

## 4 Topic guides for interviews, observations and focus groups

### TOPIC GUIDE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH PRACTICE STAFF

Topic	Sub-topic/questions
Explore individuals' roles, responsibilities and experiences	<p>What is their job title and what does the current role involve?</p> <p>Examples of their day-to-day activities/work</p> <p>What is their training background and past working experiences?</p>
Explore individuals' thoughts about increasing skill mix in primary care	<p>Should it be happening?</p> <p>Why yes/no?</p> <p>What drives skill mix change in your practice?</p> <p>What would you do more of /less of if you could?</p>
Own evaluation about implementation of skill mix	<p>In what ways do you think your practice team is negotiating skill mix successfully?</p> <p>And</p> <p>In what respects could you do better?</p> <p>Explore what has changed</p> <p>Explore how those changes have come about</p> <p>Explore the pace of change</p> <p>Explore barriers/facilitators of change</p>
Perceptions about the most important aspects of your work here	<p>For your team colleagues?</p> <p>For patients who attend the practice?</p> <p>For you as an individual?</p> <p>For the NHS as a whole?</p>
Received feedback from patients which is about skill mix	<p>Do they tell all types of practitioners the same positive/negative story?</p> <p>Do they select/attempt to select different practitioner types for different types of problem?</p> <p>How much do they pursue continuity of care?</p>
Expectations vs experience of what happens when implementing skill mix changes	<p>What have you discovered about implementing skill mix in primary care that you didn't expect to be the case?</p> <p>To what extent does skill mix working seem to alter what you do/see?</p>

	<p>Good/bad</p> <p>Service delivery aspects?</p> <p>Relationships with colleagues?</p> <p>Tricky boundaries to negotiate?</p> <p>Have you had support/advice from anywhere to help smoothly implement skill mix changes?</p> <p>Where would you go for advice?</p>
Shifting tasks, negotiating boundaries	<p>Duplication/substitution/delegation/innovation /enhancement etc</p> <p>Do you organise your team:</p> <p>according to tasks?</p> <p>according to specific roles?</p> <p>according to each practitioner's skill-set?</p> <p>dictated by patients' 'presenting problem'?</p> <p>How do you deal with multiple (and potentially related) problems?</p> <p>Are any team members becoming de-skilled?</p>
Patient choice vs available service delivery	<p>How much detailed information are patients willing to give when requesting an appointment?</p> <p>Does that information match what they say when they attend?</p>
Quality of care delivered to patients	<p>Do you perceive any change in the quality of care that your team delivers – that you attribute to wider skill mix?</p> <p>Is this based on measures e.g. QOF, SAEs, CQC, incentivised performance markers/activity targets ? etc</p> <p>How do you think your wider skill mix may affect patient safety?</p> <p>Who takes responsibility for patients' experiences of PC?</p>
Personal and professional development	<p>In what ways does working in a diverse team have any bearing on your PPD?</p>
Recognised impact of being involved in a study	<p>In what ways does being involved in this study affect how you work?</p>
Keeping ahead in a changing NHS organisation	<p>Are costs of skill mix a problem?</p> <p>Is recruitment/retention a problem?</p>

	<p>Do you repeatedly train staff who leave for another post?</p> <p>Do you employ strategically, reactively, opportunistically?</p>
Future sustainability	<p>What will make a difference to how GP practice work in the future?</p> <p>To what extent are you considering/doing 'working at scale'?</p> <p>What incentives do you think practices may need?</p>

