Physician Assistants have been employed at Eynsham Medical Group since November 2023. Following the Leng Report commissioned by the government, we are writing this statement to add clarity to the role of the Physician Assistant at EMG.

A Physician Assistant (PA) is a Medical Associate Professional. They are not doctors, nor are they doctors in training. In order to become a PA, they must have studied an undergraduate degree at university, followed by a 2-year Masters degree as a Physician Assistant which encompasses a general medical education. At all appointments, our PAs introduce themselves in their role.

Throughout their deployment at EMG, we have ensured that they have further training beyond their degrees in conditions that they are expected to review. In the early months of our Physician Assistants' employment, we allowed them to see significantly fewer patients per day and ensured that every patient was reviewed by a supervising GP prior to leaving the Practice so that we could be confident that our Physician Assistants were delivering care to a high standard, as would be expected. As well as through their paced introduction to the Practice, our PAs have close daily supervision, are involved in educational meetings at the Practice and have ongoing monthly tutorials. During these tutorials, cases and conditions are discussed, along with our PAs being observed in practice. The PAs have a named supervisor in Dr Kyan Zarbalian who is responsible for overseeing their ongoing development.

During each clinic, our PAs have a nominated GP supervisor who has appropriate blocked time allowed to review any cases where there is uncertainty, or to provide advice. Our PAs and our supervisors are aware that we expect our PAs to have a low threshold to ask for help during clinics. All appointments with our PAs are discussed with their supervising GP at the end of each session to debrief in case anything further should be added to the ongoing care. PAs are not able to prescribe medications, and any suggested prescriptions will be discussed with their supervising GP who takes responsibility for any prescribing.

Our PAs are not able to see patients for all their health problems, but in keeping with the current guidance, are able to deal with certain urgent issues such as coughs and colds, urine infections, sore throats and ear symptoms which have clear guidelines and protocols for management. They also provide routine appointments for conditions such as nail changes, muscular issues, or prostate discussions. We have policies in place at the Practice avoid patients being seen repeatedly only by our PAs for the same presenting problem.

Our system at Eynsham Medical Group aims to ensure that patients are "triaged" appropriately. This ensures that our PAs do not see "undifferentiated cases" as when a patient or their representative makes an appointment request, using the information provided (or perhaps asking for more if needed), the Duty Doctor or Urgent Care Practitioner will request an appointment with an appropriate team member. This appointment may be with the GP, PA, Urgent Care Team or Clinical Pharmacist, if an appointment is required.

Our PAs also offer support through administrative tasks in which they have also been trained at the Practice. They are not a replacement for GPs but through reducing administrative workload and reviewing patients with more minor ailments they allow our GPs more capacity to review those with more complex conditions or care needs.

Our PAs are valuable clinical team members and professionals who deserve respect and to not be abused at their place of work. We will continue to keep their roles and responsibilities under review to ensure compliance with NHS England guidelines and maintaining high levels of care.

You can learn more about our inidividual Physician Assistants at this link:

Practice Team - Eynsham Medical Group