



General Practice Nurse Community

Supporting and empowering
general practice nurses in Dorset



Connect

Work together and
share best practice



Learn

Access training, resources
and development



Grow

Build confidence,
skills and leadership



Impact

Improve outcomes for
patients and our communities

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Welcome to Your Community

This is the very first edition of the Dorset General Practice Nursing Newsletter.

This newsletter has been created to bring together General Practice Nurses and the wider primary care nursing workforce from across Dorset. It is a place to share good news, celebrate achievements, highlight education opportunities and ensure every nurse feels connected to a wider professional community.

General Practice Nurses are at the heart of modern primary care. We lead prevention, manage long-term conditions, deliver vaccination programmes, improve population health and provide compassionate, person-centred care every day.

We hope you enjoy this first edition.



www.primarycaredorset.co.uk/nurse-community

Working Together to Shape the Future of General Practice Nursing

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter and to the launch of the **Dorset General Practice Nursing Community of Practice**.

My name is **Nikki Lopez**, and I am one of the **General Practice Nursing Workforce Clinical Fellows** for the Dorset General Practice Alliance and Primary Care Training Hub. Alongside this role, I am **Nurse Manager at South Coast Medical Group**, and a **Respiratory Nurse Specialist**.

Although I may be the face behind this newsletter, this work is very much a team effort. The Fellowship is led by a fantastic team of three. **Clare**, our Professional Nurse Lead (or as I like to call her, the big boss, despite being rather petite!), provides the strategic leadership for the programme. **Cheryl** leads on education and workforce development, ensuring we continue to create meaningful learning opportunities for General Practice Nurses. My role is to lead the development of our **General Practice Nursing Community of Practice**, bringing nurses together, improving communication and creating a stronger professional network across Dorset.

Throughout my career I have been passionate about supporting nurses and helping General Practice Nursing receive the recognition it deserves. Every day GPNs deliver highly skilled care, lead innovation and improve the lives of thousands of patients, yet our profession is often overlooked.

The Community of Practice has been created to connect nurses across Dorset, reduce professional isolation, promote education and share innovation. It is also about developing future leaders and ensuring General Practice Nursing has a stronger voice across the healthcare system.

As the Dorset General Practice Nursing (GPN) Workforce Clinical Fellow, I am leading the development of a connected and supportive network for General Practice Nurses across Dorset. The aim is to reduce professional isolation, strengthen peer support and improve access to education, guidance and professional development opportunities.

A key part of this work is establishing direct communication with GPNs through a regular newsletter, providing updates on education, clinical guidance, events, workforce developments and opportunities relevant to General Practice Nursing. Alongside this, I am proposing an optional WhatsApp community where GPNs can ask quick clinical or professional questions, share good practice and support one another in a safe and respectful environment. Participation will be entirely voluntary for those who wish to be involved. Please let me know if interested.

In addition, I am working with the Dorset General Practice Alliance to develop a dedicated GPN webpage, creating a single point of access for educational opportunities, training events, meetings, resources, career development and Community of Practice activities. Together, these initiatives will improve communication, increase collaboration and help ensure that every GPN in Dorset feels connected, informed and supported throughout their professional journey.

This newsletter belongs to all of us. I hope it becomes a place where we celebrate success, share ideas, inspire one another and continue to raise the profile of General Practice Nursing across Dorset.

Thank you for being part of this exciting journey. I look forward to working with you all as we build a supportive, collaborative and thriving General Practice Nursing community.

In the Spotlight: Our Team



Name: Nikki Lopez

Job title: GPN fellow, (Nurse Manager for SCMG and Respiratory Nurse Specialist.)

Years with the NHS: Too long!

Favourite part of my job: Representing and empowering Dorset's General Practice Nursing workforce by fostering connection, enhancing local support, and influencing national recognition for GPNs.

Coffee order: Cappuccino

Weekend you'll find me: Kayaking on the Stour or with my family in the forest.

