
- Referrals
- Health promotion
- Facilitating management of chronic conditions

Personal qualities and skills:

- Ability to care about patients and their relatives
- Committed to providing high quality care
- Awareness of one's own limitations
- Commitment to keeping up to date and improving quality of one's own performance
- Appreciation of the value of team work
- Clinical competence
- Good organisational skills

For further information on general practitioners, please visit www.rcgp.org.uk



CASE STUDY

Name: Dr Vaiyapuri Raja

Job title: General practitioner

Location: Stanford-Le-Hope

I came to do my training in Basildon. I enjoyed the placement and liked the surroundings so decided to stay. I hope to retire in the same place.

What I've found I really like about general practice is it's very flexible and I also like the challenges it throws. Every patient is completely different. In general practice I can treat a patient as a patient and not as a condition. It helped me develop long term relationships with patients and their families and get a better understanding of their whole family life and their situation. With that knowledge I can shape and tailor the care for every individual patient. It also gives me the opportunity to treat patients from a whole range of age groups.

With the formation of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), GPs have taken on management roles to shape the care that's being provided both in the community and in the hospital.

'I can shape and tailor the care for every individual patient.'

Essex is a big county but it's very dynamic, the population is fantastic and they mix very well. You've got a good social life, you've got fantastic coastal towns, quaint little villages in between and good education facilities from primary schools to grammar schools. Essex is also well connected by road and train into London. Essex is good for doctors because the general practice community is very supportive. I've got good support from my peers. I'm not sure that you'd get this same support in other counties.



I started off in hospital medicine and have worked seven years in the NHS. I think the moment I would say I'm very proud of, is the step I took into general practice. I think it was a career defining moment for me. It changed the way I thought about my whole life as such and it brought me very close to my patients which I think is really very important.

If you're ready to face challenges and make a real difference, I think general practice is the place that you need to be.

Physician associate

A physician associate is “a new healthcare professional who, while not a doctor, works to the medical model, with the attitudes, skills and knowledge base to deliver holistic care and treatment within the general practice team under defined levels of supervision.” (Physician Assistant Competence and Curriculum Framework)

Physician associates compliment existing roles in the general practice workforce and bring many benefits including continuity of care for patients. They also free up consultants to enable them to concentrate on more complex cases.

Physician associates are used extensively in the United States and elsewhere. Their role in the UK is likely to evolve over time with increasing opportunities within primary care.

For more information please visit
www.ukapa.co.uk

Your work may involve:

- Taking medical histories
- Performing examinations
- Working with patients, carers and healthcare professionals
- Minor surgical procedures
- Diagnosing physical and mental conditions
- Facilitating management of chronic conditions
- Analysing test results
- Running clinics

Personal qualities and skills:

- Good communication skills
- Flexible and adaptable
- Well organised
- Confident and able to work on your own initiative
- Ability to work independently as well as part of a team
- Committed to providing high quality care
- Appreciation of the value of team work
- Clinical competence



CASE STUDY

Name: Jade Moore

Job title: Physician associate

Location: Braintree

I work as a physician associate in general practice in Essex and have done so since 2010. I do a mixture of chronic and acute medicine. I work from a combined list with the GPs so at present none of my work is filtered and I see whatever walks through the door, the same as the GPs do.

'I know I am making a huge difference, it's extremely rewarding and the team element of general practice is great.'

I do a bit of everything but have a specialist role in diabetes. I do on-call with GPs, home visits and have started doing some palliative care. I also run a family planning clinic and an in-house anticoagulant centre at the surgery.

My biggest achievement is that I know I am making a huge difference, it's extremely rewarding and the team element of general practice is great. The beauty of general practice is that you really get to provide holistic care to the patient and their family, you know everything about them.

The continuity of care that general practice gives you is unlike any other area of medicine. You get to see such a breadth of medicine in one day and for me, no other area offers that opportunity. There's a lot of support available for physician associates in Essex. GPs in Essex invested time and money into me which enabled me to develop much faster. It's pushed me forward and enabled me to practice at a much higher level. I couldn't have asked for anything more and Essex is the place I'm going to stay.



'One of the beauties of Essex is that it's so diverse.'

I've done a lot of training in Essex and it's been second to none and the support I've had in Essex has been absolutely phenomenal.

