

Physician Associates Working in Mental Health

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healthcare

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to introduce the prospect of employing Physician Associates (PA) in Mental Health settings by explaining who Physician Associates are, their current scope of practice in other specialties and in Mental Health in the National Health Service (NHS), their potential future roles in Mental Health and success stories thus far.

What is a Physician Associate?

Physician associates (PAs) are healthcare professionals with a generalist medical education, who work alongside doctors, physicians, GPs and surgeons providing medical care as an integral part of the multidisciplinary team. PAs are dependent practitioners working with a dedicated medical supervisor but can work autonomously with appropriate support.

A HEE 'task and finish group' led by RCPsych aim to provide solutions to deliver the expansion of physician associates, and to build engagement, awareness and best practice. The group is made up of representatives from the College, HEE, medical directors from trusts employing PAs, PA course providers and physician associates.



HEE Star, Health Education England

The NHS Stance



How Many Physician Associates Work in the UK?

The UK workforce includes 1000 graduate PAs and 1,200 students (2018). There are limited numbers of PAs currently working in mental health settings (approximately 20), though the numbers are slowly increasing and feedback from consultants supervising PAs is generally positive.

In the 2017 Workforce Plan, Stepping Forward to 2020/21 Health Education England envisaged an expansion of PA numbers to 3,000 by 2020. The Royal College of Psychiatrists have called for 10% of the new PAs to be working in Mental Health.



How do Physician Associates fit into the NHS Workforce?

Physician associates work within a defined scope of practice and limits of competence. They:

- Take medical and psychiatric histories from patients
- Carry out physical and mental state examinations
- See patients with undifferentiated diagnoses
- See patients with long-term chronic conditions
- Formulate differential diagnoses and management plans
- Perform diagnostic and therapeutic procedures
- Develop and deliver appropriate treatment and management plans
- Request and interpret diagnostic studies
- Provide health promotion and disease prevention advice for patients.

In the 2017 Workforce Plan, Stepping Forward to 2020/21 Health Education England envisaged an expansion of PA numbers to 3,000 by 2020. The Royal College of Psychiatrists have called for 10% of the new PAs to be working in Mental Health.

Physician associates have been practicing in the UK since 2003. Physician associates can be found working in GP surgeries, A&E departments, inpatient medical and surgical wards and some mental health teams throughout the UK.



How can Physician Associates Help Psychiatrists in the NHS?

Physicians associates have the knowledge base, skills and attitudes to deliver a holistic type of care and treatment under consultant supervision. Their skills to support the physical health care of patients in mental health settings bring important benefits to mental health services and they have the potential to help consultants work to the top of their skill set, meaning that productivity is improved. While trainee doctors and surgeons rotate through different specialties, PAs offer continuity and stability both for patients and for the team in which they work.

PAs are working in several mental health trusts across the UK. They can:

- Undertake full psychiatric (and risk) assessments
- Carry out physical assessments and procedures
- Liaise with other services
- Carry caseloads under supervision
- Prepare reports and discharge summaries
- Undertake basic psycho-therapeutic interventions
- Perform service QI and audit activities
- Deliver education of service users and other staff
- Assist the managing consultant by writing letters, chasing referrals/treatments, and preparing medical notes.

How Much Experience Does a Physician Associate Have?

All physician associates hold at least a bachelor's degree, usually in a life science field (biomedical science or a health-related science degree). Most physician associate programmes require at least a 2:1 honours degree for entry into the postgraduate diploma course along with some prior health or social care experience

UK postgraduate PA medical training is spread over a period of at least 90 weeks (approximately 3,200 hours, divided into 1,600 hours of theory and 1,600 hours of clinical practice). The current curriculum stipulates a minimum of 90 hours in mental health.



Do Physician Associates Require Clinical Supervision?

Physician associates are dependent practitioners working with a dedicated consultant supervisor but can work autonomously with appropriate support.

Supervision of a physician associate is like that of a junior doctor in that the PA is responsible for their actions and decisions; however, the consultant is ultimately responsible for the patient. The supervisor also has responsibility for ongoing development of the PA including review

of workplace-based assessments, appraisal and development of a professional development plan.

Levels of supervision will vary from individual to individual and is dependent on several factors including their past healthcare experience and years of experience. A new graduate will require much more intensive supervision compared to an experienced physician associate.

Do Physician Associates Require CPD?

PAs have a responsibility to keep up to date. Continuing Medical Education (CME) or Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is key to a PAs ongoing clinical practice, thus most physician associates are provided with some form of study leave. All PAs are required to fulfil CPD requirements to remain on the Physician Associate Managed Voluntary Register (PAMVR) which is to be audited by the FPA using the CPD diary.

The FPA requires documented evidence of members CPD as an essential component of the information needed to remain on the PAMVR. This evidence is required to be documented in the members' RCP CPD diary. All PAs are currently required to complete 50 hours of CPD per year.



Inceptorship Programme

A bespoke educational programme could include:

- Psychiatric history taking & mental state examination
- Training on record keeping & recording risk
- Training on personal safety & de-escalation skills
- Intermediate life support training
- Information governance training
- Teaching on formulation & psychological interventions
- Quality improvement & audit skills
- Mental Capacity & Mental Health Act training
- Dementia & autism awareness training
- Education & teaching skills
- Study budget to access PA specific educational activities

Some of the above could be delivered via mandatory training and in conjunction with training for other staff members eg. Junior doctors.



	On Qualification	On Completion of 1 year Internship
History and consultation	Will be able to carry out focused history and produce an appropriate list of differentials.	Able to carry out a thorough focused history, and be able to identify appropriate co-morbidities, predisposing/risk factors in order to interpret most likely differential and reasons.
Examination general	Starting to be able to abbreviate their examination to become more focused including mental state and cognitive examinations. Becoming confident in ability to distinguish normal from abnormal during clinical examination.	Supervising doctor has confidence in PA findings and in the PA using their clinical findings to justify the differential diagnosis.
Interpreting evidence and investigation	Understand diagnostic tests to rule out key negatives. Become aware of the limitations of investigations.	Confidently articulate findings and investigation results.
Clinical judgment and risk management	Able to narrow list of important differential diagnoses. Consistently identify high risk conditions requiring immediate attention.	Identify main diagnosis and justify reasoning. Aware of best venue to nurse patient e.g. PICU/Acute ward/Rehabilitation Ward.