Name: Cheryl O'Sullivan

Job Title: ANP (LTC) / GPN workforce fellow

Years with NHS: 35 years

Favourite part of my job: Working together to ensure General Practice Nursing remains at the heart of General Practice. Championing our voice and the important role we play not only in Primary Care but our value across the System. Ensuring we have the skills and competencies to deliver the highest quality patient care but to also flourish in our roles.

Hidden talent: Trained chef

Coffee order: Tea (lots!)

Weekend you'll find me: Park Run!



Name: Clare Mechen

Job title: Professional Nurse Lead for DGPA and PCTH (Also, Nurse Manager for The Adam Practice and Wessex LMC Nurse Advisor)

Years with the NHS: 36 years

Favourite part of my job: Championing the voice of the Dorset General Practice Nursing workforce at a strategic level, influencing policy, driving innovation, and advocating for the needs of patients, communities, and the profession.

Hidden talent: Nutrition coach (in training)

Coffee order: A good cup of English Tea or homemade kombucha

Weekend you'll find me: With my dogs and family hiking the hills of Dorset or on a campsite somewhere in the UK

Our door is always open, and we're here to help whenever you need us.

www.primarycaredorset.co.uk/nurse-community

Community Care Needs Community Nurses

A recent House of Lords debate reinforced what General Practice Nurses already know - community healthcare cannot succeed without investing in the people who deliver it.

Baroness Clare Gerada highlighted the essential contribution of General Practice Nurses, District Nurses and Health Visitors in delivering the NHS ambition of moving more care closer to home. She called for greater investment in workforce, education and community services, warning that without properly supported community teams, prevention and continuity of care will suffer.

Her message is clear: if the future of the NHS is community-based, then General Practice Nurses must be recognised, valued and supported.

Celebrating Dorset

We'd Love to Celebrate You!

Future editions will recognise the fantastic work happening across Dorset.



Have you:

- Completed a qualification?
- Become an Independent Prescriber?
- Led a quality improvement project?
- Introduced an innovative service?
- Won an award?
- Welcomed a new member of your team?

If so, we'd love to feature your story.

You Said, We Listened

More than 100 primary care nurses from across Dorset completed our Community of Practice survey, helping shape the future of this exciting new network.



Your biggest challenges

- Increasing workload
- More complex patients
- Feeling isolated
- Keeping up with changing guidance
- Lack of protected learning time



You asked for

- More education
- Networking
- Peer support
- Career development
- Shared clinical resources

The most requested educational topics were Respiratory, Diabetes, Wound Care, Women's Health, Frailty and Immunisations.

Your feedback has directly shaped our plans for the Community of Practice.

Save The Date

As a team we are in the planning stages of a 2nd **GPN + COP Network event** for early 2027, following the success of the 2025 event, this will include the opportunity for the Nursing Community of Practice to come together Face to Face.

Watch this space!

Watch this space for further details, we hope you'll join us!

Meet Melissa



Melissa from the Dorset Primary Care Training Hub will introduce herself in our next issue and explain how the Training Hub supports General Practice Nurses through education, career development, leadership programmes and workforce initiatives.

Education & Training

This regular feature will highlight:

-  Study days & clinical updates
-  Leadership development programmes
-  Independent prescribing pathways
-  Funding opportunities
-  Conferences & webinars

Please email PCTH with any queries



Please see below for upcoming opportunities  

FdSc Nursing Associate Apprenticeship - Expressions of Interest now open

General Practice Nursing Course (Foundation and Enhanced) - fully funded places available!

Content provided by
Dorset Primary Care Training Hub.

THE GPN 10

General Practice Nursing continues to evolve at pace, with national policy, workforce developments and clinical innovation shaping the future of primary care. Our Top 10 GPN News highlights some of the key developments influencing General Practice Nurses nationally and across Dorset and Nationally. From workforce and education to leadership, prevention and respiratory care, these updates reflect the important contribution GPNs make every day in delivering high-quality, patient-centred care closer to home.

