



January 2024

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the employment of anaesthesia associates (AAs) and physician associates (PAs) in the NHS.

I note your concerns about the training and competency of anaesthesia and physician associates but disagree with your assessment of the roles. As you may be aware, the physician associate (PA) title has been well established in the United Kingdom since 2014.

It is also important to note that during training and qualified practice PAs must work with a dedicated medical supervisor which will be a consultant, GP, or other senior medical personnel.

This medical supervisor is responsible for the supervision and management of a student's educational progress throughout the clinical placements of the course.

However, practising PAs, nurses and other healthcare professionals can train, supervise, and assess a PA student in a particular skill, procedure, or competence.

At present, the Faculty of Physician Associates at the Royal College of Physicians also provides professional support to PAs across the United Kingdom. The Faculty's support includes setting standards for education and training, as well as overseeing a voluntary register of qualified PAs who have been declared fit to practise in the UK.

The Government will lay legislation before Parliament on Wednesday 13th December 2023 to begin the process of regulating PAs and AAs, which will allow the GMC to commence regulation by the end of 2024. Regulation by the GMC will help provide clear standards for the clinical practice and professional conduct of PAs and make it easier for employers, patients, and the public to understand the relationship between this role and that of doctors.

Let me also assure you that NHS England is working with the relevant professional colleges and regulators, to ensure the PA and AA roles are expanded safely and effectively. The new regulation will help ensure that PAs and AAs have the same levels of regulatory oversight and accountability as doctors and other regulated healthcare professionals.



Chris Heaton-Harris
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Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY