

# HEE Quality Strategy 2016 – 2020



Developing people  
for health and  
healthcare

[www.hee.nhs.uk](http://www.hee.nhs.uk)

## Foreword

Health Education England is responsible for ensuring that there are high quality learning environments for all healthcare learners. In order to drive greater improvements in the quality of education and training across England, we are pleased to launch HEE's Quality Strategy 2016 – 2020, and our associated multi-professional HEE Quality Framework. Together they set out how HEE will measure, recognise and improve quality in the education and training environment, including the significant impact that excellent educational leadership and the culture within an organisation has on the experience and outcomes of learners, and the experience and empowerment of patients as partners in their care.

They set out our shared ambition for quality improvement, innovation and transformation through a focus of 'commissioning for quality' and how our system leadership in the education and training landscape at local and national level will galvanise behind a common vision, understanding and view of quality.

The HEE Quality Framework has been developed under the leadership of the HEE Postgraduate Deans. They will oversee the implementation of it at local level as part of their multi-professional remit, in partnership with our learners, placement providers and Higher Education Institutions. The Quality Strategy and Quality Framework are intended to be dynamic documents that will evolve over time to reflect the transformation of the healthcare learning environment. During the

implementation of the framework in 2016/17, local teams will test and refine its use, alongside partners. We have a significant programme of research planned to move our understanding and measurement of quality in education and training towards a more outcome and evidence based approach. To demonstrate how our leadership and investment activities for quality deliver direct improvements in the experience and outcomes for patients, and ostensibly, to the transformation of the workforce aligned to the ambitions of the Five Year Forward View.

By improving the quality of training for students and trainees, we will deliver a workforce with the right skills, values and behaviours to ensure high quality care for patients;



Sir Keith Pearson



Professor Ian Cumming



Professor Wendy Reid

“**Training is patient safety  
for the next thirty years”**

Professor Sir John Temple – Time for Training, May 2010.

# 1. Introduction



Health Education England (HEE) exists for one reason only: to support the delivery of excellent healthcare and health improvement in partnership with patients and public across England by ensuring that the workforce of today and tomorrow has the right numbers, skills, values and behaviours, at the right time and in the right place.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessments delivered by both educational providers and placement providers affects the learning outcomes and the assurance that Professional Regulators are able to provide to patients, the public and employers that newly qualified professionals are safe and able to practise to the required standard at the point of registration.

For HEE, the quality of teaching, learning and assessments, particularly in work based placements, lies at the heart of our responsibility in the NHS. The correlation between quality of education and training for learners and its link to quality and outcomes for patients is well understood by HEE.

The Care Act, 2014, outlines HEE's responsibility for securing continuous improvement in the quality of education and training provided for health care workers; and via this, continuous improvement in the quality of health services. This Quality Strategy, developed in co-production across HEE and with our wider stakeholders and partners, describes how we will ensure that quality is at the heart of and is the driving force for that agenda.

This Quality Strategy describes HEE's vision for how we will use our levers, leadership and influence to assure and continuously improve the learning environment. It will set out;

- HEE's responsibilities for the quality agenda and our multi-professional leadership offer to the education and training system for healthcare,
- How HEE will build stronger collaborative alignments with the wider health and care system, to drive quality improvement in education and training,
- How HEE will align our resources to make the most effective and efficient use of our education infrastructure, investment, leadership and capability,
- Introduce a single multi-professional HEE Quality Framework to ensure a consistent approach to quality improvement across work based learning and assessment for all healthcare learners.

It will enable HEE to ensure high quality work-based learning environments in order to ensure that the current and future workforce are equipped to deliver new and innovative models of care, work across new and integrated care settings and support the ambitions of the Five Year Forward View, whilst ensuring high quality services in partnership with patients.

## 2. Context and Background

### 2.1 Capabilities and Culture

HEE is one organisation, built on a legacy of localism and collaborative partnerships. A recent audit highlighted that HEE's local teams have developed their own, quite distinctive, quality frameworks and quality management processes in response to local need and key challenges. The basis of this local work has helped to shape our national Quality Strategy and Framework. However, this local context has meant that HEE has not, until now, had a shared vision or definition of what we mean by quality in the learning environment.

