



Physicians' Assistants (Anaesthesia)



What are physicians' assistants (anaesthesia)?

Physicians' assistants (anaesthesia) (PA(A)) were introduced in the UK to allow for the expansion of anaesthetic services and to make operating theatres work more efficiently and flexibly.

A PA(A) is a highly-trained professional who is qualified to administer anaesthesia under the supervision of a consultant anaesthetist. They provide both continuity and flexibility of service to departments that employ them.



Training and qualifications

PA(A)s are either health professionals or university science graduates who have undergone a 27-month programme of postgraduate training, leading to a postgraduate diploma in anaesthetic practice.



What are the benefits of having a PA (A) in the team?

PA(A)s offer a range of benefits across multidisciplinary teams, including increasing productivity and reducing theatre downtime between complex anaesthesia cases. They can also help reduce downtime on dynamic lists, such as trauma surgery or where same-day admissions are employed, and help to increase the number of supervised lists for trainee doctors.

Where PA(A)s have received further training in local anaesthetic and other techniques, medical manpower has been released for other tasks. PA(A)s can also help reduce locum costs or cancelled lists when 2:1 supervision is employed.



What do they do?

- Preoperative assessment and preparation of patients for anaesthesia.
- Anaesthesia checks.
- Plan the anaesthetic (approved by a supervisor).
- Prepare and administer anaesthetic medications.
- Provide assistance to the anaesthetist.
- Provide services associated with anaesthesia such as vascular access.
- Teach, supervise and assess other team members.
- Support doctors in emergency medicine and critical care.



The facts

- There are approximately **180 PA(A)s** working in NHS hospitals across the UK.

Further Information

The Association of Physicians' Assistants Anaesthesia
<https://www.anaesthesiateam.com>

NHS Employers
www.nhsemployers.org/maps