

NHS Wales GP Retainer Scheme Guidance

This guidance sets out the criteria for doctors who wish to join the GP Retainer Scheme in Wales.

The document is also intended for practices that may be considering having a GP Retainer.

Version number: 2.0

First published: 1 October 2019

Last updated: 29th April 2020

Prepared by: GP Training and Education Section – Medical Directorate,
HEIW

Table of Contents

Section	Page Number
<u>Introduction</u>	3
<u>Purpose</u>	3
<u>Eligibility</u>	4
<u>GP Retainer Approval Process</u>	5
<u>Roles & Responsibilities</u>	6
<u>GP Practice Guidance</u>	7-8
<u>Contractual / Employment Issues</u>	9
<u>Annual Review</u>	10
<u>End of Placement</u>	10

1) Introduction:

The GP Retainer Scheme was first introduced in 1969, and enabled doctors to update / retain their skills and further develop their careers in part-time employment in an approved practice. This would normally coincide with a period of their lives in which they are only able to undertake a small amount of paid professional work.

The scheme is a combination of service commitment and continuing professional development, by facilitating the opportunity to do a small amount of paid professional work and be involved in educational sessions. It aims to support the practice of medicine and career development within a protected and educationally stimulating environment.

Originally the scheme allowed for only 2 sessions of work per week, but in 1998 new rules were introduced, allowing Retainers to work up to 4 sessions per week. There have been fundamental changes to the scheme since, although HEIW continues to revise its procedures in response to changes to employment law and NHS practice, including distribution of the BMA Standard Model Contract.

In 2019, the scheme was updated by Welsh Government to reflect UK developments to the Retainer Scheme. In England, the National GP Retention Scheme is managed jointly by the local offices of Health Education England (HEE) (through the designated HEE RGP Scheme Lead) and NHS England.

2) Purpose:

The scheme is designed to support doctors that have left, or are considering leaving general practice for the following reasons:

- (i) approaching retirement, or
- (ii) require greater flexibility to undertake other work within general practice or otherwise; or
- (iii) for such other reasons related to the personal circumstances of that doctor as their Health Board considers to be acceptable, for the purposes of this Scheme.

3) Eligibility:

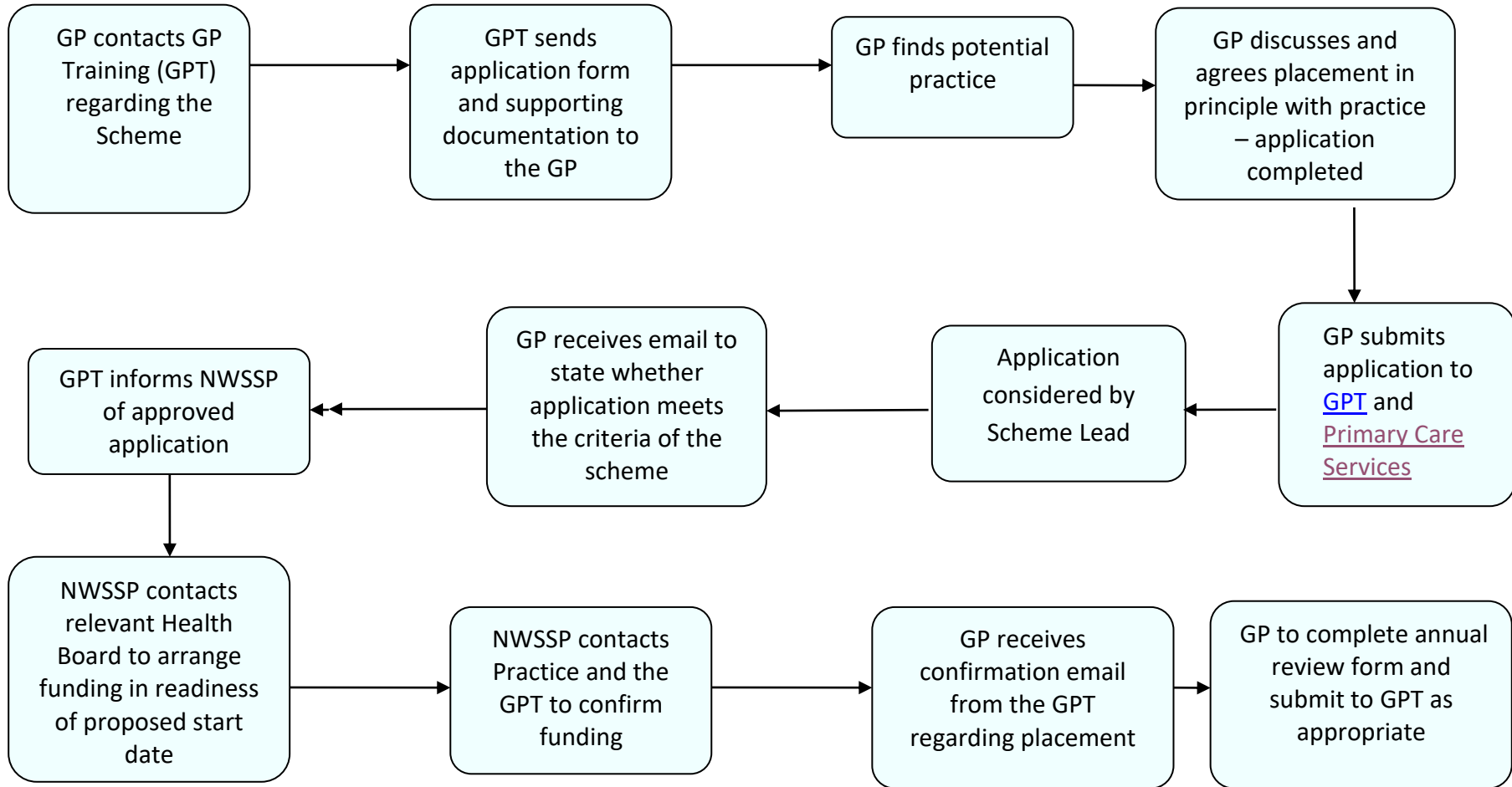
The scheme is open to doctors who demonstrate ALL of the following criteria in their application:

Must hold full GMC registration with a license to practice and be on the Welsh Medical Performers List
Be eligible to work unrestricted in general practice i.e. no conditions or undertakings on their licence to practice, except those relating solely to health matters
Intend to return to independent general practice within a maximum 5 years (depending on their circumstances e.g. not applicable to doctors that intend to retire)
Show that a regular part-time role does not meet the doctor's need for flexibility, for example the requirement for short clinics or annualised hours
Where there is a need for additional educational supervision. For example a newly qualified doctor needing to work 1-4 sessions a week due to caring responsibilities or those working only 1-2 sessions where pro-rata study leave allowance is inadequate to maintain continuing professional development and professional networks

Please note:

- Each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Scheme Lead
- A GP Retainer must work no more than 4 clinical sessions per week. Any requests to do so must be made in writing to the Scheme Lead for consideration.
- If a practice can only provide a Retainer with less than 4 sessions, they are free to find another suitable practice that will allow them to work their full allowance of sessions.
- If a doctor has not undertaken any clinical work for 2 years or more, an application to the GP Induction and Refresher scheme would be appropriate. Please click [here](#) for further information.
- Where a doctor has previously been on the Retainer Scheme but is not currently on the Scheme and is otherwise eligible, they may apply to re-join the scheme.

