

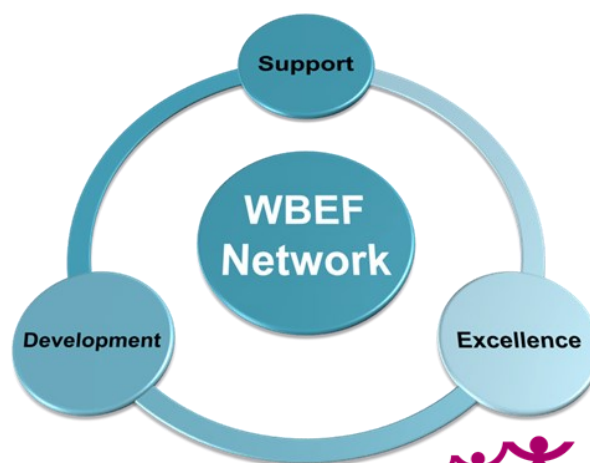
WBEF Witter Final Edition

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A fond farewell from the WBEF Network

The WBEF Network came into being in July 2011 with the specific remit of developing and championing the Assistant Practitioner (AP) role. The North West has been very fortunate since 2002, with a strategic plan for the support and development of APs. However, in 2017 arrangements for funding AP training changed and it will no longer be commissioned by Health Education England (North West). This will also result in the decommissioning of the WBEF Network from March 2018. This edition of 'Witter' is dedicated to the work of the WBEF Network since its inauguration and highlights from within the Network and our learners, whom we are very proud of. So take some time to look back over the last 6 happy years with us and plans for the continuing support of the fabulous AP role.



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The Network's contribution to the AP role in the North West

The WBEF Network is unique to the North West and its work has contributed to the size of the AP workforce and the diversity and impact this role has had here in the region. Over the past six years the Network has worked with seven of the North West universities supported 1,003 trainees to achieve their qualifications worked across 106 organisations.

The scope of the Network has enabled the AP role to be developed in many different areas including NHS, Social Care, independent sector, private organisations, and charities.

The North West continues to be the national lead for the development of APs and has an eclectic mix of services where APs are deployed, for example:

- mental health
- acute settings
- community
- therapies
- social work
- re-ablement
- end of life
- learning disabilities

It is anticipated that the AP role will grow and flourish across the region, in increasingly diverse settings, disciplines and organisations.

University mentor days supported by the WBEF Network

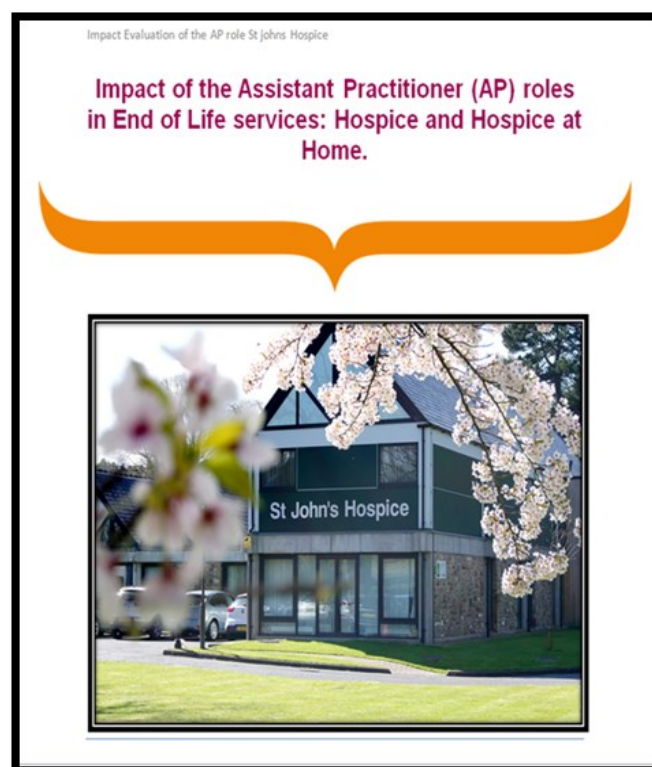
During the last two years the Network has worked closely with the three commissioned universities to develop and deliver mentor support events across the region, which have evaluated very positively. The need for sound, supportive mentorship is recognised as a corner stone to ensuring effective qualified APs who are ready to meet the challenges of a new role with increased responsibilities who are

ready to meet the challenges of a new role with increased responsibilities.