Practice pharmacist

Practice pharmacists work closely with GPs, community pharmacists as well as other healthcare professionals to support the safe effective use of medicines and may also advise on the best use of the NHS medicines budget.

Some practice pharmacists work in strategic commissioning roles and have a lead role for all issues related to medicine and prescribing. Practice pharmacists may also run specific clinics for practices. In addition to this they provide education and training on therapeutic and prescribing issues to prescribers within the practice and surrounding locality.

The role of practice pharmacist is likely to grow as new commissioning arrangements are implemented.

Your role may involve:

- Advising GP practices and community pharmacists on good prescribing
- Ensuring local prescribing is evidenced based, supporting best practice
- Developing local formularies
- Planning, commissioning and delivering pharmacy services
- Financial management of prescribing budget
- Facilitating certain clinics
- Providing training to prescribers



Personal qualities and skills:

- Excellent knowledge of treatments
- Attention to detail
- Effective communication skills
- Good IT skills
- Ability to work on your own, and as part of a team
- Ability to identify and work through problems to find effective solutions
- Good communication skills

For more information please visit
www.rpharms.com and
www.essexlpc.org.uk

CASE STUDY

Name: Chris Rose

Job title: Locality support pharmacist

Location: Witham

As a locality support pharmacist, I actually go to all four GP surgeries in the town and support their prescribing and make sure that it is safe effective medication that the patients take.

I look through patient records to check that everything is ok. If there are some anomalies or specific issues that I'm looking into, I make recommendations to the GP and sometimes have a consultation with patients to discuss any changes that we might make. To actually be able to go into practices presents a really good opportunity because we can improve the healthcare of a larger number of people.

'Working in general practice gives the opportunity to be autonomous.'

It gives me the opportunity to become the interface between pharmacies and the GPs. As a practice pharmacist I work closely with the GPs in a clinical perspective and this is something I really enjoy.

Building relationships with the people involved and joint working means better results, so it's a really enjoyable role. The role is quite varied. In general practice, every day is different and every day we get the opportunity to meet new people. There are so many bubbly characters working in general practice. It makes every day fun filled, I really enjoy going to work. It's the people that make it, you get to know them. Most people working in the NHS are there because they care about people and I'm no different.



Working in general practice gives the opportunity to be autonomous and give prescribing advice to GPs for the benefit of their patients. General practice does give more opportunities for pharmacists to develop, with lots of opportunities for career progression and that's not unusual in Essex.

I've lived and worked in Essex for most of my career and love it. It's a great county to work and live in. You've got the seaside, you've got rural areas and towns. I wouldn't think of working anywhere else. People want different things out of life, in Essex you've got the best of both worlds. Essex is a really great place.

Advanced nurse practitioner

Advanced nurse practitioners (ANP) undertake clinical nursing practice at advanced level using expert knowledge and clinical skills gained through further education and training. This provides opportunities for nurses to further their career and professional development.

The expertise of the ANP in primary care lies in their ability to operate as a 'generalist' due to their broad knowledge base and skill set.

Advanced nurse practitioners will have a leadership role within their practice and may also, in some cases, be practice partners.

Your role may involve:

- Taking a full patient history
- Carrying out any physical examinations
- Identifying likely diagnosis
- Requesting appropriate tests to aid diagnosis (blood tests, x-rays, scans)
- Referring patients to an appropriate specialist (in the practice or hospital)
- Prescribing medicines and non-medical treatments
- Arranging follow-up and on-going management



Personal qualities and skills:

- Good communication skills
- Knowledgeable
- Flexible and adaptable
- Able to work well with healthcare professionals and patients from a wide variety of backgrounds
- Well organised
- Confident and able to work on your own initiative



For more information please visit
www.rcn.org.uk

CASE STUDY

Name: Joy Harrison

Job title: Advanced nurse practitioner

Location: Ardleigh

15 years ago, I was working on a medical ward and just felt that I wanted to do something different. I was doing too much management and I wanted to get back to working face-to-face with patients. I love working in general practice and I wish I'd done it years ago. Since moving to general practice I've never looked back.

I think it's really important that people in hospitals know that you can transfer to work in general practice. If you do it in Essex there's a lot of support all the way through.

'I love working in general practice and I wish I'd done it years ago.'

As an advanced nurse practitioner, I work much more autonomously and see people with acute illnesses or minor injuries, from babies up to 99 year olds. Becoming an advanced nurse practitioner opened lots of doors for me and made a massive change to my career and the work I do. It was the best move I ever made.

