**The Abstract**

I have been a registered nurse for 22 years, during which I have worked in a variety of clinical settings spanning across both primary and secondary sectors; holding both clinical and managerial posts (Nurse Practitioner and Clinical Lead and Matron).  I am proud to hold the Queen’s Nurse Award and a Masters in Professional Practice. I also hold a Nurse Practitioner Qualification and am a registered Non-Medical Precriber.

I have more recently moved into a Lecturer role at University of Cumbria, where I work on the Apprenticeship Team for the Registered Degree Nurse Apprentices and the Trainee Nurse Associates.  Having worked clinically and managerially with some of the first Nurse Associates to qualify from University of Cumbria, and now working with the future students I have an ideal position in being able to understand the standards for registration and practice, but also enable Health Care Trusts to help explore the role and understand the requirements in terms of role development and regulation.

I am delighted to be given the opportunity to lead the opening presentation, alongside Ali Richards (Senior Lecturer at University of Cumbria).  Ali leads on the Apprenticeship Programme for Assistant Practitioners and has a wealth of experience of working in the Apprenticeship team and also with the Nurse Associate Apprentices.

Our presentation will explore the landscape to date in terms of the Nurse Associate role development, and look forward to the future and the possibilities this role brings – not just to the Nurse Associates themselves but also in terms of the wider health care system and employers.  The Regulations and Standards for Professional Practice for Nurse Associates will be reviewed, exploring how this links with the Apprenticeship Standards and University validated pathways of learning.  We will also explore some of the challenges that are often though of (either anecdotally or factually) with Nurse Associates in practice – encouraging participants to refocus these and consider how they can be seen as opportunities.