Impact Evaluation Tool: A case study

The WBEF Network understands the positive impact the AP role has had over the years and across many different services. With this in mind, it has developed an impact evaluation tool which managers, workforce development or learning and development leads, might wish to use to assess both qualitative and quantitative effects the role has had on services.



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St John's Hospice utilised the tool to determine how effective the role was within their service setting. The hospice currently has five APs in post. They carry out a range of duties, many of which were the domain of the registered staff. The APs also provide services in the community that were not available prior to the introduction of the AP role. It is estimated that the introduction of the role has made savings of between £14,822 and £18,170 per annum. The APs currently provide over 100 hours of service per week, delivering aspects of care previously carried out by registered staff. The hospice reports that the role continues to develop and evolve with the APs becoming more involved in a number of activities as time goes on. To read the full case study via the Assistant Practitioner pages at <http://www.ewin.nhs.uk/>

Resources for Future Progression



The Network has developed a number of resources to support learners, learning environments and universities. We are sure that some of the resources will be useful immediately post March 2018 and way beyond into the future. Whether you are looking at introducing an AP for the first time and want help scoping the parameters of the role, considering preceptorship needs of the newly qualified AP or evaluating the impact the role has had in practice you'll find support by the Assistant Practitioner pages at <http://www.ewin.nhs.uk/>

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Apprenticeships: Changes to funding



Funding for AP training is available through the new apprenticeship route. Learners will still be required to achieve the equivalent of a level five academic qualification, which is the same level as the foundation degree; however there are other qualifications that can be considered.

Many large organisations with a salaries bill of over £5m, will contribute to what is known as the apprenticeship levy. The levy will be used to fund learners onto the apprenticeship programme. You can take a look at the apprenticeship standards and assessment arrangements for APs by clicking on the link.

[Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship standards](#)

AP Ambassador

Although the WBEF Network will be decommissioned in March 2018, the AP role will continue to be developed in line with service needs and workforce strategies. The new higher apprenticeships will provide fresh opportunities for organisations to 'grow their own' and to develop new relationships with training providers. It is anticipated that new organisations, particularly in the independent sector, may utilise funding to develop APs for the first time.

The Network has identified individuals who have experience of, and hold an interest in AP role development who have agreed to act as ambassadors, offering advice and guidance to new organisations with emerging roles. Individuals such as workforce leads, managers and APs

themselves have come forward to offer their support. You can view their profiles by visiting the Assistant Practitioner pages at <http://www.ewin.nhs.uk/>

2016-2017: A year for celebrating multi-professional learning

In 2016/17 the WBEF Network was involved in a number of inter-professional learner events across the North West which brought together learners and educators from a variety of health and social care programmes.

Learning Matters



In November 2016 a group of Pennine Care multi-professionals delivered a half day study event, bringing together educators and learners from the Greater Manchester regions. The main aim of the event was to bridge the gap between learners and educators. An enthusiastic and excited group of 30 were divided into three smaller groups. The workshops topics:

- Supporting and empowering others
- Emotional resilience and mindfulness
- Effective communication and feedback

Immediate feedback suggested a successful and enjoyable learning event, and that future events would be valuable. Following analysis of the learner evaluations, it was agreed any future events would be extended to a full day. For full details of how the event was evaluated view the Assistant Practitioner pages at <http://www.ewin.nhs.uk/>

[TLE It Matters report](#)

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All Learners Celebration Event

On the 16th June Liverpool John Moore's University hosted an inter-professional study day, bringing together learners from across the Cheshire and Merseyside region, from a variety of health and social care programmes. The event opened with a number of key note speakers from health and social care including: Dr. Mike Farrell, Head of Education Transformation, HEE North; Judith McGregor, Physician Associate Programme Lead, HEE NW; Gaynor Westray, Director of Nursing and Midwifery, WUTH; Ffion Lloyd and Katie Gannon, Student Quality Ambassadors.