What I really enjoy about working in general practice is the independence, I can examine, diagnose and treat a problem or refer them onto hospital if needed. It's more challenging than a lot of types of nursing.

I really enjoy getting to know whole families. I also really enjoy that you don't know what's about to come through the door.



I came to Essex 11 years ago, I was living in a city when I decided I wanted to change the way I was living. I came down south to get a better way of life for me and my family. We now live in a community. I think in Essex there is a lot more support for nurses. You are given more respect, they make a lot more effort to keep you up-to-date. In Essex there are opportunities to meet nurses working in different practices. We have lots of meetings, get together to share ideas and support each other. I think that's something particular to Essex.

There's plenty of big towns in Essex, there's lots to do. The benefit of course, is that you are not too far from beautiful countryside as well.

Being in Essex is the right place for me. Everything's come together since then.

Practice nurse

Nurses are an important part of delivering care in general practice. Practice nurses work in GP surgeries as part of a general practice team that is likely to include doctors, healthcare assistants, practice managers and administration staff.

In smaller practices, you may be the only nurse, whereas in larger surgeries, you may share duties with practice nurse colleagues. As the range of healthcare services provided in the community increases, the role of the practice nurse is likely to expand and change.

Depending on your experience, you could run clinics, which will demand attention to detail, initiative and plenty of confidence. As a practice nurse, you will be able to apply for training to support your development into senior positions such as advanced nurse practitioners.

For more information please visit
www.rcn.org.uk/



Your work may involve:

- Treating small injuries
- Assisting with minor operations carried out under local anaesthetic
- Family planning and sexual health
- Running vaccination programmes, for example protection against flu
- Supporting the healthcare team in its monitoring of long term condition management such as diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure
- Obtaining blood samples
- ECGs
- Minor and complex wound management including leg ulcers
- Health promotion

Personal qualities and skills:

- Good communication skills
- Knowledgeable
- Flexible and adaptable
- Able to work well with healthcare professionals and patients from a wide variety of backgrounds
- Well organised
- Confident and able to work on your own initiative

CASE STUDY

Name: Julia Riley

Job title: Practice nurse

Location: Thurrock

I started off working in the local hospital, mainly on the coronary unit. I was very upset to hear that patients would come in and say, "if only I'd stopped smoking". This gave me insight into what could be done and I decided that perhaps if I came into general practice, then through education and support, we could perhaps stop people smoking and improve their lifestyles. I just felt that I needed to make a difference, so I decided that I would work with the local GP.

I do vaccinations, well woman checks, minor illness management and through consultation, we explore together how we can improve all aspects of their health.

'I just felt that I needed to make a difference, so I decided that I would work with the local GP.'

It isn't just about the tasks that I am performing, it's being central to care within the family unit, helping them through their healthcare journey.

The work is so varied, I can't say I don't go to work every day without thinking, "what is going to happen today and what improvements can we make to patient care?".

We tend to do a lot of case discussions to ensure that patients with long term conditions are getting the care that they need in the community.

I'm sure there are nurses out there that would like to work in general practice but are frightened to make the move. I made the move, it's the best move I've made.

We share the same level of interest in what we want to do for patients within the locality.

My proudest moment was receiving an award from the Queen's Nursing Institute for my part in how we can improve standards of nursing care within the community for patients.

Essex is so diverse. We are lucky to have the rural and the urban mix as well as some lovely seaside towns. There is so much energy and enthusiasm in Essex and the community spirit to take things forward. I think it's an exciting place to be and I see practice nursing as a pivotal role in taking this forward.



Practice manager

Practice managers are responsible for the overall running of general practices (GP surgeries). Practice managers play a pivotal role in ensuring that patients receive excellent care and work with a range of healthcare professionals and administrative staff to achieve this.

Practice managers come from different backgrounds. Typically, it would be an opportunity for an experienced manager, bringing both day-to-day management skills as well as a strategic perspective, for one or more partner medical practices.

Your role may involve:

- People management
- Financial management and budgeting
- Managing information and communication
- Developing or improving services
- Working with a team of medical and non-medical staff
- Managing medical ethics and legal requirements
- Improving services

Personal qualities and skills:

- Excellent people and organisational skills
- Ability to work with a range of stakeholders
- Finance experience
- Good IT skills
- Verbal and written communication skills
- Committed to providing high quality services

For more information please visit
www.amspar.co.uk



CASE STUDY

Name: Ann Read

Job title: Practice manager

Location: Colchester

My role involves pretty much anything you can think of, from high level strategic planning, organising and looking into local and national initiatives from the Government to looking after the premises.

