

# Assistant Practitioners for Mental Health



A Workforce Development Project for the North of England  
led by Health Education England North West  
in collaboration with Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust

Developing people

for health and

healthcare

[www.hee.nhs.uk](http://www.hee.nhs.uk)

# Agenda

The Role of an Assistant Practitioner
The Transformational Contribution of the Assistant Practitioner
The Health Education England Workforce Transformation Offer for Trainee Assistant Practitioners in Mental Health
The Assistant Practitioner Education Programme
Expression of Interest & the Selection Process
Next Steps

## The Role of Assistant Practitioner

- A trained senior clinical care support worker who competently delivers health and social care to and for people. They have a required level of knowledge and skill beyond that of the traditional healthcare assistant or support worker ([Skills for Health, 2015](#)).
- Band 4 NHS Careers Framework
- Designed to work across patient pathways and can offer additional flexibility in the delivery of new care models.
- Able to work across professional boundaries e.g. nursing, AHP, social work
- [The Assistant Practitioners in England Report \(SfH, 2015\)](#) identifies that stakeholders can clearly articulate the benefits of introducing the AP role, which include :
  - Contribution improvements in quality, productivity and efficiency
  - Able to work in a range of clinical, community and laboratory situations
  - Increasingly seen in roles that cross health and social care and professional boundaries.

## Assistant Practitioners in Mental Health Services

GEOGRAPHY	No of APs *AfC Band 4 Only	Physical Health	Mental Health	
NORTH WEST	1709	1547	162	9.5%
NORTH	3484	3053	431	12%
NATIONAL	7900	6871	1029	13%

### Comments:

- Discrepancy in the development of the AP role between physical health and mental health settings
- Why? Awareness? Relevance? Need? Engagement?

## Assistant Practitioner v's Nurse Associate - What's the Difference?

**Nursing Associate:** Bridges the gap between health & care assistants and **registered nurses**. A stand-alone role that provides a career pathway into graduate level nursing.

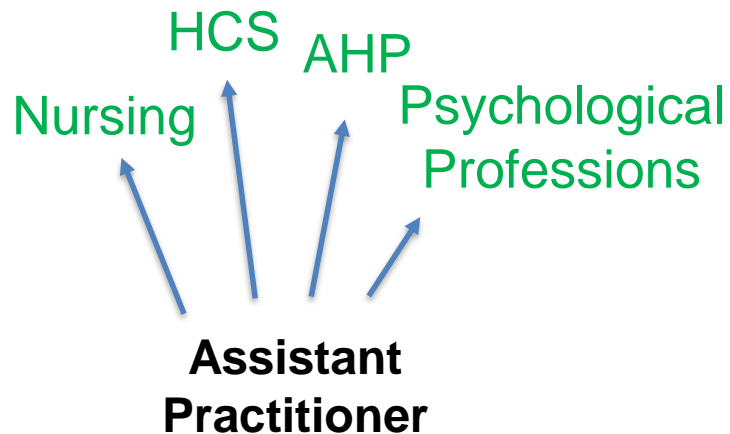
*A role designed to develop the nursing workforce that can work across all nurse led settings.*

**Assistant Practitioners:** Bridges the gap between healthcare assistant/ support worker and **registered professions**. A non-occupational specific role deployed across multi-professional settings. Provides a career pathway into a range of registered graduate professional roles such as a nurse, dietitian, physiotherapist, healthcare science practitioner, occupational therapist, psychological wellbeing practitioner.

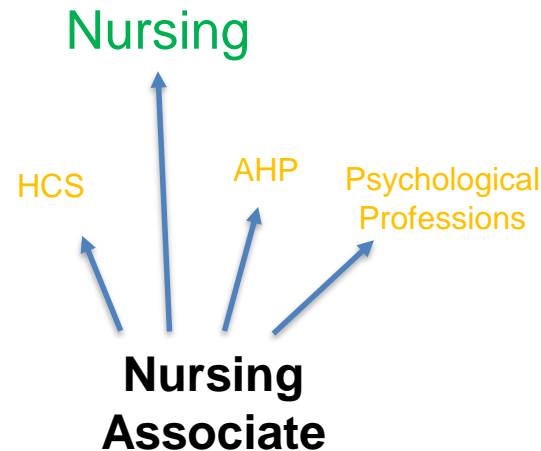
*A role with a flexible mix of skills that can work with a range of registered practitioners across health & care in multi-professional settings*