Sample Educational Timetable

Week 1	MHA and MCA
Week 2	Psychosis – History, MSE and Case Discussion
Week 3	Simulation Actor Session
Week 4	Psychopharmacology
Week 5	Depression and Anxiety – History, MSE and Case Discussion
Week 6	Mania and Hypomania – History, MSE and Case Discussion
Week 7	Personality – History, MSE and Case Discussion
Week 8	Psychotherapy
Week 9	Risk Assessment
Week 10	Drugs And Alcohol Session
Week 11	Case Based Discussion
Week 12	3 month review
Week 13	Case Based Discussion
Week 14	Case Based Discussion
Week 15	Case Based Discussion

Is There a College or Faculty for Physician Associates?

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) established the Faculty of Physician Associates (FPA) in 2015 in conjunction with the UK Association of Physician Associates (UKAPA), Health Education England (HEE) and other royal colleges to strengthen and develop the close working relationship between doctors and physician associates. The aim of the Faculty is to support the professional development of physician associates, and thereby enhance patient safety, by providing access to the educational and professional development resources from the RCP.

The RCP provides administration for the Faculty, which includes the running of the Physician Associate Managed Voluntary Register (PAMVR). We would strongly advise that employed PAs are required to be on the PAMVR. The PAMVR is currently 'voluntary'. However, the Faculty encourages all physician associates to join the register, and all employers to ensure that PAs are registered.

Are Physician Associates a Regulated Profession?

Physician associates are still seeking statutory regulation, therefore 'physician associate' is currently not a protected title. The Department of Health are considering regulation to provide a legally accountable framework to ensure patient safety, set standards for the profession, education, protection of the title, fitness to practice, and continuing fitness to practice. Whilst these are already in place for physician associates nationally and overseen by the FPA, they cannot be legally enforced without statutory regulation.

FPA, HEE, Higher Education Institutes involved in training PAs, medical royal colleges, including the Royal College of Psychiatrists, are seeking regulation of the profession and the establishment of a statutory register. It is envisaged that those on the PAMVR will be transferred to the statutory register and only those on the statutory register will legally be allowed to practice as a PA.

The Physician Associate Recertification Exam

The recertification exam is designed to cover all core areas of practice that a physician associate is expected to maintain knowledge in, regardless of whether they are working in a specific specialty. Medicine is forever changing, and PAs have a responsibility to keep up to date. This ensures that physician associates are fit to practise and safe for patients.

To remain on the PAMVR physician associates must sit the recertification examination every six years. Physician associates have three attempts to sit and pass the recertification examination. If a PA fails the recertification exam on three occasions they will be removed from the PAMVR and their employer notified. They will then have to take the qualifying exam to enter onto the PAMVR.



Can Physician Associates Prescribe in the UK?



PAs are currently unable to prescribe medication in the UK. Close work with supervising physicians and arrangements developed individually allow for flexible ways of working for instance, many PAs working in general practice may propose prescriptions and request their supervising physician for a signature.

Prescribing rights for PAs may change once statutory regulation is introduced. At that time, decisions will be made regarding prescriptive rights. As physician associates are not yet licenced nor regulated, this limitation also applies to requests for x-rays and other ionising radiation requests.

Do Physician Associates Need Professional Indemnity?

Yes, PAs require professional indemnity coverage. The Medical Protection Society (MPS), Medical Defence Union (MDU) and Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland (MDDUS) all provide professional indemnity for qualified PAs.

Within trusts, the practice of physician associates is covered by the Department of Health 2012 Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts (CNST). However, qualified PAs are strongly encouraged to have their own personal professional negligence insurance from one of the medical defence organisations listed.



Do Physician Associates Need a Licence to Work in the UK?



No, but they do need to meet the required UK national standards for physician associates. American-trained PAs are eligible to work in the UK but are required by their employer to have and maintain their National Commission on Certification for Physician Associates (NCCPA). In the future, US-trained PAs may have to take a UK certification.

A physician associate post has been evaluated under Agenda for Change at Band 7*. Higher level physician associates (usually requiring a minimum of five years' experience and a relevant Masters' degree) have been banded at 8a.

* There is, however, some complexity in banding: During their inceptorship year, PAs can be employed on a Band 6 contract pending achievement of certain competencies. In addition, because of local competition, some Trusts have employed student PAs in their last few months of training on a Band 4 contract before they take their finals, with an automatic move up on success in the national exam.

Can Doctors Who Trained Abroad Work as PAs?

International Medical Graduates have not completed an approved PA training programme at an approved university, and so are not eligible to work as a physician associate. Anyone wishing to

become a physician associate must apply to and complete the entire physician associate programme and pass the national examinations.

University of Aberdeen	University of East Anglia	University of Reading
Anglia Ruskin University	University of Hertfordshire	Sheffield Hallam University
Bangor University	Hull York Medical School	University of Sheffield
University of Birmingham	University of Keele	St George's, London
University of Bolton	University of Leeds	University of Surrey
University of Bradford	University of Liverpool	Swansea University
Brighton and Sussex Medical School	University of Manchester	Ulster University
Brunel University	Newcastle University	University of the West of England
Canterbury Christ Church University	Plymouth University Peninsula School of Medicine	University of Wolverhampton
University of Central Lancashire	Queen Mary University of London	University of Worcester
		De Montfort University Leicester

Why are Other Professionals Called Physician Associates?

In the UK organisations can employ people to do technical tasks such as phlebotomy, ECGs and administrative duties. While they may also be called 'physician associates/assistants', they have not undertaken the training required for PAs in the UK at a recognised universities and have not passed the UK PA National Certification Examination or have the training of National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) (for US PAs). Therefore the FPA and universities are working towards regulation of the profession to protect the title.

There is also a separate profession called physicians' assistant (anaesthesia). This is a separate profession with a different set of competencies which enable them to work under the supervision of anaesthetists within the operating theatre environment.



A photograph showing three hands of different skin tones (dark brown, medium brown, and light pink) resting on a dark wooden surface. The hands are positioned in a way that suggests unity or support. The text "Sample Documents" is overlaid in the center in a magenta color.

