



## in this issue

- Student Conference and Careers Fair
- Applying for jobs
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- New training opportunities
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- "HMS Physician Associate"

## diary dates

- PA Surgery opens 6/9/18
- FPA Conference 27&28/9/18
- FPA Student conference 27/9/18
- #PA Week 6 -12/10/18
- Parliamentary reading of the PA Bill 16 & 26/10/18
- KSSPAS Supervision training 8/11/18
- KSSPAS Steering Group 20/11/18

## newsflash

*Fully tailored half day of training for new PA Supervisors to help them understand the supervision requirements and develop their PAs – 8 November*

If you are interested in attending, please email the School

## contact Us

kss.schoolofpas@nhs.net  
kssschoolofpas.org

## Welcome

Dr Natalie King

Welcome to the latest KSS School of Physician Associates Newsletter. This special edition celebrates the success of the School's first ever student and employer conference and careers fair we held on 8th June 2018. The event was well attended by all first and second year students from the three regional PA programmes (CCCU, University of Surrey and BSMS) as well as employers from Primary and Secondary Care.



L to R: Sarah Vigor, Dr Natalie King, Michelle Chapman

The day kicked off with an update from Faculty of Physician Associates President Jeannie Watkins, who talked about the fantastic journey of the PA profession in the UK and next steps to prepare for the future. Jeannie was followed by Michelle Chapman, Lead PA for the School, who delivered an excellent talk on getting that first PA job. Jerome Barton then presented life as an experienced PA in Primary Care and outlined how his role has developed over the last 10 years.



Dr Iain Wilkinson, Consultant Orthogeriatrician at Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust and FPA national supervisor of the year 2017 talked to the delegates about maximising the PA/Supervisor relationship to help guide their career development. Two qualified PAs from St Georges and St Thomas gave the students "top tips" for National Exam success and Dr Jia Doulton from University of Surrey explained options available to PAs to support University programmes - helping to train the next generation.

We are grateful to all the employers who attended and took time to explain their plans for PAs, showing that the role is highly thought of and rapidly growing in our region. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the students, speakers and employers for making the event such a success and also the qualified PAs in the region who provided advice and support during the Q & A session.

The next year is set to be an exciting time for our PA students in completing their studies and entering employment. I wish all the 2nd year's good luck in their national examinations and every success securing their first post. I just want to remind them and their new employers that the School is there to help you in any way we can; we look forward to supporting your future career development.

## The Future's Bright ...

Jeannie Watkins PA-R  
President of the FPA



Physician Associates have come a long way since the first US PAs were recruited to posts in the UK in 2003. Over the years we have seen significant change not least of which the rapid expansion of numbers of qualified PAs and those in training.

These years have not been without their challenges, mostly in our continued plight for statutory regulation, but now is the time to start looking beyond regulation and what the next phase of Physician Associate development looks like. Frameworks for prescribing, how university programmes are accredited and the development of an apprenticeship standard are all currently in focus.



For PAs themselves though there is now a clear need to provide some form of framework for post qualification career development.

PA development is different from the traditional hierarchical development of a doctor in training. With each year of practice a PA will continue to develop skills and knowledge in the area they practice but also have opportunities to develop in other areas. The uniqueness also comes from the fact that PAs flex and change, moving in a horizontal fashion across different specialties or different focusses of the role, all dependent on the needs of the PA, their supervisor and the employer.

In a soon to be published document by the FPA we have set out what the first 5 years looks like for a Physician Associate post qualification. In particular the skills and competences that need to be evidenced during the New Graduate Year, for example in the level of supervision required and the complexity of cases seen. The document will also set out what a PA might look like 5 years down the line seeing more complex patients and taking on additional activities that can only be done with experience, adequate training and competency assessment.

Whilst the FPA have a clear role in ongoing lobbying for political change and setting professional standards for our profession, they are resolutely committed to providing professional support to PAs across the UK, representing their views and ensuring PAs retain their unique identity in a sea of change across the NHS.

The future for PAs looks bright.

With regulation hopefully imminent, work will focus on how we move on from restrictions on practice (prescribing and ordering ionising radiation).

PA numbers will continue to expand and we must ensure we are all ambassadors for our profession and take every opportunity to help shape the direction of our professional development.

The students of now are the future leaders of this profession; embrace it and get involved!

*“If you do not know where you come from,  
then you don't know where you are,  
and if you don't know where you are,  
then you don't know where you're going.  
And if you don't know where you're going,  
you're probably going wrong.”*

*Terry Pratchett*

## Getting that first PA job

Michelle Chapman PA-R  
Lead PA, KSS School of PAs



I have been involved in PA recruitment for over two years now; shortlisting and interviewing applicants for posts at SASH, and although definitely not an expert, I want to share with our soon-to-be-qualified PAs some of my insights.