There was a student initiated Q&A session with a panel of learner representatives of different disciplines and at different stages of learning. The AP role was ably discussed by Phil Lamb and Stacey Rawlinson. The afternoon provided opportunity for learners to speak to experts in the field. AP Ella McClure co-hosted a discussion and provided expertise on the role within Primary care. Follow the link to see the full report. [ALCE](#)



Public Health all Learner Conference

In late June, 47 multi-professional students, such as Registered Nurses, Trainee Assistant Practitioners, Trainee Nurse Associates, and Mental Health Nurses, attended an all learner Public Health Conference at Stepping Hill Hospital. The day was organised by PEFs from Stockport and supported by WBEF's, university lecturers, and Public Health Nurses.

The day was opened by Donna Sager, Deputy Director of Public Health Stockport Council, who later spoke about Stockport's health and social needs, giving an overview of current and future projects. She presented the challenges for Stockport and some real life stories.

Alison Farrar - NW Population Health & Prevention Network Lead from HEE highlighted some current projects and presented an illuminating overview of the 'bigger picture'.

There were sessions on linking theory to practice and behaviour change and a case study was presented by a third year student.

A pre and post quiz demonstrated that participants' knowledge had increased by 65% and that their confidence to initiate conversations with patients around public health had risen by 63.5% during the course of the day.

Comments were extremely positive, and the students had obviously been really enthused and motivated in their public health role.

AP case studies

Terence Jagger

Assistant Nursing Oncology Practitioner Royal Preston Hospital
Qualified as an AP 2016

Since qualifying Terry has been 'bitten by the learning bug'. He signed up to complete his full BSc (Hons) and achieved an Upper 2:1 in 2017, and has now commenced an MSc programme in sexual health. Terry shares his thoughts and comments about his journey through academic studies.



"I found my Assistant Practitioner training to be very challenging both with developing new clinical skills and from an academic standpoint. Returning to education after a number of years seemed initially daunting, but I gradually gained confidence and ultimately completed both the Foundation Degree (Assistant Practitioner) and BSc in Health and Social Care.

As a practitioner, my confidence to challenge situations has continued to grow, and not just

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accept the notion of 'this is how we have always done it'.

Challenging situations and questioning processes has developed my leadership skills, and has encouraged colleagues to take on board my new ideas in a bid to stream line processes and make them more efficient. This is crucial as time is very precious in a busy out-patient oncology clinic.

Due to my continued development both professionally and academically, I am ready to take on my next challenge, and that is to complete my MSc in Sexual Health studies which I commenced in September, 2017. This, it is hoped, will enable me to pursue a career in teaching future health and social care students, passing on the knowledge, skills and expertise I have gained throughout my career".

Karen Teale

Sister
Blackpool Teaching Hospital
Qualified as an AP 2010

Karen began working in the Trust as a Health Care Assistant on the haematology/oncology ward in 2002. Initially completing the NVQ level three, Karen went on to commence the Health and Social Care Foundation Degree (Assistant Practitioner) successfully qualifying as an AP in February 2010.



Within six months Karen completed her adult numeracy level two qualification which, together with the foundation degree, allowed her to apply for to a nursing degree programme. Karen completed her Nursing (Adult) BSc (Hons) pre-registration, graduating in September 2012. In 2013 Karen was nominated for an award as part of the Adult Learners Week Awards for health and social care and became the joint winner in the career progression category.

After gaining twelve months experience as a staff nurse on the haematology/oncology ward, Karen applied for a position in the community nursing team and worked as a district nurse for one year. Whilst Karen enjoyed her experience in the community and gained many valuable skills, her passion remained within the speciality of haematology/oncology nursing and she returned here as a staff nurse in 2014.