Sample Documents

Sample Physician Associate Advert

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust provides specialist mental health services in North West England and beyond. We are passionate about mental health and wellbeing, delivering the best possible services for the people we care for. Care has always been at the heart of everything we do. Our ambition is to deliver Perfect Care and become a leading organisation in mental health, addiction, learning disabilities and community health services.

Safety of our staff is something that we take seriously and we have recently implemented reduction of restrictive practices which has led to significant benefits for staff. In addition, our "No Force First" philosophy has also yielded benefits for staff in terms of their safety.

Our innovative practices in this area, together with the implementation of Just Culture has been welcomed by our staff.

We have also invested significantly in the health & wellbeing of our staff and their personal development. As an employee you will receive access to:

- A full range of health & wellbeing support including occupational health and staff support advice
- Physiotherapy
- Training packages supporting employee resilience, stress management and mental health awareness
- Fitness and sports facilities at a reduced cost

Do you want to join one of the leading mental health trusts in the country? Do you want to grow with us in your professional role as a Physicians Associate?

We currently have career opportunities for Physician Associates to work in several of our mental health specialties across Liverpool, including adult mental health (in-patients), community health, low secure and learning disabilities.

This is an excellent opportunity for newly qualified Physician Associates to gain wide ranging experience as part of the consolidation year across a number of mental health specialties offered within the Trust.

Applicants will be required to register on the Faculty of Physician Associates (FPA) Managed Voluntary Register (FPMVR) before commencement of employment. Additionally you must hold, or will do so on completion, a PG Diploma in Physician Associate Studies from a recognised University and have passed the UK Physician Associate National Exam.

We welcome applications for the posts of Physician Associate at Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust.

Interviews will be held on 21 November 2017

For further details / informal visits please contact:

Tel No:

Examples of Physician Associate Job Descriptions

SHEFFIELD HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Physician Associate

Band: Band 7 AfC

Accountable to: Supervising Consultant

Job Purpose

Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust are seeking enthusiastic Physician Associates to play a key role in the management of patients and to support the effective functioning of the wards and community teams and contribute to wider service developments. The post holder will be accountable for ensuring that high quality patient care is delivered at all times. The Physician Associate will be supervised by a designated consultant with regular meetings to support on-going development within the role. The Physician Associate will attend regular CPD sessions to support on-going development.

General Requirements

Physician Associates will have a base on one or more of the psychiatric inpatient wards at Sheffield Health and Social Care Foundation Trust, but may also be asked to undertake work in conjunction with Crisis or other Community teams.

Physician Associates will be expected to work flexibly and co-operatively with other members of the clinical team and will be required to cover for colleagues during periods of absence. The Physician Associate role will complement other roles in the team and strengthen the multi-disciplinary team. They will have continuing responsibility for patients in association with others in the clinical team. They will ensure accurate records are maintained.

Physician Associates will be supported to undertake mandatory training and other training specific to their role in conjunction with the Medical Education Department.

They will undergo an annual PDR or appraisal

Physician Associates will be provided with a weekly timetable outlining fixed clinical commitments such as ward rounds, hand overs, supervision and training. They will also have time for undertaking roles related to their skill set in the clinical setting as detailed below. They will be expected to respond to clinical demands and play a role in prioritising clinical and other needs.

Physician Associates will be expected to register with the Physician Associate Managed Voluntary Register (PAMVR) run by the Royal College of Physicians and be expected to keep up to date with necessary professional development.

The post holder will be accountable for their clinical responsibilities and comply with the Department of Health, UK Managed Voluntary Register for Fitness to Practice and Code of Conduct standard and all trust policies. They will adhere to the principles of confidentiality and the Data Protection Act at all times

Principal Duties

Physician Associate roles are likely to include, but not be limited to the following:

- Practice under the supervision of a Consultant Psychiatrist
- Conduct initial psychiatric assessments, take patient histories and perform physical examinations
- Establish differential diagnosis, making appropriate treatment plans under supervision of the Consultant Psychiatrist
- Participate in multidisciplinary team meetings, handovers and other relevant clinical meetings
- Treat patient and their family members using a high degree of empathy and advanced communication skills
- Respond in a timely way to requests to assess or review patient's physical and / or mental health
- Record clinical notes about patient contacts and provide advice to staff on further management / investigations / interventions
- Review and summarise patient notes for the purposes of contributing to discharge summaries and reports.
- Undertake assessment and assistance to ward staff in the event of medical emergencies
- Work collaboratively with the relevant team i.e. Psychiatrists, Junior Doctors, Senior Nurses, Nursing Staff, Support Workers, Occupational Therapists, Psychologists to ensure good working relationships
- Liaise with primary care and relevant secondary health care providers relating to a patient's care or treatment
- Liaise with community teams about a patient's on-going care and treatment needs
- Support health promotion activities including those relating to smoking, drugs and alcohol
- Provide psycho-educational support to patients and carers / families
- Support proactive screening and interventions with regard to the physical health of patients.
- Liaise with pharmacy regarding issues relating to medication
- Contribute to the development of physical health competencies in mental health staff in a range of settings.
- Carry out procedures which will include (but not be limited to):
 - o ECG
 - o Venepuncture

- IV cannulation
- Interpretation of blood results
- Mental state examination
- Cognitive assessment

Service Development

- The post holder will be willing to participate in research/audit/QI opportunities as they arise
- Be responsible for the dissemination of new or updated clinical practices
- Support the placements of nursing, medical and physician associate students on placement
- Participate in undergraduate teaching
- Support junior doctors on placement
- Support the development of skills in the wider team and the organisation
- Assist with the development of, and implementation of, local and trust wide policies, procedures, guidance and protocols

Job Description Review

This is not an exhaustive list of duties and responsibilities and in discussion with the manager the postholder may be required to undertake other duties which fall within the Banding of the post. The job description will be reviewed regularly in the light of changing service requirements and any such changes will be discussed with the postholder.

The post holder should be comfortable in the use of computer technology, have basic keyboard skills and have the ability to use email.

All employees are expected to observe the following: -

Equal Opportunities and Dignity at work – Statement of Intent

The Trust is a major employer and provider of services. We are committed to building a workforce which reflects the diversity of and meets the needs of the local community.

We oppose all forms of discrimination on legal and moral grounds, and recognise that discrimination creates barriers to achieving equality for everyone.

The Trust is committed to making equality of opportunity and fair treatment a reality whereby an individual can seek, obtain and continue employment without unfair discrimination.