## Topic guide for staff/patient observation

Topic/area of interest	Sub-topic/questions
Overall service delivery – booking appointments	<p>How do staff explain the roles/duties of different practitioners?</p> <p>To what extent are patients asked to share medical information when requesting an appointment?</p>
Consultation – what can be observed about practitioner and patient agendas for the consultation	<p>To what extent is the consultation activity driven by</p> <p>Patient</p> <p>Practitioner</p> <p>Background processes/ongoing issues</p> <p>What other factors operate?</p> <p>How are conflicting agendas negotiated?</p>
Expectations - patient	<p>Is there evidence of what the patient expects from this practitioner?</p> <p>How is the relationship negotiated?</p> <p>How are wants/needs/problems expressed?</p> <p>Underlying preconceptions?</p> <p>Use of verbal and body language</p> <p>Sense of confidence, trust, reliance, acceptance, resistance, questioning etc.</p> <p>Unanswered questions, outstanding issues etc.</p>
Expectations - practitioner	<p>Is the practitioner -patient relationship clear?</p> <p>Responsiveness to patient-related factors; e.g. anxiety, resistance etc</p> <p>Evidence of independent confidence/assurance</p> <p>Evidence of acknowledged limitations and how these are dealt with</p> <p>Use of external resources – online, guidelines, other staff team members</p> <p>Negotiation of follow-up advice</p>
Observed overall service delivery- consultations	<p>Volume of activity</p> <p>Completion of agenda items – for patient or practitioner</p>

	<p>Actions advised to deal with additional activity e.g. future appointments</p> <p>Is there a clear next plan/action?</p> <p>Exchange of information – patient experience, healthcare advice</p> <p>Evidence of holistic practice, patient choice</p> <p>Evidence of flexibility regarding guidelines, referral patterns, negotiation of priorities</p> <p>External drivers – e.g. work to achieve on QOF, CQC, incentivised performance markers/activity targets?</p>
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## TOPIC GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUPS WITH PATIENTS & PPG MEMBERS

Topic	Sub-topics/questions
Encourage opening narrative General exploration of views on access to health care via GP	What changes, if any have been evident in terms of: Timely access Continuity of care Continuity of professional giving care Sufficient time and attention to their concerns
Experience of newer types of practitioners	What has been their experience? Do they like what skill mix provides? Have they noted different patterns in the care offered? How have they felt about being offered/seeing other practitioners as a replacement for GPs?
Choice of practitioner	Did they have a choice of practitioner type? Did they have to choose between a sooner/later appointment opportunity with different types of practitioner Do you have any 'lines in the sand' re which type of practitioner you would see for a specific problem?
Sources of information/knowledge about primary care practitioners	Do they have any knowledge or guidance to feel they can make a good choice of practitioner to see? What do they believe each practitioner type offers?
Changing patterns of accessing first-line health care	Has their consulting preference changed? Do they require more/fewer appointments to resolve their health issues?
Changes in organisation of health care services at local level	More/fewer face-to-face consultations? Longer/shorter consultations? More/less single-issue consultations? Early returns to 'see someone else' for the same or a related problem?
Staff attitudes and abilities	Are there many instances of 'asking for a second opinion/advice'? Do they feel more/less reassured after a consultation? Is it easier to attend for a review?

Limitations on what specific practitioners can provide	e.g. any issues with medication unresolvable by non-prescribers
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#### **ADDITIONAL TOPIC FOR PPG MEMBERS ONLY**

General questions about skill mix	What have they heard/been told?
Awareness of skill mix changes in GP practice	How have you heard that information?
PPG engagement or role related to skill mix changes	<p>Were your views sought at any stage?</p> <p>Have you been asked to give feedback?</p> <p>Have you tried to offer feedback?</p>
Perceptions about how changing skill mix may bring benefit or disadvantage to any groups of patients	<p>Demographics – old, young, vulnerable, housebound</p> <p>Illness – acute illness, chronic disease, multimorbidity</p> <p>Complex problems, mental health problems, communication difficulties?</p>
Awareness of the reasons your practice has chosen to employ practitioners from different backgrounds	<p>to meet demand for appointments</p> <p>to meet the needs of patients more effectively</p> <p>to improve the quality of care delivered</p>
Future impact and sustainability	<p>Do staff seem happier with new ways of working?</p> <p>Are there further changes you think would improve – esp related to the workforce – team composition, team orientation etc?</p> <p>How do you see the shift to skill mix affecting the services delivered by your practice during the next 5 years?</p>