Karen completed a Principles and Practice of Cytotoxic Chemotherapy module at UCLan in 2015 and attended the Haematology and Stem Cell Transplantation Educational Programme for Nurses. This enabled her to develop her knowledge base within this specialised field practice whilst continuously increasing her portfolio of clinical skills. She successfully secured a Sister's post in July 2017 and has since been encouraged to undertake both a peripherally inserted central catheter module, and an oncology module. Karen's long term goal is to work within the palliative care team at the Trust.

Karen is a keen advocate for life long learning, regularly participating in prospective learner events in order to share the experiences of her own learning journey, offering encouragement and advice to those considering similar career progression pathways.

Angela Wood-Brignall

Angela an AP at Halton Hospital, in 2015 developed a poster for her public health module titled 'tickle your tackle'. The poster was endorsed by 'Tackle Prostate Cancer'. Angela demonstrated the creativity of APs as well as showcasing the invaluable contributions the role can make, both locally and nationally. Read more about this initiative by following the link.

[tickle your tackle](#)



AP and Team Awards

Amanda Derbyshire

Amanda qualified as an AP in September 2014 and won the Nursing Standards Award 2015 in the Health Practitioner Member award category. Read all about Amanda's initiative by following the link [Amanda Derbyshire](#)



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Blackpool Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust

The Network examined AP success rates and career progression into professional registration, at Blackpool Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust from 2006, with really encouraging results. The evidence indicated that 103 APs had been trained within the Trust, with a 91% completion rate. Furthermore, 21 of the qualified APs progressed to professional registration, representing one in five entering the health and social care professions.

Recently eight APs have completed nursing degrees, along with one AP who has studied to become an ODP. All were seconded by the Trust through widening access and secured posts there as registered members of staff.

Here is a snippet of what some of them had to say...

Kandy Cardwell

"The opportunities I have been given as an assistant practitioner has allowed me to progress onto a career path I never dreamed I'd achieve. I will be forever grateful to Cath and the trust for believing in me and allowing me to undertake both the AP training and then Adult Nursing. I will always use the skills gained from my time as an AP in my future nursing career."

Sabina Collins

"I feel so thankful to be given the opportunity to complete the assistant practitioner course, it increased my love for nursing and gave me the skills and knowledge needed when transitioning to a staff nurse."

Gemma Brown

"Personally, I know I would never have made the jump from a Health Care Assistant to Staff Nurse without the opportunity of becoming an Assistant Practitioner first. The AP role gave me the knowledge and confidence to successfully complete my nurse training and I am so proud to be part of this little group of home grown Blackpool nurses, who have supported each other throughout this process." grown Blackpool nurses, who have supported each other throughout this process."

Catherine Graham

"I really feel that becoming an assistant practitioner prior to my training helped with the transition to staff nurse."

Clare Flynn

"It may not seem the conventional role into nursing but the AP training and AP role were the building blocks for my development and skills, without it I would not be in this role now! The support I have received throughout training from within the Trust has been amazing from my own workplace, placements, mentors and PEFs."



Good luck to all of the Blackpool graduates in their future roles and career choices. We hope others are inspired by their stories to progress up their own career ladder.

Simply the Best: End of life care in Stockport

The Enhanced Support Team (EST) Stockport MBC, were nominated by their manager Stuart Bridgwood, for the "Care Team of the year Award" Great British North West Care Awards. After being shortlisted, the team went on to win the prestigious 'Care Team of the Year' award.

The EST work in an integrated team providing a seamless service to meet the needs of service users at the end of their life.



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Stuart Bridgwood describes the team: “They are a brilliant team of AP’s that work fantastically well with one and other delivering the Gold Standard Framework for end of life care. They have a wealth of knowledge, experience and professionalism which can only have been enhanced by their foundation degree training and integrated working with Health’s palliative care services.”

The team regularly receive glowing compliments from patients and their loved ones, often highlighting what a difference they made to everyone in the family. The quality of care is often highlighted, noting how the team bring humour and positivity into the household at a very difficult and challenging time. Most significantly the team’s most important achievement is enabling individuals to realise their preferred place of death and enable them to stay at home at the end of their lives.