We have used different measures and benchmarks and applied them in various ways. The management of our local partnerships and quality arrangements through the Learning and Development Agreement also varies across the country. This has created frustration and duplication of efforts for providers that have quality management relationships with more than one Local Office as well as duplicating effort within HEE. Similarly, Professional Regulators experience different working arrangements with HEE local teams, when a more consistent corporate approach, with clear delineation between our respective roles and responsibilities would be more effective.

There are complex systems across the quality and learner support infrastructures within HEE, with many interdependencies, but this has sometimes resulted in duplication and silo working. Local teams have historically built and funded these infrastructures in diverse ways, in line with local arrangements. Quality assurance and quality improvement of education and training has typically been organised separately for undergraduate and postgraduate medical, pre-registration and post-registration non-medical learners, as well as apprenticeships and Agenda for Change pay bands 1 – 4. However, as HEE has an overarching responsibility for the quality of education for all learner groups, there is an opportunity to ensure effective oversight of where training is succeeding, and help to create and share new solutions where there are concerns about quality.

Increasingly, through the Postgraduate Deans and wider leadership infrastructure, HEE has

been building a greater multi-professional context to ensuring and improving quality and managing work place based learning and assessment. This has demonstrably improved education standards across professional groups, enabled greater recognition and sharing of best practice and enabled the development of an improved 'offer' from HEE to providers.

Through the investment currently made for placement fees of almost £1.5 billion (across undergraduate and postgraduate medical and non-medical placements) and in the infrastructure that supports quality management of £120m, HEE makes a substantial commitment to the quality assurance and quality improvement across healthcare education and training.

The Quality Strategy is intended to further enable this, whilst providing a national consistent framework on which we will work. The Strategy describes HEE's commitment to align our efforts locally and nationally and to the emerging educational market, so that HEE can ensure;

- A shared vision, standards and measures for quality and quality improvement in education and training to ensure a clear and comparable view at national and local level,
- An informed choice for learners and a strategic approach to how HEE will influence future healthcare education and training provision,
- Identifying, endorsing and promoting high quality placements that invests educational resources and supports all learners,
- The right balance between national consistency and local enablement,
- A cohesive multi-professional leadership across the learning infrastructure, to support continuous quality improvement and offer support where it is required,
- Efficient use of quality data and information collection and use and a proportionate, risk-based approach to quality oversight,
- Ensures that patient safety and quality of care are at the heart of what we do by demonstrating that our investment supports the delivery of quality in the experience and outcomes for patients.



In order to realise our shared ambitions for consistent and improved quality in the learning environment, HEE will align our educational infrastructure and leadership behind our educational investments and these will be underpinned by the HEE Quality Framework. Local teams will provide multi-professional leadership and learner support, in collaboration with placement providers, educators, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and learners. They will also continue to build on the excellent work to ensure patient and public involvement is culturally enshrined and can therefore influence decision making in course development, curriculum setting and learner selection.

This leadership offer will ensure quality of placement experience and learning for all learners, from young people undertaking entry vocational qualifications for a career in healthcare, to all undergraduates in professional programmes. It will enable multi-professional support and promote inter-professional learning, in order to develop a flexible and adaptable workforce. HEE's local quality infrastructure and wider partnership networks are well placed to offer models of multi-professional support to underpin this and promote the value of inter-professional working and learning in the workplace, through;

- Promoting a culture that maximises the learning opportunities for learners across all sectors and services delivering placement teaching and learning,
- Ensuring all learners have access to equitable and high quality support across their learner pathway aligned with their current education programmes and preparation for future healthcare careers,
- Maximising the passion, expertise, strengths and commitment of the education infrastructure and wider partnership networks,
- Removing unnecessary duplication, reducing the collective burden and aligning efforts to maximise quality improvement activities,
- Ensuring that learners, partners and stakeholders understand the role, purpose and contributions of HEE's learning infrastructure.

At local level, Postgraduate Deans will work with their teams and wider learner support networks to identify opportunities to maximise the effectiveness of investment and ensure added value across all activities.

