

**The Role of The Trainee/ Assistant Practitioner (TAP/AP)  
The North West Perspective Update from 2016**

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# What is an Assistant Practitioner

- An assistant practitioner is a non-occupational specific role that has been developed to assist organisations to deliver high quality and patient centred services in a variety of settings.
- Developing the role of the assistant practitioner can help employers ensure they have the right flexible mix of skills to meet complex patient needs, freeing up registered practitioners to deliver what they have been uniquely trained for.

(NHS Employers 2015)

# Why were they introduced?

- **Ensure the right flexible mix of skills to meet complex patient needs both in acute and non acute settings**
- **Free up registered practitioners to deliver what they have been uniquely trained for**
- **Support areas of skills shortage/recruitment difficulties**
- **Changing demographic of the population**
- **Changes in technology and expectation**
- **Changes in Service Delivery Acute to Community**
- **Provide one fluid career pathway (NHS Career Framework)**
- **Support for the PWP workforce and increase capacity in IAPT services**
- **Widening participation and talent for care**

# APs The North West Experience

- Across a range of service areas since 2002 including, NHS, Social Care, Not for Profit Sector, Primary care and most recently IAPT Services
- Workforce planning to identify appropriate role design
- Approximately 4000 qualified and in training
- Continued development of the role through the higher apprenticeship framework with anticipated wider access across a range of providers
- Role support via apprenticeship standards, core skills and code of conduct for APs

## Currently in IAPT services

- Three Trainee Assistant Practitioners
- In two service areas
- Due to complete their first year of a two year foundation degree at the University of Bolton.
- Support and direction through a dedicated steering group.
- National interest in the role development.
- Plans to evaluate the impact of the role out to tender.