4) GP Retainer Approval Process



5) Roles & Responsibilities:

GP Training and Education Section - HEIW

- Process the application for the scheme and inform NWSSP of approved applications
- Approve eligibility for scheme against criteria
- Appeals procedure for non-acceptance on scheme
- Maintain records for the Retainer Scheme members - Application records will be retained by the Section for audit purposes for six years (as per NHS Wales Retention Policy). The retention period will be triggered by the Retainer leaving the scheme.
- Maintain data on interested individuals and practices
- Monitor CPD aspect and ensure educational component is appropriate of placement
- Grievance procedure for any Retainer who feels they are not receiving educational benefits
- Evaluation of the scheme
- Annually review Retainers on the Scheme including eligibility
- Monitor and authorise requests for change of job plan due to change in personal circumstances or professional opportunities
- Provide accurate information on scheme to GPs

Data may be shared between HEIW, Welsh Government and NWSSP for the purpose of approving applications and monitoring the effectiveness on the scheme. Further details can be found in our [privacy notice](#).

NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP)

- Coordinate and confirm funding arrangement with Retainer's Health Board
- Liaise with the doctor and GPT regarding the funding
- Provide advice to doctors and practices regarding the funding arrangements

Health Board

- Ensure funding is available for Retainer placements
- Liaise with NWSSP to confirm funding arrangements

6) GP Practice Guidance:

Eligibility criteria for GP practices

- The GP practice should offer the Retainer work that enables them to maintain skills across the full spectrum of a general practitioner. The Retainer should be embedded in one GP practice to enable peer support at work and continuity with patients.
- Practices must be able to demonstrate they can meet the educational needs of the Retainer as appropriate and that they understand the ethos of educational supervision. The designated Scheme Lead will assess this based on the needs of the doctor who is applying. The practice should provide a named educational and clinical mentor who is either a GP trainer, F2 supervisor or has recently accessed a suitable training course in supervision. The precise specification is for local determination by the Scheme Lead.
- Practices may employ more than one Retainer where there is capacity for support and long-term career opportunities with the prior approval of the Scheme Lead.
- If your practice is not an approved Welsh GP Specialty Training Practice, it may be necessary for the Scheme Lead to visit your practice. In the first instance, please contact the GP Training and Education Section to discuss the practice approval process – heiw.gpretainer@wales.nhs.uk

Obligations of the Retainer, practice and educational / clinical mentor

- Hold full registration and a licence to practice with the General Medical Council (GMC), and meet the requirements for remaining on the Wales Medical Performers List (including requisite medical defence organisation cover)
- Notify the Scheme Lead, in advance where possible, of any changes in working arrangements (e.g. potential additional work) and personal circumstances that may affect participation in the scheme
- Notify the GPT of any long spells off work (over four weeks), e.g. maternity leave or long-term sick leave
- Submit to the GPT an annual review form, to allow time for discussion regarding continuity of the scheme and any adjustments required
- Attend any events organised by the Scheme Lead expressly for Retainers
- Meet appraisal and revalidation requirements and make their Responsible Officer aware that they are a Retainer i.e. ensure their professional details are kept up-to-date on their MARS account

Obligations of the practice, employing organisation

- Provide the Retainer with contract of employment equivalent to those already employed, outlining job role, salary, taxation and NI legislation, redundancy, representative bodies, grievance procedures, superannuation, practice meetings, annual leave, flexible working policies i.e. Maternity/Paternity leave
- Offer adequate and appropriate induction, both on joining and after any significant break (e.g. maternity leave). This will include for example IT systems, practice procedures and protocols, referrals systems, in-house and community services, collaborative working arrangements and referral pathways, prescribing formularies, team roles, information governance, safeguarding etc
- Nominate clinical colleague(s) to act as an educational and clinical mentor, who will provide one-to-one support in protected time (fortnightly or monthly as discussed and agreed with the Retainer). A minimum of 2 hours a month would be recommended (additional to CPD entitlement)
- The doctor nominated as an educational mentor to the Retainer must have had relevant educational training. If not already a trainer, the individual must undertake suitable training prior to having a Retainer
- Notify the Scheme Lead (and Retainer's Responsible Officer if appropriate) in advance of any substantial changes within the practice, that may impact upon the employment and educational arrangements of the Retainer
- Work with the Retainer to create a job plan suitable for their individual needs to keep them in the profession. The job plan should include participation in team meetings during their normal working days
- Invite the Retainer as appropriate to practice-based events, including practice meetings, in-house training, away-days and significant event meetings, in protected time, using the CPD allowance as appropriate and agreed, with reference to learning needs as established at the Retainers appraisal
- Offer the Retainer accommodation in a consistent room – Retainers should not be asked to 'hot-desk', except in practices where this is the norm for everyone
- All medical records and hospital correspondence must be filed in practice notes, in chronological order. The records must contain easily discernible, drug therapy lists for patients on long-term therapy and should be 80% summarised
- The Practice must have methods for monitoring prescribing habits as part of audit, and should have a practice formulary or a prescribing list and a policy on how the list is reviewed and implemented
- The Practice must offer a sufficiently wide range of GMS/PMS services to enable the Retainer to maintain skills across the full spectrum of GP work
- Multi-partner practices with a large patient list *may* be approved to employ two Retainers at the same time. This request must be made in writing for consideration by the Scheme Lead. An additional visit may be organised to ensure the premises and the arrangements are suitable for both Retainers

