

has provided the basis for the RCPsych Inceptorship Programme supported by HEE.

Results. The SHSC programme has been well received by the 11PAs that have been through the programme, with all PAs recommending other mental health organisations take a similar approach. There have been many additional benefits of the sessions. They allow PAs to gain peer support and it has been a forum to raise issues which often arise when integrating new roles into pre-existing MDTs.

Conclusion. The RCPsych Inceptorship Programme is a PA specific educational programme. It is an important tool in addressing the gap between variable mental health experience as a student (which is limited to a 3-week placement and is variable in content) and working in a psychiatric setting. RCPsych and HEE recommend that all mental health organisations employing PAs implement an inceptorship programme based on the work carried out at SHSC. These should comprise of regular, protected sessions that provide PAs with bespoke mental health training to support their integration into psychiatric multidisciplinary teams. HEE have agreed to provide funding to help organisations facilitate it.

Physician Associates in the Frame: Developing a National Competence Framework for Physician Associates Working in Mental Health

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Aims. Physician associates (PAs) are becoming more commonplace in psychiatric services in the UK to help address long term workforce difficulties. The 2019 NHS Long Term Plan detailed a commitment to transforming mental health care in England recognising that services were not meeting current or future increase in demand. Health Education England's (HEE) report, *Stepping Forward to 2020/21: The Mental Health Workforce Plan for England*, described a longer-term strategy to expand the mental health workforce, including recruiting 5,000 people into 'new roles' including physician associates. The NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019/20–2023/24 stated an aim of recruiting 140 PAs to the workforce over five years in addition to the requirements specified in the HEE report. Competence frameworks make the link between evidence and practice and can be a valuable basis for training, an agenda for supervision and a guide for self-monitoring and personal development for people working in the role.

Methods. The competence framework was developed by the National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health (NCCMH). The work was overseen by an expert reference group, comprising experts in training PAs in mental health, PAs, researchers and experts by experience, all selected for their expertise in research, training and service delivery. The completed framework was then sent to relevant stakeholders including the Faculty of Physician Associates and patient groups for comment and adapted accordingly.

Results. The completed framework has been arranged into seven domains: Knowledge of Mental Health, Professional/Legal Issues,

Engagement and Communication, Diagnostic Assessment and Treatment Planning, Interventions, Team Working and Metacompetences. This reflects the expected roles and responsibilities of PAs working in mental health.

Conclusion. The Competence Framework for PAs will help those involved in mental health care services who wish to deepen their understanding of the PA role, and will be useful to team members working with PAs, to their managers and to commissioners. It will support the work of PA supervisors and peer coordinators, and those delivering education and training to them. It also brings a level of standardisation of the role. More work will be needed to adapt the Competence Framework for PAs for specialist contexts, such as in dementia care or children and young people's services.

Curriculum Development: A National Curriculum for Physician Associates in Mental Health

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Aims. Physician associates (PAs) are becoming more commonplace in psychiatric services in the UK to help address long term workforce difficulties. The 2019 NHS Long Term Plan detailed a commitment to transforming mental health care in England recognising that services were not meeting current or future increase in demand. Health Education England's (HEE) report, *Stepping Forward to 2020/21: The Mental Health Workforce Plan for England*, described a longer-term strategy to expand the mental health workforce, including recruiting 5,000 people into 'new roles' including physician associates. The NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019/20–2023/24 stated an aim of recruiting 140 PAs to the workforce over five years in addition to the requirements specified in the HEE report. A curriculum for PAs working in mental health would set out the competencies required to work in mental health services.

Methods. The curriculum was developed by the National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health (NCCMH). The work was overseen by an expert reference group, comprising experts in training PAs in mental health, PAs, researchers and experts by experience, all selected for their expertise in research, training and service delivery.

Results. The overarching aims and objectives of the curriculum was to convey a practical understanding of the attitudes, knowledge and skills that underpin the role, thus enabling PAs to offer effective and value-driven support to patients.

The completed curriculum has been arranged into seven modules: Knowledge, Professional/Legal Issues, Engagement and Communication, Diagnostic Assessment and Treatment Planning, Interventions, Managing the Interface of Mental and Physical Health and Team Working. This reflects the expected roles and responsibilities of PAs working in mental health.

Conclusion. HEE and the Royal College of Psychiatrist have recommended all mental health organisations implement an educational programme for new PAs. The curriculum will inform the training requirements for PAs and standardise the training they