

Reference Number: FOIAH2425/182
From: Private Individual
Date: 27 June 2024
Subject: Physician Associates within Rainbow SARC

Your trust board papers from 7th March 2024 contain the following statement: "The Rainbow Centre is a dedicated Examination Centre and child protection service. Our Doctors and Physician Associates (PAs), supported by Health Care Assistants and Nurses, examine, and advise on the medical aspects of suspected or actual child abuse."

I am writing to ask about the use of Physician Associates within the Rainbow SARC unit and safeguarding team:

Q1 Do physician associates conduct Paediatric Forensic Examinations (either alone or jointly with another clinician)?

Physician Associates do not currently conduct any examinations for any aspect of child protection medicals.

One Physician Associate jointly undertook child sexual abuse medicals with a Forensic Medical Examiner (FME) between May 2019 and October 2023.

A1 Alder Hey operates a SARC two clinician model whereby a FME will carry out a Forensic Medical Examination however another clinician will support and review the child/young person holistically for any health needs. From May 2019 until October 2023, one Physician Associate was available alongside their doctor colleagues to support the FME as part of this model however will not have undertaken the forensic examination. Since October 2023, the Physician Associate is not part of this model of provision.

Q2 If yes to 1), how many Paediatric Forensic Examinations have Physician Associates performed in the last 6 months (either alone or jointly with another clinician)?

A2 Not applicable as per A1

Q3 Do physician associates act as expert witnesses?

A3 No

Q4 Please provide any governance documents related to the deployment of physician associates within your safeguarding team

A4 No documents specific to Physician Associates