



- ✓ The Faculty of Physician Associates (FPA) provide [resources for employers](#) and hold the [PA Managed Voluntary Register \(PAMVR\)](#)
- ✓ The GMC offer guidance around the [supervision of PAs in practice](#)



Key Facts – PA role in Primary Care

- ✓ [Physician Associates \(PAs\)](#) are part of the [Medical Associate Professions \(MAP\)](#) workforce – they are healthcare professionals with a generalist medical education who work under the supervision of a doctor to provide medical care, across primary and secondary care settings
- ✓ The [PA role](#) was first introduced in 2003. PAs undertake Masters level study to qualify
- ✓ [Recently commissioned research](#) found the PA role positively impacts patients and service provision (impacts increase as experience in the role increases). PAs offer routine and acute on-the-day appointments, contributing to increasing access and reducing waiting times
- ✓ Many PAs are trained in frailty. Data shows that as well as saving GP time, this positively impacts on the provision of services for older people and for the patients themselves
- ✓ Processes and outcomes of PA and GP consultations for same-day appointment patients have been found to be similar at a lower consultation cost, with PAs offering “a potentially acceptable and efficient addition to the general practice workforce” ([Drennan et al., Br J Gen Pract, 2015](#))
- ✓ The PA role has been shown to provide [effective support to patients with mental health presentations in primary care](#)
- ✓ Currently PAs are unable to prescribe and are not permitted to request ionising radiation. However, work is currently underway to enable PAs to perform these functions from 2025
- ✓ There are plans for the PA workforce to become a regulated profession, with [GMC](#) registration. A move to prescribing rights will become possible after then
- ✓ A £5000 [preceptorship](#) support payment is available for PCNs/GP practices employing newly qualified PAs (or those moving from secondary care)

Key Facts – PA apprenticeship

- ✓ PA apprentice training is a 30-36 month postgraduate programme, combining work-based and academic learning between the employer and university
- ✓ HEIs specify [entry criteria](#) for their programmes – candidates will need to demonstrate ability to study at Masters level (typically with a first degree in biosciences or by current registration with the NMC as a Nurse or Midwife, or HCPC as an Allied Healthcare Practitioner) and some healthcare experience
- ✓ Numeracy and literacy qualifications equivalent to GCSE grades 4-9 (or functional skills level 2) will also need to be evidenced
- ✓ A [template job description](#) for the PA apprentice role is available.
- ✓ The apprenticeship route for PA training is an opportunity to upskill existing staff members who meet the entry criteria.
- ✓ Apprentices have allocated protected study time (~40%) to attend academic study, complete assignments and undertake placements across the health care system.
- ✓ Currently 10 universities are approved to deliver the [PA Apprenticeship Standard](#). This includes providers offering national (online) delivery. [See programme details and contact information here](#)
- ✓ The Faculty of PAs (FPA) has developed a [draft curriculum](#) aligned to the GMC's [generic and shared learning outcomes](#)
- ✓ On successful completion learners can apply for inclusion on the [PA Managed Voluntary Register \(PAMVR\)](#) which is held by the [Faculty of PAs \(FPA\)](#)

Considerations for PCNs/GP practices:

- ✓ As the employer you need to specify the salary for the role
- ✓ You need to undertake a recruitment process, working with HEIs to jointly assess suitability
- ✓ Your PA apprentice will spend time working and learning in other settings. Like other healthcare students they will be required to undertake placements across a range of disciplines in secondary care, including mental health
- ✓ You are responsible for organising placements, as part of the tripartite agreement made between the education provider, employer, and the apprentice. Placement patterns vary depending on the education provider
- ✓ Your [Training Hub](#) can support with connecting with education providers and understanding specific placement requirements
- ✓ No healthcare education and training tariff is payable for the PA apprentice role, so a collaborative approach to reciprocal placement arrangements across your ICS (and beyond) will be beneficial
- ✓ You should consider the role that the PA apprentice will undertake once qualified, including their tasks and duties and how this could support the medical and nursing team to focus their time on more enhanced duties

Physician Associate Apprenticeships in Primary Care

A quick guide to introducing a PA Apprentice into primary care – funding

Funding Support

Education fees are required by education providers to deliver the PA apprenticeship programme (currently set nationally at a maximum of £17,000). Download a [Primary Care Apprenticeship Guide](#) for useful information to support you with understanding [funding options](#) for Apprentice PAs.

Apprenticeship Levy and Levy Transfers

Employers with a pay bill exceeding £3 million per year can meet this cost through their apprenticeship levy payments.

Primary care employers are typically non-levy paying organisations but can access [levy transfers](#) from levy paying organisations (local trusts) for 100% of the training costs of an apprenticeship. Further support around this process can be provided by [your regional apprenticeship relationship manager](#) or via talentforcare@hee.nhs.uk. Employers accessing apprenticeship levy funds need to set up a [digital apprenticeship account](#) (supported by their [Training Hub](#)).

This digital account only needs to be set up once and can be used again if the employer wishes to seek further apprenticeship funding. Levy funding can only cover the cost of apprenticeship training and assessment – apprentice salary or other costs such as travel and accommodation, expenses or other training are not included. Placement costs are not covered by the levy. Employers are responsible for ensuring their apprentices gain the requisite on-the-job experience. This requires strong partnerships between employers at a local level, with HEI support. Apprentices are not eligible for student loans.

Co-investment Support for Non-Levy Payers

Employers unable to arrange levy transfers can reserve [co-investment](#) where both the employer and the government pay the education provider for apprenticeship training – 5% from the employer and 95% from the government.

National educational support grants

Employers can access an educational support grant of £10,000 per PA apprentice starting in 2023/24. This funding recognises the need to establish resources and processes to embed the PA apprentice role locally. It is intended to develop educational infrastructure and can be used flexibly by employers (for example, with supervision support and placement organisation.) Employers need to consider how to build sustainability into their arrangements.

Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS)

The PA apprentice role is part of the [ARRS](#). Therefore a PCN can claim reimbursement for salary costs (plus some on-costs) up to a maximum reimbursable amount equivalent to Band 5 on the [Agenda for Change](#) payscale. Staff will need to be enrolled on an approved apprenticeship programme in line with the [Network Contract DES](#). As set out in [Investment and Evolution: Update to the GP contract agreement 2020/21 – 2023/24](#), staff employed through ARRS will be considered as part of the core general practice cost base beyond 2023/24.

Maths and English

Support those who do not meet the numeracy and literacy entry requirements

Click [here](#) to find out about free functional skills resources



Primary Care Apprenticeship Guide

Download an information pack full of **useful hints and tips** to support your PA apprentices on their learning journey [here](#)



Healthcare Apprenticeship Standards Online (HASO)

Find useful resources on the dedicated health and social care apprenticeship [website](#)