‘There’s never a dull moment and that’s the great thing about my job.’

I manage a large team of ten doctors. I make sure everyone knows what they’re supposed to be doing and help the team support the patients to get the best care they can get. There’s never a dull moment and that’s the great thing about my job. As a practice manager you get to work in and build a really good team. There’s a lot of camaraderie, it’s a nice working environment.

I enjoy working in general practice because it’s diverse, no two days are ever the same. It’s a great satisfaction when you get to meet the patient groups and they’re pleased with what you’ve done and happy with the service.

My biggest achievement is the surgery. We created a purpose built surgery that’s got a bit of wow factor.

It’s also exciting when there’s new projects to work on, doing different things.

Working in Essex is great because we have such an excellent network of practice managers. If you’ve got a problem there’s always someone there to talk it through with and you can work with one another to come up with a solution. We’ve also got a great team at the CCG.



Essex is a great place to live and work for lots of reasons and I would recommend it to anybody.

‘Working in Essex is great because we have such an excellent network of practice managers.’

Healthcare assistant

Healthcare assistants (HCAs) work in general practices, under the guidance of a qualified healthcare professional.



Most commonly, HCAs work alongside nurses to deliver care to their patients. The role of HCA is diverse with increasing opportunities to develop your knowledge and skills through further training.

HCAs provide essential support to ensure the smooth running of patient clinics, assisting patients to manage chronic conditions in the community.

Your role may involve:

- Wound care and dressing
- Supporting patients
- Helping people to mobilise
- Clinical room preparation
- Generally assisting qualified healthcare professionals.
- Monitoring patients' conditions by taking temperatures, pulse, respirations, cholesterol and weight
- Taking bloods

Personal qualities and skills:

- Caring and compassionate
- Experienced at delivering care
- Good communication skills
- Flexible and adaptable
- Committed to providing quality care
- Able to work as part of a team
- Able to work well with healthcare professionals and patients from a wide variety of backgrounds

For further information please visit www.nhs Careers.nhs.uk or www.rcn.org.uk



CASE STUDY

Name: Janet Belton

Job title: Healthcare assistant (HCA)

Location: Colchester

As a healthcare assistant in general practice I assist the nurse and the team. We take on lots of roles nurses do and have a lot of training and supervision.

I decided to work in a general practice when my children were at an age where I could go back to work. I saw an advert for a prescription clerk and moved on from there. I started off doing just phlebotomy and after my training, took on the phlebotomy clinics. Gradually they wanted me to do more so sent me off on a course to do ear irrigations, dressing etc. I now also do immunisations, flu jabs, pneumonia jabs and assist minor ops. There's a lot you can do being an HCA.

'I do see the difference I make.'

I do get very attached to the patients. They are absolutely super and I like to spend as much time with them as I can. They get attached to us as well. You get to know the patient because they talk to you, you get to know their families and you see a condition from the beginning to end, whereas in hospitals you never see when they are healed or better. I do see the difference I make, with a lot of patients.

Essex is a really nice place to work and Colchester is a really friendly town to live in.



As a healthcare assistant in general practice, you gain so much confidence in yourself. It has made me much more understanding of people's different circumstances in life and the different places that they've come from and where they need to go to.

'HCAs in general practice are a lot more hands on.'

Receptionist

Receptionists play a vital role in general practice. They are the first link for many patients and visitors who might be anxious – perhaps visiting a doctor or other member of staff for the first time or waiting for the results of an important test.

Receptionists work on their own or with one or two other receptionists, greeting patients as they arrive and checking them in. They might also collect patient notes and ensure that these vital records go to the right healthcare professional. In a clinic, they may make appointments and arrange patient transport. General practices can be busy and the pace can be fast, so receptionists need to be able to think on their feet.

There may be opportunities through further training to progress to a supervisory or even management role.

