

# Advanced Practice

## Case Study:

### Maria Barrett

#### Overview

Maria is an advanced practitioner (AP) and non-medical prescriber (NMP) working in a busy intestinal failure unit in Salford. She has a passion for research and is a Community for Allied Health Professions Research (CAHPR) and National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Allied Health Profession (AHP) Research Champion.

#### Developing from enhanced to advanced

Maria qualified as a dietitian in 2010 and secured a rotational role working across two district general hospitals, which included working with people requiring parenteral nutrition (PN). In this role she gained experience and exposure to various clinical conditions. Her first enhanced level role allowed her to specialise within renal dietetics, where she worked for 8 years. This allowed Maria to develop depth of expertise as a renal specialist dietitian, expanding her clinical knowledge and understanding of medications, as well as the complexities of managing renal PN. Maria worked in an organisation that was at the forefront of supporting dietitians to prescribe phosphate binders, and this helped build her prescribing and metabolic knowledge, which supported future research studies. Maria collaborated with the BDA to devise educational resources and guidance and undertook quality improvement projects (QIPs), lectured at Coventry University and was heavily involved as a practice educator supervising dietetic learners. Maria's development across the 4 pillars within her enhanced level role prepared her well for developing as an advanced practitioner.

In 2019, Maria moved into a band 7 role at an intestinal failure (IF) unit. She spent a year expanding her clinical skills alongside continuing to be involved in national talks and debates regarding IF and undertook research in the form of QIPs and service evaluation studies. An

opportunity arose for a trainee AP to join the team. In line with the multi-professional aspiration of advanced practice, for the first time this role was open to all professions. Maria interviewed alongside nursing managers and pharmacists and the strength of her dietetic education, training and experience ensured she was successful.

Part of the trainee AP role requires the completion of a 2-year master's level degree. At the time, the university only allowed professions eligible for independent prescribing to enrol on their NMP module. As prescribing was required for Maria's AP role, she completed the NMP module post completion of her AP masters. The modules initially focused on clinical foundation knowledge before moving into the speciality specific elements of the AP role. The course also required completion of a research project for which Maria chose a QIP along with a literature review. Maria had a medical supervisor who supported her with case study discussions and knowledge checks throughout the course.

During her trainee AP role, Maria attended 2 days at university and 3 days in her trainee role, which enabled an easier transition into the role on completion of the academic elements. Funding for the role post qualification was through a vacancy and Maria now sits under the nursing directorate.



Maria did experience some challenges during her study and in developing her AP role. In particular, the profession specific legal limitations of supplementary prescribing. Completing the prescribing module in addition to, and after, her AP masters meant that it took longer and was more challenging to meet the prescribing competencies required for her role. Whilst prescribing is not always a requirement for an advanced practitioner role, in this instance, Maria was at a disadvantage to her nursing colleagues who are eligible to become independent prescribers. Maria was the first trainee AP from a dietetic background within the organisation and therefore additional learning needs were identified. These required her to work on developing specific skills, that may have been core for those from a nursing background, on top of the additional skills required for the AP role. This included cannulation, venepuncture, drain manipulation, feeding tube insertion, taking blood cultures. To overcome this, Maria developed a personal development plan which helped her obtain the relevant learning from a generic AP master's programme. She worked through this over the 2-year trainee period, utilising practice supervision from her medical and nursing colleagues.

### Role Impact

Maria works with 2 other APs from a nursing background on a 21 bed-unit managing people with type 2 & 3 intestinal failure. The AP team manage the full clinical pathway from presentation to discharge. They order relevant investigations, including blood tests, x-rays and CT scans, interpret

these as appropriate to their scope of practice and manage clerking and discharge. Maria also conducts a weekly outpatient clinic, where she utilises more of her traditional dietetic skills.

The team demonstrates the impact and value that APs from a multi-professional background can provide. This diversity, with colleagues from a nursing and dietetic background, allows knowledge transfer and more holistic care to be provided for complex interventions and the efficient day-to-day running of a busy IF ward. The IF team also have a national agenda, and Maria and the team support with management of IF on a national footprint. For example, by providing advice to other hospitals and delivering education at seminars.

Maria's passion for research and her role as a research champion helps other AHPs access research. She has an honorary role with a university to conduct her own research, as well continuing with QIP and service evaluation in her day-to-day work. These aspects of her role help to support development of the profession and provide vital data for the shaping of future roles.

### Career Aspirations

Maria's aspirations are to continue developing the AP role and to become more nationally involved with other APs working in IF. She wants to expand and support the team to provide more at a national level. Maria will continue to promote and support AHPs interested in undertaking research and being a champion on the importance of this in both dietetics and AP.

### How does Maria work across the 4 pillars of practice?

As an AP, Maria has demonstrated that she works across the 4 pillars of practice. Whilst all roles require this, for an AP role this is evidenced, through post registration academic and clinical attainment, to be at master's level.