As an equal opportunities employer, we will ensure that all job applicants and employees receive fair and equal treatment and will not be disadvantaged by unjustified conditions or requirements.

The Trust's Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy underpins the Trust's commitment to achieve equality and fairness at work and to ensure that individuals or groups are not unfairly discriminated against.

We are committed to improving our practice through signing up to initiatives such as Stonewall Champions, the Disability Standard, "Two Ticks" and Mindful Employer.

Safeguarding Children and Adults

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people (anyone under the age of 18) and adults. It expects all staff, volunteers and contracted staff to share this commitment and act in such a way that safeguards and promotes the health and well being of children, young people and adults.

Staff must ensure that they are familiar with the signs and symptoms of abuse and know what to do if any such concerns are raised.

Staff are expected to know about and follow the Trust's safeguarding children and safeguarding adult policies which can be found on the Trust intranet, and participate in related mandatory/statutory training.

Risk Management

Staff should be aware of the principles of risk management and adopt appropriate practice to reduce the risk to themselves and others. In particular, staff should observe the Trust's Risk Management Strategy, Risk, Incident & Serious Incident reporting and management policies, Health & Safety regulations and the risk management training requirements for all staff.

Infection Prevention & Control

Staff are expected to comply with the Trust's Infection Prevention & Control policies and conduct themselves in such a manner as to minimise the risk of causing healthcare associated infections.

Examples of Physician Associate Job Descriptions



AFC Reference:	CORP/0098
Job Title:	Physician Associate
Band:	Band 6
Hours:	37.5 hours
Division/Service:	Corporate
Accountable to:	Supervising Consultant
Responsible to :	Supervising Consultant

Job Outcomes:

As a result of the post-holder being effective in their role, The Trust would expect to see the following outcomes for the Trust, service users and the wider community:

1. Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust as a leading provider of mental health care, addiction services and learning disability care.
2. Service users receive a high quality service and one which is free from stigma, discrimination and harm.
3. Staff are engaged with the delivery, innovation and continuous improvement of services to benefit service users.
4. Visible and responsive leadership, setting the standard for others and role-modelled throughout the division for all managers
5. The Trust values of Continuous Improvement, Accountability, Respectfulness and Enthusiasm will be embedded across the division for all staff and evident to service users.



Job Purpose : The Physician Associate will work collaboratively with the multi-disciplinary team to ensure standards of care and treatment are met. They will support high quality patient care, providing continuity of service and improving the patient experience.

Principal Responsibilities:

- 1 As a dependant practitioner undertake patient/service user consultations, assessments, clinical examinations, order appropriate investigations and interpret investigation findings.
- 2 Form a list of differential diagnoses, recommend management/treatment for discussion with and sign off by a clinical supervisor.
- 3 As part of a multi-disciplinary team, support the delivery of care in a range of settings.
- 4 Under clinical supervision, take responsibility for a dedicated patient/service user caseload, where required.
- 5 Maintain timely and appropriate documentation.
- 6 Within your scope of practice and working as part of multi-disciplinary team, perform delegated diagnostic/therapeutic procedures.
- 7 Contribute to the development of efficient pathways of care.
- 8 Working as part of a multi-disciplinary team, support and contribute to timely discharge planning where appropriate.
- 9 Analysis of reports in order to support patient/service user care.
- 10 Ensure the provision of a high standard of care at all times.
- 11 Liaise closely and work collaboratively within the clinical/multi-disciplinary team to ensure good working relationships are in place which maximise benefits to patient/service user care.
- 12 Build effective networks with other teams and other organisations, working in collaboration to support efficient patient/service user care.
- 13 Comment on policies and processes to inform policy and process development relevant to the clinical department.

CLINICAL & PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Adhere to the relevant NHS Codes of Practice

- 1 Develop and maintain specialist medical knowledge appropriate to the role through relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD)/Continuing Medical Education (CME).
- 2 To be accountable for the care given and to comply with the Fitness to Practice and Code of Conduct standard as established by the PA Managed Voluntary Registration

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01/02/2017



Commission (PAMVRC) and subsequently the appropriate statutory regulating body, when this is in place.

- 3 Work in partnership with the trust, colleagues and patients to promote and support the role of Physician Associate as part of the multi disciplinary team

TEACHING & TRAINING RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1 Attend, and prepare for, all scheduled academic and clinical teaching determined for the purposes of CPD.
- 2 Work in partnership with colleagues, to promote and support an environment of learning where all can achieve through joint support and endeavour.

RESEARCH & AUDIT

- 1 Participate in all aspects of clinical governance, including undertaking clinical audits (quality assessment and process improvement) and risk management.
- 2 Present research and/or clinical work at meetings as required.

Generic Responsibilities for all staff:

All post holders will agree to:

- To observe the provisions of and adhere to all Trusts policies and procedures.
- To actively participate in the annual performance review to identify personal development needs
- To actively participate in the required re validation process of the Physician Associate Managed Voluntary Registration Commission (PAMVRC) and subsequently the appropriate statutory regulating body, when this is in place
- To attend Trust Statutory and Mandatory training sessions as required and any other training courses relevant to the post.
- To fully comply with the relevant sections of the Health and Safety at Work Act. They must also understand and implement Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust "Statement of Policy on Health and Safety at Work" and the Trust corporate "Health and Safety Policies and Procedures". You are required to follow all applicable rules and procedures relating to Health and Safety at Work and to take all responsible precautions to avoid actions.
- To be aware of the confidential aspects of the post. To keep up to date with the requirements of information governance; undertake mandatory training and follow Trust policies and procedures to ensure that trust information is dealt with legally, securely, efficiently and effectively. Breaches of confidentiality will result in disciplinary action that may involve dismissal. You must maintain the confidentiality of information about service user staff and organisational business in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and Caldicott principles.
- The post holder should also be aware that, regardless of any action taken by the employing authority, breaches of confidentiality could result in civil action for damages.
- All staff will be treated with respect by management, colleagues, patients and visitors and equally staff will treat management, colleagues, patients and




visitors with the same level of respect. Staff will be supported to challenge any discriminatory behaviour that may be based on differences in race, disability, language, culture, religion, sexuality, age, and gender or employment status.

