

Advanced Practice Case Study:

Lauren McVeigh

Overview

Lauren is an Advanced Practitioner (AP). She is a regional specialist dietitian leading the gastroenterology and nutrition support team across Bristol and the South West region. She is also a member of The Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances, an independent scientific committee supported by the Department of Health and Social Care.

Developing from enhanced to advanced

Lauren qualified as a dietitian in 2010 and began her career in a busy hospital trust. In this role she gained valuable experience in both inpatient and outpatient settings, building a strong foundation in adult dietetics.

Her first enhanced-level role was in a rotational post at band 6, where she specialised in paediatrics dietetics over two years. During this time, she developed her skills across all four pillars, with a particular focus on professional practice (clinical), this experience enabled her to secure a band 7 role. Initially, Lauren covered a maternity leave post in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, where she further developed her clinical expertise. Alongside this, she started undertaking masters' modules, working

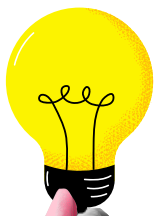
towards a Master's degree in Advanced Professional Practice. When the maternity leave post ended, she transitioned to a new role as the lead paediatric gastroenterology dietitian with the added responsibilities of helping to establish the paediatric nutrition support team.

In this role, Lauren deepened her expertise in paediatric gastroenterology, gaining extensive knowledge in managing gastrointestinal conditions, particularly coeliac



disease and inflammatory bowel disease. She also trained as a First Contact Practitioner (FCP), completing master's modules in physical assessment and history taking. With this additional training, she led a dietetic-led service to all paediatric coeliac disease, safely assessing people upon referral, conducting physical assessments, identifying red flags, arranging diagnosis tests and making specialist referrals where necessary. As this proved to be safe and effective, Lauren's responsibilities expanded, and she took over the management of the entire paediatric coeliac pathway for those with a serological diagnosis. This new model ensured that people were seen by the right professional at the right time.

With the support of her dietetic manager through practice supervision and appraisal, Lauren was encouraged to progress to an AP role. Her organisation supported the role development and through restructuring of the post, the AP role was created. Since she had already completed a Master's degree in Advanced Professional Practice (Paediatric Dietetics) and was practising at an advanced level of practice across all four pillars of practice, she applied for AP status through the Centre for Advancing Practice ePortfolio pathway which was funded through Health Education England. Once accepted, she had 12 months



to complete the programme, working closely with an allocated educational supervisor. This required the completion of a learning needs analysis, evidence of advanced-level practice at masters level, critical reflective case studies demonstrating clinical expertise, critical reflective accounts related to the other pillars, a 5000 word critical narrative and feedback from service users and colleagues. Lauren successfully achieved AP status in November 2024.

Role Impact

Lauren’s role as an AP in the acute-setting dietetic-led paediatric coeliac clinic highlights the significant benefits of a dietetic-led approach to service delivery. Children with coeliac disease are now being seen by the right clinician at the right time, leading to improved service user experiences, reducing waiting times and fewer unnecessary appointments.

With her specialist training, skills and background, Lauren is uniquely positioned to manage the entire pathway for children with coeliac disease, a service that previously required consultant input. This dietitian-led model has proved to be both highly cost effective and income generating for the NHS trust. In the last year alone, the AP-led service has eliminated the

need for 350 consultant appointments and reduced waiting times for diagnosis by 38 days compared to the previous consultant led service. The financial savings generated from this service have directly contributed to the creation of an additional gastroenterology dietetic post, further enhancing the quality and capacity of paediatric gastroenterology care.

Career Aspirations

As a newly qualified AP, Lauren is committed to further developing her dietetic AP-led coeliac clinic. She is actively exploring opportunities with her gastroenterology colleagues to expand the dietetic-led service, identifying other service user groups who may benefit from assessment and dietary management without requiring consultant intervention.

Although non-medical supplementary prescribing was not initially deemed essential for her AP role, Lauren remains interested in revisiting this in the future as part of her professional development.

Looking ahead, Lauren’s long term career aspiration is to pursue a PhD and progress into a consultant dietitian role, contributing to research service innovation and leadership in paediatric gastroenterology dietetics.

How does Lauren work across the 4 pillars of practice?

As an AP, Lauren 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 masters level.