Applying for jobs alongside the demands of the course can be challenging but getting it right is so important. The number of students graduating this year will potentially outnumber jobs, so competition will be high. Your application is your ticket to get that all-important interview.

Your personal statement is particularly crucial and your chance to demonstrate and evidence how you have developed as a clinician. Try to express your **passion** for the specialty, outlining your knowledge and skills while keeping it concise. Don't list all the procedures and placements you have done. Instead, demonstrate **skills** with your own clinical examples and bring out the key points you have learnt and how you have developed.

When that interview arrives, get the basics right. Do some **research** on the organisation e.g. do they employ PAs currently? **Get there early**, and be smart and professional from the moment you enter the building – you never know the first person you meet may be on the interview panel. **Prepare...** especially for some of the most common questions that may come up... and think about the key concepts they are trying to elicit with those questions.

**Why did you become a PA?**

**Why should we employ a PA?**

**Why this specialty?**

**Where do you see yourself in 5 years?**

Understand the **limitations** of the role and think about some practical ways of working around them - this demonstrates **initiative**, that you intuitively know what needs escalating and can practically approach problems.

**Patient safety** is crucial to the job of a PA and you should try to explain how this is fundamental to the care you give. Mention that the code of conduct, fitness to practice, your portfolio and the employer's appraisal system all help evidence safe competent practice.

Also, being an **advocate** for the patient and escalating appropriately are important skills. Familiarise yourself with escalation procedures, e.g. SBAR and MET calls.

Don't forget to ask what the employer can offer you. **Your development is important.** Do you fit the organisation? But just as importantly, does the organisation fit with you?

Following the interview, if not part of the panel, you should try to meet with your designated supervisor. Developing a rapport will affect the success of your role.

Best of luck and am happy to help further if you want to get in touch.

## PA Surgery

From September we will be running a monthly drop in telephone surgery where PAs or PA students may phone and speak to Michelle Chapman.



This can be to discuss pretty much anything but might include issues in the workplace, supervision or governance arrangements or suggestions for the School to better support PAs and employers.

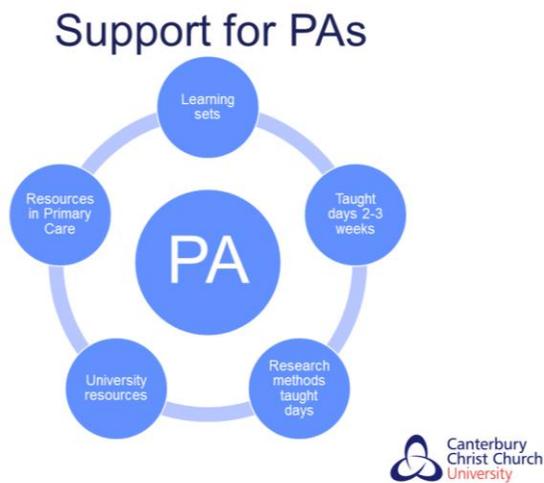
The School of PAs will not have authority or power to address specific issues but the phone surgery will help extend our continued peer support.

PA surgeries will be available on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month, between 3 and 4pm, commencing **6<sup>th</sup> September**. Call 01737 768511 ext 6635.

Any change to this schedule will be notified via our website.

## New Internship programmes on offer in Medway

We are pleased to announce new one year internship programmes at Canterbury Christ Church University designed to further support PA development in Surgery, Emergency Medicine or Primary Care. Newly qualified PAs appointed to the internship can obtain a more tailored skillset, ensuring patients, Trusts and General Practices get the full benefit from PA skills.



The PA will be supported during their employment by the Trust or Practice to further develop their skills and in addition released to attend University to complete master's level credits giving them the opportunity to top up their PGDip to an MSc.



For more information, please contact Roz Tucker  
roz.tucker@canterbury.ac.uk

or Catherine O'Leary  
<Catherine.O'Leary@hee.nhs.uk>

### PA INTERNSHIP OVERVIEW

- Two week HEKSS Foundations in Surgical Skills and Anatomy course
- Two surgical training blocks
  - each will be five months in duration with two different surgical specialties
- One year band 6 service contract with sponsoring Trust

Dissertation

- Supported by CCCU with Research and Methods Module - 60 credits to complete MSc
- Service improvement project supported by supervising clinician

## PA CPD Opportunities

Over the past few months The KSS School of PAs has organised, in conjunction with our partners, a number of well received training days for PAs in our region, including a simulation study day with BSMS, a day on communication skills with Andy Anderson from Mobius Training and Teamwork and Leadership workshop with the education team from RCP London.

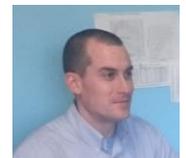


In November we will be running a half day for new PA Supervisors from across the region to help them develop their PAs and ensure they understand the supervision requirements of PAs. We will touch on the difference from supervision of junior doctors and equip them to be the best supervisors they can be. If you are interested in attending, please email the School.