1. Fair Pay Campaign Continues

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) continues to campaign for fair and equitable pay for General Practice Nurses. National surveys suggest many GPNs remain excluded from NHS pay uplifts, with concerns that this is affecting recruitment and retention across primary care.

2. General Practice Nursing in the Spotlight

National healthcare leaders continue to recognise that General Practice Nurses are central to delivering the NHS vision of more care closer to home. Prevention, long-term condition management and personalised care are increasingly dependent on a skilled GPN workforce.

3. Recruitment Remains Challenging

Practices across England continue to report difficulties recruiting experienced General Practice Nurses. Many areas are investing in structured career pathways, mentorship and support for newly qualified nurses to encourage more nurses into primary care.

4. Education and CPD Still a Priority

Professional organisations continue to call for protected learning time and equitable access to continuing professional development. Investing in education remains essential to maintaining a skilled and confident primary care nursing workforce.

5. Long-Term Condition Care Continues to Evolve

Integrated reviews for patients living with multiple long-term conditions are becoming increasingly common, supporting more holistic care while reducing duplication and improving the patient experience.

6. Respiratory Care Remains High on the Agenda

Asthma and COPD continue to be national priorities. Current guidance focuses on optimising inhaler therapy, reducing reliance on short-acting reliever inhalers and supporting earlier identification of patients at risk of deterioration.

Top 10 GPN News - continued

7. Prevention is Everyone's Business

General Practice Nurses remain at the forefront of prevention, leading vaccination programmes, cardiovascular risk reduction, cancer awareness, smoking cessation and health promotion initiatives across primary care.

8. Digital Innovation is Expanding

More practices are making greater use of digital tools to support recalls, long-term condition monitoring, patient education and remote consultations, helping improve access while maintaining high-quality care.

9. Leadership Opportunities Continue to Grow

Increasing numbers of General Practice Nurses are taking on leadership roles within Primary Care Networks, Integrated Care Systems, education, quality improvement and service transformation, demonstrating the growing influence of the profession.

10. Dorset Community of Practice Update

The Dorset General Practice Nursing Community of Practice has now been successfully launched and is already bringing General Practice Nurses together from across the county. The network provides regular educational meetings, mentorship opportunities, peer support, newsletters and collaborative learning, helping to strengthen professional connections and reduce isolation.

Together, we are building a stronger, better-connected and more influential General Practice Nursing workforce that champions professional development, inspires future leaders and ensures General Practice Nursing has a stronger voice in shaping healthcare across Dorset.

Did You Know?

- Over 15 million people in England live with one or more long-term conditions.
- Around 70% of appointments in primary care relate to long-term condition management.
- General Practice Nurses provide millions of consultations every year, delivering expert care, education and prevention across every stage of life.
- Investment in General Practice Nursing is increasingly recognised as essential to delivering sustainable, community-based healthcare for the future.

Dates for your diary

September 2026



Launch of the Dorset General Practice Nursing Community of Practice

October 2026



GPN Educational Online Session on 1st October 2026 via teams - **Book on here!**

Topic: Necessary and Immediate Care and the red flags in leg ulcers

Hosted by: Cathy Ulner, Complex Leg Ulcer Team Lead and Specialist Leg Ulcer Nurse

Early 2027



Dorset General Practice Nursing + COP network event

More details will be announced soon on our website: www.primarycaredorset.co.uk/nurse-community

Get Involved

This newsletter has been created for Dorset General Practice Nurses, by Dorset General Practice Nurses. If you have an article, education idea, clinical update, good news story or event you'd like to share, please get in touch with [Clare](#), [Nikki](#) or [Cheryl](#).

Together we can connect, learn, lead and continue to raise the profile of General Practice Nursing across Dorset.

Editors Note

General Practice Nursing is changing rapidly. From expanding career opportunities and funded development programmes to increasing national recognition of the profession, there has never been a more exciting time to be a GPN. Here in Dorset, our Community of Practice aims to ensure every General Practice Nurse has access to support, education, mentorship and opportunities to shape the future of primary care nursing together.

See you in the next edition! 

