

PROFESSIONAL NURSE ADVOCATE ROLE UHCW



More than a hospital



Practice Development Team
October 2022

Why do we need Professional Nurse Advocates?

The professional nurse advocate (PNA) program was launched in March 2021 with the intention of improving the patient experience through enhanced quality of care delivered by a resilient, valued, and confident workforce. The PNA role was designed to be central to this improvement by delivering restorative clinical supervision (RCS) for nurses across England post the Covid pandemic, with the intention of restoring staff resilience, improving staff well-being and in turn improving staff retention across the NHS.

The PNA is a practicing nurse, trained to support the workforce by facilitating other nurses to lead and deliver quality improvement initiatives in response to service demands and changing patient requirements. The Chief Nursing Officer for England (Ruth May) described a vision of a minimum of one PNA for every twenty registered nurses. Having access to a PNA will increase staff confidence and help staff to take ownership of improving working conditions within their own their clinical areas, ultimately resulting in higher job satisfaction and retention throughout the organisation.

What will the PNA do?

The primary focus of the PNA role is to deliver restorative clinical supervision which allows individuals to reflect on personal and professional practice in a safe, non-judgmental, confidential setting. This is intended to be a two-way process with no set agenda, allowing time to think, to explore feelings and emotions and ultimately to determine how these feelings and emotions can impact practice either in a beneficial or detrimental way. The PNA is not in place to solve problems but to help and support others to move forward to find acceptable solutions to the issues raised.

RCS sessions are also about providing a safe place for staff to slow down, think and reflect. They are guided by the PNA and may include career development conversations, appraisals, and revalidation discussions if these are appropriate to the situation. The PNA should be sufficiently well versed in these areas to offer appropriate support or to indicate where such support can be accessed.

What does the PNA need to know?

To successfully deliver this support, it is crucial that the PNA have a clear understanding of what support they can provide and what support goes beyond their remit. They should understand how appropriate any type of support is to the individual's situation and how and when to steer those receiving restorative clinical supervision to other sources of help when the need for additional input is indicated. The PNA must also develop self-awareness of how their interactions with individuals seeking support may affect themselves and crucially, when, where and how to find help and support for themselves should they need it. This is a vitally important part of the role to enable the individual PNAs and the program to continue to deliver the required support long-term.

PNA training

Because of the demanding nature of the PNA training and of the role the PNA, the training programme is offered as a level seven (Masters) accredited module. This training includes academic assessment, poster presentations and production of competency portfolios. The training programme runs for three months and includes

six full study days with some possible variation according to the health education institutes providing the training. Once qualified the PNA will have the skills to facilitate RCS for their colleagues and teams. The training program will equip the PNA to listen to and, crucially, understand and be able to respond to the challenges facing fellow colleagues. The RCS that PNA's deliver is integral to their training and starts as soon as their time on the program begins.

Additional aspects of the PNA role

Although PNA training focuses first and foremost on restorative supervision, other aspects of the role include the expectation that the PNA will lead, support, and deliver quality improvement initiatives in response to common themes that may arise during RCS sessions, appraisals, or career development conversations. The delivery of these improvement initiatives may be in a ward setting, for example supporting and empowering involvement in ward accreditation initiatives, or developing local pathways to support staff (e.g., competency packages etc.). However, discussions with line or senior management may be needed to implement some aspects of local improvements to clinical areas and in respect of career development opportunities. The PNA, therefore, will be expected to be able to communicate effectively at all levels of the organisation. In addition, the PNA role aligns with the standards of shared decision making and, if employed effectively, can enhance quality improvement by encouraging active membership and participation in shared decision-making councils.

What qualities/skills/abilities should a PNA have?

As you can see, the PNA role is wide and varied and requires many interpersonal and organisational skills. To be a PNA at UHCW you must:-

- ❖ Be a visible role model for care excellence within the clinical areas and be actively involved in local and trust wide quality improvement
- ❖ Have the ability to set and clearly communicate boundaries for the PNA role and indicate other routes to other types of support where appropriate
- ❖ Be prepared to regularly highlight support opportunities for staff to colleagues.
- ❖ Agree to provide quality assurance for the implementation of the role by recording on the shared data base **monthly** the number of RCS sessions, group RCS sessions, career conversations, improvement programs and the education and improvement sessions that have been conducted
- ❖ Record and follow up on all complaints, incidents, or errors highlighted in the fulfillment of the PNA role.
- ❖ Commit to attending monthly steering group meetings to drive the role forward, as a place to discuss any challenges that may have arisen and to gain ideas and peer support from other PNA's in the organisation
- ❖ Commit to the guidance and governance of the role including contributing to a quarterly PNA report

- ❖ Be prepared to deliver RCS support to staff outside of the PNAs own directorate / clinical area if that is required.

