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| Cheshire Training Hub |
| Physician Associate Education and Training Support Pack |
| Sub-category of Governance Framework for Training and Education in Primary Care |
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| HEATHER GLOVER CHESHIRE TRAINING HUB |
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| This role has emerged in response to increased demands placed on general practice. This support pack aims to guide practice managers in providing a consistent approach to developing the role, a defined job description and competency framework to support work-based learning. |

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**Physician Associate Education and Training Support Pack**

**Introduction**

From 2018, through the development of a [Primary Care Academy](http://www.cheshireandmerseysideprimarycareacademy.co.uk/index.php) (PCA), the 5 Training Hubs in Cheshire and Merseyside have been working collaboratively. The [Training Hubs](http://www.cheshireandmerseysideprimarycareacademy.co.uk/index.php/contact-us)  are a resource of further information and guidance for each of the primary care networks, in order to engage and develop their workforce to ensure future success and sustainability. The purpose of this training support pack is to guide and direct practice managers and employees, and assist in the successful development of the growing number of roles within primary care.

General practice and primary care is becoming increasingly complex. The primary care workforce therefore, are developing and expanding the roles and expertise offered, with greater collaboration within Primary Care Networks (PCN) to address the current challenges. Growing demand for workforce solutions in primary care and the existence of Training Hubs presents an opportunity for workforce development with the necessary support networks in place. One of the roles to have been developed in order to address these challenges is the physician associate.

**The Physician Associate**

By 2020, the Department of Health and Health Education England (HEE) want to see a total of 1,000 physician associates (PA) recruited to primary care. This is because of the potential GP shortages, and it will help to deliver the five-year plan for primary care. The PA role is a new healthcare professional taking pressure off overburdened doctors and providing patients, especially those with long-term conditions, continuity in primary care.

They are trained to work within a defined scope of practice, and work alongside General Practitioners providing medical care as an integral part of the multidisciplinary team. PAs work under the supervision of a doctor but can work autonomously with appropriate support. The PA will work collaboratively with other members of the Primary Care Team within the policies and procedures of the practice, and responsibilities may include:

* Telephone triage
* Taking medical histories from patients
* Carrying out physical examinations
* Seeing patients with undifferentiated diagnoses
* Seeing patients with long-term chronic conditions
* Formulating differential diagnoses and management plans
* Carrying out diagnostic and therapeutic procedures
* Developing and delivering appropriate treatment and management plans
* Requesting and interpreting diagnostic studies
* Residential, nursing and home visits
* Providing health promotion / disease prevention advice for patients
* Examine patients
* Administer drugs
* Order medical and diagnostic tests
* Diagnose illnesses
* Counsel patients and their families
* Co-ordination of research activity.

PAs in the UK are unable to prescribe medication by virtue of working as a physician associate. However, a registered nurse with prescribing rights, for example, working as a physician associate is able to prescribe medication by relying on their nursing knowledge, skills or experience in that role.

**Professional Training and Qualifications**

PAs are clinical graduates trained in the medical model. They must pass a 2 year university course at diploma or masters level to learn clinical knowledge and skills after completing a 3 year biomedical or healthcare related degree. Trained in both acute and primary care to gain a rounded patient centred clinical experience, this will help to strengthen the workforce which was the commitment in the 2016 General Practice Forward View.

PA training follows a combined apprenticeship & preceptorship model where it’s the student PAs responsibility to ensure that they learn and the provider’s responsibility to ensure that they are able to work with a suitably diverse range of patients and staff.

The employee could be registered in another healthcare profession such as nursing, allied health or midwifery. The PA national exam is a requirement for entry into professional practice, and must be taken by every PA in the country, regardless of which programme (postgraduate diploma in PA studies or master’s qualification) they have passed. PAs have to meet a nationally approved standard of training and practice. This is a requirement of the competence and curriculum framework for physician associates as laid down by the Faculty of Physician Associates (FPA).

The (FPA) currently runs the Physician Associate Managed Voluntary Register (PAMVR), which allows employers to check whether an applicant or employee is a fully qualified and approved PA.

**Continuous Professional Development**

Continuing professional development (CPD) is required to continually enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to work safely and effectively as a PA. All PAs are currently required to fulfil CPD requirements to remain on the PAMVR which is to be audited by the FPA in conjunction with the Royal College of Physicians using the CPD diary.

The Faculty of Physician Associates requires documented evidence of members CPD as an essential component of the information needed to remain on the PAMVR. This evidence is required, under membership of the FPA, to be documented in the members' RCP CPD diary. All physician associates are currently required to complete 50 hours of CPD per year. Further information can be found in the CPD guidance for physician associates below.

**Resources**

Faculty of Physician Associates <https://www.fparcp.co.uk/employers/pas-in-general-practice>

Health Careers Physician Associate <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/medical-associate-professions/roles-medical-associate-professions/physician-associate>

Health Education England Physician Associates in Primary Care <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/primary-care/physician-associates-primary-care>