

# What is a nursing associate?

The nursing associate is a generic nursing role in England that bridges the gap between healthcare support workers and registered nurses, to deliver hands-on, person-centred care as part of a multidisciplinary team in a range of different health and social care settings.

Nursing associates are members of the nursing team, who have gained a Nursing Associate Foundation Degree awarded by a Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) approved provider, typically involving two years of higher-level study, enabling them to perform more complex and significant tasks than a healthcare assistant but not the same scope as a registered nurse. With additional training, the role also provides a progression route into the registered nursing profession.

The role has been introduced to help build the capacity of the nursing workforce and the delivery of high-quality care while supporting nurses and wider multidisciplinary teams to focus on more complex clinical duties.



*"As a nursing associate in a medium secure forensic learning disability unit, I provide a holistic approach to care for service users, improving their physical and mental health while involving their family for an approach which promotes parity of esteem.*

*"I've recently been tasked with completing a physical health audit each month to ensure each patient has had a physical health examination, dental and optician appointments and up to date assessments and screening. I escalate to registered nurses for them to counter-sign referrals and implement feedback from the ward round. I empower service users' inclusion by delivering person-centred mental and physical health promotion, and activities of their choice." - **Ian Costello, Registered Nursing Associate***

The nursing associate is a protected title in law and the role is regulated in England by the NMC, which means that you can only employ people into the role who are qualified and registered as nursing associates.

Skills for Care and the NMC have produced case studies which share more details about the nursing associate role and where it can be deployed, including a short film, which features trainee nursing associates and registered nurses, describing how they see the nursing associate role contributing to better patient and service-user care.

NHS England has also produced the below video which shows what a nursing associate is, and where they can be deployed.





*"Being a nursing associate gives me the perfect blend of delivering therapy and care to service users in my supervision. I work in the CAMHS Community Eating*

*Disorder team where I progressed from support worker in 2016, to nursing associate in 2019. As part of my role, I review cases, co-ordinate care for low risk cases, participate in reflective practice and family therapy to deliver support for service users with their families, and work independently with service users on their body image; mindfulness and meal support.*

*"As I can work independently, my role supports registered nurses by relieving them of low risk cases, allowing them to focus on more complex cases. Being accountable can be reassuring to team members I work alongside as it allows me to contribute more to improving the delivery of care by reducing waiting times for service users." - **Lauren Caruana, Registered Nursing Associate***