For more information please visit
www.amspar.co.uk or www.bsmsa.org.uk

Your role may involve:

- Taking telephone messages
- Managing diaries
- Meeting and greeting patients, carers and other GP visitors
- Supporting the team in clinics
- Typing reports
- Sending letters
- Filing
- Facilitating the smooth running of patient clinics
- Working with patient records
- Dealing with telephone enquiries
- Organising patient waiting areas
- Working as part of a multidisciplinary team

Personal qualities and skills:

- Efficiency
- Good communication skills
- Discretion
- Committed to providing quality services
- A friendly, sympathetic/reassuring manner
- Good IT skills
- Organised



CASE STUDY

Name: Ann Barnett

Job title: Receptionist

Location: Highwoods

My role is very varied, we don't only do reception work, we do a lot of admin as well and really care for the patients' needs. You meet every walk of life working in general practice. I like getting to know the patients, particularly the elderly people. You do get to know them and build up a rapport.

'You learn a lot of different skills, not only the workplace skills, you also learn a lot of things about how to interact with people.'

I think they feel they can call on us for anything. I've been working in general practice for six years and love it. It was quite an eye opener.

Our patients are such lovely people, it's a really nice job and you do come home at the end of the day thinking, I've made a difference. Confidentiality is very important and also you have to remember that when people come to the doctors they're poorly, most of them need a bit of TLC.

I think being a receptionist in general practice has made me more caring, it's not just about greeting someone and directing them to an office, it's actually speaking to them and gaining their trust and confidence. You're able to offer to help patients, they know you're there for them. You see babies and see those children grow up.

I think I've probably changed a lot since I've been doing the job. Hopefully I've always been a caring person, but I've learnt to be more tolerant.



I always think that I would like to be treated with kindness and respect anywhere I went, and so that's how I like to treat the people I deal with.

We work as a team and have that camaraderie. We support one another because we understand what's going on and I think we are closer because of that.

People are a bit more friendly in Essex and working in a general practice in Essex is very good. I think you learn a lot of different skills, not only the workplace skills, you also learn a lot of things about how to interact with people. These are all life skills. I think people really benefit from working in a general practice environment.

Apprentice

There are clinical and non-clinical apprenticeship opportunities in general practice. Apprenticeships usually last for one year. During this time you are supported to undertake a nationally recognised vocational qualification. There are several apprenticeship roles within general practice these include:

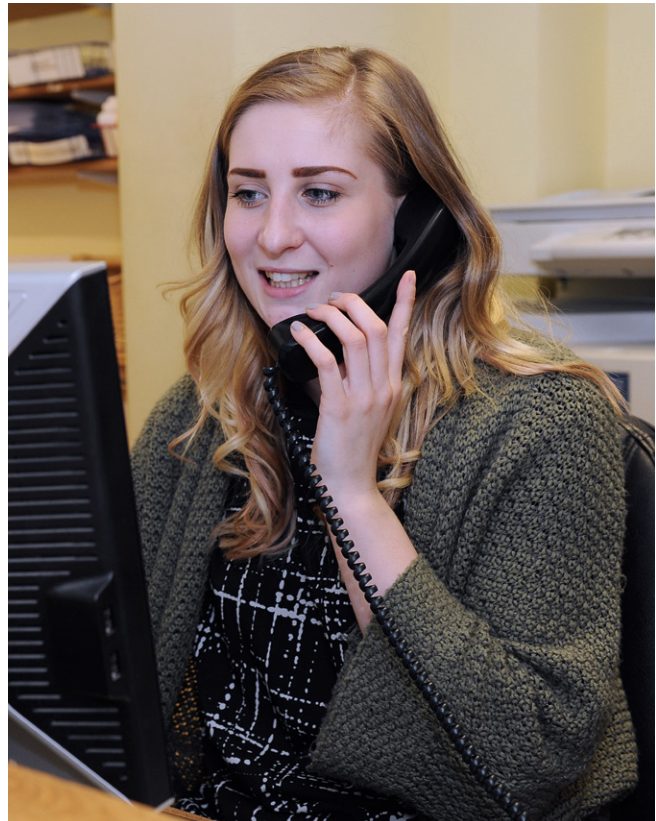
- Assistant practitioners
- Healthcare assistants
- Receptionists
- Business administrators
- Managers

Clinical apprenticeships as a healthcare assistant may include taking bloods, doing ECGs and carrying out new patient assessment. There may be opportunities to progress to undertake nurse training.

Non-clinical apprenticeships may include providing support to the practice manager or receptionist on a range of administrative and clerical tasks.

