

NHS England Thames Valley and Wessex Primary Care School – Training Hubs

Reference guide for Primary Care Network Learning Environment approval document

Introduction

NHS England's (NHSE) Workforce Education and Training Directorate (formerly Health Education England) is responsible for the quality assurance of the education and training of healthcare learners in England. The assurance and approval of Primary Care Learning Environments (PCLEs) has been delegated to local Primary Care School teams.

Purpose

The [Primary Care Environment Learning Environment Approval document](#) forms the application for Primary Care Networks (PCNs) to gain approval as a PCLE.

Historically, management of learning environments has been at individual practice level, which focusses the work on a few individuals within that one practice. With a move to PCN-wide learning environments, PCNs will have the opportunity to host learners across multiple practices, creating an integrated pathway for learning.

NHSE's Thames Valley and Wessex Primary Care School (TVW PCS) recognise the key role that PCNs take in increasing the workforce in Primary Care and will work with PCN teams to expand their educational capacity to develop and support a sustainable workforce, to grow and support learners across all professions.

This document does **not** include the approval of Educators / Supervisors, which will remain the responsibility of the relevant governing body.

Principles for managing approval of Primary Care Network Learning Environments in Primary Care

- To expand educational capacity, processes will be seamless, applicable at scale and to all learners:
 - It is anticipated that a Learning Environment is considered a PCN where Primary Care placements occur and covers all types of Primary Care learners
 - Placements within the PCN may include GP practices, care homes, Out of Hours services (OOH), community pharmacies, voluntary organisations, and other emerging placements
 - Categories of learners who could be placed in the environment following recognition depends on the educators available, but could include GP trainees, nurses, allied health professionals, pharmacy learners, physician associates, dental trainees, nursing associates, and new / emerging roles
- The application will be coordinated across the PCN with a named leader who takes leadership responsibility for the educator network in that PCN
- The approval of a PCN level Learning Environment will be undertaken jointly or after liaison with education partners including Higher and Further Education providers and where appropriate regulators
- The approach will be risk-based in line with other approval processes within [Health Education England's Quality Framework \(2021\)](#):
 - Established sources of information, such as CQC reports, will be utilised to inform approval processes
 - Where risks or concerns are raised, NHSE Local Quality Teams and Primary Care Schools will work together with placement and education providers to address these concerns in accordance with the relevant escalating concerns pathways
- The process for Primary Care Learning Environment Approval is mapped to the [Health Education England Quality Framework \(2021\)](#) which provides clear specifications to assure the quality of clinical Learning Environment placements

Health Education England Quality Framework (2021)

The [Quality Framework](#) underpins the principles and strategy, setting out the standards NHS England's Workforce, Training and Education Directorate (formerly Health Education England) expects of clinical learning placements. Including the principles of continuous quality improvement, innovation and reflecting the professional frameworks and regulations across the whole system, in all clinical Learning Environments and for all learner groups.

The framework comprises six core domains:

1. **Learning environment and culture** - the settings learners are located and the activity of education and training

2. **Educational governance and commitment to quality** – the organisational ethos, priorities, and policies in place to support learning
3. **Developing and supporting learners** – the resources, support and tools learners need to succeed
4. **Developing and supporting supervisors** – the resources and support required by those overseeing the clinical and educational development of learners
5. **Delivering programmes and curricula** – how organisations provide for learners' education and training needs including collaboration with the wider system to achieve this
6. **Developing a sustainable workforce** – how the organisation improves retention and develops the whole workforce

Each domain has an overview of standards, which overlap and are interdependent. The standards are supported by descriptors which act as a guide for evidence to be included within the submission.

Overview of process for completing the PCN Learning Environment Approval document

The [PCN Learning Environment Approval document](#) is to be used to quality assure a Primary Care organisation for learner placements. It should form the basis for a discussion about the culture, leadership and governance of the Learning Environment and ways in which learning opportunities are offered, as well as enabling a discussion about the skills and experience of the 'educators' and their development needs.

NHSE Thames Valley and Wessex Primary Care School (TVW PCS) will administrate this process for PCNs across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB), Frimley and Hampshire and Isle of Wight (HIOW).