

## A day in the life of a GP

### **1) Give a brief description of what you do & the company you work for?**

I am a GP and work for the NHS. GPs deal with a whole range of health problems. They also provide health education, offer advice on smoking and diet, run clinics, give vaccinations and carry out simple surgical operations. GPs usually work in practices as part of a team that includes nurses, healthcare assistants, practice managers, receptionists and other staff. Practices also work closely with other healthcare professionals, such as health visitors, midwives, mental health services and social care services.

### **2) What does your average day entail?**

My average day is as follows:

#### **8.30 am**

Arrive at surgery and deal with any urgent queries, such as contacts from the Out of Hours Service overnight. Review blood and other test results that have been sent overnight from the laboratory.

#### **9.00 am**

Start morning surgery. See 16 booked patients at 10 minute intervals. May have to take telephone calls from hospital or community staff about our patients during surgery. Call patients who have requested a home visit that may need attention before routine visit time. Speak to other clinical staff eg GP Registrar, Nurse Practitioner, Nurse, about patients they are seeing.

#### **11.40 am**

Telephone consultations from patients about their test results. Review and sign all repeat prescriptions that have been generated from patient requests that day. Respond to emails from work colleagues about patients, practice activities or meetings.

#### **11 am-1.30 pm**

Home visits. The practice area covers almost 150 square miles. Home visiting is organised by the doctor working at the Ashton or Kelsall branch surgery. We often travel 15-20miles a day on visits, so some time can often be taken travelling between calls.

#### **1.30-3.30pm**

Review all further blood and test results. Review all hospital, A&E, Out of Hours letters. Take telephone calls from patients about their test results. Patient care at Tarporley Hospital. Clinical meetings with doctors and nurses often occurs at this time. Forms and further correspondence – e.g. completing holiday cancellation, medicals, insurance, housing, blue badge, disability forms. Meetings outside the practice eg prescribing, clinical commissioning group often occur at this time. Teaching with medical students. Teaching with trainee GP's – occurs once a week for 2 hours. Dictate referral letters and carry out referrals for investigations from the days patient contacts.

### **3.30 – 6.00 pm**

Afternoon surgery, usually 12 patients. The Duty Doctor covers until we close at 6.30pm and may have to take requests for late afternoon or evening visits, depending on clinical need; receive and act on any urgent test results that have been phoned or faxed to the practice.

### **After Surgery**

Deal with any new queries and sign further prescriptions. Complete any work outstanding from the day.

### **3) What skills and qualification are required for your role?**

To become a GP, you'll need to complete:

- a degree in medicine, recognised by the General Medical Council (GMC)
- a two-year foundation course of general training
- specialist training in general practice.

Medical degrees are available at undergraduate level (taking five years to complete) and graduate level, which typically takes four years. The British Medical Association has further information about applying to medical school as a graduate.

Entry into medicine is very competitive and your motivation and commitment are rigorously assessed. You may be required to complete the UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT) or BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT). Find out how to prepare for the UKCAT.

Following your medical degree, you'll need to complete a two-year foundation programme, which consists of:

- **Foundation Year 1 (F1):** allows you to take supervised responsibility of patient care in a variety of settings. Once you've successfully completed F1 you can be granted full registration by the General Medical Council (GMC).
- **Foundation Year 2 (F2):** you'll remain under supervision but will take on increasing responsibility and make management decisions. At the end of F2, you'll get the award of Foundation Achievement of Competence Document (FACD), which allows you to enter a general practice training programme. More information can be found at The Foundation Programme.

The specialist training in general practice takes at least three years to complete. This includes 18 months as a speciality registrar in a range of hospital roles, followed by another 18 months as a GP speciality registrar in general practice.

You will also need to pass the exams for membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and will then be awarded the Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT). This means you can then gain entry to the GMC GP Register, and start applying for jobs.

You will need to show the following skills:

- personal qualities such as compassion, resourcefulness, stamina, motivation and perseverance
- the ability to work within a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals
- excellent listening and communication skills for dealing with patients
- leadership skills, especially if working as a partner in a practice
- the ability to work under pressure and deal with different demands
- good IT skills for keeping patient records
- excellent time-management to balance appointments with admin work
- business skills if running a practice as a partner.

4) What do you enjoy most about your job? What are you least favourite aspects of your job?

Helping people, having a significant impact on their life and hopefully making them feel better. Delivering bad news. This is difficult of every GP but is something you unfortunately get use to.

5) What were your favourite subjects at school? Why? Do these link/relate to the job you do now?

My favourite subjects at school were the sciences because they challenged me to think and helped me to understand about the world we live in and why things happen. These do relate to my job. My knowledge of Chemistry and Biology help me everyday.

6) How did you get to where you are now?

I did A Levels in Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics and History. I then went on to study a degree in medicine at Kings college London. I then completed my two-year foundation course of general training and then spent a year specialist training in general practice. It is a lot of work and a lot of training but I love it.

7) What advice would you give to our aspiring students who are interested in pursuing a career in your profession?

You'll be required to have experience in a related area, such as a caring or health environment. This is to show that you have an understanding of what working in medicine is like and that you appreciate the emotional and physical demands, as well as the skills required.

Relevant work experience can be carried out in hospitals and GP practices, hospices and care homes or any other environment that involves caring for people. Work shadowing or observing doctors can also be helpful to get an idea of what the work involves.

Volunteering opportunities can be found at:

- Do-it
- Medschools Online

8) In your current profession what are the potential development and progression opportunities?

Once you're working as a GP, you must keep your knowledge and skills up to date through continuing professional development (CPD). You'll have to complete revalidation with the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) every five years.

The RCGP uses a credit-based system for measuring CPD, where one hour of learning, plus a reflective record, equals one credit. You need to complete a total of 250 credits of CPD for revalidation so should aim for 50 credits each year.

CPD activities should reflect your personal interests and can include additional training and study, peer review, mentoring skills and attendance at events.

It's useful to develop a portfolio to keep track of your CPD activities and give examples of your work. As well as revalidation, the portfolio can be used for general professional development, appraisals and interviews. The NHS provide access to an e-portfolio for doctors, as well as advice on how to complete it.

The RCGP can also help with training and development and offers various events, including one day essentials conferences on topics such as mental health, ear, nose and throat, and ophthalmology. Find out more at [RCGP Learning](#).

As you progress, you may choose to undertake further training to specialise in a certain area and become a GP with specialist interest. This will involve taking a postgraduate qualification in a specialist topic such as a diploma in cardiology. You could also take a clinical assistant role, working under a consultant for one day a week, or attend update meetings on your specialist interest.