

Advanced Paramedics As Primary Care Practitioners

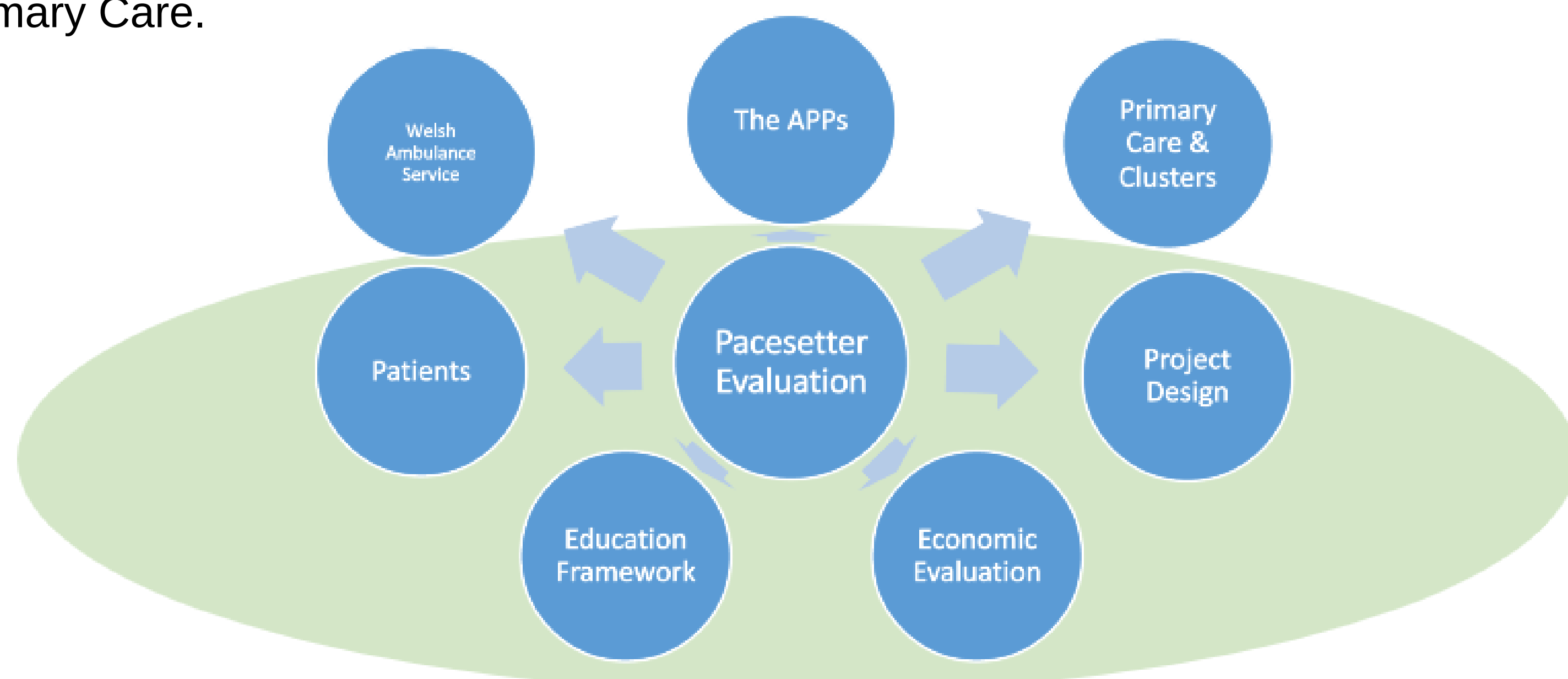
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Background

In 2018 Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) were jointly awarded Welsh Government Pacesetter funding to test an innovative model of working in North Wales. WAST Advanced Paramedic Practitioners (APPs) worked on a three part rotation incorporating BCUHB Primary Care Sites, shifts in the Clinical Contact Centre and solo responding for WAST.

Rotational working could potentially support the sustainability of primary care services, providing additional, skilled members of the primary care and cluster multidisciplinary team. It could also help to retain experienced ambulance service clinicians.

The project team worked with Public Health Wales to develop a seven-part evaluation framework, summarised below. The elements highlighted green in the image below were evaluated by external partners, and this poster will focus exclusively on the APP and Primary Care.



Cohort I APPs started in Primary Care in June 2019, and were joined by Cohort II in September 2020. Data was collected using a mixed methods approach, this poster covers the period June 2019 to August 2021.

Results

"The paramedics relieve pressure on the surgeries both with home visits and clinics when working. As their clinical supervisor...I have seen them become better, independent, confident clinicians." Clinical Supervisor

"The Pacesetter programme has greatly enhanced [my] clinical practice, and having been exposed to new (compared to traditional paramedicine) ways of patient management." APP

"It does change your practice. I certainly take on more risk, now. Well, I think I manage the risk better...and manage it differently." APP

- The Minnesota satisfaction questionnaire was completed by both Cohorts of APPs. The results indicated a high level of satisfaction with the rotation.

- 'Train where you work' whereby APPs are based in the same geographical areas for WAST and Primary care shifts was perceived to be beneficial, particularly in terms of relationships with colleagues and navigation of local services.

- Interviews with Cluster and primary care staff determined APPs would be a profession of choice if there were practice vacancies in future.

- APPs have been valued members of the Primary Care team during the Coronavirus pandemic. They have supported local assessment centres, as well as the vaccine roll out on behalf of surgeries.

- Working as part of a primary care MDT was an effective means to improve APP knowledge and navigation of primary care. It was also said to increase colleagues understanding of the APP role and ambulance service.

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17 Advanced Paramedic Practitioners (APPs)



24

GP Surgeries

7 Primary Care Clusters in North Wales

4 Qualified Prescribers

23

minutes average consultation time

3

GP Educators

14

GP Supervisors

15 minutes average travel time to home visits

38% of appointments outside surgery – at the home address including nursing/residential homes, 4% not documented.

>7,000

Patient consultations

58% of consultations undertaken in-surgery, of which **72%** were telephone triage, eConsult and virtual consultations

87%

patients were new presentations

22% consultations required liaison with, or referral back to ANP/GP

Discussion

The APP role is relatively new to primary care. This is thought to be the first comprehensive evaluation particularly concerning rotational working, and including APPs who are qualified independent prescribers. The findings and project will have relevance for other organisations interested in utilising the APP or paramedic workforce in primary care.

The Pacesetter APPs have demonstrated that they are effective, respected members of the multidisciplinary team. However, as professionals new to Primary Care, they require investment, continued education and GP supervision to support their transition.

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