

# Protected Learning Time

Protected Learning Time (PLT) is an opportunity for general practice teams (GPs, registered nurses, healthcare assistants, admin/reception staff and allied health professionals) to learn about new clinical developments and updates to national guidance in an environment that promotes patient care.

PLT events are also essential in promoting peer support, building relationships, keeping teams motivated as well as engaged in training and development.

## Application process

Practices in NWL can apply to take part in PLT sessions with at least 8 weeks prior notice to the event completing the application form within the policy and sending to the Primary Care Contracting Team ([nhsnwl.lon-nw-pcc@nhs.net](mailto:nhsnwl.lon-nw-pcc@nhs.net)).

## Approval Requirements (Policy Highlights)

[The Protected Learning Time](#) policy sets out principles and expectations for NHS NW London GP practices requesting approval during core contracted hours, while ensuring compliance with national guidance and contractual obligations.

Minimum requirements during PLT:

- Patients must be able to:
  - Access essential services by telephone
  - Attend the practice premises during core hours for prescriptions or urgent medical attention
  - Book or cancel appointments

Suitable arrangements might include:

- 'Buddy' arrangements with neighbouring practices
- GP Federation support
- Locum staff
- Existing staff (rotation schedule for training needs)
- Sub-contracting

Examples of successful applications:

- A GP on site and a receptionist to manage walk-ins and calls
- Using a branch site for essential services
- Communicating with patients in advance about reduced service

## Suggested PLT Topics

Together with our Local Training Hubs, we have collated a list of suggested topics that you might want to consider. Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and practices are permitted to determine their own priorities to optimise the protected learning time:

- Mandatory Training Events such as Basic Life Support Training or Oliver MacGowan
- Interface with partners such as community pharmacy and acute trusts
- Health & Wellbeing Temperature Check [\[link\]](#)
- Public health and prevention improvement
- Tackling health inequalities and improving outcomes
- Planning and requirements for CQC inspection – pre and post discussions

- Leadership and development e.g. team growth and development of knowledge.
- Change management
- Team building
- Business continuity testing
- Strategy and project planning
- Using data to monitor our performance – digital literacy generally
- Safeguarding whole team review – look at registers – look at how all roles feed into safeguarding
- Complaints and significant events review – whole team review

We would like to encourage all our practices to consider ways to utilise the protected learning policy which may also require support from PCN's or neighbouring practices to ensure the national guidance in ensuring they have in place arrangements for its patients to access essential services during core hours.

Your Local Training Hub and NWL Training Hub Team ([nwl.traininghub@nhs.net](mailto:nwl.traininghub@nhs.net)) are on hand to provide advice and guidance on the policy and training opportunities. Further information can also be found on the NWL Training Hub website [[Link](#)]