

Title Physician Associates (PAs)

Reference Number: RDF2043

Date of Response: 28/12/23

Further to your Freedom of Information Act request, please find the Trust's response(s) below:

Please be aware that the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (Royal Devon) has existed since 1st April 2022 following the integration of the Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust (known as Northern Services) and the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust (known as Eastern Services).

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for the period August 2022 - August 2023

1. *Number of Physician Associates (PAs) Employed:*

- Please provide the total number of Physician Associates employed in your trust for the stated time period. Eastern service: 17 Northern service: 7

2. *Average Annual Salary of PAs:*

- Please disclose the average annual salary, or salary range, for Physician Associates employed in your trust for the stated time period, and a breakdown of how many PAs are on each Agenda for Change pay band.

Trust Northern and Eastern service answer: All on Band 7 Agenda for change.

3. *Average Weekly Working Hours:*

- Specify the average number of hours worked per week by Physician Associates employed at your trust for the stated time period, and the average number of hours worked outside of the 9am-5pm time range.

Eastern service answer: Physician Associates work between 8 and 12 hours per week overtime each weekend on a rota. All on a standard 40 hour per week contract WTE apart from x1 on 0.75 WTE X1.

Northern service answer: PA's work 37.5 hours per week on average. This is worked variably over 6 weeks. Working day and shift patterns vary dependant on specialty and role. There is no specific weekend working for most PAs in the Northern service of the Trust.

PA's Working outside 9-5 is specialty specific and is approximately 0-10 hours per week.

4. *Job Duties and Responsibilities:*

- Provide a detailed description of the job duties and responsibilities of Physician Associates within your trust for the stated time period.

Trust Northern and Eastern service answer:

All Physician Associates work within a consultant supervised team structure. The role mirrors that of a F1 F2 junior doctor apart from they cannot prescribe drugs or order ionising radiation.

None of them work in an unsupervised manner.

PA's duties and responsibilities: They do a mixture of ward work as follows:

- Writing discharge summaries.
- Assisting with ward round by taking blood, basic procedures like IV cannulation.
- Supporting the Consultant by writing ward round notes.
- They take history and examine admissions to medicine and to surgery on call. These patients are then directly reviewed by the registrar or Consultant on call.
- They attend clinic or outpatients alongside a consultant with all the patients reviewed by a consultant.
- PA's may also attend nurse led clinics. However, all patients attending such clinics are discussed and reviewed with a senior clinician.
- In surgical specialities they will assist a consultant in operating theatre.
- They supervise day case IV infusions.
- PA's Take triage referrals from community with patient-by-patient discussion with consultant.

5. *Supervision and Accessibility:*

- Clarify what profession and grade are supervising Physician Associates and whether PAs at your trust are able to attend work if their supervising clinician is not immediately contactable by them.

Eastern service answer: All our Physician Associates work within teams where they are supervised by consultant. Some of that supervision will be at times by other doctors in training. Only F2 or above doctors can counter sign any medications or discharges prepared by a PA.

Northern service answer: As Eastern services, *named* clinical supervisor for Physician Associates is at consultant grade.

6. Role in Filling Rota Gaps:

- Indicate whether Physician Associates at your trust are permitted to fill rota gaps left by GMC Registered Medical Doctors. If so, specify the grade of doctors they are authorised to cover for.

Trust Northern and Eastern service answer: The PAs are an additional workforce in same way an ACP works. We do not routinely rota PAs on any doctor on call rotas.

Within hyperacute busy areas like AMU they are an additional part of workforce along with ACPs. We do not formally “not” permit it, but it does not really arise as they cannot prescribe and as we mainly see their advantage as M-F ward continuity.

During industrial action, some PAs supported Consultant led work and supervised work covering out of hours, *however, all their work was highly supervised.*

Within ward work they are increasingly counted “within the numbers” for a ward (typically the F1-2 level staff numbers) collaborating with other doctors in training but again within consultant led teams.

7. Hourly Rates for Bank Shifts:

- Please provide the hourly rate range paid to Physician Associates working bank shifts at your trust for the stated time period. Break down this range according to years of service if applicable.

Trust Northern and Eastern service answer: We follow Agenda for Change rules. [Pay scales for 2023/24 | NHS Employers](#)

8. Prospective Employment:

- Please disclose the number of Physician Associates your trust plans to employ in the next 5 years, or business cases out for employing PAs in the next 5 years.

Trust Northern and Eastern service answer: Our plans submitted to Workforce Strategy Group and within current financial plans is built on growing our numbers by x 6 new graduates each year. However, that total will not reach a formal plus 6 each year as there will inevitably be movement of staff to other hospitals or out to primary care, so our expansion is likely to be overall at slightly less than 6 each year.