- You will be expected to undertake the Trusts' commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- To ensure that when creating, managing and sharing information records it is done in an appropriate way, subject to statutory requirements and agreed security and confidentiality policies, procedures and guidelines. All employees are responsible for implementing and maintaining data quality, ensuring that records are legible and attributable and that the record keeping is contemporaneous
- In accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2008, the post holder will actively participate in the prevention and control of infection within the capacity of their role. The Act requires the post holder to attend infection prevention and control training on induction and at regular updates and to take responsibility for the practical application of the training in the course of their work. Infection prevention and control must be included in any personal development plan and/or appraisal.
- To adhere to relevant Code of Practice of Professional body (if appropriate)
- The post holder must be flexible in the duties performed and it is expected that similar duties, not specifically listed above, will be carried out as required and may be cross site.
- The duties contained in this job description are not intended to be exhaustive. The duties and responsibilities of this post are likely to evolve in line with the Trust's continued organisational development.
- To adhere to the NHS Constitution and its principles and values. You must be aware of your Duty of Candour which means that you must be open and honest during your employment and if you see something wrong, you must raise it. You must read the NHS Constitution in full and can download this from the Trusts intranet site or the www.gov.uk website. Hard copies are available from the HR Department on request.
- The Trust is a non-smoking site. Failure to follow this rule could lead to disciplinary action.

This job description is intended as an outline indicator of general areas of activity and will be reviewed in light of the changing needs of the Trust in consultation with the postholder

Sample Physician Associate Job Description

		
	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
QUALIFICATIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postgraduate Diploma in Physician Associate studies including having passed the national examination for Physician Associates. • Registration on the Faculty of Physician Associates Managed Voluntary Register – post qualification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of relevant academic achievements, e.g. prizes, awards, distinctions, publications, presentations, other achievements
KNOWLEDGE/EXPERIENCE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates knowledge of evidence-informed practice • Evidence of understanding of the needs of the healthcare sector and the patients/service users it serves 	
VALUES:	<p>Can demonstrate the Trust values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous Improvement • Accountability • Respectfulness • Enthusiasm • Responsive to service users • Engaging leadership style • Strong customer service belief • Transparency and honesty • Discrete 	
SKILLS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to prioritise own workload to meet deadlines • Capacity to manage time and information effectively • Capacity to operate under pressure whilst maintaining high standards of care and professionalism • Demonstrates clarity in written/spoken communication and capacity to adapt language to the situation, as appropriate • Able to build rapport, listen, persuade and negotiate • Demonstrates initiative and resilience to cope with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of research, including awareness of ethical issues
<p>Version 01/02/2017</p>		



	<p>change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows self-discipline and commitment • Conscientious, responsible and discreet • Flexible and co-operative approach to work and working with colleagues • Team player – with the capacity to take on board the perspectives of other's and treats them with understanding • Self motivated, proactive and innovative • Attentive to detail and quality of work • Ability to use tact and diplomacy – demonstrating respect for all 	
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SHEFFIELD HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Assistant Physician Associate

Band: 4

Accountable to: Supervising Consultant

Job Purpose

Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust are seeking enthusiastic Assistant Physician Associates to play a key role in the management of patients and to support the effective functioning of the wards and community teams and contribute to wider service developments. The post holder will be accountable for ensuring that high quality patient care is delivered at all times. The Assistant Physician Associate will be supervised by a designated consultant with regular meetings to support on-going development within the role. The Assistant Physician Associate will attend regular CPD sessions to support on-going development.

Assistant Physician Associates will have a base on one or more of the psychiatric inpatient wards at Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust, but may also be asked to undertake work in conjunction with Crisis or other Community teams.

Assistant Physician Associates will be expected to work flexibly and co-operatively with other members of the clinical team. The Assistant Physician Associate role will complement other roles in the team and strengthen the multidisciplinary team. They will ensure accurate records are maintained.

Assistant Physician Associates will be supported to undertake mandatory training and other training specific to their role in conjunction with the Medical Education Department.

They will be expected to pass their examination during the fixed term contract and on completion of this will be eligible for a Physician Associate role within the Trust.

Assistant Physician Associates will be provided with a weekly timetable outlining fixed clinical commitments such as ward rounds, handovers, supervision and training. They will also have time for undertaking roles related to their skill set in the clinical setting as detailed below. They will be expected to respond to clinical demands and play a role in prioritising clinical and other needs.

They will be expected to keep up to date with necessary professional development.



The post holder will be accountable for their clinical responsibilities and comply with all Trust policies. They will adhere to the principles of confidentiality and the Data Protection Act at all times.

Principal Duties

Assistant Physician Associate roles are likely to include, but not be limited to the following:

- Practice under the supervision of a Consultant Psychiatrist
- Conduct initial psychiatric assessments, take patient histories and perform physical examinations under supervision
- Propose differential diagnoses, proposing appropriate treatment plans under supervision of the Consultant Psychiatrist
- Participate in multidisciplinary team meetings, handovers and other relevant clinical meetings
- Treat patients and their family members using a high degree of empathy and advance communication skills
- Respond in a timely way to requests to assess or review patients' physical and / or mental health
- Record clinical notes about patient contacts and suggest advice to staff on further management / investigations / interventions
- Under supervision, review and summarise patient notes for the purposes of contributing to discharge summaries and reports
- Under supervision, undertake assessment and assistance to ward staff in the event of medical emergencies
- Work collaboratively with the relevant team i.e. Psychiatrists, Junior Doctors, Physician Associates, Senior Nurses, Nursing Staff, Support Workers, Occupational Therapists, Psychologists to ensure good working relationships
- Liaise with community teams about patients' on-going care and treatment needs
- Support health promotion activities including those relating to smoking, drugs and alcohol
- Provide psycho-educational support to patients and carers / families
- Support proactive screening and interventions with regard to the physical health of patients
- Under supervision, liaise with pharmacy regarding issues relating to medication
- Contribute to the development of physical health competencies in mental health staff in a range of settings.
- Under supervision, carry out procedures which will include (but not be limited to):
 - o ECG
 - o Venepuncture
 - o IV cannulation
 - o Interpretation of blood results
 - o Mental state examination
 - o Cognitive assessment



Service Development

- The post holder will be willing to participate in research/audit/QI opportunities under supervision as they arise
- Support the dissemination of new or updated clinical practices
- Support the placements of nursing, medical and physician associate students on placement
- Support undergraduate teaching
- Support junior doctors on placement
- Support the development of skills in the wider team and the organisation
- Assist with the development of, and implementation of, local and Trust wide policies, procedures, guidance and protocols

Job Description Review

This is not an exhaustive list of duties and responsibilities and in discussion with the manager the post holder may be required to undertake other duties which fall within the banding of the post. The job description will be reviewed regularly in light of changing service requirements and any such changes will be discussed with the post holder.

