



Future Nurse Implementation Oversight Board

1. Briefing 11 October 2018

The Council of Deans of Health UK (the Council) represents the UK's 84 university faculties engaged in education and research for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals. At any one time our members will be educating nearly 120,000 future registered health professionals. We are committed to working in partnership, strengthening membership engagement and intelligence gathering to influence policy UK-wide for high quality education and research. The Council welcomes the establishment of the Future Nurse Implementation Oversight Board and looks forward to supporting the effective implementation of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) future nurse standards to ensure a positive education experience and outcome for students as the future leaders of care.

2. The Council's work to date

The Council has been actively involved in the development of the future nurse standards through a series of face to face focus groups involving strategic leaders in higher education and research, nurse educators and employers across the UK. We have also positively engaged with the NMC's sponsoring board and thought leadership group. We have welcomed the new approach to standards, strengthening the leadership of future nurses and ensuring a contemporary and relevant approach to their education.

Since the publication of the future nurse standards by the NMC in May 2018, the Council has been involved in a range of events to better prepare our membership for implementation. In July we held a workshop for 2019 early adopters to support educators in their curriculum development and practice partner arrangements. A second workshop focused on the NMC's new quality assurance model will take place in November 2018. A workshop for 2020 adopters of the new standards is intended by April 2019. These events have been organised in collaboration with the NMC. In addition to this the Council has facilitated conversations with our members and the NMC around new practice assessment documents (PAD).

3. The oversight board terms of reference

We welcome the Oversight Board's focus on system readiness for the effective implementation of the future nurse standards. We hope the following comments will be helpful to shape the terms of reference at the first meeting of the board.

3.1. Aims of the board

Most students on nursing education programmes in England will be educated as part of a tuition fee three-year degree based in a higher education institution (HEIs). There will be other education

programmes that students may follow including postgraduate two-year degrees and higher apprenticeships. The Oversight Board will need to ensure there is a balanced discussion in relation to the different education routes to reflect student numbers and areas that have most impact.

Placement capacity is an area of focus and concern to enable effective delivery of the standards. This is both in relation to quality and availability of placements to enable growth and diversity of settings, for example placements in relation to primary care and community settings. We highly recommend this is picked up as an important area of focus for the aims of this board.

3.2. Membership of the board

There will be nearly 90 HEIs in the UK delivering programmes against the future nurse standards. To ensure there is a strategic and sector approach to the discussions, we recommend our Council is represented by its Executive Director, while the board also invites two HEIs as additional members, one being an early adopter from England and one from another country (Wales or Scotland). The HEI outside England could support the board's aim of UK benchmarking whilst the early adopter from England will provide a hands-on provider perspective. We note the absence of an early adopter service provider to the board and highly recommend there is one. We support the inclusion of a student on the board and are very happy to recommend one from our student leadership programme. Given that this is a national board (as opposed to national and regional) there is a question as to whether the regional members should be meeting separately and reporting to this board.

3.3. Other engagement mechanisms

We believe ongoing engagement of the higher education and practice sectors in the implementation of the standards will help support effective delivery while it will also inform the Oversight Board on areas of challenge and pressure points. The Oversight Board may thus consider as part of a wider engagement plan how we can all facilitate effective task and finish groups to ensure what is discussed nationally is filtered through locally and vice versa. This will help both with evidence gathering and dissemination. The Oversight Board may co-opt as appropriate leaders of task and finish groups from outside its membership.

3.4. Governance

There is a need to ensure recommendations from this board particularly affecting departmental budgets and expenditure are reported at the highest level within departments. We therefore suggest the Chair of the Oversight Board reports both to senior officials in the Department of Health and Social Care (regarding CPD funding and practice placement capacity issues), Department of Education (regarding postgraduate funding and implications for apprenticeships) and Office for Students (regarding vulnerabilities and strategic interventions funding). We are assuming that there will be a reporting mechanism to the governing Council of the NMC regarding recommendations on their quality assurance process but would seek clarification of this point.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD) are essential in enabling the existing workforce to deal with new developments, including the entry to the workforce of nurses trained to future nurse standards. There were cuts to local CPD budgets in 2016 of up to 45 per cent as the result of a decision taken at national level to reduce workforce development funding by 49 per cent. 2017 saw further cuts. Funding for the existing workforce is critical to ensure that they can effectively absorb the introduction of nurses practising to the future nurse standards and better meet patient needs. Funding should also be made available to support the development of cohorts of practice supervisors and assessors. Whilst we expect many of these individuals to be currently undertaking the role of mentor to existing students, these new roles are fundamentally different. These individuals will therefore need assistance to step into these roles and the financial support and time to do so.

System readiness

The health and social care system is under immense pressure due to a variety of factors. This includes greater patient demand; workforce capacity issues; and financial pressures. The new standards require education and practice to work collaboratively to ensure that students 'experience the variety of practice expected of registered nurses to meet the holistic needs of people of all ages'¹. This is true for nurses across all fields and settings. Practice placement capacity, in the context outlined above, is a major issue in enabling all nursing students to access a sufficient range of practice placement experiences to meet the holistic healthcare needs of the population.

The Council is particularly concerned about practice placement capacity in primary and community settings. Simultaneously, the new standards for student supervision and assessment create a new tripartite model to replace mentorship. This will involve a practice supervisor, practice assessor and academic assessor. The Council supports this change but notes the increased burden that this will cause to the system at a time of existing pressure.

The NMC quality assurance process

The Council commends the work of the NMC in developing and finalising the future nurse standards. However, any delay in the delivery of the NMC's quality assurance process will have a detrimental effect on the ability of approved education institutions (AEIs) to deliver newly approved nursing programmes.

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¹The Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2018, Part 3: Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes, p10

