

A day in the life of...

Jeanette, Practice Manager



Jeanette started before 7.30 this morning, to make sure she is ready for the 8am opening. Already she has reviewed the plan for the day and briefed the admin team on any GP/nurse changes.

Staff wellbeing is very important to Jeanette and she likes to check in with her staff every morning. If she thinks a team are under pressure, she will always help, whether it is sorting post, answering phones, etc.



Jeanette may have started in the office at 7.30, but her day begins earlier as she logs on to the system first thing in a morning to manage any changes to clinical staff rotas so that patients see as little disruption as possible.

There is a daily catch up call starting with all the partners and managers. This is done via teams so they can maintain social distancing. The meeting means that everyone is on the same page and has all the information they need.



So much information comes in to General Practice every day and it is Jeanette's job to filter it all and make sure those that need it have it. Info from NHS England, NICE and the CCG with guidance and updates to prescribing, referrals, contracts, etc.

In case you're wondering what's going on, today we are following Jeanette, the Practice Manager at Dicconson Group Practice. Dicconson Group is 1 of our 57 GP practices in Wigan Borough. They have 8896 registered patients.



Following the practice meeting, there are a couple of reports that Jeanette needs run to double check a drugs query, as well as some medical access requests and safeguarding queries.

Dicconson Group Practice is quite large, with a big team to manage, so it has its own Staff Manager, Cheryl, who looks after the wellbeing of the staff. Today Cheryl is working on the staff rota, which is quite complicated!



By now Jeanette's to do list has gone out the window as she deals with the things coming out of the team meeting, and the new requests coming in over email and supporting staff. The Practice Manager role is clearly very reactive.

There have been a few new staff members joining the admin and support team at Dicconson Group Practice. This takes some of the pressure off the team. Each team member gets given an area of responsibility. Important it's all fair and equal.



Jeanette and Cheryl have been reflecting on how challenging planning staffing in the practice is currently. Whilst COVID rules have changed for most people, NHS rules are a lot stricter to protect patients, and so staff can be suddenly unavailable.

The practice, like most, has the Ask My GP service for patients. This enables patients to message in queries rather than needing to phone. The majority of patients here find this really helpful and useful. The phones are there for those who prefer.



The practice are working with their Patient Group (PPG) to see how they can help people to understand Ask My GP and make it easier for them to use. Their PPG is a vital part of their team as they bring the patient perspective.

Jeanette has worked in GP practices for 40 years with 33 as a practice manager. The role has changed hugely in that time, with the last 18 months being the most stressful and tiring - for obvious reasons.



Jeanette is stressing to me that the practice haven't stopped seeing patients, but they use Ask My GP to help them to support patients too. The no. of patients needing help has increased and with COVID cases rising, you can't have a full waiting room.

It's clear from talking to Jeanette that practices have had to change a lot to continue to help their patients. And new guidance comes out on what they should/n't be doing weekly. Jeanette likens it to a rollercoaster.



Jeanette's planned to do list for today includes submissions to NHSE / CCG, practice accounts, follow up a complaint, review flu/covid vaccine uptake, review GP rota, etc, etc... some of this will be bumped to tomorrow so she can deal with urgent requests

One of the urgent things that has dropped in for Jeanette to deal with today is a request for support from the police. This will take time to sort and is the kind of thing no one thinks about when they consider the practice manager role.



After doing as much as she can for the police, Jeanette is now working on a complaint from a patient that involves another organisation and then will be looking at a query about covid home visits and another about hot clinic appointments.

As a Practice Manager, Jeanette is responsible for overseeing all of the administrative & business operations. The role is incredibly varied. They make sure the practice runs effectively.



Jeanette is spending time talking with patients who need her help. Despite not being a traditional patient facing role, practice managers spend a lot of time supporting individual patients with queries, concerns, challenges and complaints.

Jeanette is very conscious of making sure staff and patients can't contract COVID in the practice. So far there have been no practice transmission, although individual staff have caught it from elsewhere. Social distancing is still in place.



A quick catch up between Jeanette and a member of her team about COVID and flu vaccines. The team monitor vaccine uptake rates and continue to work hard to support eligible patients to get vaccinated.