Your role may involve:

The role of apprentice will vary depending on which level of apprenticeship and job role the apprenticeship is aligned to. All apprenticeships involve undertaking work-based learning, assignments and creating a portfolio of work. This is supported both by a mentor and the general practice staff.



Personal qualities and skills:

- Organised
- Committed to providing quality services
- Active team member
- Flexible and adaptable
- Efficiency
- Good communication skills
- Discretion
- A friendly, sympathetic/reassuring manner
- Willing and able to learn new skills

For more information please visit
www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/



CASE STUDY

Name: Abbie Gould

Job title: Apprentice

Location: Great Bentley

I am an apprentice receptionist at a GP surgery. I greet patients at the front desk, answer the telephone and manage appointments. I also do a lot of scanning, filing and general administration work, so I'm learning everything you need to do in a practice.

I wanted to work with the NHS because I wanted to learn a lot more. It's a big world in the NHS. It's surprised me how much we need the NHS and how much the NHS does for us. I wanted to work for the NHS because you can develop and gain experience. In a GP practice you learn something new every day. You get to know the patients and they know you. The pleasure of working in general practice is knowing that you've actually helped someone, it's very rewarding. In reception, you're on the front desk, you can really change someone's day.

'In a GP practice you learn something new every day.'

Since starting my apprenticeship I've gained a lot of experience. I think it makes you appreciate the NHS more.

I am supported throughout my apprenticeship by a lady who comes to see me in the practice. She sets tasks and that's where I've learnt my personal and communication skills. She is great, if I have any queries I can call her, she's really supportive and the people I work with are lovely too.

By doing my apprenticeship in a GP practice it is helping me prepare for the future. I am not 100% sure of what I want to do in the future, but I want to stay in a GP practice because with GPs it's more personal, you get to know people.



Working for the NHS at a young age is great because you gain experience, life skills, communication and organisational skills, which are needed for a bigger role in the future. The more experience I gain through my apprenticeship, it's giving me that step up the ladder.

'I like working in Essex because everywhere is close, you've got great transport, it's a good night out and everyone's really friendly.'

What's your next step?

We hope this booklet will have given you some idea of the many opportunities on offer within general practice in Essex.

If you have decided that you want to join the NHS in general practice, your next step depends on your starting point. NHS Careers can provide further information on how to apply for training and you can also consult your local careers adviser.

If you need a degree, UCAS can advise on which universities offer the relevant courses.

Universities will be able to tell you what qualities and characteristics they look for in applicants. For example, getting some work experience is an excellent way of showing your commitment and enthusiasm.

If you are considering a change of career, volunteering or shadowing an established professional in your spare time is a useful way to find out more about the field of work that you wish to pursue and can be invaluable in terms of making contacts.

Here is a checklist of things you should be doing, whether you're still at school, studying for a degree or looking for a change in direction:

- Have you explored routes into your chosen general practice career?
- Are there any particular skills or experience that will improve your chances of getting into your chosen career within general practice?
- Have you enquired about opportunities to volunteer or do relevant work experience in general practice?

- Have you investigated further qualifications you might need for your chosen role?
- Have you searched the NHS Jobs website or spoken to your local general practices to get an idea of the type of vacancies available?

Whatever position you're in right now, the NHS Careers service can help.

For more information, please contact:

NHS Careers

Tel: **0345 60 60 655**

Email: advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk

Visit: www.nhscareers.nhs.uk

'The doors are wide open
for more professions to
come in and get involved in
terms of the care that we are
able to provide in Essex'

Jade Moore (Physician associate)

Useful contacts in Essex

North and South Essex Local Medical Committees Ltd

5 Whitelands Terling Road
Hatfield Peverel
Chelmsford
Essex CM3 2AG

Tel: 01245 383430

Web: www.essexlmc.org.uk

Email: info@essexlmc.org.uk

EQUIP (Education and Quality in Primary Care)

Web: www.essexequip.nhs.uk

Email: linda.grimstead@nhs.net

EPIC WD (Essex Primary Care Inter-Professional Centre for Workforce Development)

Email: emily.brown6@nhs.net

Basildon Specialist GP Training Programme

Web: www.basildongpstp.com/

Essex Local Pharmaceutical Committee

17 Clematis Tye
Springfield
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 6GL

Tel: 01245 460079

Web: www.essexlpc.org.uk

Email: office@essexlpc.org.uk

Essex Local Optical Committee

Web: www.essex-loc.org

Email: enquiries@essex-loc.org

Essex Local Dental Committee

Web: www.essexldc.org.uk

Chelmsford Specialist GP Training Programme

Medical Academic Centre
Broomfield Hospital
Pudding Wood Lane
Broomfield
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 7ET