# Widening Career Pathways Across Health & Care Professions

Wide Application  
Provider Focus  
Multi-professional Care Pathway



Broad Application  
Profession Specific Focus  
Nursing Care Pathway



Narrow Application  
Profession Specific Focus  
IAPT Care Pathway

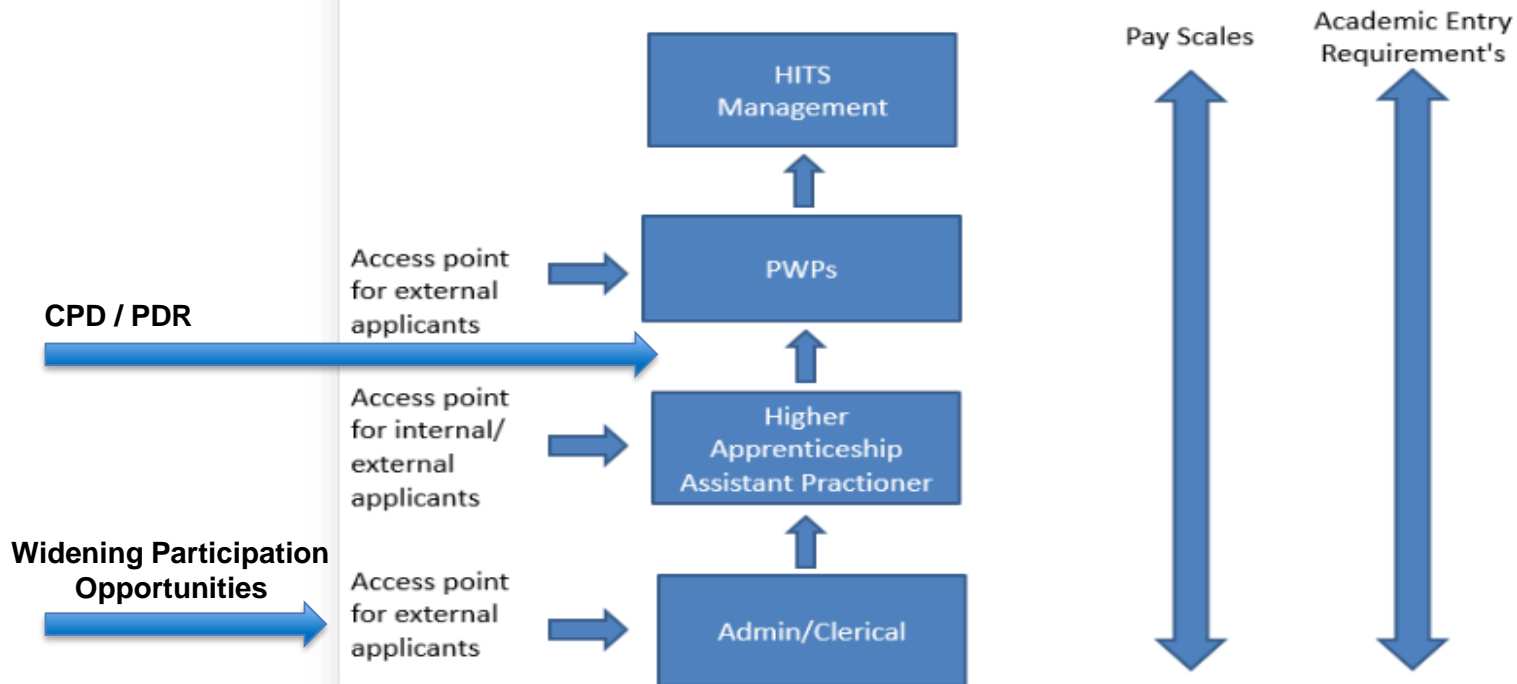


## Role Comparison

- [Healthcare Assistant Practitioner](#)  
Apprenticeship Standard Level 5
- [Nursing Associate](#)  
Apprenticeship Standard Level 5
- [PWP Apprenticeship](#)  
Apprenticeship Standard Level 6

# Lengthening the Career Ladder & Widening Participation IAPT Case Example

## Proposed IAPT Career Structure





## **Development of role and responsibilities**

Four key responsibilities for APs in Mental Health services:

**1. Supporting the multidisciplinary team with the organisation, implementation and coordination of clinical tasks - including Social Prescribing & Care Navigation**

**2. Patient Involvement and Engagement. Including collating patient feedback, following up patient experience questionnaires for inputting into service quality assurance processes.**

**3. Community Engagement. Building connections with community groups and resources; maintaining links with partner organisations; engaging with marginalised / hard to reach sections of the community**

**4. Support and coordination of Psychoeducational Groups. Supporting organisation and running of groups, follow-up of DNAs and gathering of service user feedback.**

