

Post Registration Standards Steering Group

Meeting held virtually at 13:00 on 16th March 2022 via Go To Meeting platform

Meeting notes

Chair and presenters: David Foster (Independent chair); Geraldine Walters (Executive Director, Professional Practice, NMC); Anne Trotter (NMC).

Independent SME Chairs: Owen Barr (Independent chair, SPQ group); Deborah Edmonds (Independent chair, SCPHN Occupational Health Nurse group); Jane Harris (Independent chair, SCPHN Health Visiting group)

Attendees: Linda Kelly, Obi Amadi, Sara Kovach-Clark, Shonali Routray, Gillian Knight, Karen Jewell, Elisabeth Eades, Christina Butterworth, Julie Critcher, Donna O'Boyle, Veronica Ayitey, Julie Dixon, Suma Das, Sara Kovach-Clark, Liz Allcock, Emma Davies.

Apologies: – Wednesday: Sharon White, Katerina Kolyva, (Lisa Llewellyn is tentative). Gwendolen Bradshaw (Independent chair, programme standards)

Welcome and introductions

David Foster (DF) welcomed attendees to the meeting and stated that this was first of the two meetings of the group. Since the last meeting there had been several changes to the group membership. So DF thanked the following members who had stepped down recently due to retirement,

1. Angela McLernon (NIPEC)
2. Yinglen Butt (RCN)
3. Lola Oni (Brent Sickle Cell & Thalassaemia Centre)

due to role changes:

4. Susan Aitkenhead (NHSE/I)
5. Charlotte McArdle (CNO NI)
6. Paula Holt (CoDH)

Maria McIlgorm (formally CNO office Scotland) was congratulated on her appointment as CNO in Northern Ireland.

DF welcomed the following new members who had joined the group:

1. Claire McGuinness (CNO Office, Scotland)
2. Christina Butterworth (Faculty of Occupational Health Nursing, FOHN)
3. Katerina Kolyva, (Executive Director, CoDH)
4. Linda Kelly (CEO of NIPEC)
5. Nichola Ashby (Head of Education, RCN)
6. Stuart Tuckwood (National Nursing Lead, Unison)

DF thanked Barbara Morgan, Independent Chair for SCPHN School Nursing who had stepped down due to ill health. He welcomes Julie Critcher who joined the group and it was her first meeting as independent chair for SCPHN School Nursing.

Geraldine Walters (GW) provided an overview of the NMC education change programme, by way of background to newer members of the group. She then provided an update of the post-registration standards review as part of the education programme.

Anne Trotter (AT) gave an update on the public consultation of the post registration standards review which aimed to seek views on whether the draft standards for Standards for specialist community public health nursing (SCPHN), Standards for community nursing specialist practice qualifications (SPQ) reflect the knowledge and skills for registration as a SCPHN or recordable SPQs and the education programme standards underpinning the SCPHN and SPQ programmes support the achievement of these proficiencies.

She reported on how Pye Tait, as the independent research organisation, had been appointed to conduct the public consultation, identify areas of disagreement, consensus and refinement in the draft standards. AT provided a special thanks to all the stakeholder groups and individuals, the PRSSG members who participated in the consultation through the organisations they represented or encouraged others to participate in the consultation.

There was good participation from all four countries of the UK from all groups with a total of 2363 responses. Of these 1890 were from individuals and organisations and 463 responses from members of the public; 11 of these were responses to the easy read version.

We had Welsh language versions of the consultation materials, however there were no responses in Welsh, although we had good representation overall from Wales. In addition to the consultation responses from professionals, organisations and members of the public, there were 73 responses sent directly to the NMC of which 47 were in a templated format. All of these were sent to Pye Tait to be included in the independent analysis.

In addition, there was the qualitative strand to the consultation which included 11 focus group interviews and 29 individual in-depth interviews. These enabled us to reach out to members of the public and seldom-heard groups who will be impacted by the standards such as children and young people, parents and carers, people with long term conditions, people with learning disabilities and so on.

AT also reported on the user testing work that was commissioned along with the public consultation. The user testing was conducted by Blake Stevenson, the independent research organisation appointed to carry out the user testing.

GW then provided some of the headline findings from the public consultation, the full report has been published on our website. For SCPHN there were 1,130 responses and 75% of these responded by saying that the draft knowledge, skills and attributes necessary for safe and effective practice as a professional with a SCPHN qualification. This matched the overall trend of responses for the three SCPHN fields with 76% agreement on the Health visiting (HV) standards, 79% agreement on the Occupational

health nursing (OHN) and 83% agreement on the School nursing (SN) standards. GW also reported that 44% respondents wanted to retain the Registered public health nursing (RPHN) qualification and 63% of these felt that the draft core SCPHN standards were appropriate for the RPHN qualification. There were some comments that provided suggestions on strengthening and fine tuning the standards. She also reported on how prescribing which was a much debated area in the pre-consultation phase, continued to be a topic that received mixed responses and no overriding majority on whether or not prescribing was a mandatory element of all SCPHN programmes.