The post holder should be comfortable in the use of computer technology, have basic keyboard skills and have the ability to use email.

All employees are expected to observe the following:-

Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work – Statement of Intent

The Trust is a major employer and provider of services. We are committed to building a workforce which reflects the diversity of and meets the needs of the local community.

We oppose all forms of discrimination on legal and moral grounds, and recognise that discrimination creates barriers to achieving equality for everyone.

The Trust is committed to making equality of opportunity and fair treatment a reality whereby an individual can seek, obtain and continue employment without unfair discrimination.

As an equal opportunities employer, we will ensure that all job applicants and employees receive fair and equal treatment and will not be disadvantaged by unjustified conditions or requirements.

The Trust's Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy underpins the Trust's commitment to achieve equality and fairness at work and to ensure that individuals or groups are not unfairly discriminated against.

We are committed to improving our practice through signing up to initiatives such as Stonewall Champions, the Disability Standard, "Two Ticks" and Mindful Employer.

Safeguarding Children and Adults

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people (anyone under the age of 18) and adults. It expects all staff, volunteers and contracted staff to share this commitment and act in such a way that safeguards and promotes the health and wellbeing of children, young people and adults.



Staff must ensure that they are familiar with the signs and symptoms of abuse and know what to do if such concerns are raised.

Staff are expected to know about and follow the Trust's Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults policies which can be found on the Trust intranet, and participate in related mandatory/statutory training.

Risk Management

Staff should be aware of the principles of risk management and adopt appropriate practice to reduce the risk to themselves and others. In particular, staff should observe the Trust's Risk Management Strategy, Risk, Incident & Serious Incident Reporting and Management policies, Health & Safety regulations and the Risk Management training requirements for all staff.

Infection Prevention & Control

Staff are expected to comply with the Trust's Infection Prevention & Control policies and conduct themselves in such a manner as to minimise the risk of causing healthcare associated infections.



Example of Job Role: Medium Secure

PA role in Medium Secure Unit

Duties include:

- 1 General medical cover across the women's service day to day (including for medical emergencies)
- 2 Routine mental state examinations
- 3 Ward rounds
- 4 Healthcare promotion and education with the service users
- 5 Writing CPA reports (medical and physical health reports) and completing bi-annual physical health assessments
- 6 Taking bloods and performing ECGs.
- 7 Arranging investigations and chasing the results
- 8 Completing external referrals
- 9 Audits
- 10 Supervision of PA students.

PA's cannot complete seclusion reviews as they are not included in the Code of Practice, but they can be part of the wider MDT during the MDT review.

Day to day , the PA attends ward round on a Thursday morning, then the rest of the week is free to get on with the work done arising from the ward rounds (seeing patients, writing reports, 6 monthly physical health assessments etc)

Example of Job Role: Low Secure

A Physician Associate started working in the service in March 2018 to improve quality of physical health care.

Role of the PA

1 Improve uptake of routine physical health monitoring.

Monthly well man checks and six monthly more detailed physical health monitoring was previously done by a number of different staff. A high proportion of patients refused to engage in the process. Having one person responsible for providing this, who has developed a good relationship with patients, has led to a significant increase in uptake. This allows problems to be detected early which is likely to lead to better outcomes.

2 Improve reliability of blood monitoring.

Six monthly blood tests are part of our routine physical health monitoring of all patients, and most patients need additional tests to monitor for side effects of medication. The system for managing this process was split between medical and nursing staff and the tests were not always done as often as they should. Visiting nursing staff were responsible for taking the blood but they were often unavailable which lead to unexpected work for the doctors, which interrupted their regular duties. Having one person responsible for setting up a database and a system to ensure no tests are missed has lead to much more robust care. The same person is either responsible for taking the blood or for ensuring that a plan is in place for someone else to do so when they are off.

3 Improve liaison with external physical health care.

Many of our patients have complex physical problems and their engagement with care has been problematical. This has led to patients getting poorer care than they should and led to our medical staff spending considerable time trying to arrange and rearrange appointments and find out what happened during appointments. Having one person responsible for ensuring appointments happen means that we can proactively find out when appointments are or rearrange them beforehand if necessary.

4 Supporting patients to engage with external physical health care

In addition, many of our patients have found outpatient appointments stressful and have either not attended or left appointments prematurely. Having one person accompany them has improved the patient's engagement with the process. One example of this is a patient who has an infected ankle which has needed treatment for several years however he has found it too stressful to engage in this process. In addition, he has poorly controlled diabetes. The PA has developed a good relationship with this patient and has supported him when he has physical health care. He previously became stressed during outpatient appointments and responded by shouting or by leaving before seeing anyone. This patient now has better controlled diabetes, and is about to have surgery on his ankle having finally successfully attended outpatients and pre-op appointments.

5 Improving health promotion.

About three quarters of our patients are obese, as a result of their mental health problems and as a side effect of medication. The PA has worked in this area to link in with other staff and support patients to lose weight. The PA has worked with gym staff, dieticians and nursing staff to support this patient in a range of ways including education around healthy eating, encouraging regular exercise both with other people and with the PA and setting targets around weight with regular weight monitoring.

A photograph showing three hands of different skin tones (dark brown, medium brown, and light pink) clasped together in a supportive grip on a dark wooden surface. The hands are positioned diagonally across the frame, with the dark brown hand at the top left, the medium brown hand in the middle, and the light pink hand at the bottom right. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

Step-by-step Guide to Recruitment of Physician Associates

Step 1

Good quality training fosters an interest in psychiatry in PA students, so providing good quality placements for students can be key. There is no additional funding for training resources and so trainers have to see the need to invest their time, often by identifying gaps in the care provided that can be met by this new discipline.

Invest in training & engage the trainers



Step 2



Place students in various sub-specialities and obtain their feedback. Involve trainee PAs in the MDTs so to offer valuable insights of future roles that are being developed in a range of psychiatric sub-specialities. There is significant competition from the acute sector and so conducting sessions with trainees to emphasise the benefits of working Mental Health will be important.