## 2.2 The Healthcare Education and Training Market

The Comprehensive Spending Review and the Higher Education Green Paper consultation document Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice, published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS) on 6 November, 2015, will undoubtedly change the healthcare educational market and introduce an open and mixed economy for learners, providers and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Trainees and students within the placement environment will be learners from publicly and privately funded courses, learning alongside postgraduate medical trainees, apprentices and staff engaged in lifelong learning. HEE's conversations with placement providers will be about ensuring and supporting quality of that environment for all healthcare learners and through this support high quality care. We will want to be assured that investments in post-graduate medical, dental and healthcare science training and learner placements, supports improvement in quality of the entire learning environment and in doing so, ensures the NHS can attract and retain high calibre healthcare staff, capable of providing quality in patient care, reflecting

the NHS Constitution and the ability to adapt to the evolving service models of the future health and care system.

In line with the green paper proposals, a new Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) will introduce a kite mark of quality for HEIs, linked to rewards for greater autonomy and financial incentives to increase tuition fees. HEIs will want to ensure and be assured about the quality of all learner placements aligned to their programmes, and will want to be cognisant of the HEE Quality Framework as an evidence based model for this. In this context, there are opportunities for a different kind of partnership across HEE, HEIs, providers, educators and learners in this new context. HEE is committed to building on our partnership working with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, to encourage and facilitate alignments between the TEF and the HEE Quality Framework to ensure we collectively maximise the opportunities and ensure effort is not duplicated.

*HEE's conversations with placement providers will be about ensuring and supporting quality of that environment for all healthcare learners and through this support high quality care.*

## 3. HEE's Quality Ambition

One of HEE's greatest impacts on the development of the current and future workforce is around quality and in particular our fundamental understanding of the correlation between quality of education and training and quality of patient care. HEE is the only national system-wide leadership organisation concerned with the whole work based learning environment for all learner groups. Through our Quality Strategy and Quality Framework, HEE will set the standards, benchmarks and ambition for quality and quality improvement across the healthcare education and training landscape. As part of this, HEE will provide constructive challenge and support for quality improvement where this is needed.

In implementing this Quality Strategy, HEE will provide a unique offer to the health and care system and assume the role of custodian of the whole learning environment, providing oversight from a broad multi-professional perspective. Aligning our levers, leadership and influence behind this offer is crucial. In developing the HEE Quality Framework, we have co-produced a shared narrative about

HEE's position in the education and training landscape. HEE's responsibilities are to;

- Ensure value for money, innovation and the continuous improvement in the quality of education and training,
- Provide solutions in the current, new and future education and training landscape. We are seen as an 'honest broker' and supportive partner to improve quality in partnership with our learners, placement providers and HEIs,
- Provides a fair, proportionate and risk based approach to ensuring and improving quality, with a broad, multi-professional perspective that is fit for purpose,
- Form strong collaborative partnerships with our learners, placement providers, patients and the public, and HEIs,
- Retain the ability to determine when the quality of the learning environment is simply not good enough and requires action,
- Take a systematic approach to identifying, recognising, promoting and rewarding high quality learning environments and excellence in practice,
- Direct our transformation resources to ensure the highest quality education and training.

## 4. HEE Definition of Quality in the Learning Environment

In 2008 Lord Darzi refocused attention on the importance of high quality care. Darzi defined quality care as clinically effective, personal and safe, with patients treated with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect and this is the working definition used across the NHS. The National Quality Board (NQB) has recently undertaken to refresh the definition and further align the approaches of Arm's Length Bodies around a shared vision for quality across the healthcare system. An early part of establishing a HEE Quality Framework was to develop a collective clarity across HEE and our wider stakeholders about what we mean by quality in education and training. Our starting point was the Darzi definition, whilst reflecting that our focus is around workforce and the quality of learning environments.

“ Education and training within a well-led, effectively managed and supportive learning environment that provides opportunities for the current and future healthcare workforce to develop the knowledge, skills, values and behaviours to deliver the highest quality patient care.

**By high quality care we mean care that is clinically effective, safe and responsive, provides a positive experience for patients, and contributes to the health and wellbeing of the population.’**

HEE will continue to refresh our definition of quality in partnership with the National Quality Board and as our evidence base evolves.