A reminder if you are age 16 and above you can attend one of our 3 local clinics for your COVID vaccine. Walk in or ring 01942 807780 to book. <https://healthierwigan.nhs.uk/covid-19-vaccination/walk-in-vaccine-clinics/>.



On vaccines, Jeanette makes sure the practice team is aware of appointment availability over the next few weeks. She also ensures checks are made to make sure that patient records are coded correctly.

Jeanette is overseeing a big team here at Dicconson Group. 9 GPs, 2 Advanced Practitioners, 3 Practice Nurses, 2 Healthcare Assistants & 15 in the admin team!



Jeanette has just explained that they have started a piece of work in the practice to review their processes - the aim is to make sure they are working as efficiently as possible, to reduce any duplication and unnecessary demand on staff.

The process review will start with the secretaries. They will look at the process of how patient referrals get to them, get sent to the hospital and how they action what comes back. They will map out all the steps and look if they can change anything.



After that, Jeanette will work with the practice nurses and reception team. Again they will choose a few processes to map out together and discuss whether they can improve anything, e.g. how they deal with abnormal blood results.

Why is Jeanette reviewing processes? The practice has grown over the years with more patients and staff. They need to be up to date and working as efficiently as possible. Quality improvement - another part of the PM role!





The practice has a Facebook page. Jeanette has just posted something useful she's seen - "while you wait" advice for people waiting for hospital treatment <https://whileyouwait.org.uk>.

Jeanette has just taken a call from a colleague at another practice, just wanted to talk through some advice they've given a patient around COVID-19 contact. Jeanette offered some reassurance she would have given the same advice.



Jeanette and a couple of members of staff are able to update the practice Facebook page. The number of followers has been growing and it's another good way to get info out to patients. They also keep the website up to date.

The practice has received an invoice that isn't for them. Jeanette has made a call to sort that out!



Member of staff pops in to Jeanette's office with a query about travel vaccines. Another routine part of GP practice work that you don't always think about - staff need to be on top of the latest guidance.

At least once a week, we (the CCG) issue a newsletter to all practices with the latest news, guidance, advice, info they need to be aware of. Jeanette has just spent some time reviewing the one from Friday to make sure she hasn't missed anything.



On the newsletter was an action to complete a survey with information about how the practice supports patients with learning disabilities & reasonable adjustments they may need. Jeanette has completed and submitted this.

Staffing matter to work on next. One of the Health Care Associates will be starting a Trainee Nursing Associate course. Jeanette needs to find them 2 week placement in secondary care & to arrange cover for when they will be away.



If you've not heard of the Nursing Associate role it's relatively new in the past few years. Training intended to bridge the gap between Health Care Assistant and Nursing role. Some more info: <https://rcn.org.uk/professional-development/nursing-support-workers/trainee-nursing-associates>.

Jeanette has reviewed some info about a pilot the practice is signing up to. About closer working between practices and community pharmacy for patients with minor illnesses/conditions.



It's estimated that 6% of all general practice consultations could be safely managed by a clinical consultation with a community pharmacist. The NHS wants to help people see the right healthcare professional at the right time.

As Practice Manager, Jeanette will make sure the practice completes any necessary actions as part of the pilot and she will work closely with colleagues in the other practices and pharmacies.



General practice is constantly evolving as they look to manage the challenges & levels of demand. Part of Jeanette's role as PM is to have a forward view and look at what initiatives they can take part in to improve services and shape the future.

Jeanette has just emailed staff with some information about safeguarding and a training brochure from the Wigan Safeguarding Adults Board. Safeguarding is such an important part of everyone's role in healthcare.



The practice has a Dementia carers group - that actually met earlier today - which is run by a couple of the patients. Jeanette sent some info through to the group leader earlier and is on hand for any queries.

Jeanette has just had a quick chat with a colleague about carers. How best they can identify unpaid carers and offer support. One of the areas they may be able to do more is around young carers for example.



From the earlier query about travel vaccines. Jeanette has been liaising via email with nursing colleagues who have now confirmed that the process is up to date so she has shared this with her staff and other practices so they all have the latest info.

Dicconson Group is part of the Wigan Primary Care Network. They work with other GP practices in the local area to look at how they can improve services and outcomes for patients.



Jeanette is Lead Practice Manager for the Wigan PCN. She feels it is a fantastic opportunity to be part of the process to bring care closer to home.

