

# Patient safety specialists (PSS)

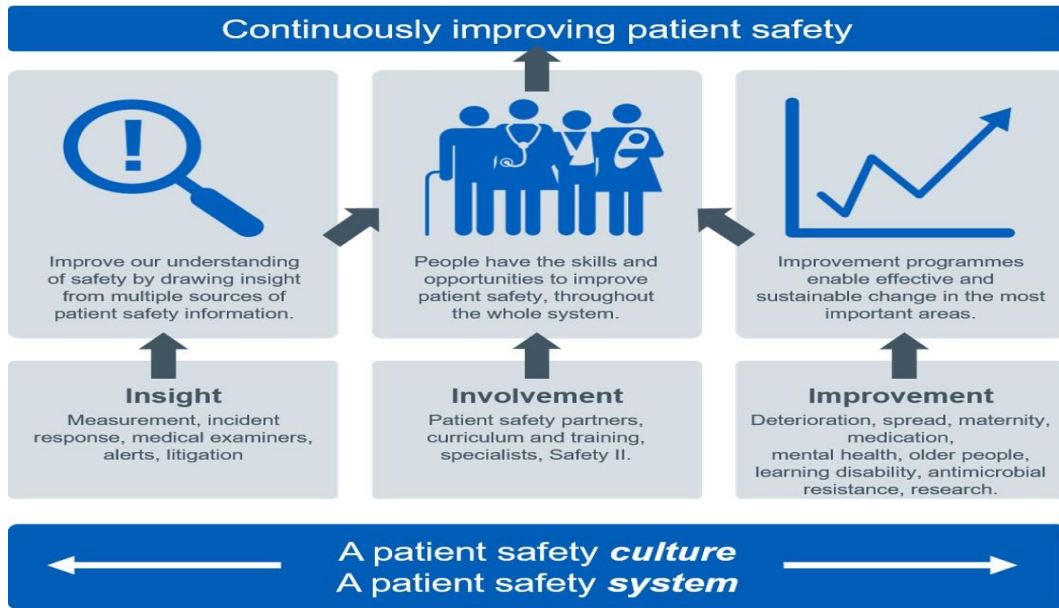
Executive briefing document

2021

NHS England and NHS Improvement



# Patient safety specialists



Formally creating this role provides status and the expectation that having a patient safety specialist(s) who is fully trained in the national patient safety syllabus is standard across the NHS

Classification: Official



## Identifying patient safety specialists

August 2020

### Purpose of the role

The NHS Patient Safety Strategy<sup>1</sup> set the ambition for the new role of patient safety specialist to be introduced in every NHS organisation in England; this includes providers and commissioners of NHS-funded care. We consulted on a draft specification for patient safety specialists earlier in 2020 and this final specification is informed by the views of those who responded.

Patient safety specialists will be the lead patient safety experts in healthcare organisations, working full time on patient safety. They will be 'captains of the team' and provide dynamic, senior leadership, visibility and expert support to the patient safety work in their organisations. They will support the development of a patient safety culture and safety systems, and have sufficient seniority to engage directly with their executive team. They will work in networks to share good practice and learn from each other.

# Patient safety specialist role

- Lead patient safety experts in their organisation, working full time on patient safety
- Able to escalate immediate risks or issues to Exec team
- ‘Captains of the team’, provide dynamic senior leadership, visibility and expert support
- Work with others including: Medication safety officer (MSO), Medical device safety officer (MDSO), Maternity safety champions
- Lead /support the local implementation of the NHS patient safety strategy: insight, involvement and improvement
- Support the development of a patient safety culture and safety systems
- Work in networks to share and learn
- Lead, and may directly support, patient safety improvement activity
- Ensure that systems thinking, and just culture principles are embedded
- Support patient safety partners ([Framework for involving patients in patient safety](#))
- Learn and develop, complete the [Patient safety syllabus](#)

