

Education team Performance report June 2025 - ETC

Report date: 23 May 2025, data correct 23 May

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KPI summary and narrative

Performance measure	What does this tell us?	RAG rating description	Current performance	Commentary
Percentage of active case within service levels (live cases) (<u>timeliness</u>)	Whether we are progressing <u>live cases</u> in a timely manner	Red <80% Amber 80-90% Green >90%	▼	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The percentage of active assessments over service level has increased from 17% to 31% since the last report. This is primarily due to several complex assessments within the approval process meaning complicated/multiple rounds of quality activities, and internal adherence to service levels in the focused review process.
Observations across processes (<u>quality</u>)	In the <u>last three months</u> , whether assessment outcomes have been objected to by providers	Red >10% Amber 5-10% Green >5%	▼	In the last three months, we have received observations on 7% of cases (two cases). This means this KPI is now amber rated. No changes were made to outcomes by ETP based on these observations, which means the initial recommendations made were fair.
<u>Time taken</u> through the approval process (stage conclusion)	In the <u>last three months</u> , whether we have delivered cases to conclusion in a timely manner	Red >5 months Amber 4-5 months Green <4 months	►	Performance has remained at red, but the length of time taken has dropped in this reporting period.
Approvals subject to conditions (<u>quality</u>)	In the <u>last three months</u> , whether we have supported providers to meet our standards through a frontloaded processes	Red >30% Amber 20-30% Green <20%	►	We have not set any conditions in the last three months.
<u>Time taken</u> to complete the performance review process	In the <u>last three months</u> , whether we have delivered cases to conclusion in a timely manner	Red >6 months Amber 5-6 months Green <5 months	►	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We concluded an assessment in March as planned, which took much longer than our service level of five months (12.8 months). This case was very complex – we discovered potentially significant problems at an education provider, which resulted in a wide range of quality activities including multiple documentary submissions, and a physical visit, to enable us to take assurance that our standards continued to be met. We took the results of this to the Education and Training Panel (ETP) in March 2025.
Percentage of <u>quality</u> checks completed	In the <u>last month</u> , whether we have ensured quality at key process points via mandatory quality checks	Red <95% Amber 95-99% Green 100%	►	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We expect a high level of compliance with mandatory internal quality checks. In the last month, 100% of quality checks were carried out at the required time.
Spot check outcomes (<u>quality</u>)	Findings from the <u>last month</u> of quality checks, showing performance linked to administration, timeliness and quality	Red <80% Amber 80-90% Green >90%	Administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have reviewed and refined existing spot checks and have introduced several new checks – we are now able to categorise spot checks to give more meaningful results. Measuring new areas has led to a drop in the compliance level reported, but we expect this to improve following feedback to the team. The number of cases checked this month was small, so each case checked had a large impact on overall results. Issues found were guidance not being followed for producing context information for our partners, and triage and report production being outside of time-based service levels. Checking showed there were no issues with the quality of process reports.
			Timeliness	
			Quality	
			Overall	

We are providing additional slides to cover recent changes to our education quality assurance model. These changes do not need any decisions – they are provided so the Committee is aware of the changes and knows what to expect in relation to them (where applicable). We have identified these areas for improvement out of internal process audits (undertaken by our Quality Assurance team) and through our ‘complex case reviews’, which are a normal part of our continuous improvement activities.

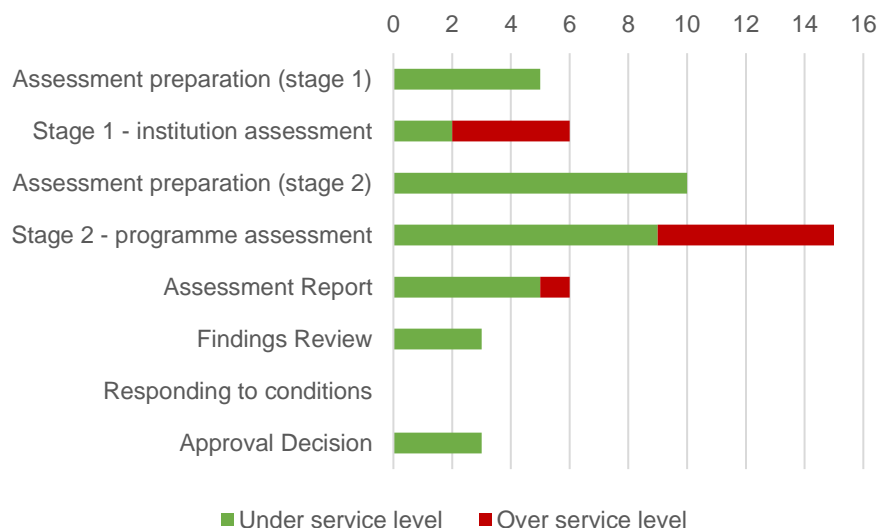
Change	Risks/issues addressed	What the Committee should expect
Developed our expectations for degree apprenticeship programmes, to ensure employers are in place at the point of approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers are an essential part of degree apprenticeship programmes, and it is not possible to meet several of our standards of education and training (SETs) if employer(s) are not in place. Learners spend 80% of their time with the employer, and therefore agreements need to be in place with specific employer(s) to ensure the education and training is of good quality and learners are supported. Several education providers currently going through an approval assessment have proposed new degree apprenticeship programmes where they have not identified employer(s). We have approved a small number of apprenticeship programmes where employer(s) are not in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval reports for degree apprenticeship programmes will define who the employer(s) involved in the programme are. We will undertake an internal exercise to review all previously approved degree apprenticeship programmes, and undertake remedial work where required with education providers where employers were not in place through approval assessments. Where remedial work is required, we will submit focused review reports to ETP with outcomes of our assessments, for decisions to be made about any future action required. Longer term, there may be linked developments to our standards in the SETs review.
New triage thresholds for degree apprenticeship proposals, to ensure we properly consider the context of existing provision at the education provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of our normal approval process, we undertake an internal triage of approval requests, to consider alignment of proposed programmes with the institution ‘baseline’ (which defines how the education provider meets institution-level standards). When there is broad alignment, we do not reassess institution level standards through a partner-led review. It is important that we understand that degree apprenticeship programmes are run differently to traditional HEI programmes, when undertaking this initial triage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When there are no HCPC-approved degree apprenticeship programme(s) at an education provider, and that provider proposes a new degree apprenticeship programme, we will undertake a partner-led stage 1 (institution level) of the approval process. This enables a full review of how institution-level standards are met to underpin the running of a degree apprenticeship programme. Approval reports for degree apprenticeship programmes will define the route through stage 1 of the approval process, which clearly covers whether the provider already delivered HCPC-approved degree apprenticeship programme(s).

Change	Risks/issues addressed	What the Committee should expect
Introducing a requirement to physically visit new education providers to the HCPC through stage 1 of their approval assessment (from September 2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We undertake a partner-led assessment of institution-level standards when an education provider is new to the HCPC. This involves a detailed assessment of evidence provided by the education provider, and a decision that these standards are met, before progressing to stage 2 (programme level) of the assessment. Once the provider is approved, it can propose new programmes (which align with how the institution functions), which would normally pass through an executive-led stage 1 of the approval process (i.e. the institution level standards are not reviewed again by partners). This is appropriate under our quality assurance (QA) model and is in line with our intentions to reduce regulatory burden. Institution-level approval has potentially wide reaching consequences for the reasons noted above, and we have seen some providers introduce new programmes at scale in short timeframes, which rely on the original institution-level judgement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From September 2025, we will introduce a requirement to physically visit education providers who are new to HCPC approval. This will form part of the quality activities we undertake, and will enable us to triangulate information provided through the education provider's documentary submission, by talking to staff and reviewing facilities. The change will enable us to better define any potential risks and issues with how institution-level standards are met, with the understanding that approving the education provider could lead to further programmes being developed that will rely on the set up and facilities of the institution. Approval reports for education providers who are new to HCPC approval will cover the physical visit as part of the quality activities section of the stage 1 assessment.
Additional spot checks, and clearer definition of benchmarking statements for internal reviews	<p>We undertake 'spot checks' of a percentage of assessments as part of our internal review of the work of the team. These checks focus on key process points and decisions, are used to improve the work of the team, and reported to ELT and ETC as part of our performance reporting. We identified the need to develop spot checks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define clear benchmarking statements across all checks, so we are consistent in our application of whether criteria are met; Categorise checks so the data we report is more meaningful; Include new checks for our records change operational process, to ensure accuracy of changes and improve internal record keeping; and Include new checks for our assessment planning activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing new checks enables us to identify issues with process compliance in areas we have not formally checked before. Therefore, we have seen a dip in overall check results, which we expect to see returning to within our KPI expectations once we have fed back to the team (see slide 2). We have provided checks broken down into different categories through this report (slide 2), which enables a better sense of where issues lie (whether those are linked to quality, administration, or timeliness).

Change	Risks/issues addressed	What the Committee should expect
Moving consideration of SET 1 (level of qualification for entry to the Register) from the institution-level to programme-level (from September 2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When defining the institution/programme level split in our standards, we decided that SET 1 should be considered at the institution-level, because it should be possible for the institution to define how they ensure their academic qualifications are delivered to the level expected through SET 1. Since defining this, we have assessed two programmes proposed as 'equivalent' to a Bachelors level with honours, delivered by organisations without degree-awarding powers who do not have a validating relationship with an HEI. Making a judgement about equivalence to the level required by SET 1 has not been possible without reviewing programme curricula, which is not covered when assessing institution level standards (as part of stage 1 of approval assessments), because the detail of the programme is linked to programme-level standards (which are considered in stage 2). There is also the possibility that an existing provider (who meets institution-level standards), may propose a programme below SET 1, and in these circumstances the assessment of SET 1 would need to be referred to stage 2 of the approval process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SET 1 will be covered in stage 2 of the approval process, enabling full consideration of whether SET 1 is met alongside the detail of a programme's curriculum. Approval reports for all programmes will include a summary of how SET 1 is met / not met, and where appropriate quality activities and any conditions will cover SET 1. Longer term, there may be linked developments to our standards in the SETs review.

Approval process – performance

Number of active cases - by case stage



Active cases

- Most cases are in active assessment or reporting stages – this means we are proactively reviewing education providers and programmes against our standards, or writing up reports on outcomes.
- Most of these programmes have September 2025 start dates. Several of these cases are complex, which is the reason for the seven cases over service levels within the relevant stages.

Conditions applied on approval

- An explicit aim of moving to our current quality assurance model was to frontload regulatory burden and reduce the number of formal 'conditions' applied when approving programmes.
- We still hold providers and programmes to the same high standards, but work with them to fix problems early, rather than resorting to formal requirement setting through conditions.
- We have not set any conditions in the three month period.

Observations

- Low levels of observations show process outcomes are acceptable to providers, and that we have undertaken a fair assessment.
- We have received no observations for cases concluded in the three month period.

Approval duration

- Performance has remained at red, but we have seen a reduction in time taken to conclude stage 2 of the process in this report.

Completed cases

Period	Number completed	Conditions set (% of cases)	Observations received (% of cases)	Stage 1 age at stage conclusion (months)	Stage 2 age at case conclusion (months)
Last month	5	▶ 0	▶ 0	N/A	▼ 5.4
Last 3 months	9	▶ 0	▶ 0	N/A	▼ 5.5
Target		Less than 20%	Less than 5%	3 months	4 months

Professional pipeline

- We include this information to provide insight about learner number changes into the professions we regulate.
- Through our processes, we capture proposed learner numbers for each programme – figures presented through this table are not actual learner numbers, but are the maximum capacity we would expect programmes to be operating at.
- This data and information can be used by commissioning organisations and others to understand capacity within approved and proposed programmes.
- We are currently undertaking some further work with our Insight and Analytics team to match pass lists with this and registrant data, which should give a fuller picture of how capacity translates to the number of individuals with approved qualifications, and the number who then become registered.

Programme capacity

- Most professions have increased capacity in the last 12 months, and are predicted to increase capacity further if proposed programmes become approved.
- Within current commissioning systems, there is a potential overall increase in capacity of 9% over two years, with some professions significantly above this (e.g. hearing aid dispensers and speech and language therapists).

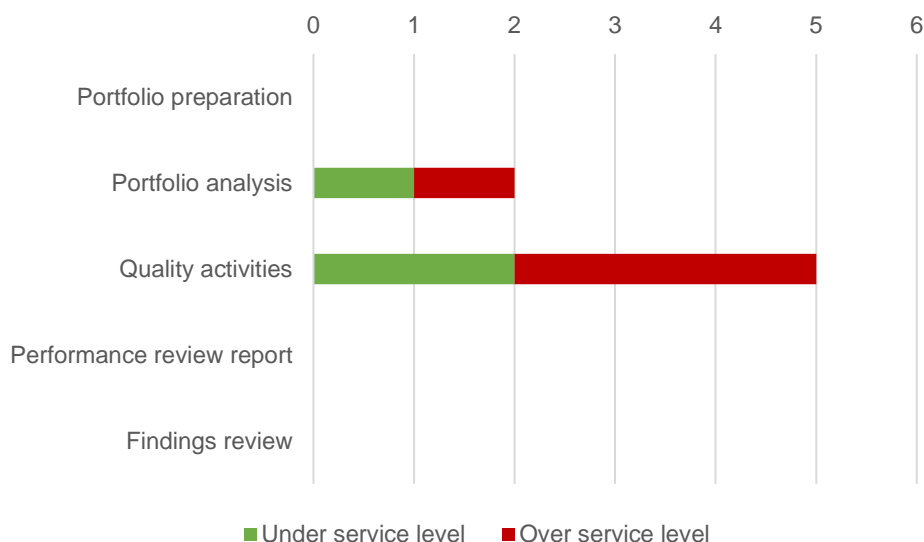
New programmes

- New programmes are currently being developed in all professions except orthoptists and prosthetists/orthotists.
- There are no programmes currently proposed in Northern Ireland.

Profession	Yearly capacity of approved and open programmes	Capacity change in the last 12 months (new programme numbers - closed programme numbers)	% change	Proposed programmes	Difference between future closures and proposed programmes	Potential capacity change, 12 months ago to future	% potential change
Arts therapist	927	20	2%	3	30	50	5%
Biomedical scientist	2,724	- 88	-3%	5	145	57	2%
Chiropodist / podiatrist	1,131	-	0%	7	91	91	8%
Clinical scientist	970	-	0%	3	30	30	3%
Dietitian	1,858	74	4%	3	45	119	6%
Hearing aid dispenser	1,082	75	7%	3	65	140	13%
Occupational therapist	6,156	132	2%	17	458	590	10%
Operating department practitioner	2,330	39	2%	3	100	139	6%
Orthoptist	276	-	0%	0	-	-	0%
Paramedic	6,674	208	3%	9	601	809	12%
Physiotherapist	8,265	90	1%	12	454	544	7%
Practitioner psychologist	3,526	- 50	-1%	7	162	112	3%
Prosthetist / orthotist	140	-	0%	0	-	-	0%
Radiographer	5,405	150	3%	10	492	642	12%
Speech and language therapist	2,348	160	7%	12	457	617	26%
Total	43,812	810	2%	94	3,130	3,940	9%

Performance review process

Number of active cases - by case stage



Current activity

- We have received portfolios from all education providers for assessments in this academic year. There are some challenges with meeting our service levels, as shown in the graph. These are currently being focused on by the team, to progress to the next case stage.

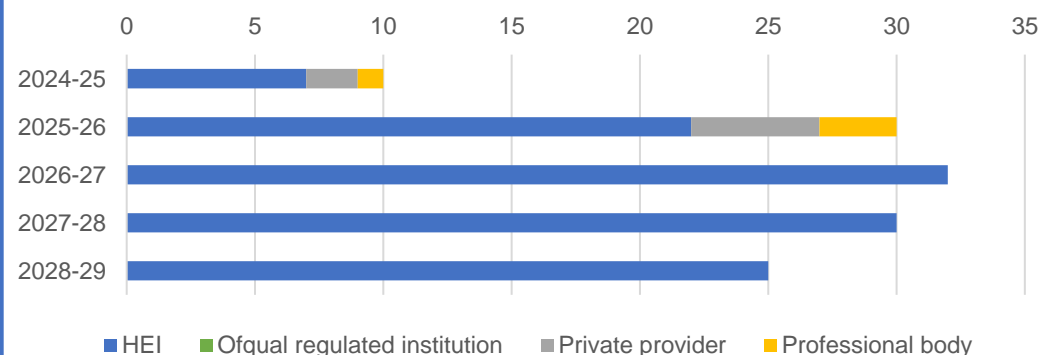
Review outcomes

- We concluded an assessment in March as planned, which took much longer than our service level of five months (12.8 months). This case was very complex – we discovered potentially significant problems at an education provider, which resulted in a wide range of quality activities including multiple documentary submissions, and a physical visit, to enable us to take assurance that our standards continued to be met. We took results of this to the ETP in March 2025.
- Variance in outcomes is driven mainly by provider type, which is mainly driven by providers not being included in HEI data returns and not establishing a data supply through the process.
- To remain confident with provider performance, we rely on regular supply of data and intelligence to help us understand provider performance outside of the periods where we directly engage with them
- The 2024-25 academic year has a smaller number of performance review submissions, with this picking back up again from 2025-26.

Completed cases

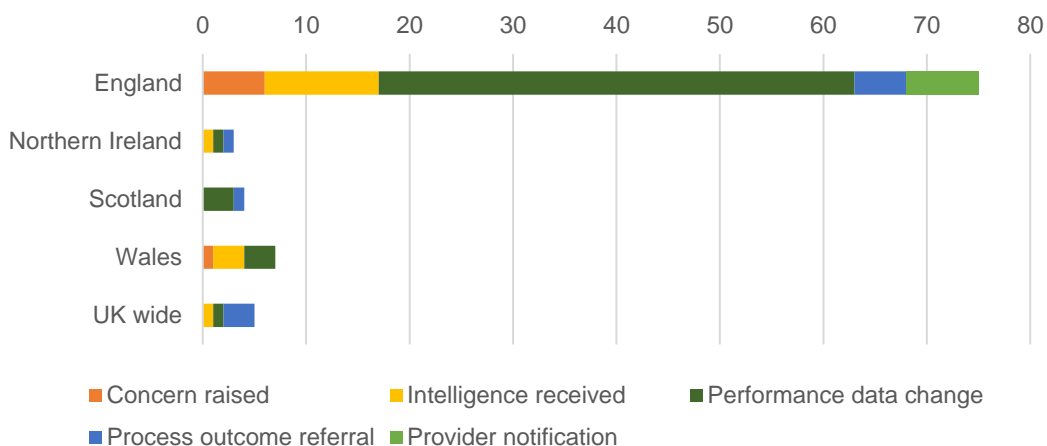
Period	Completed	Observations received (% of cases)	Age at case conclusion (months)
Last month	0	N/A	N/A
Last 3 months	1	100	▶ 12.8
Target		Less than 5%	5 months

Next review period outcomes

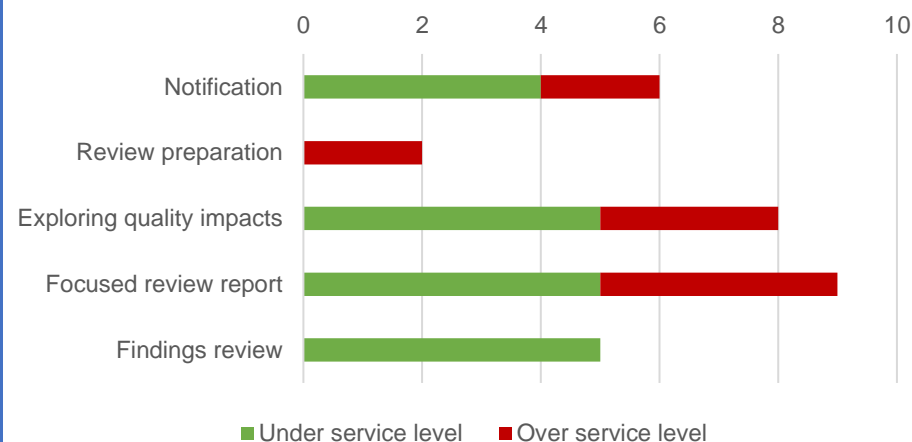


Focused review process

Focused review triggers - 12 months



Number of active cases - by case stage








Cases – received and completed

Period	Triggers received	Review required %	Number competed (full process)	Observations received (% of concluded cases)	Age at case conclusion (months)
Last month	3	tbc	4	►0	▲7.1
Last 3 months	12	▼41	4	►0	▼7.1
Target		50%		5%	5 months

- There are still too many assessments which are over service level, with about a third of cases being out of service levels relevant to their case stages
- The two case stages for which we have most direct control within the team are the notification (initial triage) and report stages – we are focused on progressing overdue cases to the next process stage, and on preventing cases ending up overdue in the first place.
- In the last month, we have reduced the number of focused review cases by four, which means we are now holding fewer open cases. This will reduce further once we close cases following ETP at the end of May (the five cases within 'findings review').
- The 'review preparation' and 'exploring quality impact' stage can take longer than our service levels, depending on education provider engagement and the complexity of the assessment leading to more detailed or multiple iterations of evidence gathering to reach our conclusions.

Assurance and current focus

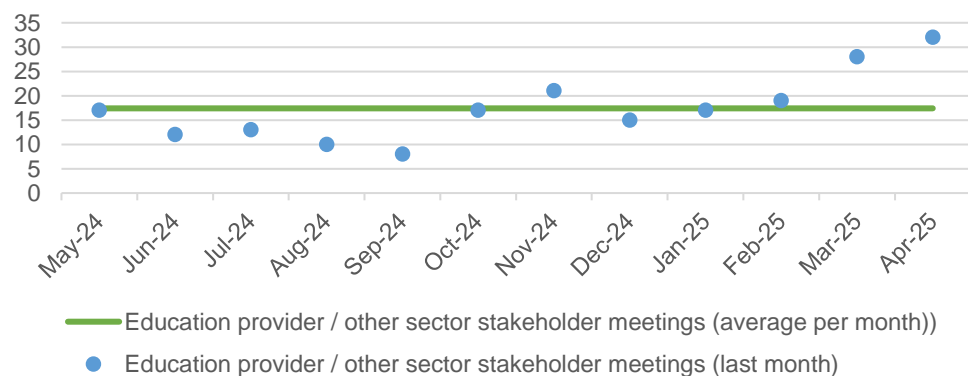
Current focus	Risks and issues	QA audit ratings		Recommendations delivered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering overdue cases in our backlog by the end of July 2025 Undertaking approval assessments for September 2025 programme starts Undertaking assessments through our performance review process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spike in reporting for review assessments (through HCPC-triggered review of education provider performance data) may lead to bottlenecks in delivery of assessments 	Approval		✓
		Performance review		✓
		Focused review		In progress
		Programme records		In progress
		Spot checks		In progress

Continuous improvement activity		
Planned	In progress	Completed (last three months)
Delivery of process improvements following audit of focused review process (Q1-2)	System for new clinical scientist modalities updated (Q1)	Developed mechanisms to understand education provider 'baseline' information through assessments (Q4)
	System development to ensure adherence to the minimum data set (Q1)	Improve quality and streamline ETP/C governance ways of working, for education assessment decision making (Q4)
	Ensure an accurate and auditable picture of closed programme records (Q1)	Refresh of partner feedback process for the team (Q4)
	Establish EQO peer review of reports for quality checking (Q1-2)	Develop spot checks following conclusion of audit (Q1)
	Delivery of process improvements following audit of programme records change process (Q1)	

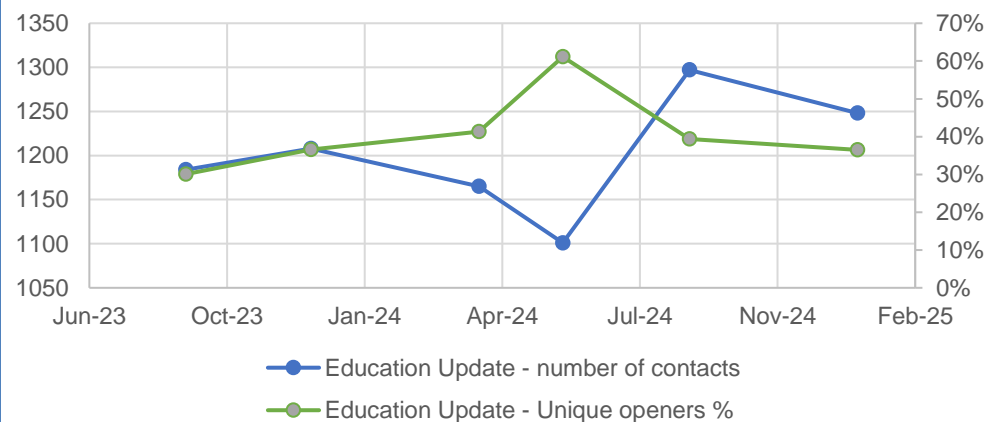
Stakeholder engagement

- We have included further metrics in this section, to help the reader understand engagement over time, including what normal looks like with our engagement activities.
- We are currently developing further measures internally, and will develop this section further in the coming months.

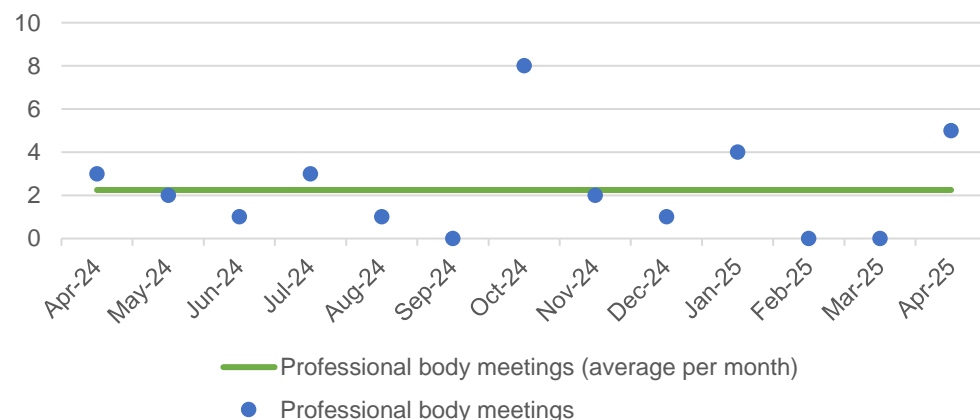
Education provider / other stakeholder 1-2-1 meetings



Education Update e-newsletter engagement



Professional body 1-2-1 meetings



Highlights



HCPC contributing to cross-regulator consideration of AI in education, and the use of data in decision making



Continued work to establish formal information sharing with professional bodies – we have now established arrangements with **seven** professional bodies

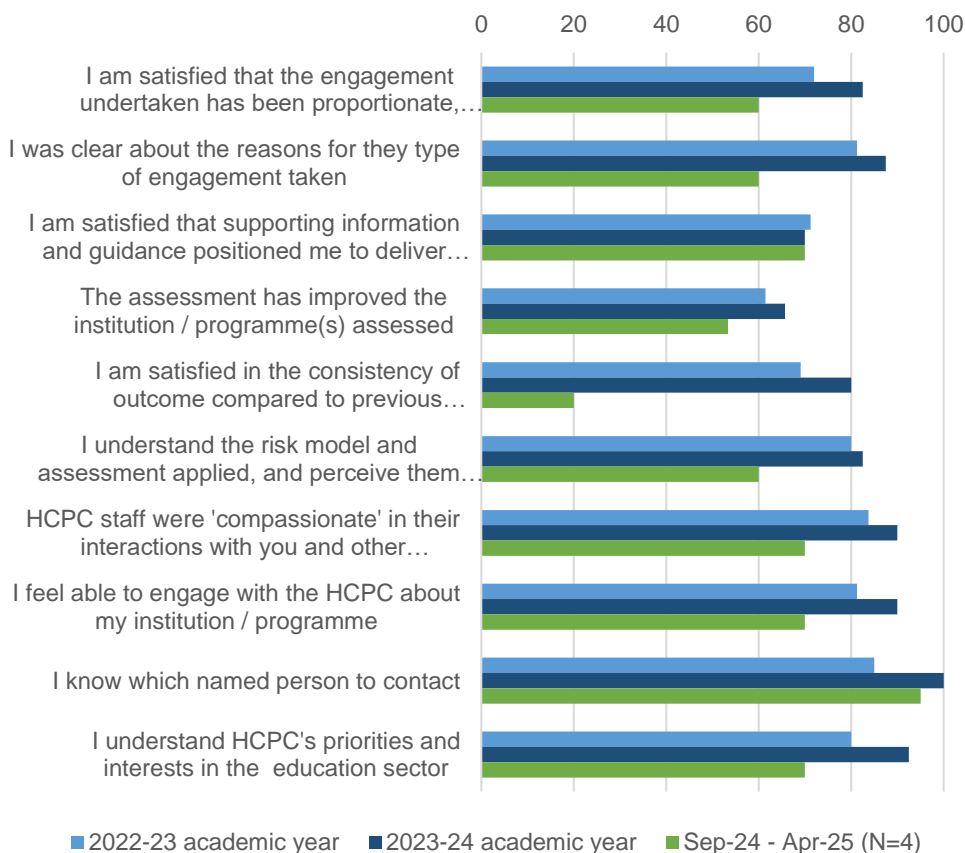


Engagement with key contacts at NHSE following government announcement of merger with DHSC

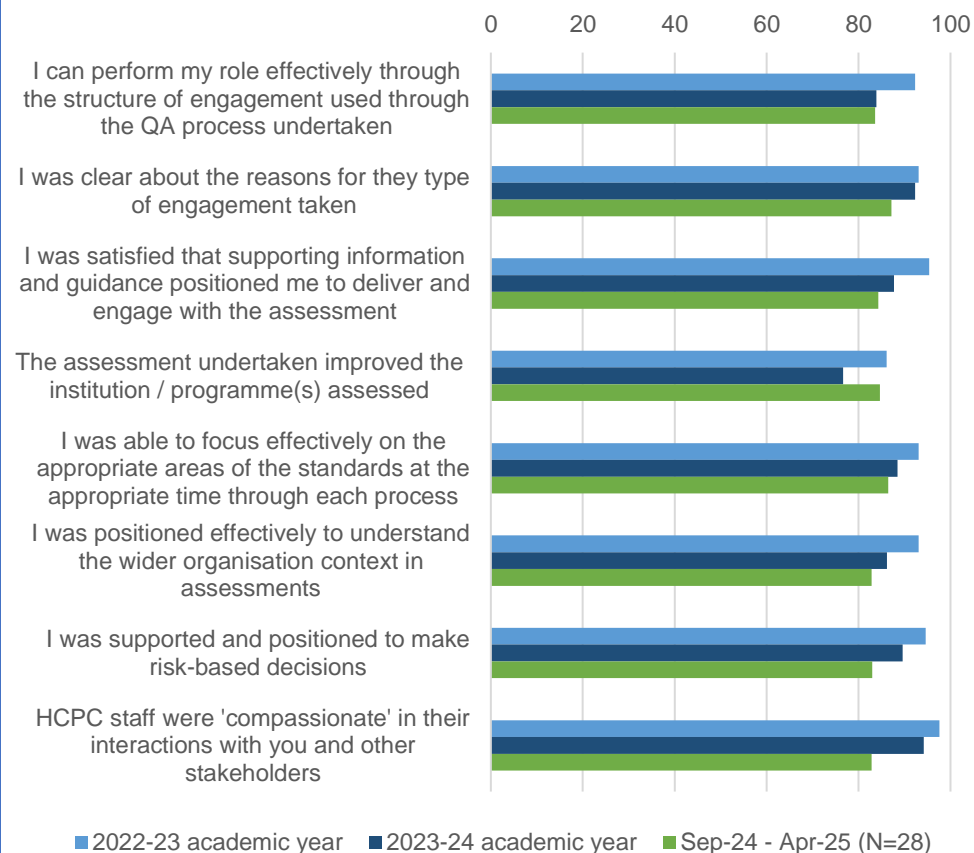
Stakeholder feedback

- We have included this information to show stakeholder experience and views of our processes – the generally high satisfaction ratings should be seen as a positive.
- This data is from a post-process survey, and is collated since we started running in September 2022.
- We have used results from the whole of the 2022-23 and 2023-24 academic years as baselines, which we compare recent results against in real time.
- It is worth noting that the satisfaction ratings for education providers are lower than historic numbers – this was due to one education provider who reported a poor experience with an assessment, which has impacted the figures due to low numbers of respondents. We will work with this education provider to understand how their experience can be improved in the future.

Education provider satisfaction rating

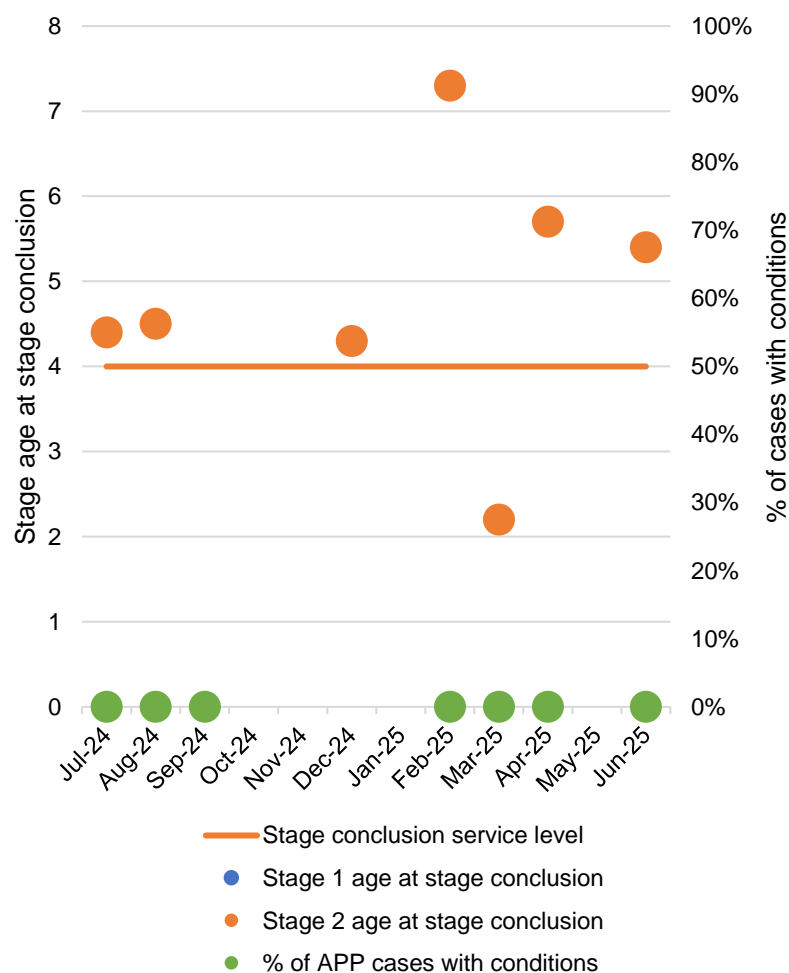


Partner satisfaction rating



Appendix – historical performance

Approval process KPIs - 12 months



Performance review and focused review KPIs - 12 months

