

Nursing Associates: Their role in General Practice




Developing people
for health and
healthcare

Nursing Associates: who are they?



In 2017 the Government announced the creation of the Nursing Associate role. The role is bridging the gap between health care support worker and registered nurse and helping meet the changing health and care needs of patients and the public.


 [Read more about the role at www.nmc.org.uk/nursingassociates](http://www.nmc.org.uk/nursingassociates)

Nursing Associate is a stand-alone role as well as also providing a route to Registered Nurse.



Nursing associates are trained to work with people of all ages and across all four fields of nursing: adult, child, mental health and learning disability.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) became the legal regulator of this new role in July 2018.

 [Read more about the regulator role at www.nmc.org.uk/nursingassociates](http://www.nmc.org.uk/nursingassociates)


The first trainee nursing associates (around 2000 across England)

registered with the NMC in January 2019 and joined a new Nursing Associate section of the register. 2018 saw a further 5,000 trainees start educational programmes with a further 7,500 planned for 2019.

What Nursing Associates will know



The NMC has set standards for Nursing Associates and Nursing Associate programmes.

 [Read more about the Nursing Associate standards at www.nmc.org.uk/standards-for-nursing-associates](http://www.nmc.org.uk/standards-for-nursing-associates)

These set out what a Nursing Associate should know and be able to do when they join the register.

Further education and experience will allow for role development. Nurse leaders across England have been clear that the intention is for Nursing Associates to support, not substitute, registered nurses.

What value will they bring to General Practice?



They will increase the capacity of general practice nursing teams. As a response to the growing demands in Primary Care, General Practice Nurses (GPNs) are embracing some activities traditionally the domain of GPs



Many general practice HCAs are keen to embark on Nursing Associate training.

such as prescribing, treating minor illness and managing long term conditions. Nursing Associates will be well placed to help with some of the routine work of GPNs.

Nursing Associates will be regulated and registered by the NMC. Regulation includes registration, revalidation and fitness to practise. This is of clear benefit to patients, Nursing Associates and employers.

Nursing Associate training offers a career development opportunity. Many current employed general practice Health Care Assistants (HCAs) are keen to embark on Nursing Associate training. If they are not offered these opportunities in general practice they may be tempted to seek them elsewhere. Trainee Nursing Associates in general practice settings report that their new underpinning knowledge is hugely beneficial to their existing task-orientated skill set.

With continued professional development, Nursing Associates will provide additional capacity within the nursing team. This might be in areas such as contributing to cervical cytology screening, meeting quality and outcomes framework targets and management of long-term conditions. Having additional capacity to meet patient need will be a welcome addition to the team. Supporting development of a Nursing Associate provides an opportunity to shape and mould an

individual to fit into a developing team.

Trainee Nursing Associates bring valuable insight across whole systems. During placements, trainees gain experience of patient pathways and journeys and bring this back to the team. There are also opportunities to showcase general practice settings by practices hosting placements for trainees from other provider areas.

Nursing Associates bring a breadth of knowledge and skill to general practice. Nursing Associate training spans all age ranges, is across all four fields of nursing (adult, child, mental health and learning disability) and provides experience in a variety of clinical contexts. This is hugely beneficial in general practice settings.


A provider that invests in training is an attractive employer. General practices with a visible training ethos will be at the forefront of recruiting the best.


Basic requirements for Nursing Associates in General Practice


- Trainee Nursing Associates must have the capability to develop numeracy skills required to meet programme outcomes and demonstrate proficiency in English language. Approved Educational Institutions can set

their own minimum entry requirements.

- Release from practice for placements and study time at university. A Nursing Associate programme usually takes two years to complete via an apprenticeship framework.
- Theory hours and practice hours will need to be evidenced
- Salary costs throughout the duration of the two-year period will need to be met by the employing practice.
- The starting salary for trainee Nursing Associates is recommended to be commensurate with Agenda for Change band 3, progressing on qualification.
- Educational fees will need to be paid but a variety of ways of doing this are offered through use of apprenticeship levy funding.
- Full support of the employing practice with appropriate supervision is required.

 [Read more about becoming a Nursing Associate at www.nmc.org.uk/becoming-a-nursing-associate/](https://www.nmc.org.uk/becoming-a-nursing-associate/)

 [Read more about the employer guide for Nursing Associates at https://www.nhsemployers.org/nursingassociates](https://www.nhsemployers.org/nursingassociates)

 If you have a general enquiry, please contact HEE at communications@hee.nhs.uk