# Key deliverables

- 2019 - Role identified as part of the [NHS patient safety strategy](#)
- 2020 Mar - Patient safety specialists made a contractual requirement within the [NHS Standard Contract 2021/22](#) section 33.7
- 2020 Aug/Nov - [Identifying Patient Safety Specialists](#) and providing nominations to NHSEI from every NHS organisation by 3011/20
- 2020 Nov – National webinars provided to support patient safety specialist training
- 2021 Apr – patient safety specialists to be full time in post
- 2021 Apr – patient safety specialist priorities document provided
- 2021 Jun - [Patient safety syllabus](#) available for patient safety specialists and training for the Board

# Early milestones

- Over 700 Patient Safety Specialists representing 96% coverage of relevant organisations
- We have held 16 national meetings – topics including:
  - National patient safety improvement programmes
  - Views on patient safety culture
  - PSIRF progress update
- Involvement in two national safety issues:
  - Beckton Dickinson infusion devices
  - Phillips device recall
- Involvement in national working groups including:
  - National Patient Safety Syllabus
  - Development of NHSX digital strategy
- Development of FutureNHS Collaboration platform (access via [patientsafetyspecialists.info@nhs.net](mailto:patientsafetyspecialists.info@nhs.net))
- Patient safety priorities document provided
- Starting to create region and ICS patient safety specialist networks

# PSS priorities (Apr-21)

- [Just culture](#) support and advice
- [National Patient Safety Alerts](#) advice
- Improving quality of incident recording
- Support transition from NRLS and StEIS to the new [Learn from patient safety events \(LFPSE\)](#) service
- Preparation for implementing the new [Patient Safety Incident Response Framework \(PSIRF\)](#) when it is launched in 2022
- Implementation of the [Framework for involving patients in patient safety](#) (published in June 2021)
- Patient safety education and training including the first two levels of the [Patient safety syllabus](#) launched in summer 2021
- Supporting involvement in the [National Patient Safety Improvement Programmes](#), working with local AHSNs and Patient Safety Collaboratives
- COVID-19 recovery support – more information will be provided shortly

## Short – medium term priorities for Patient Safety Specialists

April 2021

This paper describes how Patient Safety Specialists (PSSs) can support implementation of the NHS Patient Safety Strategy and operational recovery during 2021/22.

We have identified nine key work programmes, with associated actions and timescales where appropriate:

1. Just culture
2. National Patient Safety Alerts
3. Improving quality of incident reporting
4. Support transition from NRLS and StEIS to PSIMS
5. Involvement in implementing the new Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF)
6. Implementation of the Framework for Involving Patients in Patient Safety
7. Patient safety education and training
8. National patient safety improvement programmes
9. COVID-19 recovery planning

We appreciate due to current workloads it may not be possible for PSSs to immediately be actively involved in all these work programmes. You should review the programmes identified in this paper with your executive team and agree a phased approach to implementation. For some programmes there may be opportunity to ensure that others in your organisation are already aware and involved and that minimal support from you is needed. There are ~~a number of~~ programmes where, although there are associated timescales, a flexible approach can be taken. For example, it may not be possible to go live with the new patient safety incident management system (PSIMS) immediately if your local risk management system (LRMS) vendor hasn't undertaken the necessary local modifications.

# Executive PSS support requirements

1. The Patient Safety Specialist was required to be identified by Apr-21. The expectation is 1FTE at band 8 range, but this may be a shared role, or more than 1FTE across large organisations
2. The PSS's name(s) has been provided to NHSEI by executive lead for patient safety
3. An executive lead for patient safety should be identified as the direct contact point for the PSS. The PSS should also link with the NED who leads on patient safety.
4. All Board members should be aware of and support the PSS's role and discuss as a board agenda item
5. The PSS priorities document (circulated Apr-21) should be reviewed and a PSS work plan agreed with the patient safety executive lead
6. The PSS should be provided with sufficient time and resources to undertake their role, network and complete the patient safety training requirements (to level 5 of the [Patient safety syllabus](#) once available)
7. There should be sufficient support/ [coaching / mentoring](#) in place for the PSS to progress their personal and leadership development