Medical Staffing

Andrew Parsons

Tel: 01245 514731/514322

Email: andrew.parsons@meht.nhs.uk

GPST Programme Directors

Dr Saadet Lauble

Email: saadet.lauble@nhs.net

Dr Bassey Okon

Email: b.okon@nhs.net

Postgraduate Medical Education Manager

Gill Slater

Email: gill.slater@meht.nhs.uk

GPST Administrator

Hannah Clark

Email: hannah.clark@meht.nhs.uk

Colchester Specialist GP Training Programme

Web: www.colchestergpstp.com/

The Postgraduate Centre

Turner Village

Colchester General Hospital Turner Road

Colchester

Essex CO4 5JL

Medical Staffing

Linda Wright

Tel: 01206 742141 ext: 2184

Email: linda.wright@colchesterhospital.nhs.uk

GPST Programme Directors

Dr Emily Foster

Email: emilyfoster@doctors.org.uk

Dr Elizabeth Hornung

Email: elizabeth.hornung@nhs.net

Dr Cyrus Fernandes

Email: cyrusfernandes@nhs.net

Postgraduate Medical Education Manager

Sharon Wyatt

Email: sharon.wyatt@colchesterhospital.nhs.uk

Elizabeth Jephcott

Email: elizabeth.jephcott@colchesterhospital.nhs.uk

GPST Administrator

Shanthi Badrinath

Email: shanthi.badrinath@colchesterhospital.nhs.uk

Southend Specialist GP Training Programme

Web: www.southendgpstp.com/

Medical Academic Centre

Education Centre

Southend Hospital

Prittlewell Chase

Westcliff-on-sea

Essex SS0 0RY

Medical Staffing

Pam Barton

Tel: 01702 385341

Email: pamela.barton@southend.nhs.uk

Lucy Keam-George

Tel: 01702 385081

Email: lucy.george@southend.nhs.uk

GPST Programme Directors

Dr Alan Kerry

Email: apkerry@aol.com

Dr Jon Rouse

Email: j.dr@btopenworld.com

Dr Lionel Nagle

Email: lionel.nagle@nhs.net

GP Tutor

Dr Biju Kuriakose

Email: biju.kuriakose@nhs.net

Postgraduate Medical Education Manager

Katie Palmer

Email: katie.Palmer@southend.nhs.uk

GPST Administrator

Lisa Monnickendam

Email: lisa.monnickendam@southend.nhs.uk

Harlow Specialist GP Training Programme

Education Centre

Parndon Hall

Princess Alexandra Hospital

Hamstel Road

Harlow

Essex CM20 1QX

Medical Staffing

Kerry McEwan

Tel: 01279 827298

Email: kerry.mcewan@pah.nhs.uk

GPST Programme Director

Dr Andrew Ashford

Email: andrew.ashford@nhs.net

Dr Zia Yaqub

Email: ziayaqub@hotmail.com

Dr Nazmul Mohsin

Email: nazmul.mohsin@nhs.net

GP Tutor/PC Tutor

Dr Cyrus Fernandes

Email: cyrusfernandes@nhs.net

Postgraduate Medical Education Manager

Margaret Short

Email: margaret.short@pah.nhs.uk

GPST Administrator

Polly Bracken

Email: polly.bracken@pah.nhs.uk

Essex Primary Care Tutors

Mid Essex

Dr Alan Symington

Email: alan@symington4952.fsnet.co.uk

West Essex

Dr Cyrus Fernandes

Email: cyrusfernandes@yahoo.com

North East Essex

Jayne Hiley

Email: jayne.hiley@northeastessex.nhs.uk

South West Essex

Dr Kashaf Mahmood

Email: kaz_m10@yahoo.co.uk

Carol Fahey

Tel: 01375 3771277

Email: carol.fahey@nhs.net

South East Essex

Indra Jayaweera

Tel: 01268 780408

Email: andra.jayaweera@nhs.net

Dr Biju Kuriakose

Tel: 01702 202353

Email: biju.kuriakose@nhs.net

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**See your
future in Essex**

