

A Physician Associate's introduction to their work, and to *The Competence Framework for Physician Associates in Mental Health*

What is a physician associate?

We are trained in medicine and work alongside doctors to give medical care. We work independently, and are supervised by a senior doctor.

What do PAs in mental health do?

We are a key member of the medical team, helping provide and connect patients' care. We continually work to improve our knowledge and skills in the role, while focusing on the patient's health and wellbeing and supporting their needs.

When might I see a mental health PA?

When you go to your GP surgery, you might meet with a PA so that we can:

- take your medical history
- carry out physical examinations
- carry out mental state examinations
- carry out assessments used to diagnose mental and physical health problems
- plan your medical treatment
- give you advice on health promotion and disease prevention.

What is the background of the PA role?

PAs have worked in the NHS since 2003. There are more and more of us working in mental health because the NHS is working to improve mental health care. To become a PA, we need an undergraduate degree in a science subject and a postgraduate master's degree in Physician Associate Studies.

Introducing *The Competence Framework for Physician Associates in Mental Health*:

The competence framework lists all of the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills that we need to work as a PA in mental health, laid out by area.

The framework was developed by and written with people with lived experience of mental health problems, PAs and other healthcare professionals. It is to help all PAs give people the same level of good-quality care.

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