7) Contractual / Employment Issues:

Professional expenses supplement

Each Retainer would qualify for an annual professional expenses supplement of between £1000 and £4000 which is based on the number of sessions worked per week. It is payable to the Retainer via the practice. The expenses supplement is subject to deductions for tax and national insurance contributions. The payment is made on the understanding that it is to be applied towards meeting the cost of the doctor's professional indemnity cover, continuing professional education requirements and other professional expenses.

For further information regarding the funding arrangements, please contact [NWSSP](#).

Contract of employment

All Retainers will be employed by the agreed practice. GMS and PMS practices should offer terms and conditions that are no less favourable than the model salaried GP contract as determined in GMS/PMS regulations.

Terms and conditions of employment are a matter of negotiation between the Retainer and the practice. The BMA has developed a model retainer scheme contract that is based on the Salaried GP Model Contract but specific to the Scheme. Contract checking and advice services can be accessed by BMA members by calling 0300 123 1233 or by emailing support@bma.org.uk. General advice for non-members can be obtained by emailing info.gpc@bma.org.uk

The Retainer contract is between 1- 4 sessions – a session is 4 hours 10 minutes (37.5 hrs / 9 sessions). The pattern of sessions worked will be reviewed with the Retainer each year via the annual review form.

The duration of the retainer contract will be for the duration of the scheme (max. 5 years) and reviewed annually. After two years of working for an employer, the Retainer should normally gain further statutory rights under employment law.

The Retainer, in discussion with the designated Scheme Lead and current practice, can extend their time on the scheme in the following circumstances:

- To replace time off the scheme relating to maternity, parental, adoption or sick leave.
- Under special circumstances e.g. where a Retainer has had to change practices due to relocation or due to break down in placement and support, and would not have enough time left on the scheme to acquire employment rights in a fresh post.

In these circumstances an extension of *up to* 24 months would be deemed appropriate.

The Retainer continues to be a member of the scheme whilst on maternity, parental leave and sick leave. Retainers are strongly advised to make use of "Keeping in Touch" (KIT) days where they are available. If a Retainer's end date falls whilst they are on paid parental leave they should contact heiw.gpretainer@wales.nhs.uk to discuss this in the first instance.

The practice and Retainer will continue to receive payments under the terms of the scheme as long as the Retainer remains contracted to the practice and the practice continues to pay the Retainer.

8) Annual Review

Retainers will be required to complete an annual review form; this will allow for careful consideration of their needs and whether they are being met by the practice, requirements for future months and whether they should remain on the scheme. The Unit will ordinarily send the form for completion by all Retainers during the first quarter every year.

9) End of Placement

The end-of-scheme form is to be completed by the Retainer following the end of the placement. This must be sent to the GPT at heiw.gpretainer@wales.nhs.uk and copied to NWSSP-primarycareservices@Wales.nhs.uk