

11 March 2021

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## Engagement within the new Education QA model for newly commissioned AHP provision in Wales

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### Executive Summary

This paper sets out our provisional approach about how regulatory assessments should be undertaken for newly commissioned allied health provision in Wales.

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Previous consideration	ETC paper 11 June 2020 – <a href="#">Education quality assurance model and pilot proposals</a>
Decision	The Committee is asked to note the potential options as what could sit within the intentions of the new QA model.
Next steps	Undertake actions as noted through the paper
Strategic priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continuously improve and innovate</li><li>• Promote high quality professional practice</li><li>• Develop insight and exert influence</li></ul>
Financial and resource implications	Costs 2021-22 Department budget
Author	Jamie Hunt, Education Manager Jamie.Hunt@hcpc-uk.org

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# Engagement with the new Education QA model for newly commissioned AHP provision in Wales

## 1. Context

- 1.1. As part of pilot activities for the new education quality assurance model, we have been engaging with sector stakeholders to inform our work with education providers.
- 1.2. Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)<sup>1</sup> are currently commissioning new Allied Health provision in the country, and we are working with them on how we might share information and intelligence to the benefit of both organisations.
- 1.3. The Executive is bringing our provisional approach about how regulatory assessments should be undertaken to the Committee. This defines how we intend to apply a flexible process within the intentions of the model, using the information and intelligence gathered from a key sector stakeholder.

## 2. Regulatory engagement needed

- 2.1. New allied health provision will need to seek and receive regulatory approval in order to commence. The commissioning exercise is seeking start dates of September 2022 so providers will engage with our process in the 2021-22 academic year, following the planned implementation of the new quality assurance model from September 2021 (pending Committee approval).
- 2.2. The new model is designed to enable sector-based intelligence and information to inform our assessments. This national approach to commissioning and associated quality assurance presents an opportunity to test whether the model's expected benefits can be realised around the use of data and intelligence to understand risk and inform decision making.
- 2.3. In preparation for associated regulatory activity, we have worked with HEIW to understand their approach within the commissioning exercise, and how we can support each other to achieve proportionate approval assessments. We now intend to design how we will structure assessments of proposals, using insight and information from HEIW.

## 3. HEIW commissioning exercise

- 3.1. Education providers have been invited to submit bids to HEIW to be awarded contracts to deliver education in relevant professions to meet the future needs of the NHS workforce in Wales.

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<sup>1</sup> HEIW have a leading role in the education, training, development and shaping of the healthcare workforce in Wales. Ensuring there are the right staff, with the right skills, to deliver world-class healthcare to the people of Wales both now and in the future (<http://heiw.nhs.wales/about-us/about-us/>)

3.2. HEIW will assess bids from education providers in a staged way:

- Initially using the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) to test whether Bidders have the capability to deliver and manage the proposed contract(s)
- Where bids have met the PQQ selection criteria they will move onto the technical evaluation section of the assessment
- The technical evaluation has an initial pass / fail section followed by detailed written responses to questions
- The written technical evaluation will produce a quality score, of which the highest scoring education provider will be awarded the contract

This process is robustly designed and operated, with sector and professional experts contributing to the assessment and scoring exercises.

3.3. Areas of assessment from the tender process potentially have considerable overlap with our standards of education and training (SETs) both in nature and in how they are assessed.

3.4. HEIW have set information and data requirements, and specifications which must be demonstrated for each area of assessment. For example, inter-professional education is identified as a theme in the technical assessment of the proposal which directly links to SET 4.9<sup>2</sup>.

3.5. Following conclusion of the tender process HEIW will have significant insight into the quality of each commissioned proposal, and will be monitoring them in the build up to start dates.

#### **4. Designing assessments**

4.1. Each proposal will need to go through the approval process, via stage 1 if the provider is new to HCPC, or stage 2 if there is existing HCPC-approved provision. The model has built in flexibility to allow focused and proportionate assessment to be undertaken.

4.2. Invoking the use of third-party intelligence and applying a 'right touch' approach could give us assurance that education providers and programmes have already been assessed (or at least demonstrated some progress) in certain SET areas. We can use this to:

- Set certain foundations of understanding and expectations through each process
- Understand the position that each education provider and programme is in when they begin their approval assessment with us

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<sup>2</sup> SET 4.9: The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

4.3. The Executive plans to work with HEIW and a set of partner visitors, to understand HEIW methodology, data and information that can be shared with the HCPC, and how these areas link to our standards.