## 5. Delivering the Quality Strategy

### 5.1. Quality Governance Arrangements

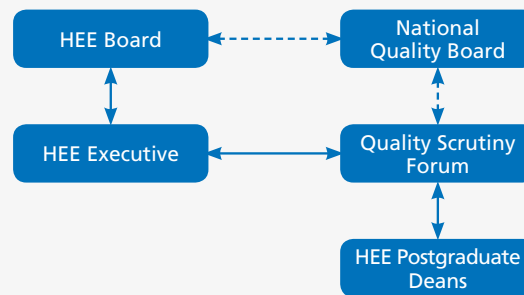
It is crucial for HEE to ensure that it has effective quality governance arrangements in place at national and local level that will enable us to;

- Assure learners, patients, families, carers and the wider community that the learning environment provides safe, effective and compassionate care and supports the development of a high quality healthcare workforce now and in the future,
- Continuously strive to listen and learn from the experience of patients, the public, students and trainees in order to improve quality of learning and the quality of patient care,
- Provide a framework which ensures there are effective structures and processes in place, with clearly defined roles, responsibilities and accountability, in relation to quality governance within HEE and with our wider partners and stakeholders,
- Ensure that information about quality is measured, analysed, challenged and used effectively and consistently to improve the learning environment,
- Ensure throughout the organisation that there is an awareness of risks to quality and ensure we take mitigating actions.

The governance arrangements outlined in the diagram Opposite, describes HEE's key leadership arrangements for the Quality Strategy. The Quality Scrutiny Forum, established in November 2015 is chaired by Professor David Croisdale-Appleby, HEE Non-Executive Director. Its membership also includes the National Director and Deputy National Director of Education and Quality, the Chair of HEE Postgraduate Deans, the geographical Directors of Education and Quality (DEQs) and the Head of Commissioning for Quality. It is a key part of HEE's emerging governance arrangements for quality and will provide oversight and accountability for the strategic direction and strategic risks for HEE across the Quality agenda.

The HEE Postgraduate Deans network, are HEE's leadership for quality and are the senior accountable clinicians for the multi-professional agenda and quality oversight at local level.

#### Governance and Leadership Arrangements



## 5.2. Measuring and Improving Quality: The HEE Quality Framework

The strategic aims of HEE's Quality Framework are;

- To ensure that HEE has a Quality Framework that covers all learner groups within the healthcare system, with a focus on the quality of work-based placements,
- To embed a shared definition, measurement and benchmarks of quality across England to support quality improvement,
- To enable HEE to systematically review our quality activities with local partners, to ensure a proportionate and effective approach,
- To establish clear quality governance arrangements, consistent quality management and quality improvement processes across HEE,
- To enable us to set the national and local ambition for quality in education and training in order to drive innovation and quality improvement.

The Framework is based on six domains that reflect the key components for quality in work-based placements for all learners groups. Each domain is supported by a set of evidence based Quality Standards that all learning environments will be expected to demonstrate. Each domain has a small set of metrics that will act as proxy measures to evidence the standards. This will be facilitated by triangulation of data and information including insight on patient safety by local teams.

The six Quality Domains are;

1. Learning Environment and Culture
2. Educational Governance and Leadership
3. Supporting and Empowering Learners
4. Supporting and Empowering Educators
5. Developing and Implementing Curricula and Assessments
6. Developing a Sustainable Workforce





The Quality Framework is part of a wider suite of documents that also includes;

- A national core set of metrics, supported by a HEE Learner Survey to be administered at local level to support our insight into the quality of learner placements,
- A HEE Quality Framework Handbook, describing our systems and processes by which we will evaluate, manage and improve quality in a consistent way.

The HEE Quality Framework will enable us to set the ambition for quality in learner placements ahead of the consultation and publication of the Teaching Excellence Framework and HEE will work to ensure effective alignment across the system of education and training. The Quality Framework will be tested at national and local level and be further refined as we cultivate an evidence base for what works. A concentrated focus on building this evidence base by testing, calibrating and refining will enable us to define and promote best practice whilst determining where HEE's emphasis adds the greatest value to quality improvement and innovation.

In parallel with implementation, HEE will secure an academic partner to work with us to develop further our understanding and evidence base for the Quality Framework. Specifically, the work will include the development of quality standards and metrics that effectively demonstrate the correlation between the quality of learning, teaching and assessment, with that of learner and patient outcomes and experience. Our current metrics, drawn from existing process, system and output based data, will evolve to include greater outcome based measures.

The HEE Quality Framework will also enable us to work in partnership with placement providers, HEIs, educators and learners to establish a HEE accreditation award for high quality learning environments. Our first stage to this is to use the Quality Framework to benchmark quality across England, enable local partners to evidence and demonstrate progress in accordance with our quality standards.