One carer offered their thoughts on the difference the team made: - “without exception every individual offered such kindness and courtesy, gentleness and dignity in every detail of personal and practical care offered to us both.... Not only did it allow our father to remain at home to end his days it came at a time to enable me, his sole carer, to focus on supporting his emotional, psychological and spiritual needs. Without this help our ‘end of life’ time together would have been more fraught and exhausting. Our memories will be those of calmness, comfort and the acceptance of the peaceful end that we achieved.”

Congratulations to all the team. A fantastic example of how the AP role can provide excellent support at arguable one of the most challenging times that any individual or family face.

Janet Guest MBE Assistant Practitioner, MFT

Janet qualified as an Assistant Practitioner in 2006. She is currently a complex needs facilitator on the Burns Unit. In 2015 Janet was awarded an MBE as a result of her commitment and work around safeguarding and in particular raising awareness around honour abuse and FGM.



New roles

In September 2016 Increasing Access to Physiological Therapies (IAPT) services embarked on the development of the AP role to support achieving targets and patient flow. Two organisations in the Greater Manchester area decided they would pilot the role and evaluate its effectiveness in supporting this particular aspect of mental health. IAPT services provide evidence-based psychological therapies to people with anxiety disorders and depression.

Antionette Smith
(Pennine Care),
Lisa Rockett
(Pennine Care)
and Jennifer Roche
(Six Degrees Social
Enterprise)



are the first TAPs in
IAPT services nationally.

Watch this space we are likely to see a lot more APs in IAPT services over the next few years.

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There is growing interest in developing the band 4 role across the North West and possibly nationwide. The Trainees are doing really well and service is already reporting how useful the role has become in supporting service delivery. This is another first for the North West and indeed the WBEF Network in supporting them.

Watch this space we are likely to see a lot more APs in IAPT services over the next few years.

Innovation and development

Paul Rathmill completed his foundation degree in September 2017 and qualified as an AP. Paul works in integrated therapies in the Lancashire area. Whilst Paul was in training he was involved in setting up a mobility assessment centre.

The Mobility Clinic was set up and designed around reducing waiting lists, reducing mileage and improving time management of staff. The clinic was set up in April in the Rossendale area as a pilot scheme subsequently rolled out throughout the locality teams within the Trust.



Paul and physiotherapist Susan Driver, developed a new patient assessment document which is also being used Trust wide within the clinics. The mobility clinic is designed to assess gait and prescribe suitable mobility aids, with a follow up visit by the AP to review patients within one week of equipment delivery.

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Patients are triaged into the clinic if their only need is a mobility review and they are physically able to attend. New pathways have been created to allow clinicians to refer to the clinic and understand the referral process.

Congratulations to Paul on his success in achieving his qualification and adding to the scope of innovation and service development which APs are so successful at.

Championing the AP role

Since qualifying as an AP in 2016, Ella McClure has been very proactive in promoting the AP role. Ella works for South Cheshire CCG and works in primary care, where there has been a growing interest in the AP role.



Ella volunteered to co-host an expert table at the Cheshire and Merseyside 'All learners celebration event.' Ella offered an insight into her role and summarised her activities Ella volunteered to co-host an expert table at the Cheshire and Merseyside 'All learners celebration event.' Ella offered an insight into her role and summarised her activities, telling us; "As an assistant practitioner my role is to assist the practice nurse team. Part of my role includes providing health promotion, dressings/wound care, ECGs, administration of vaccinations; flu (including nasal), pneumonia, shingles, and vitamin B12 injections, blood pressure checks, diabetic support, ear irrigation and overseeing work of the health care assistant. The role also includes some administration duties."

The final curtain

So we have reached the end of our final Witter from the WBEF Network. The members of the team, past and present, have enjoyed working with all stakeholders and of course all of the TAPs and APs who we have had the pleasure of supporting. The Network would like to take this opportunity to wish you the very best for the future.