Ensure spread & compete

Step 3

Adverts and interviews should be held well in advance of final exams. This allows for seamless initiation of post following exam results. At interview assess communication, competency and interest in Mental Health. Standardise the interview process and potentially include a clinical skill (ie. a presentation on Mental State Examination) as the training period in Mental Health is limited to three weeks. Ensure the interview panel represents the multidisciplinary team eg. future supervisors, nurses, trainees, and service user reps.



Advertise & interview

Step 4

Explain the role to service users, carers and staff. Provide information on their competence and limitations and their potential impact on the MDT. It will be important to engage Junior Doctors as there can be potential tensions if benefits not fully explained. PAs may be able to utilise some postgraduate training, but will benefit from bespoke training and CPD. The role of Consultants as supervisors require consideration and potentially job planning.



Introduce & embed role

Step 5

As PAs are required to maintain their physical health skills and knowledge, linking with acute hospital and General Practice CPD sessions locally can help to allow them to remain competent with generic skills and knowledge. Allow time and study budget to attend specific PA events run by the Faculty of Physician Associates. In the future, senior PAs may be able to progress to more specialised roles, with pay progression along 'agenda for change' banding. There would likely be many roles in training and or education of PAs in future.

Develop CPD & training opportunities

The Checklist

Following the experiences and learning gained from recruiting PAs at Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust, NHS Employers have developed a checklist which includes useful steps on how to develop business plans, gain support from stakeholders, plan a recruitment campaign for Medical Associate Professionals (MAPs), and provide an effective induction programme.



Checklist



This checklist is designed to help you recruit and develop medical associate professions (MAPs) in your organisation, and support them to deliver excellent patient care.

✓ Measure current performance

- Hold sessions with staff groups to gather feedback on the supply of non-medical and medical staff.
- Consider whether the recruitment and utilisation of MAPs roles could help alleviate any concerns around supply.

✓ Gain support from stakeholders

Seek buy-in from key stakeholders such as:

- medical director or nominated lead
- Postgraduate medical education (PGME) staff (director of PGME and medical education manager)
- clinical directors
- service managers
- staff groups (consultants, nurses, SAS doctors, junior doctors and allied health professionals)
- patients
- Health Education England.

✓ Organise internal project management

- Set up a working group with representation from areas that may benefit from the employment of MAPs.
- Work with clinical directors and PGME staff to develop job descriptions and timetables which will enable MAPs to undertake an array of duties.
- Investigate the financial resources required for the project.

✓ Develop a business plan

Prepare a business case that includes the following elements:

- details about your supply issues
- your strategic plan and how you will recruit and support MAPs
- the number of roles and skills required
- the recruitment campaign activity
- resources to coordinate activity in the trust – clinical and pastoral
- the use of social media such as LinkedIn and Twitter in recruitment and engagement
- pastoral support for pre-employment, induction and supervision
- plans for engaging with current staff to build support for the recruitment and integration of MAPs
- campaign evaluation to inform further MAPs recruitment activities you may undertake in the future
- timescales and resources for the recruitment, development and training of MAPs
- clear measurables to help you understand and demonstrate the impact
- how you will undertake local equality impact assessments.

✓ Prepare for a recruitment campaign

- Contact your local course provider/ higher education institutions (HEI) to find out when students will be seeking employment after graduation.
- Ensure your local course provider/ HEI have information for students on the application process.
- Invite students to meet with junior doctors, consultants, nurses and patients to discuss potential employment opportunities. Highlight the wider reward package and benefits working for your organisation.
- Advertise any employment opportunities both internally and externally to maximise applications.
- Use values-based recruitment processes and include doctors, consultants and patients on the interview panel to ensure the right candidates are recruited to provide safe patient care.

✓ Provide pastoral support

- Plan for MAPs to join at the same time. This will help them build up a peer network and reduce feelings of isolation.
- Invite MAPs to attend the same inductions as other staff groups, such as junior doctors.
- Provide MAPs with guidance and policies, including serious incidents, and facilitate any additional training necessary.
- Organise for MAPs to receive support from medical staffing throughout their employment, to ensure they receive the right level of support.
- Allocate a supervisor who can provide regular feedback on their performance and provide them with support in their day-to-day activities.
- Produce a development plan which will support them and extend their scope of practice to special areas of interest.

✓ Plan your evaluation

- Review existing national data – consider using data over a minimum of three years to identify trends which can provide a baseline. Use available data on trust outcomes such as Care Quality Commission reports, the General Medical Council's National Training Survey, etc.
- Measure the effectiveness of the implementation of the MAPs – consider organising listening events with junior doctors and other relevant staff groups to seek feedback on utilisation of MAPs.
- Liaise with clinical directors and ward managers – identify the financial benefits such as reduced agency spend, income generation, etc.
- Present the evaluation to the board – this will help you to seek continued commitment for the development of MAPs within your organisation.

✓ Update existing information

- Review and update existing internet and intranet information for MAPs.
- Consider updates to policies and strategies that include MAPs as an integral element of the medical workforce.
- Continue to identify further development opportunities such as quality improvement projects.

✓ Recognise your success

- Seek feedback from all staff groups on how MAPs have improved productivity and patient care.
- Present positive outcomes from the evaluation to the board and relevant stakeholders.
- Share examples of good practice in the development, support and utilisation of MAPs on a local, regional and national level.
- Make plans to repeat the process of evaluation annually.

Further Information

For further information on the medical associate professions, visit www.nhsemployers.org/maps

A photograph showing three hands of different skin tones (dark brown, medium brown, and light pink) clasped together in a supportive grip on a dark wooden surface. The hands are positioned diagonally across the frame, with the dark brown hand at the top left, the medium brown hand at the bottom left, and the light pink hand on the right. The text 'Success Stories & Feedback' is overlaid in the center in a magenta color.

Success Stories & Feedback

Success Stories & Feedback



The improvements [on the low secure unit] we have seen in the quality of our physical health care from the work of the PA has far outweighed our expectations. We have better systems in place, which are more reliably implemented and we have already started to see a tangible improvement in outcomes for several patients. Key factors in this improvement have been the knowledge and enthusiasm of the PA combined with having one person clearly responsible who has been able to engage patients better than previously because she has supported them better through having a good therapeutic relationship."