4.4. This will help us to understand the appropriateness of each of the following options, including which (one or many) should be applied:

1. In relation to the commissioning decision and data and information held by HEIW:
  - a. Take the assurances that HEIW has reached in certain areas as the assurance we need that certain standards are met by each proposal. Assess other standards through our own assessment
  - b. Through each process, if possible and allowable, source information directly from HEIW in relation to specific proposals, and use this as evidence linked to specific standards to be assessed on a case by case basis<sup>3</sup>
  - c. Source information provided to HEIW directly from providers, and use this as evidence linked to specific standards to be assessed on a case by case basis
  - d. Do not use data and intelligence from or presented to HEIW in assessments
2. Use our understanding of the HEIW commissioning process and Wales-wide approaches to provide national context when undertaking provider level approval assessments
3. Tailor our approach to each situation, considering the proposal specific information provided by HEIW
4. Work with HEIW through individual processes as a key stakeholder in the success of the process

4.5. With our current understanding of the information sharing that is achievable, the Executive considers that options 2, 3 and 4 are achievable and reasonable. Further consideration is required for which sub-option would be best applied in option 1, but the Executive considers that option d is not suitable (for the reasons in the paragraph below).

4.6. Within the intentions of the model, it would not be suitable to do nothing (ie apply each assessment in a vacuum). This would actively undermine realising the benefits of the model, particularly around proportionally of assessment and using data and information from sector stakeholders to inform decision making.

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<sup>3</sup> HEIW noted that they do not have permission to directly share data they receive from providers through their process, so option c may be most appropriate for provider data

## 5. Timeline and next steps

### 5.1. Steps taken so far:

- We have undertaken initial scoping conversations with HEIW about what is achievable in terms of information sharing and how we might work together through this initiative
- We have also begun working with HEIW on our understanding of their procurement exercise, including the areas focused on and their approach to assessment
- Interested education providers have submitted their tender responses to HEIW (at the end of January)

### 5.2. Steps to be undertaken:

- April – Clarify and formalise information sharing capabilities with HEIW. For example, whether outcomes from the quality assessment can be shared directly with the HCPC.
- May – Define how we will use this information within approval assessments, and more broadly how we will approach these assessments
- End of May – tender process concludes with HEIW issuing ‘Award Notices’ to successful bidders
- June – Communicate our approach to education providers. This will allow providers to understand what we will need from them, and what work we are undertaking prior to case specific engagement with them

## 6. Evaluation

6.1. We will be able to measure the success our approach within the existing evaluation structures for the pilot, and with some additional measures and methods. Each of the three strategic objectives of the model are relevant to the approach.

<b>Strategic objective</b>	<b>What success looks like</b>	<b>Evaluation method</b>
Achieving risk based outcomes which are proportionate and consistent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proportionate process application – consideration of initiative and context through case level assessments</li><li>• Consistency of assessment and outcomes – similar or linked approaches at different proposals assessed</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Qualitative internal review of process application</li><li>• Stakeholder views (visitors, education providers, HEIW) on whether they support and have valued the approach</li></ul>

	consistently, regardless of visitor panels	
Operating efficient and flexible quality assurance processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficient process application – not revisiting (or multiple working) country-wide approaches through case assessment unless there is a defined case specific reason to do so</li> <li>• Reduced timeframe for approving new programmes (shorter than the current 9 month aim)</li> <li>• All programmes approved for their September 2022 start dates</li> <li>• Flexible process application – focusing on the unique aspects of each case assessment, whilst considering the country-wide context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key performance indicators</li> <li>• Qualitative internal review of process application</li> <li>• Stakeholder views (visitors, education providers, HEIW) on whether they support and have valued the approach</li> </ul>
Using a range of data and intelligence sources to inform decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data and information provided from HEIW had a tangible benefit on process application and outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key performance indicators</li> <li>• Qualitative internal review of process application</li> <li>• Stakeholder views (visitors, education providers, HEIW) on whether they support and have valued the approach</li> </ul>

6.2. Many of the benefits noted above, particularly those which rely on process outcomes, will not be measurable within the timeframes of the pilot and implementation decision point (September 2021), as case level assessments will take place from September 2021 onwards. However, the prep work, qualitative information on stakeholder views, and progress to realising these benefits can be considered within the model implementation decision.

6.3. The Executive will use outcomes based evaluation information in business as usual model improvement, with key improvements reported to the Committee as defined through ongoing governance update work.

## 7. Areas for the Committee to note

7.1. As noted in the context section, the Executive has based the approach to this work on the intentions of the new education QA model.

1. The Executives consider the engagement undertaken so far as valuable, and plans to undertake similar engagement in the future with other sector bodies
2. Application of the options noted through section 4 are a reasonable application of the QA model to achieve the model's strategic objectives
3. We will include information about engagement with external stakeholders in reporting, so the Committee is positioned to make sound decisions on institution / programme approval
4. The Executive include evaluation from section 6 in future evaluation activities through the pilot