### 5.3. Working in Partnership

#### Professional Regulators

It is crucial that HEE's partnership arrangements across Professional Regulators are as effective

as possible in order to collectively ensure patient safety and for HEE to enhance the experience and outcomes for learners. HEE engaged early with the General Medical Council (GMC), the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), the General Dental Council (GDC), the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and the General Optical Council (GOC) to share the emerging quality framework and strategic context.

HEE and the Professional Regulators have committed to work together on areas of mutual or shared focus for the benefit of patients and learners. Early areas of collaboration will include effective data and intelligence sharing and opportunities to work together to enable and empower inter-professional learning to support and facilitate transforming models of service delivery.

#### National Quality Board

HEE works in partnership with other national leadership organisations across the health and care quality agenda through the National Quality Board (NQB). The NQB partners have a primary focus on how they can work collaboratively on improving quality for patients (safety, clinical effectiveness, patient experience) and look to harness the unique role the Board can play around providing collective leadership and system alignment to the quality agenda. The NQB is currently developing proposals for a system wide Quality Strategy to underpin its role in supporting local health and care systems to close the 'quality gap' described in the Five Year Forward View.

### 5.4. Sharing Information

Robust monitoring and reporting processes are essential to the continuous improvement of education and training, with patient safety and quality of care at the heart of all activities. Sharing timely information and evidence across the healthcare system, including the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Quality Surveillance Groups (QSGs), Commissioners, Commissioning Support Units (CSUs) and Regulators on areas such as raising and responding to concerns about patient safety and care, requires a systematic reporting framework and is a crucial local partnership endeavour. The HEE Quality Framework will enable a consistent corporate approach to supporting this.

*The HEE Quality Framework will enable us to set the ambition for quality in education and training.*

---

## 6. Levers and Incentives for Quality and Transformation

Section 5.2 describes how the HEE Quality Framework will enable us to work in partnership with placement providers, education providers, educators and learners to establish a HEE accreditation award for high quality learning environments. Building on this, HEE has started work to develop Quality Standards for Excellence and Innovation, potentially with associated 'stretch' measures and metrics to enable HEE to identify and promote excellence in quality and reward those placement providers that work in partnership to deliver innovative solutions to transforming our current and future workforce.

This is crucial to enable local health and care systems to deliver the ambitions of their shared Strategic Transformation Plans (STPs).

HEE are integral partners within these transformational planning footprints and more widely HEE is developing its support offer for system leadership to develop clear vision and a strategic approach to timely and effective workforce transformation across the system. Quality is a central thread to enable workforce transformation in collaboration across local health and care partnerships.

We are in the early stages of the work, but our planned next phase of delivering the Quality Strategy will explore how HEE can/should use our levers, influence, leadership and incentives to most effectively drive innovation, quality improvement, integration in learning and support all placement providers to become proficient learning organisations.

*HEE are integral partners within these transformational planning footprints*

---

## 7. Future Developments

The Quality Strategy sets the context in which HEE will launch our Quality Framework in April 2016. Further work will be required to test, calibrate and refine it, but in doing so it will enable HEE to set a course for a new relationship with our partners at local and national level, where quality is at the heart of our shared purpose. To support the delivery of the Strategy, there are some core future developments planned for 2016/17 and beyond. HEE will;

- Secure an academic partner to collaborate in building our understanding of outcomes based standards and associated measures and metrics, to drive our Quality Framework to a more meaningful context for patient care and for learner outcomes. This will include building an evidence base to develop stretch metrics that demonstrate quality assurance, innovation, quality improvement and comparability across programmes and placements.
- Explore the development of HEE learning objectives to influence the transformation of curricula and clearly define what is needed in our workforce of today and tomorrow to deliver the ambitions of local health and care systems in the context of the Five Year Forward View.
- Build our capabilities in 'Commissioning for Quality' to enable us use of our available levers and incentives to drive quality improvement and embed innovation in transforming the current and future workforce.
- Test and launch the HEE Learner Survey as a vehicle for collecting consistent learner feedback from placement experience and outcomes for all learner groups,
- Explore technology related applications, to enable the collation of timely and prevalent learner voice in the pursuit of continuous quality assurance and improvement.
- Build our collaborative partnerships around Quality Improvement with the Professional Regulators and wider system partners.