We continue to identify opportunities to upskill our PA workforce and have a number of further training sessions in the pipeline. These will be advertised to all PAs we know who are working in our region. If you are not already on Jo's distribution list for this, please make sure you contact her.

## Primary Care - a challenging and rewarding role

Jerome Barton PA-R



PA's in General Practice are both clinically and cost effective and are appreciated by their patients and colleagues. The general practice role fits well with the PA's generalist approach and because the range of patients and presentations is vast, all areas of our training are utilised. Within a flexible working schedule there is still scope to specialise and develop special interests. It is a challenging but rewarding role that is worth pursuing.

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## PA Case Study in GP

Churchill Clinic, Kent

Supervising GP: Dr Mayur Vibhuti

### PA: Alyson Ring

“During my first year of study I had my GP training placement at Churchill Clinic and they kindly offered to sponsor my 2<sup>nd</sup> year tuition fees. I always knew I wanted to work in GP but having the sponsorship helped. I qualified in October 2016 and started working here almost immediately. I enjoy patient contact, working in a smaller team and providing continuity of care. I enjoy following the patient journey and building a relationship and trust.



My supervisor is our Lead GP but I am also supervised by the other GPs when necessary. I can go to anyone at any time to ask questions but generally explain to the patient that I will seek advice and call them back later in the day. In particular, I tend to check pain and mental health medications with others. Feedback is given as we go along and also at weekly MDT meetings.

At first I explained to the reception staff there is no difference in how they allocate patient appointments and they now treat me like one of the GPs. In the mornings I see emergency patients, followed by telephone calls for dealing with results, queries, etc. Lunchtime I review my own list of patient results which are allocated to me on the computer system. Pre-bookable appointments are in the afternoons, these tend to be my own patients for reviews and follow up.

I am given a study budget and study leave so I am able to maintain my CPD requirement as part of my registration on the PA-MVR.”

### Practice Manager: Yvonne Edison

“We had Alyson as a trainee and could see the potential for having a PA in practice. Alyson added a new dynamic to the team, reduced pressure on our GPs and offered an alternative when recruiting clinicians.

Alyson has slightly longer appointment times so patients have more time with a clinician but because she has increased our capacity we now have 15 minute GP appointments in the afternoons. She has enabled the practice to increase patient access reducing pressure on the GPs. Our patients are very receptive to the care/treatment she provides. Alyson sees basic minor ailments and complex needs. She also supports our doctor on the weekly nursing home visit caring for end of life dementia patients with co-morbidities.

During her first months, Alyson had regular reviews with the lead GP and support from all the other clinicians and the Practice Manager. We had joint clinics and longer appointment times to enable Alyson to fully review patients. The GPs had gaps in their schedule to support induction and questions. In our practice, we have multiple prescribing clinicians so Alyson finds the next available clinician to sign a prescription. X rays are generally signed off as they arise or at the end of clinic.

Alyson attends our weekly MDT meetings, monthly CCG education afternoons and other training to develop her skills. She can see any of the other clinicians when required and access their clinics including minor operations, vasectomies, and pharmacy clinics. She is also involved in practice audits.

*It does take a while to build up confidence and skills but it is worth the effort.”*

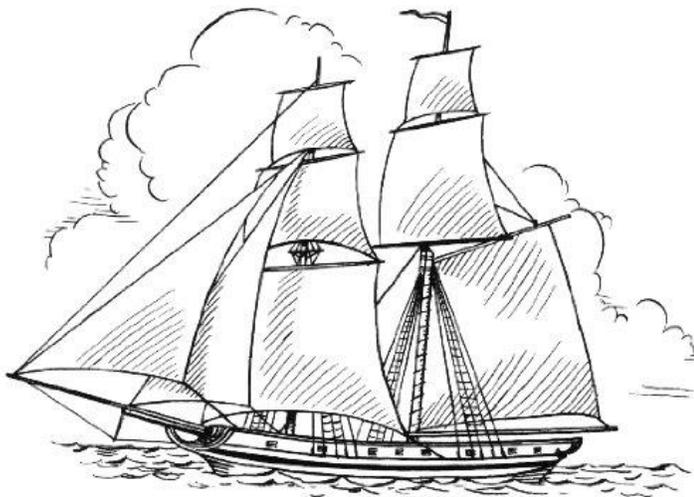
## Casting off

Physician Associate  
Trauma & Orthopaedics,  
Medway NHS Foundation Trust



I'm Christopher Lyus, a newly qualified PA working at Medway Maritime Hospital in Trauma & Orthopaedics as part of the Surgical Internship programme run by Canterbury Christ Church University. I've been asked to write about the making of a PA and some tips for passing your exams.

