





# NEW ROLES in Primary Care

## NURSING ASSOCIATE


The Nursing Associate role is currently being developed nationally, through local pilots including one in North-Central London. Once fully established, Nursing Associates will be a new support role that will bridge the gap between healthcare support workers and registered nurses to deliver **hands-on care for patients**. 


 Nursing Associates will be regulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), and work under the leadership and direction of registered nurses, but also have **a degree of autonomy** and use **situational judgement** within the parameters of their practice, whilst delivering care to patients.


Nursing Associates work within all aspects of the nursing process, providing high-quality holistic and person-centred care to individuals. They will also support the registered nurse in the **assessment, planning and evaluation of care**. 


Educated to **diploma of higher education (DipHE) foundation degree** and having undertaken the Nursing Associate **Training Programme**, or through Nursing Associate **Apprenticeship** in the workplace, they are trained to deliver person centred care, solve problems, support the education and assessment of competence of others as well as be fully aware of the parameters of their own practice. 

## PRACTICE BASED PHARMACIST

Practice Based Pharmacists work in general practice as part of a multi-disciplinary team in a patient facing role to clinically assess and treat patients using their **expert knowledge of medicines, long term conditions and triaging** for specific disease areas. 


They can be trained as independent prescribers, work with and alongside the general practice team, oversee **prescribing** processes, carry out associated audits, taking responsibility for patients with chronic diseases and undertaking **clinical medication reviews** to proactively manage people with complex polypharmacy, especially for the elderly, people in care homes and those with multiple co-morbidities. Some are also trained to manage seeing patients with minor ailments. 


 A 2016/17 audit of workload impact showed that having a pharmacist working four sessions a week resulted in over **400 hours of GP time saved** over the course of the year.


All Practice Based Pharmacists have an **undergraduate Master's degree in Pharmacy (MPharm)** and a **postgraduate membership qualification (MPharmS)**. They undertake credit bearing post-graduate training to become Independent Prescribers and undergo ongoing professional revalidation to maintain their Membership qualification. 


## MEDICAL ASSISTANT

Medical Assistant is a new role created to reduce **administrative workload pressures** of general practitioners, and improve access for patients. Candidates for medical assistant role are currently being trained. 


 They will **support** the on-call doctor for telephone triage, follow up patients, read, code and action incoming correspondence, prepare forms, and produce referrals using templates.


 Once the role is fully established in General Practices, Medical Assistants may also take on other duties such as **preparing patients** for consultations, following up with patients about **test results**, attending multi-agency meetings to represent the practice, supporting the audits, and **signposting** to other services.


 Medical Assistants are **highly skilled members** of the administrative teams, who also receive additional training locally for their roles. Currently, Medical Assistant training is a pilot programme and the impact the role will have on the workload of general practitioners will be measured through an evaluation.


 They cannot make **clinical decisions** or request any tests.

## PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE

Physician Associates are medically trained generalist healthcare professionals who work together with and are supervised by GPs. They **provide medical care** as part of the multi-disciplinary teams. 

 They take medical histories from patients, **carry out physical examinations**, see patients with undifferentiated diagnoses, see patients with long term 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, and provide health promotion and disease prevention advice for patients.

They **cannot prescribe or request ionising radiation** such as chest x-ray or CT scan. 

 Physician Associates usually have a bioscience related first degree and receive further training as well. They train for **2 years** on postgraduate programmes focusing on general adult medicine in hospitals and general practice.