## The Transformational Contribution of the Assistant Practitioner

- **Patient Care:** supporting transformation of the mental health care pathway by increasing the skill mix of the workforce
- **Widening Participation:** enabling careers of individuals employed on Agenda for Change bands 2-4.
- **Diversification of the workforce:** enabling recruitment of individuals with non-standard qualifications, including lived experience.
- **Workforce Growth & Retention:** expanding recruitment points and extending career pathways in to mental health and registered professions
- **Sustainable Work Based ‘Earning & Learning’:** the AP role is approved as a higher apprenticeship training route and funded through the Apprenticeship Levy

# North Region Assistant Practitioner for Mental Health Workforce Development Offer

Stepping forward to 2020/21 states the importance of adopting support roles as part of the large scale expansion the mental health workforce in order to meet the ambition of treating one million more patients by 2021.

All of the North STPs have identified the development of support roles as part of their workforce expansion strategy.

Coordinated expansion of the AP role across mental health and improving access to psychological therapy teams (IAPT). Builds sustainability by building commitment and capability of service providers at scale and pace to access apprentice levy funding to develop AP career pathways.

## **Assistant Practitioner Offer:**

- Training support package for NHS & NHS commissioned providers of Mental Health and IAPT services to take up the Assistant Practitioner role to enhance their care pathways.
- Integrated practical support to develop the capability of NHS & PIVO mental health service providers to access apprentice levy funding for sustainability of new Assistant Practitioner apprenticeships in mental health.
- Monitoring and quality assurance of the uptake and application of the role across mental health settings to guide implementation and disseminate new ways of working and good practice at scale and pace.

## Assistant Practitioner Training

- Band 4 NHS Careers Framework
- Higher Apprentice model with trainees spending their time on day release to undertake 2 year foundation degree training programme
- Core and specialist modules tailored to intended area of practice.
- Care Certificate built into the degree
- Supervised practice throughout training to completion of the Programme - assessed by a trained mentor,
- Standard entry route for an AP is employment at Band 2/3 in their first year of training, progressing to Band 3 in year two and, on successful completion at the end of year 2, progressing to Band 4 responsibilities.

## Higher Apprenticeship Healthcare Assistant Practitioner Programme example:-

		FdSc Health & Social Care (Assistant Practitioner)			Total credits 240
		Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3	
Level 4		PZ1015 Study and Lifelong Learning skills (20)	PZ1067 Anatomy, Physiology and Psychology of Health (20)	PZ1046 Mental Health across the lifespan (20)	120
		PZ1022 Communication and Collaboration (20)	NU1019 Care from the Clients Perspective (20) OR PW1002 Introduction to Medicines Management for Assistant practitioners (20)	PZ1068 Foundations For Practice (20)	
Level 5		PZ2091 Evidence Based Practice (20) OR PW2002 Medicines Management for Assistant Practitioners (20)	Mental Healthcare: The Broader Context (20)	PZ2035 Management and Leadership in Health and Social Care (20)	120
		PZ2073 Health Promotion (20)	PZ2066 Developing Practice (40)	PZ2066 Developing Practice (40)	

## Higher Apprenticeship - FdSc in Health and Social Care (Assistant Practitioner)

- Consists of Core and Optional Modules specific to service need
- FdSc (240 academic credits) 20 credits year 1 and 40 credits year 2
- **Work based learning modules supports 20% off the job training within the Apprenticeship Standard**
- 2 year course
- 1 day a week
- Delivered over 3 semesters
- Core Skills Apprenticeship Standard
  - – Fit For Practice Skills Service Specific Support for interview and application process
- Continues Employer Engagement - Facilitate Mentor & Manager support
- Monitor and record WBL
- Attend Organisational Forums
- Work Collaboratively with Service / Training & Development Management
- Provide Guidance job descriptions, policy (SOP)
- Support Role Redesign
- Share Good Practice
- End Point Assessment - 3 elements MCQ, Observation of Practice & Interview

## Examples of the Assistant Practitioner role in Practice

- Theatre AP's undertake a scrub role – developing within roles within recovery
- Managing non complex case loads and patient groups
- Leading within link roles e.g. Audit, Infection Control, M&H
- Leading patient groups e.g. Therapies, Children's services, Mental Health
- Providing clinic service e.g. Flu, INR, NHS Checks
- Reduce waiting times A&E, Urgent Care, Radiography, Breast Screening
- Practice Assessments and Referrals



## Expression of Interest



Mental Health & IAPT Commissioning Leads  
Mental Health & IAPT Service Providers

North West:  
Workforce Directorate  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
3 Piccadilly Place  
Manchester  
M1 3BN



By Email

10<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Colleagues

### RE: Expression of Interest for Trainee Assistant Practitioners for Mental Health – Spring 2021

Building on the [‘The NHS Five Year Forward View for Mental Health \(FYFV/MH\)’](#) and [‘Stepping Forward to 2020/2021, The Mental health Workforce Plan for England’](#) I am pleased to confirm that Health Education England in collaboration with Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust are offering funding packages to NHS and NHS Commissioned Providers of Mental Health services interested in transforming their workforce through the role of a ‘Trainee Assistant Practitioner’.

