

National Physician Associate Expansion Programme (NPAEP)

Background information and FAQs

The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is currently recruiting up to 200 experienced Physician Associates (PAs), on behalf of partner NHS providers throughout the country. Seven of the recruited PAs will work in the Trust whilst the remainder will be deployed in four regions around the UK and support the work of hospital clinicians and GPs as part of the two year National Physician Associate Expansion Programme (NPAEP).

The PA posts are open to all suitably qualified candidates from anywhere, including the UK, although it is anticipated that PAs with the required level of experience are likely to come predominantly from the USA.

It is recognised that there are challenges in the NHS workforce up and down the country in the context of rising demand as well as recruitment and retention difficulties. NPAEP aims to support NHS organisations who wish to explore the use of PAs as part of their wider workforce strategies in order to find sustainable solutions to these challenges.

Over 40 organisations throughout the UK have signed up to NPAEP and have identified between them the demand for 200 posts for experienced PAs. PAs will be integrated into multidisciplinary teams, working alongside the existing workforce, which includes junior doctors, consultants, nurses and nurse practitioners.

All the recruited PAs will be supported through an intensive induction process which will include clinical and non-clinical elements. Each PA will also have an identified mentor and the Programme will work with host organisations both in advance and during the Programme, in order to understand their needs in integrating PAs into their teams.

PAs are healthcare professionals who, while not doctors, work to the medical model, with the skills and knowledge base to deliver care and treatment.

PAs also provide support in the diagnosis and management of patients and are trained to perform a number of roles including:

- taking medical histories
- performing examinations
- diagnosing illnesses

- analysing test results
- developing management plans.

Currently over 200 PAs, mostly UK trained, are working across the country. They are educated to degree level having in most cases a 2:1 bioscience degree before entering a two year intensive postgraduate training course based on the medical model used to train doctors.

FAQs

How has the salary for these PAs been calculated?

NPAEP is offering a comprehensive salary and benefits package to attract highly experienced PAs into these fixed-term roles. The rationale for the package is as follows:

1. The salary for NPAEP PAs is set at an all-inclusive £50,000. This is a spot salary placement and has been calculated on a number of benchmarks and factors including: professional median salaries, both in the UK and abroad, the desired experience and caliber of candidates we are seeking, the required standard working hours (48 hours per week, including weekends) and the fact that these are fixed-term contracts, which can be perceived as a disincentive for applicants. Furthermore, these salaries will not be supplemented in any other ways, e.g. for working unsociable hours.
2. The annual leave entitlement is more generous than the typical NHS allowance. It is likely that most of our 200 PAs will come from the USA – where salaries are usually measured in 6 figures. We are not able to compete in terms of US salaries, so a generous leave allowance is part of the recruitment strategy.
3. Paid time for continuing professional development is also more generous than the typical NHS allowance. Again, this is part of the recruitment strategy.
4. We are offering a contribution towards relocation (£1,000). Again this is part of the recruitment strategy. It is well below the level of the average relocation packages on offer in the UK and US.
5. We do not yet know whether we will be able to recruit the numbers of highly experienced PAs we require and therefore, part of the rationale behind the development of this package is market testing – in order to understand what is required to attract the required skills and experience for this Programme.

The Professional Body for PAs in the UK is the Faculty of Physician Associates at the Royal College of Physicians. The Faculty has recently issued this

statement regarding NPAEP and the terms and conditions of PAs in the UK more generally:

<http://www.fparcp.co.uk/recentevents/2015/8/30/statement-issued-in-response-to-the-national-physician-associate-expansion-project>

Can current NHS staff such as nurses and doctors apply for the position?

We are looking for PAs who will provide not just clinical skills but will also work with teams to support them in exploring how the PA role can be used effectively as part of the existing workforce. For this reason, the job description states that it is an essential requirement for applicants to have previous experience of working as a PA.

Furthermore, to ensure we have the highest calibre PAs on the Programme (and in line with best practice), we are only recruiting people who are eligible for inclusion on the Physician Associate Managed Voluntary Register (PAMVR) which is held by the Faculty of Physician Associates at the Royal College of Physicians; only someone who has passed either the UK or US national certifying exam can be on this Register.

Becoming a PA is a career option open to existing healthcare workers, and more information can be found at NHS Careers:

<http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/wider-healthcare-team/careers-in-the-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/physician-associate/>

Why are you going to the USA to recruit the PAs?

PAs have been an established role in the USA for many years and therefore offer high levels of experience in this specialised area. However we, of course, welcome applicants from anywhere including the UK and Europe. Furthermore, all suitable applicants from the UK will be interviewed and offered positions first, before we interview and recruit from the USA.

We will continue to update these FAQs in response to queries and as the Programme develops.

Further information on the programme can be found at:
www.npaep.com

For all media enquiries relating to the programme, please contact
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