



Health Education England

The Physician Associate

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Who are we?

“a collaborative healthcare professional trained as generalists under the medical model who work under defined levels of supervision and support to assist the medical team to deliver care”

Approximately 280 Physician Associates nationally across 35 trusts/40 GPs with roles covering a wide range of clinical specialities

(FPA Census, 2016)

What can we do?

- Take medical history
- Physically examine a patient
- Formulate differential diagnoses
- Perform, request and interpret diagnostic test and procedures
 - ECG, venepuncture, catheterisation, joint injection, cervical smear, family planning, minor surgery
- Formulate treatment and management plans
- Refer patients to specialist services and further care
- Manage medications *
- Provide health promotion and disease prevention

* All with the mentorship of a supervising clinician

Education and Training

- 28 programmes across all regions of the UK (a further 5+ in development)
- Minimum 90 week programme with a mix of PGCert and MSc diplomas

Entry requirements:

- Undergraduate degree (2.2 or above) in relevant specialty
- Evidence of experience in healthcare (paid or voluntary)

- Nationally devised core curriculum with a minimum of 1600 clinical hours across compulsory placements in addition to a 50% theory component
- Emphasis throughout training for an awareness of the limits of competence and holistic care
- National qualification exam to ensure a universal standard from all training facilities

How is the PA role being used in General Practice?

Patient level

- Telephone triage
- Pre-bookable appointments
- Same day bookable appointments
- Request for investigations/correspondence
- Referrals for non-elective and elective
- Support nursing home and residential home residents
- Chronic disease management
- Collaborative care co-ordination role

Practice level

- Support the achievement of QOF
- Contribution to education meetings
- Advise of CQC registration and responsibilities
- Help with the achievement of Enhanced Services eg INRs, family planning and sexual health clinics, minor surgery etc
- Take responsibility for case finding for example avoidable admissions audit
- Supportive part of the multi disciplinary team

A day in my life...

Working with the support of the Duty doctor managing the urgent appointments and queries. During each session the duty doctor is released for 8 – 10 routine appointments with 5 minute supervision slots between to allow for the PA to have prescriptions signed or support with consultations.

Net gain routine appt = 15-20 per day.

Morning Surgery

0830-1030 – Telephone triage (5 minute appts)

1030-1200 – Morning appointments (15 minute appts)– with patients following triage, low threshold for elderly and paediatric patients

Lunchtime

1200-1330 – Home visits, lab reports, admin, referrals, morning review with mentor

1330-1400 – Lunch

Afternoon surgery

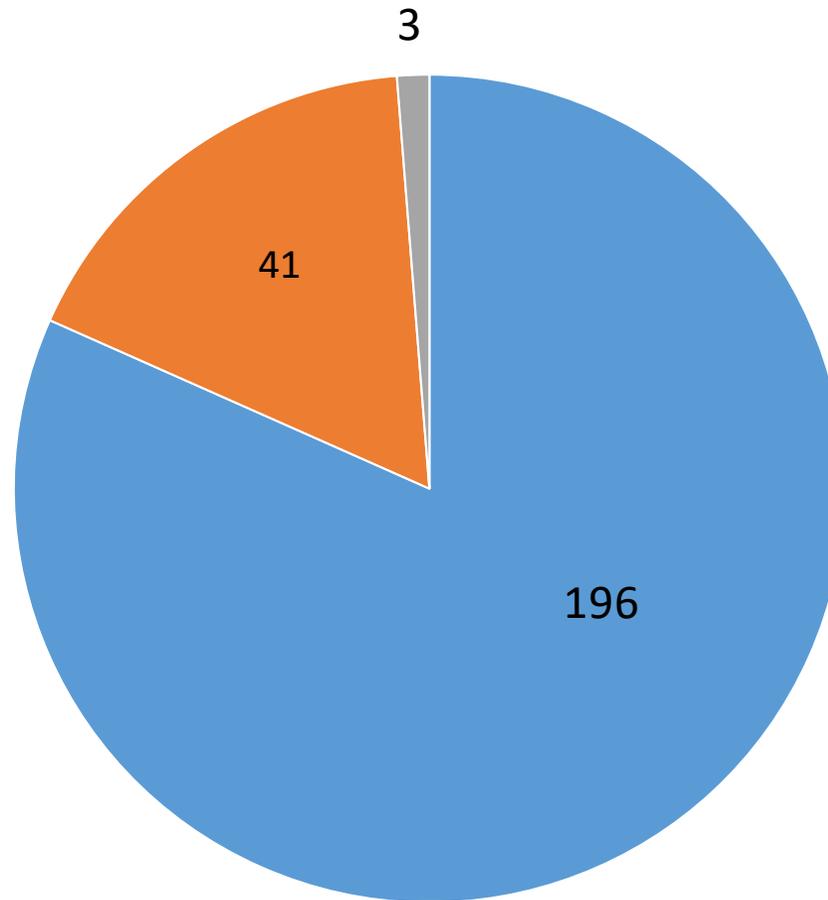
1400-1500 – Afternoon telephone triage, day book, prescription queries (5 minute appts)

1500-1730 – Afternoon appointments (15 minute appts)

1730-1800 – Debrief with mentor

Supervision Required

Out of a total of 250
patient contacts



Inspired by 'The Physician Associate'
Jeannie Watkins, St Georges University London

Outcomes

- 40+ more routine appointments being offered each week
- Reduced waiting times for routine appointment – 11 days to 4 days
- 6% reduction in unplanned admissions since Nov 2016
- Decreased patient return rate (19% to 11%)
- Increased team working across the practice
- Overall GP perception of workload improved

Responses...

Colleagues

“a positive addition to the team, with phenomenal knowledge and confidence, which has helped to ease the demand on the practice”

“its really nice to have another clinical member of staff to be able to direct patient queries to, very approachable and always happy to help”

“Always positive and willing to take on any appropriate task to contribute to the surgery team, has taken a lot of pressure away from the GPs enabling them to concentrate on work most appropriate for them ”

Patients

“Lovely manner, explained things clearly and made me feel heard”

“Very competent”

“I was concerned at first that I wouldn't be seeing a GP, but she was so knowledgeable and easy to talk to, I couldn't have asked for better care”

100% of respondents would choose to see the PA again

Practicalities

- Salary

- AFC Band 7 (£30,000-£40,000) for new graduates, increasing at practice discretion with experience.

- Indemnity

- Indemnified by MPS, MDU and MDDUS with coverage and costs depending on duties undertaken.

- Regulation

- **NO STATUTORY REGULATION** – unable to prescribe or request ionising radiation.

- Faculty within the RCP, established managed voluntary register, potential agreement of regulation under the GMC/HCPC within 1-2 years