‘The Assistant Practitioner’ is a 2 year Higher Apprenticeship, with 1 day on training release at University. It is a support role that works across a wide range of professions and care settings. This means that they can bridge the gap across integrated care pathways, and be supervised by a range of health and care professionals.

Health Education England are able to offer the following workforce transformation packages:-

- 1. Applies to Apprenticeship Levy Paying Organisations:-**  
A ‘Training Grant’ contribution will be provided based upon a mid point A/C Band 3, plus on costs to support 2 days training/week. Education costs will be drawn direct from your Organisations Apprenticeship Levy.
- 2. Applies to Non Levy Paying Organisations:-**  
Using the Apprenticeship Levy’s Co-Investment model HEE will provide the 5% Employer contribution and a ‘Training Grant’ contribution based upon a mid point A/C Band 3, plus on costs to support 2 days training/week.

We are looking for expressions of interest from services able to provide the appropriate access to work-based training and supervision in line with [Apprenticeship guidance](#).

This intake is available for 2020/2021 across the North of England starting in Spring 2021 with a limited number of places. Training providers will be available across the North in each of the STP areas.

If the number of expressions of interest exceed the number of funded places, allocation will be based on the selection criteria attached. For those services who are not successful in receiving a funded place we will work with you to ensure you are in a position to apply for future funding through the sustainable Apprenticeship Levy funding route.

Since this is an apprenticeship role trainees must be employed by the service and have a guaranteed post at the end of training.

Support to access the [Apprenticeship Levy](#) will be provided by the University and HEE.

For further information please see the attached fact sheet/links. If you have any questions or queries please contact Kay Helliwell on 07825 114 318 or [kay.helliwell@merseycare.nhs.uk](mailto:kay.helliwell@merseycare.nhs.uk).

To submit an Expression of Interest please [Click Here](#). The application deadline is Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020 COP.

Yours sincerely

K. Helliwell

**Kay Helliwell**  
**Project Team Manager**  
**Assistant Practitioners for Mental Health – North of England**



## **Trainee Assistant Practitioner – Application/ Recruitment Timeline**

Submit Application by COP 11/09/20 for Trainee Assistant Practitioner



HEE will communicate allocated places by w/c 28/09/20



w/c 05/10/20 Services initiate recruitment process in collaboration with HEI ready for Spring 2021  
University start date



Services provide HEE with name of trainee by 30/11/20



HEE distribute LDA/LOA agreements



w/c 01/04/21 HEE will initiate monthly data collection from services employing Trainee Assistant Practitioners

## Trainee Assistant Practitioner – Selection Criteria

HEE will allocate places based on the criteria below:-

- Understanding of the role - key competencies & boundaries of responsibility :

- Supporting multidisciplinary teams
- Patient involvement/engagement
  - Community engagement
  - Support & Co-ordination of Psychoeducational groups

- System Readiness:

- In a position to recruit ready for the university start date in Spring 2021

- Meets requirements for Apprenticeship Standard:

- Able to employ the trainee
- Guaranteed post at the end of 2 years

- Innovation

- Equitable spread across the STP's / CCG's

- NHS Commissioned Provider

## What is the Apprenticeship Levy?

- Sustainable source of funding
- The apprenticeship levy came into effect 6<sup>th</sup> April 2017
- UK Employers in both private and public sectors with an annual pay bill in excess of £3 million are required to pay 0.5% of the entire pay bill.
- Those with a pay bill of less than £3 million won't pay anything, but will still be able to access funds to pay for apprenticeship training through the co-investment model.
- Payments will work on a first-in, first-out basis, and will be taken from the funds that enter the account first. Any funds not spent will expire after 24 months and will support existing apprenticeship learners, new starts with levy- paying employers who spend more than the funds available in their accounts, and apprenticeships with non-levy paying employers.

## Next Steps

- Consider if the role of an Assistant Practitioner fits in your service?
- Link in with HEE Project Team Manager/support package
- To submit an expression of interest [Click Here](#)
- The closing date is Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020 COP

**For more information contact:**

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North of England**

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**Email: [kay.helliwell@merseycare.nhs.uk](mailto:kay.helliwell@merseycare.nhs.uk)**