

DEVELOPING PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATES IN PRIMARY CARE

Longitudinal Integrated Internship - A North Wales Approach

Gemma Nosworthy 1 Ffion Williams 1

1 Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

BACKGROUND

The role of the Physician Associate (PA) has slowly been introduced to the United Kingdom (UK) over the last 15 years.

In 2016, Health Education and Improvement (HEIW) commissioned post graduate courses in two Universities in Wales.

To date there are over 100 students that have studied in Wales and that have gone onto successfully pass the Physician Associate National Exam.

In 2018 when the first cohort of students qualified, no posts in Primary Care were identified.

In 2019, the first Primary Care post was advertised in an Independent GP practice in North Wales.

In order to stimulate the market the Longitudinal Integrated Internship was launched by the Primary and Community Care Academy in Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

DEVELOPING THE LONGITUDINAL INTEGRATED INTERNSHIP (LII)

In collaboration with the qualified and qualifying Physician Associates in 2019, local GP practices, the Primary and Community Care Academy (PACCA), worked to gain a better understanding of the barriers to employment in Primary Care.

In General Practice this was:

- Lack of understanding of the role
-

"What does a PA do?" "What can a PA do?"

- PAs level of experience and understanding of the Primary Care environment
- Level of direct supervision the PA required
- Lack of prescribing and rights to order x-rays

For Physician Associates this was:

- Experience and understanding of the role in Primary Care

"haven't been able to get a placement in Primary Care"
"I did mine in Out of Hours"

- Strong desire to work in Secondary Care setting as perceived as a "safer environment" with access to senior clinicians at all time

Rotational Internship Model

Multiple rotations didn't allow for time to embed in the team and gain full value of the experience.

"By the time I had got settled it was time to move again"

Rotations meant that by the time the PA had settled into the practice it was time to move to the next rotation and it made it increasingly difficult to demonstrate value to the Primary Care team.

The Longitudinal Integrated Internship design has been informed by this engagement.

LONGITUDINAL INTEGRATED INTERNSHIP

The Longitudinal Integrated Internship (LII) has a number of key elements:

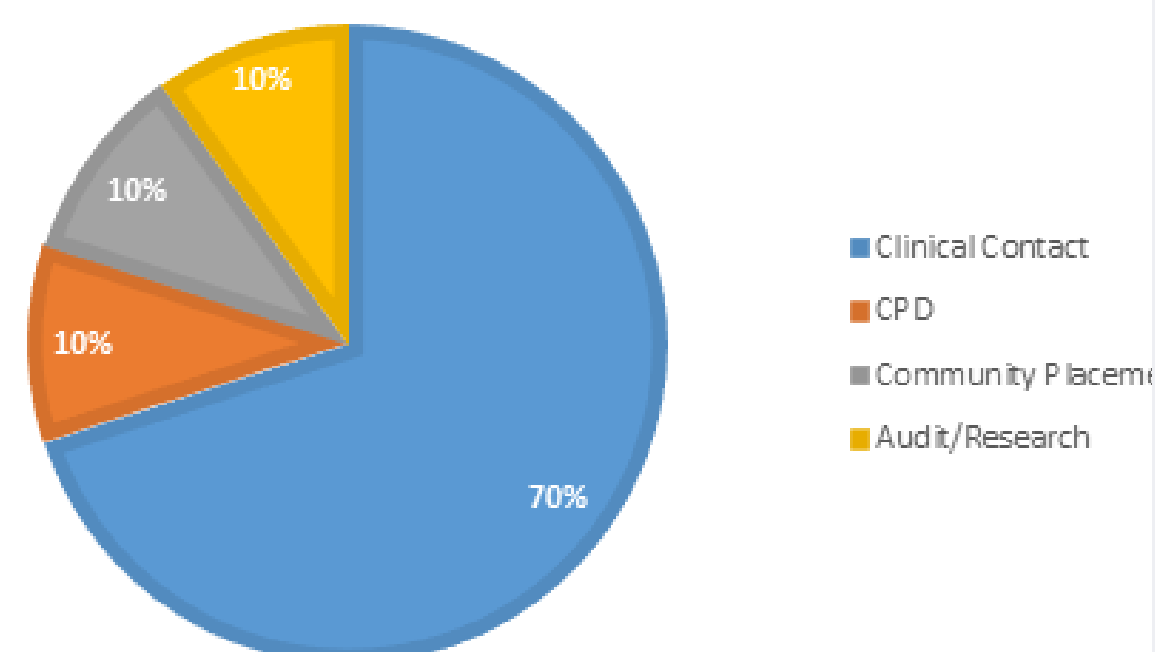
For the Physician Associate:

- Clinical patient facing contact
- Continued Professional Development
- Community Placement
- Audit /Research
- Named clinical and educational supervisor
- 12 month fixed term contract at Agenda for Change (A4C) Band 6

For the Practice:

- Health Board employed and funded Physician Associate
- Practice Attachment Fee
- Opportunity to employ at the end of the contract

PROGRAMME ELEMENTS



FEEDBACK & FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The LII has been well received within the participating practices, 3 posts were available across north Wales during 2020, with all posts filled in different practices.

All Practices have reported high levels of satisfaction

All Physician Associates have reported high levels of satisfaction

All participating practices have opted to participate in 2021 taking on another cohort of newly qualified Physician Associates

Retention rates will be available for the first cohort in 2021.

The Internship PA Cohort have undertaken an audit during their internship and the poster presentation can also be found at the RCGP conference this year.