

"I enjoy the patient contact and the best part is building a professional relationship with a number of my patients."

During his a-levels, Andy was interested in biology and the human body but didn't want to study medicine. When he came across the physician associate course, he was happy to discover a role which included similar tasks to that of a doctor without being one.

Andy King

Physician associate

Employer or university

Mosborough Health Centre, Sheffield



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**How I got into
the role?**

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collapse**

I've always been interested in medicine but never wanted to be a doctor. After my undergraduate degree in Zoology, I took a gap year where I worked as a medical receptionist and got trained up to be

a diabetic healthcare assistant. This experience gave me a taste of what it's like to work with a range of patients, and I found this to be very rewarding.

Around the same time, I discovered the physician associate course and the role instantly drew me. At the time, physician associate was a very new role in the NHS and it seemed innovative and exciting. What I liked most was the thought of undertaking similar tasks to that of a doctor but not being a doctor. I didn't hesitate in applying for the two-year postgraduate diploma and today I'm a qualified physician associate.

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What I do

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A typical day begins with me looking at my patient list. I see about 14 patients in the morning, help with home visits and catch up with blood results later in the day, and then I see another 12 or so patients in the afternoon. I enjoy the patient contact and the best part is building a professional relationship with a number of my patients.

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The best bits and challenges

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I particularly find it very rewarding when I've supported a patient with a mental illness such as depression – for months or even years sometimes – and seen them come out the other side feeling hopeful and stronger than they were. If there was one thing I could change about my role it would be to have the ability to sign my own prescriptions. This would help me to put into practise the pharmacology unit that was a part of my course and I think it'd also be less time consuming than waiting for a GP to sign it.

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Career plans and top tips for others

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If I had to summarise the qualities needed to be a physician associate in three words, I'd say empathetic, patient and knowledgeable. And just as one of my mentors once told me, when consultations don't go to plan (which they won't at times), you take a minute to pull yourself together and then completely forget about it. You don't want to bring your baggage from one consultation to another.

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Life outside work

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Outside of work, I play football for a local team, take Taekwondo classes in which I've reached black belt level and I also play a few instruments. Having hobbies is a crucial way for me to manage a healthy work-life balance; making time for the things I enjoy helps me to relax which is crucial for my job.

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