One of the largest achievements of the PCN is their work on the COVID vaccination programme - a huge feat! The Wigan PCN hold clinics at Robin Park Leisure Centre. This is just 1 example of joint working but there's lots of day to day things too!



Jeanette has told me she is very proud to be part of a strong local practice manager group who work very closely together to problem solve and share good practice. Hopefully you've seen lots of examples in our posts today.

If you're just joining us we are spending the day with Jeanette who is practice manager at Dicconson Group practice. Showing you what a typical day is like being a practice manager. Hope you are finding our posts interesting!



#WiganNHSmanager #TeamNHSGP

Monday 25th October 2021



Jeanette has had to make a call to log an issue with the GP clinical system. Providing them with some info so they can look in to the issue.

A quick look over Jeanette's to-do list from this morning. 3 of 8 things done, GP rota, catch up with PCN manager and room utilisation submission. Lots of other unplanned things she's had to pick up and respond to. This is a typical day.



Some work is being done to review how health buildings across the Borough are used to make sure we are making the most of all space! Jeanette has had to review & amend a report about this practice, what rooms are used when.

A quick chat with Jeanette about how patients access services here. They have Ask My GP or patients can phone in if they need to. Since 1st Aug, the team has processed 7253 requests via Ask My GP!



If you are able to, you access Ask My GP through the practice website. When you use it for the first time you create your own log in and password. It then takes you through entering some info which get's submitted to the practice.

A quick call to a colleague to arrange a time for Sue who runs the Dementia Carers Group. Sue messaged Jeanette and asked if they could catch up on some matters arising which Jeanette is happy to do.



Jeanette's just described managing the practice at the moment as a "balancing act". With COVID numbers rising, they need to keep everyone (staff & pts) as safe as possible, constantly managing the risk e.g. by telephone reviews if appropriate.

Jeanette is confirming order for next year's flu vaccines to be delivered in 2022! They look at what they ordered last year, the disease register & age of patients to work out how much to order. So much forward planning.



Dicconson Group Practice has a General Medical Services (GMS) contract with the NHS. If you are interested in the contracting side of things more info here: <https://england.nhs.uk/gp/investment/gp-contract/>.

Every year, the practice has to complete an online return to NHS England where they declare if they are meeting all the elements of their GMS contract. This is Jeanette's task as Practice Manager!





Jeanette has completed most of the contract e-declaration. There's just one query she needs some more info about before she can complete and submit. Although she has until end of November, she "feels better that most of it is done".

Something has dropped in to Jeanette's inbox and she needs to liaise with the CCG about a patient and the effective use of resource policy. To see if a particular treatment can be funded
<https://healthierwigan.nhs.uk/services/effective-use-of-resources/>.



Call from a team member asking for contact details for the manager at the GP Alliance. Some patient test results have come back from a smear test done in the service. The practice needs more info about it to be able to code correctly on the GP system.

Another matter Jeanette has been working on today. The team need to arrange to visit a local care home to complete some last remaining COVID boosters. Liaising with the home about the date and then staff who need to make up the vaccinating team



As a Wigan Primary Care Network (PCN) exec member, Jeanette has just received a notice to sign off some invoices for the PCN, which she has just actioned right away.

As we are starting to wind down for the day, Jeanette is reflecting on how this is the most demanding but rewarding job! She has been here so long but still loves it and loves the people she works with. "the practice team keeps us all here".



Jeanette feels we have quite a unique situation in Wigan where we have long serving members of staff in practice and wider organisations such as the CCG. The strong relationships are so important and help with delivering primary care.

Last task of the day. Preparing an overview of all roles in the practice. For example "a first contact practitioner is..." The plan with this is to add the info to Ask My GP in the future so patients have info about who is dealing with their requests.



1/2 Jeanette's one key message to patients: "contrary to media reports, we are not closed. Whilst we are working differently we are seeing patients who need to be seen..."

2/2 "...a big thank you to our patients who have been so understanding during this difficult period and have adapted to our new systems. We wouldn't be getting through it without the support of our patients and staff".



A big thank you to Jeanette for allowing us to spend the day with her today! We hope you've found our posts interesting. We've tried to give you an idea of what the practice manager role is all about. Although no day is the same - busy & varied!

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