Dr Claire Brabbins, Forensic Psychiatric Consultant

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust



The provision of a [PA] to our inpatient unit has enormously helped us integrate physical and mental health issues, especially with most mental health nurses now not trained in general nursing. With the increasing pressures in on call rotas and reduced numbers of junior doctors on the wards, the PA has been able to provide continuity. They have also helped induct new doctors on to the unit to ensure seamless patient care. They have supported medical & Physician Associate students and help International Medical graduates familiarise with the NHS. They are an asset and moulded to help the teams they are placed with."



Dr Indira Vinjamuri

Consultant Psychiatrist and DME
Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust



[PA's are] willing to learn, engage with everyone, teach others, and available. [They are] really helpful with admissions and immediate plans."

Inpatient Psychiatric Nurse

Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust



The physicians associate working on our ward has always been happy to get involved. He has helped with routine physical health reviews on the ward and did well to manage a medical emergency including liaising with ambulance service. He has also contributed to a QI project we have been undertaking to improve physical monitoring of patients taking antipsychotics. He has worked closely with junior doctors on the ward. They have not impacted on my practice personally, but it has been helpful to have additional support in the management of patients physical health and this has reduced the demand on foundation doctors on the ward."



Dr Jonathan Mitchell

Inpatient Psychiatric Consultant,
Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust



[The PA] comes to [the ward] to take bloods, ECGs, etc, and she has also stepped in to cover for the junior doctor in MDTs (taking minutes). We have found [her] assistance to be very helpful."

Karen Clark, Ward Manager

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust



I have known [the PA] since my admission. She is polite, friendly and approachable. Straight away at admission she did a physical examination (bloods, weight, blood pressure etc). She gave me an explanation of her job role and informed me that I can contact her at any time to enquire about our wellbeing.

I feel [she] is very genuine and professional in all her work. She has also given me advice with regards to my current weight loss programme (3st 13lbs so far) and is always giving me encouragement. She has informed me about the positive effects my improved lifestyle has had on reducing my cholesterol and resting heart rate.

I think I can speak for the rest of the lads that she is a valued part of the staff team."

Service User

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust

Success Stories & Feedback



Our Physician Associate has filled an important gap in our service, being able to prioritise physical health and health promotion, while developing a trusting relationship with patients who are hard to engage, has led to better outcomes already. Even though most improved outcomes would be expected in the longer term."

Dr Clare Brabbins

Psychiatric Consultant
Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust



[PAs are] useful for doing bloods, ECG and physical assessments, helps me refine my teaching skills as a foundation doctor. They enable me to focus more on doing MSEs and spending time with the patients."

Junior Doctor

Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust



I have found the physician associates in psychiatry to be motivated, keen to learn and compassionate working in the sometimes challenging environments of inpatient psychiatric wards. They have developed good relationships with the teams and particularly supported junior doctors in undertaking routine work and helping out when doctors are off the ward for training. [I suggest] extend to form a coherent professional presence across the organisation. I think they would be helpful in home treatment, early intervention and recovery teams."

Dr Helen Crimlisk

Psychiatric Consultant
Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust





I felt reassured that the PA's previous experience in General Practice assisted the mental health team to better manage our patient's physical issues on a older people ward."

Dr Velusamy Sivakumar

Psychiatric Consultant
Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust



[The PA] has been an absolute pleasure to work with and it can be seen that the physical health of the patients under her care is much better managed, tightly monitored and any medical concerns more immediately assessed and managed with the ongoing management being actively in hand. She is known to be approachable for the ward nursing staff and has shown an aptitude for working with a range of professionals using her medical knowledge to assist their patient input. She is particularly gifted in her communication skills, often having to give service users difficult or sensitive information during discussions reading their physical and mental health and I have observed her to do this in a commendable way with an appropriate level of honesty and openness but an awareness of how to communicate this sensitively. She has been seen to cope admirably with patients who have presented as hostile or aggressive and has a level of skill in such situations that seems comparable with someone who has worked within mental health for a number of years."

Dr R Edwards

Ward Doctor
Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust



[The PA] demonstrates a natural aptitude for embodying a holistic approach to diagnosing patient's problems and proactively considers their physical health needs in the context of often complex, severe and enduring mental illness by undertaking comprehensive clinical histories and examinations. She excels in health promotion and disease prevention achieving good clinical outcomes with multiple patients... [She] is a core member of the multi-disciplinary team and respected by her colleagues for her invaluable contribution to patient care. She has forged very good relationships with the medical and nursing team... She has sound working knowledge of the relevant ethical and legal issues generally applicable within medicine and more specifically, under the mental health act."

Dr Alex Till

Psychiatry Trainee
Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust

Success Stories & Feedback



Physician Associates are generalists, but can over a period of time develop specialist skills in a particular field. Our service users and clinical teams could indeed benefit from this USP of Physician Associates as it fills a skill gap in our current mental health workforce. They can also be a model workforce for integrating physical and mental health care in the community. Today, they can ensure continuity of care for our patients and also champion positive health."



Dr Arun Chidambaram

Deputy Medical Director
Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust



The physician associates have been motivated to learn and gain experience in mental health whilst also being trained to assess patients presenting with physical health problems. [They are] always willing to learn and improve as professionals."

Inpatient Junior Doctor

Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust



Challenges include dealing with emotionally dysregulated patients who may exhibit challenging behaviour such as team splitting and aggression; and also dealing with disordered attachment (for example to myself, which has been a recent challenge with one of our patients). These difficulties became fewer [my] experience increased.

Clinical supervision has been very useful. PAs [have] felt very well supported in working through their concerns."

Kathryn Robertson

Psychiatric Consultant
Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust



[The positives of working at SHSC are] as a new addition to the Trust, we have been able to fit ourselves into places where the need is greatest and we are able to take on new opportunities that are on offer, e.g. bitesized teaching. [The teaching sessions] have been insightful sessions in building my knowledge and is an open space for questions that I may not have the time to ask on the ward."

Physician Associate

Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust



[The positives of working at SHSC are] being a pioneer for the Physician Associate role at the Trust. Staff are open and supportive about the role. [The teaching sessions are] very interactive, informal style that is welcoming to be able to participate effectively."

Physician Associate

Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust

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