Then moving onto reporting on the SPQ findings, GW stated how the consultation asked questions to establish if the draft SPQ standards (structured across seven platforms) were applicable for each of the fields of community nursing SPQ. There were greatest level of agreement for platforms 2 and 3 on the applicability to all the fields of community SPQ. The lowest level of agreement was 72% from the perspective of General Practice nursing for platform 5.

Those who disagreed had opportunities for further comments and the major theme of these was the need for field-specific standards and to use more advanced terminology for the standards. On the skills annexe question, the majority did not show much appetite for a skills annexe. The majority of the respondents (67%) supported the proposal that the new SPQ should be opened to other nurses working in the community (not currently covered under current SPQs) and 64% felt that the draft standards were appropriate for those roles. Like SCPHN, there was a lack of consensus on whether or not prescribing should be mandatory part of all SPQ programmes although only 7% felt it was not a necessary skill, so most of the responses were divided between mandatory and optional.

GW explained from a regulatory perspective how prescribing could be included in the SPQ programmes if AEs want to include them. This along with a few other areas, is also something that had been asked of the four country chief nursing officers, in terms of what would fit best with their future vision for community nursing. GW confirmed that prescribing was going to be one of the key areas to consider in the post-consultation assimilation phase.

AT then provided the headline findings for the education programme standards for SCPHN and SPQ. She explained the structure of the draft programme standards and how there are common components for both SCPHN and SPQ and where required there are tailored standards for SCPHN and for SPQ programmes. AT reported on how there was majority (67%) overall agreement on the draft programme standards. Areas with lesser consensus were: length of programme and consolidated practice which will be examined during the post-consultation assimilation phase.

DF invited questions from attendees and thanked the NMC team for conducting a successful public consultation, which was longer than usual consultations which enabled greater participation despite the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic.

Obi Amadi (OA) queried the way the findings were presented for the programme standards slide, where the last point stated the level of agreement while the other two points were stated in terms of level of disagreement. AT clarified that this was simply to

bring in variety in terms of presentation of the findings; she also provided further details on the exact number of responses for those findings.

Deborah Edmonds (DE) explained that the difference in some of the findings (particularly on mandating a period of consolidated practice) was also due to the OHN respondents, who were more likely to work in non-NHS or non-health care settings and public limited companies where it is difficult to assure a consolidated practice.

Owen Barr (OB) further commented that the presentation captured the main areas of feedback from an SPQ perspective. He stated how there had been some good discussions following consultation and that further work was needed in assimilation and as the chair he would continue to work with the different SPQ groups.

DF invited Julie Critcher (Chair of SN group) and Jane Harris (Chair of HV group) for comments in their capacity as chair. **JH** commented on the rigorous and detailed process that meant there were clear topics to be discussed further in the assimilation phase and there had already been some good discussions with colleagues across the UK up to this point.

The meeting then concluded with next steps for the process, which were outlined by GW in terms of assimilation discussion for topics to strengthen, refine and those that need to arrive at consensus following debate. The topics with the most diversity of opinion were identified for discussion; these include – prescribing, consolidated practice and length of programme along with looking at the suggestions on refinements. Following meetings with consultation assimilation teams (CAT) and standards reference group (SRG), the refinements would then be shared with PRSSG after which they would go for final approval to the Council at their meeting in May.

GW then invited OB for any reflections on the SPQ discussions so far and he stated that they had been very useful with the topics clearly outlined with free flowing and open conversations. **OB** reflected that there was overall good support for the SPQ standards and often the suggestions would often be around specific phrasings and refinements to strengthen and overall there was progress towards consensus.

DF then emphasised that the standards were not yet cast in stone therefore there was scope to hone the standards to ensure that there are clear blue waters between regulatory standards and curriculum development; the latter would be developed locally with scope for designing curriculums based on the local requirements for services to cater to public needs.

DE and **JH** to reflection the SCPHN discussions – **DE** reflected on how the assimilation process was about a healthy challenge and the importance for her personally to reflect the diversity of settings and sectors where the OHN profession works and the skill sets required for non-traditional settings with skills such as business acumen and influencing. **Christina Butterworth (CB)** further reflected that it was great to have commissioners, practioners, and educators because it led to good finessing of the standards. **JH** added that it was good to have four country representation and the great to see the interest and passion people had to the topics with honest and really helpful discussions with wide representation.

DF then thanked all those who had participated in the assimilation process and demonstrated their time and commitment. GW concluded by stating that until the next meeting in April meeting, the assimilation process will progress and there will more updates on the standards refinements in the next meeting which will be on 28 April 2022.

DF confirmed the date of the next virtual meetings to be held on 28 April 2022 and closed with the meeting by thanking everyone for their support and contributions.