Post-training

Following successful completion of the PNA training program the role will include, but is not limited to:-

- The embedding of the role in the clinical area by deploying the A-EQUIP model (clinical supervision, monitoring and evaluation, quality improvement and education and development)
- Accurate monthly recording of the number of RCS sessions, improvement initiatives, career conversations and/or group sessions - this is a crucial part of the PNA role to help monitor the implementation of the role and the effectiveness of any support delivered. This information is shared regionally and nationally

Committing to the PNA training programme, successful implementation of the role and embedding the role once qualified come with significant challenges. These may include engaging with reluctant ward staff, time constraints when clinical demand is high and ensuring that staff have appropriate and protected non-clinical time. The role also requires a commitment to timely and accurate data reporting (monthly at a minimum) and active participation in monthly steering group meetings. It will also require regular conversations with line managers to identify common themes, how to implement local improvement initiatives and, how to act on service user feedback potentially via datix reporting/ investigating and/ or attending QIPS meetings.

The training programme and role post-qualification will have demands on time and a requirement for the PNA to work on their own initiative. Furthermore, for the role to be successful, information gathering, and critically, utilisation of the gathered information is essential. This will require the ability to summarize and effectively present this information. To achieve this effectively, the role needs to become embedded in the clinical areas and there needs to be uptake of the services available. Promoting the role and achieving this uptake and embedding may be one of the most challenging and time-consuming initial aspects of the role.

What to consider if you would like to be a PNA?

Given the above information and due to the academic nature of the training programme and the experience and resilience needed to be effective in the role once qualified, a strict candidate criterion is in place for prospective applicants to meet.

Line managers must confirm that the candidate meets the set criteria and confirm that the candidate will be able to get the support, time and resources they need to successfully complete the training module and also to implement the role successfully once qualified.

Applying to be a PNA

If you would like to be considered for a place on the PNA training programme you must be able to answer yes to, **and show clear evidence of meeting** the following criteria:

Candidate criteria:

- I have been a Registered Nurse for 3 years or more and have completed at least one Revalidation with a folder / portfolio of evidence.
- I have academically worked at level six or above and have clear, documented evidence of this study.
- I can commit to completion of this module which will include attending six full study days over a three-month period and self-directed study time and learning.
- I am a clinical and professional role model within my clinical area, and I demonstrate this daily by encouraging junior members of staff
- I am a visible, approachable member of the team.
- I currently do, or will have, the facility to be involved with incident reporting and evaluation, complaints, and service user feedback.
- I have proven leadership abilities, strong communication skills and a willingness to embrace change and demonstrate this in my clinical practice by being a visible, motivational and inspirational team member.

If you can answer yes to the above questions **and** have evidence to support this, you will need to discuss your application with your line manager. They are required to answer yes to the following questions for your application to be accepted:

Manager commitment

- I can verify that the candidate does meet the specified criteria (as described above) for consideration for allocation to a PNA program, we have had a conversation together and discussed the expectations of both parties to complete and successfully implement the PNA role.
- As a manager I will commit to the facilitation of time for the candidate to attend six full study days to successfully complete the PNA program.
- I will facilitate protected time for the PNA outside of clinical practice to meet the expectations of the role once qualified, including attendance at monthly steering group meeting with a minimum of eight hours non-clinical, protected time once a month.
- I will facilitate the involvement of the candidate in incident reporting and evaluation, complaints, and service user feedback to create learning and development opportunities.

- I will provide full engagement and support for implementing the role of PNA in the clinical area, including regular meetings to understand key themes presenting locally to support positive action and change where possible.
- As line manager I also consider the candidate has an appropriate attendance record and has one hundred percent compliance with their mandatory training. They always demonstrates the Trust values and I can agree to support the training and implementation of the role in my clinical area.

If after reading and answering the above questions you wish to apply for the PNA training program, please complete the following and return to wendy.hunter@uhcw.nhs.uk

To be completed by the Candidate

I have read and understood the information contained in this leaflet; I confirm that I meet the candidate criteria for the PNA role and training program and would like to be considered for this role. I have discussed this with my line manager and have their agreement to proceed with the application

Name of candidate _____ Ward/Clinical Area _____

Signed _____ Date: _____

To be completed by Ward/Department Manager

I confirm that I have read and understood the information contained in this leaflet; I confirm that this member of staff meets the candidate criteria and will be supported to complete training and implement the role of a PNA as described in the Manager commitment statements

Name of Ward/Department Manager _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Upon receipt of the form above an 'expressions of interest' and Ethnicity form will be sent to you for completion. When you return this, you will added to the waiting list for consideration for allocation of a place on a training programme by the PNA Regional Midlands Group.