

Health Education England's response to nursing associate consultation

Background

Between 28 January and 12 March 2016 Health Education England (HEE) consulted on proposals to introduce a new 'nursing associate' role in England. The Council's response to this consultation can be found [here](#).

On 26 May HEE published its response to the consultation [*Building Capacity to Care and Capability to Treat: A new team member for Health and Social Care in England*](#)

Overview of the publication

HEE's 61 page response to the nursing associate consultation summarises the 1,384 responses received by question posed. At the end of each section HEE has set out its proposals for the role.

HEE reports that the majority of consultation respondents welcomed the new role but wanted the role to be defined with a clear scope of practice and a robust education and training framework. HEE is now launching a programme of work based on four geographical workshops to develop the scope of practice, required knowledge, skills and competencies, to develop a curriculum and establish test sites (p.47).

Appendix F of the document sets out an indicative scope of practice for nursing associates. This includes administration of prescribed medicines. It is proposed that nursing associates will deliver care under the direction of a registered nurse but will not require direct supervision.

HEE intends to recruit 1,000 nursing associate students to start in January 2017.

Regulation of the role

The majority of consultation respondents felt that nursing associates should be regulated with a minority believing it should be a registered role. Most named the NMC as the most appropriate regulatory body.

HEE response to nursing associate consultation

Purpose

This briefing document has been written to summarise HEE's response to the nursing associate consultation

Publication date 26 May 2016

Relevance for CoDH members

This is relevant mostly to members in England with potential implications for other nations over time.

Contact details for further information

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HEE has decided that it is necessary to define the role before deciding if it is appropriate to recommend its regulation (4.26).

Paragraph 4.65 states:

“The decision as to whether to regulate the role must be made on the basis of the knowledge, skills and competencies required for the role and the scope of practice for the Nursing Associate. If once this is defined, NHS Improvement, NHS England, HEE and the NMC assess there are risks to patient safety, they will consider the appropriate level of regulation (if any) and HEE will work with the Department of Health to take this forward”.

Progression into the role and into Registered Nursing

HEE says it will ensure that issues of progression and accreditation of prior learning are central to the forthcoming work with stakeholders, creating clarity with regard to progression into the nursing associate role as well as potential progression into Registered Nurse training (4.34).

HEE says that respondents to the consultation supported opportunities for progression into Registered Nursing and expressed an appetite for a qualification with a defined and regulated scope of practice mapped to the pre-registration nursing standards (4.49).

The link to apprenticeships

In general there was support for an apprenticeship route. HEE has stated that it is fully committed to developing proposals to deliver training for the Nursing Associate through the apprenticeship route (4.54).