



Nursing associates

Supporting nursing teams
across health and social care

What is a nursing associate?

A nursing associate is a member of the nursing team who provides care for people who use health and care services. This role is only being used and regulated in England. The role is intended to address a skills gap between health and care assistants and registered nurses. It's also a stand-alone role in its own right, which provides a progression route into graduate level nursing.

Nursing associates are trained to work with people of all ages and in a variety of settings. It's intended that this new role will support registered nurses by enabling them to focus on more complex clinical duties.

We set standards of proficiency for nursing associates and have held nursing associates in England on our register since January 2019. Our standards of proficiency for nursing associates and nurses show what the roles have in common and where they differ.

What the new standards for nursing associates mean for you

The standards are set out in six sections. Here's what each one means for you:

1. Being an accountable professional

Nursing associates provide safe and compassionate care that's based on your unique needs. They act professionally at all times, make informed decisions and take responsibility for their actions.

2. Promoting health and preventing ill health

Nursing associates support you to manage your health, so that you can have a good quality of life at every age.

They help to tackle the big issues that affect public health, including issues that particularly matter to you.

3. Provide and monitor care

Nursing associates monitor your health needs, and work with you and your family or carers to deliver your care. They make any decisions with you, not for you.

4. Working in teams

Nursing associates work well with a wide variety of colleagues in different roles, ensuring they communicate effectively with nurses and other health and care professionals.

5. Improving safety and quality of care

Nursing associates help monitor and improve the quality of care you receive. They identify any risks to your safety and take action to manage these, ensuring your best interests, needs and preferences are put first.

6. Contributing to integrated care

Nursing associates play a key role in helping you and providing your care, alongside a range of other professionals and carers.

What about the specific skills nursing associates need?

There are two annexes in our standards that list the skills nursing associates must have, and the procedures they must be able to do when they join our register. One focuses on communication and relationship skills and the other on the procedures nursing associates need to be able to do.

Will you say what nursing associates can't do?

Professional regulation rarely sets out in law what professionals can't do. However, the Code commits nursing associates to not work beyond the limits of their competence.



What standards will the first nursing associates (who started their training before regulation) have to meet?

All students, regardless of when they started their training will be assessed against our standards of proficiency for nursing associates. For those students who started their training before we were legally the regulator, we'll have a process in place to assess the comparability of their qualifications.

Those who have a comparable qualification can apply to register with us in the usual way. Those who don't have a qualification that is comparable will have to pass a test of competence before they can register with us.

To find out more information about nursing associates, please visit:
www.nmc.org.uk/nursingassociates