I like to think of Universities as the dockyards of PAs, where each piece of clinical knowledge is carefully made and placed by expert shipwrights. Over a two-year period, a bare frame will be added to and made into a hardy tug boat. Before being allowed out of dry dock each boat is carefully inspected and, if it passes quality control, is registered and given a seal of approval.



The true test of any ship will be its maiden voyage and whether it will float or sink. Being a safe PA is the single most important aspect, everything else will come with time.

For those *sea-sick* of all the naval analogies let's get to some exam tips. As you know there are two parts: the Single Best Answer (SBA) exam and the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).

The SBA consists of 200 questions set over two x 2 hour sessions on one day. It is virtually impossible to cram for this exam as it covers ALL specialties and ALL conditions you are expected to know as a PA. So take your time revising; you should aim to spread it out over a long period of time and focus particularly on your 1A conditions - they will be your easy marks.

When answering the questions, make sure you read them fully. Remember, it is the single best answer they want. Answer ALL questions.

Relax in the break between exams - discussing with fellow examinees your answers to questions that have already come up is unlikely to help you in the next exam but I can assure you it is guaranteed to send your blood pressure soaring!

The OSCE is potentially the single most stressful exam of anyone's life. The most important tip I can give for this is that you cannot revise alone for this exam it must be a group effort. Practice performing in front of others and getting constructive feedback from your peers.

Remember the four Ps and you will be fine;

**Practice**  
**Prevents**  
**Poor**  
**Performance**

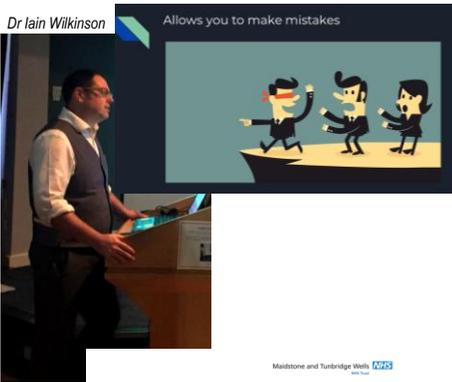
I hope these tips help you in some shape or form.

To all those PAs already in the workforce and those just about to qualify, I hope to see you on my maiden voyage into the deep blue that is the NHS!



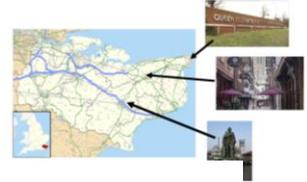
# Conference and Careers Fair in pictures

Dr Iain Wilkinson



*It was fantastic to have so many employers there that are keen to employ PA's*

Three Main Hospitals East Kent



L to R: Lottie Lewis, Mikaela Carey



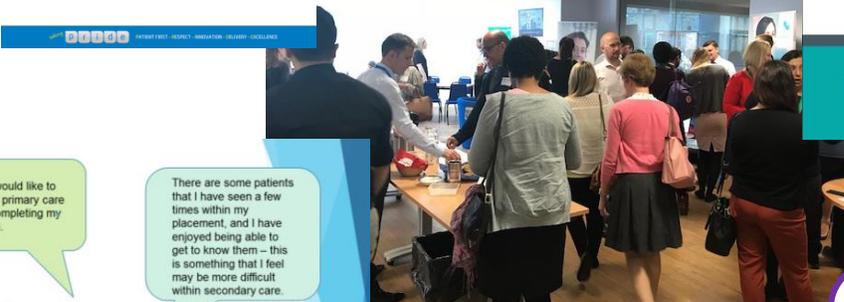
## Physician Associates at MTW

- Our Trust – large acute trust in West and Mid Kent
- Full range of hospital services to 500,000 people
- 2 clinical sites – Maidstone Hospital and Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury
- Specialist Cancer Services – Kent Oncology Centre – 1.8 million people

## Expectations and Preparation for the National Exam

**Mikaela Carey**  
Physician Associate at St George's Hospital London  
Previous National Student Representative at the Faculty of Physician Associates

**Lottie Lewis**  
Physician Associate at St Thomas's Hospital London



Yes, I would like to work in primary care after completing my training.

There are some patients that I have seen a few times within my placement, and I have enjoyed being able to get to know them – this is something that I feel may be more difficult within secondary care.

Primary care provides exposure to a wide variety of conditions that possibly may not be seen on a routine basis if I were to work within a specialist department in secondary care.

What did Students themselves think about primary care ?

*It was an eye opening programme, Thank you for inviting me*



## PA Career Progression



*It was encouraging to see PAs from other Universities*



*Good opportunities to ask questions and interact with the excellent range of speakers*

*Enthusiasm from potential employers was very promising. The future is bright!*

L to R: Prof Michael Wilson CBE, Dr Natalie King

