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# NURSING ASSOCIATE **APPRENTICESHIP**

Bridging the gap between healthcare  
workers and registered nurses



**PRIMARY CARE**

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**A nursing associate** is a generic nursing role that bridges the gap between healthcare workers and registered nurses, validated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council. They are expected to work as part of a multidisciplinary team, supporting registered nurses by undertaking holistic caring for patients as part of the nursing team.

## What is a nursing associate?

The nursing associate role provides an exciting opportunity for primary care settings - such as a GP practice - to develop and strengthen their workforce. It's a new career pathway for healthcare assistants to become registered professionals. Depending on their skills and experience, trainee nursing associates and qualified nursing associates can take on tasks and responsibilities to alleviate pressure on registered nurses. They can also provide additional clinical leadership in a GP practice if required.

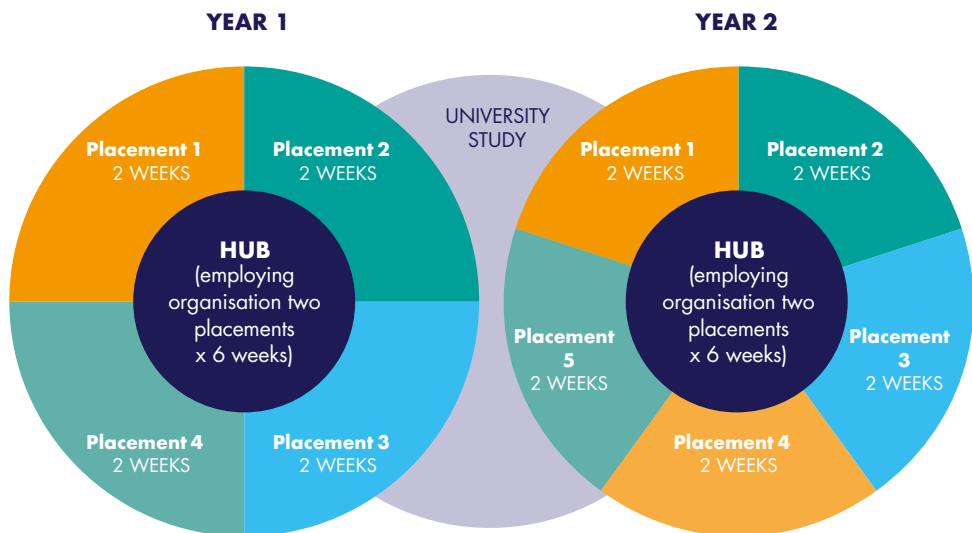
The apprenticeship is a two-year foundation degree programme. Potential applicants should have relevant experience, a good grounding in maths and English, work full-time and have lived in the UK for three years.

“Having a nursing associate as part of our team has been invaluable. As a registered nurse, I now have more time to deal with our more complex patients and we have a lot more capacity within our practice team. Our nursing associate has grown in confidence and really values the learning and experiences she has gained from the apprenticeship.” **Senior Practice Nurse**

Support is in place to assist employers and trainees during the application process and for the duration of the course which includes:



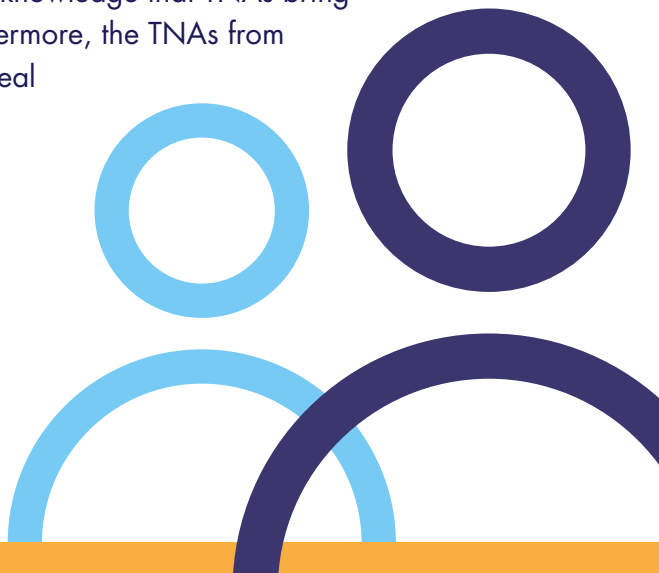
The trainee is required to complete placements across a number of different health and care settings, through a 'hub and spoke' model. This means that your trainee will carry out 'hub' placements with you as their employing organisation for two six-week blocks each year. They will then move from your area for a number of two-week 'spoke' placements each year. These will be across other settings (e.g. care homes and general practices). They will have four two-week spoke placements in Year 1 and in Year 2 they will have five.



Trainee nursing associates are required to complete placements in all four areas of nursing:

- mental health
- adult care
- learning disability
- paediatric care.

Due to this broad mix of settings and skillsets, staff and patients immediately benefit from the knowledge that TNAs bring back to their employer. Furthermore, the TNAs from other settings learn a great deal from their spoke placement at your place of work. This hub and spoke model provides a real enrichment of understanding not just for trainee nursing associates, but for primary care and general practice staff too.



Nursing associates are able to lead on a number of caring responsibilities due to the wide-ranging knowledge and skills they have obtained through their training. Examples include:



Catheter Care  
(e.g. insertion/removal)



Administering medication



Assisting patients with stoma care



Develop/review/monitor care plans



Wound care (e.g. removing clips/sutures, tissue viability risk assessments etc.)



Monitor/assist ordering of clinical supplies



Diagnostic checks (e.g. second recorder for controlled drugs/medication checks)



They can also delegate direct care to healthcare assistants, and provide the right supervision to support them in their role.

There is also the potential for NAs to train as smear-takers and immunisers.

There are a number of benefits to supporting a TNA in your organisation, however consideration should be given to some of the implications that may affect your organisation in the short term.

Benefits of supporting TNAs	Commitment required from employer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Free up capacity for your registered nurses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Salary costs for your TNA</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Improved skills, knowledge and confidence and greater accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Funds to backfill your TNA's current post for approximately 11-12 months across two years</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Improvements in quality of care and client experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Dedicated time for your TNA to study and attend spoke placements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Career development opportunities for HCAs, leading to the retention of staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ An understanding that your TNA is learning on the job</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Route into registered nursing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A commitment to supporting your TNA with their studies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Staff feel more valued in the care home setting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ New staff from other settings may not be used to care homes and require additional support</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ TNAs will bring new ideas and experiences having been trained across all settings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Risk of drop-out from course if not supported adequately</li> </ul>

“We knew at the start of the apprenticeship that we would be required to make some upfront investments in staffing and salaries so that we could support our TNA through her apprenticeship. However, we wanted to be able to support our staff to develop their knowledge and skills, and we felt like the apprenticeship was a great opportunity. We now have a fully qualified nursing associate working in our practices and we can really see the benefits, so we knew we made the right decision.”

**GP Practice Manager**

Supporting a TNA can have a positive impact on your staff and your organisation and should be seen as a long-term investment in your care delivery team. By offering an opportunity for your HCAs and receptionists to develop in their career and gain new skills and qualifications, you are not only supporting the retention of your staff, you will also be relieving pressure on your registered nurses and other general practice and primary care staff.

## Career pathway

