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## NHSE long term workforce plan - Understanding HCPC's requirements webinar – Q&A

This document is a summary of the points raised in the Q&A from our webinar on 17 September 2024.

### Apprenticeship programme burden on learners – impact of working and study on wellbeing

We would expect this to be considered against our learner support standards, and that programmes should be designed with this in mind. Learner feedback mechanisms are important for education providers to understand the difficulties apprentice learners are experiencing (as is the case with learners on any HCPC-approved programme). We recognise that there will be different support needs for apprentice learners when compared to learners on direct entry routes, and education providers should consider these differences when designing / applying their support arrangements.

### Any changes to apprenticeships due to the change in government

We are not aware of any changes in this area, and the new government has committed to the delivery of the NHS Long Term Workforce plan. We will continue to work with ministers and civil servants on this and other areas, and will consider any future changes in line with our regulatory requirements (which will remain fundamentally unchanged). If there are changes, we will communicate how these affect our regulatory approach directly with education providers.

### Oversight of the number of international learners, international learners accessing practice-based learning

We do not hold data related to this, but do expect through our standards that practice-based learning is available for all learners on a programme. NHSE may hold further information about numbers and impact.

### Professional body expectations and regulatory requirements

- We work closely with professional bodies to understand their expectations, and consider these when assessing programmes. However, we do not hold programmes to those expectations, instead focusing on the outcome. We are comfortable with staff resourcing if the education provider can demonstrate that it is sufficient for the number of learners proposed. This can include staff from outside of the profession being delivered.
- We appreciate that at times it might be helpful for the HCPC to be more prescriptive with staff / learner ratios, especially with the financial pressures faced by the education sector at this time. However, becoming more prescriptive does not align with our regulatory approach and the outcome focused nature of our standards, and therefore we do not plan to set specific staff / learner ratios. We consider that being more prescriptive could stifle innovation, and might not

work for all models of learning that we approve (for example, portfolio based routes).

- Similarly to the above, with the number, duration and range of practice-based learning, we understand professional body expectations and use them when assessing programmes, but do not hold education providers to the expectations of professional bodies.
- Since introducing our current quality assurance model in September 2021, our regulatory approach has become more 'right touch', which means we will only intervene where we need to, but this does not mean that our requirements have changed. Education providers and programmes still need to meet our standards, and we will continue to consider appropriate evidence that this is the case. This shift in approach means that we are better engaged with, and place more value on the expectations of, professional bodies, as they help us to understand what is normal for the professions we regulate.
- We work closely with professional bodies on the Long Term Workforce Plan and other areas. We regularly discuss how we can integrate our activities, and how our requirements and expectation can be shaped by each other, with current initiatives in mind. This work is in progress, and we are currently actively considering how we can reduce overlap with professional bodies and others, in keeping with our independent roles.

#### Direct influence of HCPC for practice educators

Our legislation only allows us to set direct requirements for education providers, and we hold them to our standards related to practice-based learning. We do not currently work directly with practice education providers in the education space, but are doing more with employers through our Professionalism and Upstream Regulation function. This may be an area we can explore more in the future, to see where we can have influence with practice education providers, considering they are a key part of the education and training system.

#### Limit on simulation allowed by the HCPC

We do not set specific limits, but we would not approve a programme with no service user contact. We will be reviewing this area within the review of our standards of education and training (SETs), which commenced this year, to consider our expectations in this area, including whether we should set limits.

#### Our expectations for the health and wellbeing of learners – links to our revised standards of proficiency

- We expect that you reasonably support all learners from a health and wellbeing perspective, including applying reasonable adjustments where they are needed.
- We also expect that anyone who completes the programme is able to meet our requirements for registration (namely the profession-specific standards of proficiency, and the standards of conduct, performance and ethics). This means that education providers need to consider whether adjustments are reasonable for an individual completing a professional programme, with our requirements for registration in mind.
- A development theme within our standards of proficiency (which became effective in September 2023) is a focus on registrants being able to manage their

own wellbeing. This must be delivered and assessed as part of programmes, as any other areas from the standards of proficiency need to be.