Performance review process report

Performance Review, British Psychological Society, 2018-2021

Executive summary

This report covers our performance review of the British Psychological Society and its approved provision. This assessment was undertaken as part of our quality assurance model in the 2021-22 academic year.

Through our review, we have considered the education provider is performing well across several areas. There are three areas where we have made referrals to the next performance review. These include equality and diversity, service user and carer involvement and the assessment of practice-based learning.

Although we have considered the education provider constitutes a low risk to how they continue to deliver education and training, given the lack of external data points, we are unable to extend the review period beyond two years. We considered a two-year review period will help us to continue to understand risks in an ongoing way where data is not available. In addition, the education provider would have the opportunity to have further developed and reflected on those areas that are currently being developed.

This report will be considered by our Education and Training Panel in March 2023, who will make the final decision on the review period.

Previous consideration	This is the education provider's first engagement with the HCPC's performance review process. There was no previous consideration leading to this performance review.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: • when the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be • whether issues identified for referral through this review should be reviewed, and if so how.
Next steps	Subject to the Panel's decision, the education provider's next performance review will be in the 2023-24 academic year

Included within this report

Section 1: About this assessment

About us

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

This is a report on the performance review process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the institution and practice areas(s) detailed in this report continue to meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the institution and programme(s) ongoing approval.

Our standards

We approve education providers and programmes that meet our education standards. Individuals who complete approved programmes will meet proficiency standards, which set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Our regulatory approach

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of programme clusters and programmes. Through our processes, we:
- enable bespoke, proportionate and effective regulatory engagement with education providers;
- use data and intelligence to enable effective risk-based decision making; and
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards.

Providers and programmes are approved on an open-ended basis, subject to ongoing monitoring. Programmes we have approved are listed on our website.

The performance review process

Once a programme institution is approved, we will take assurance it continues to meet standards through:
- regular assessment of key data points, supplied by the education provider and external organisations; and
- assessment of a self-reflective portfolio and evidence, supplied on a cyclical basis

Through monitoring, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess how an education provider is performing based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. We take this assurance at the provider level wherever possible, and will delve into programme / profession level detail where we need to.

This report focuses on the assessment of the self-reflective portfolio and evidence.

Thematic areas reviewed

We normally focus on the following areas:
- Institution self-reflection, including resourcing, partnerships, quality, the input of others, and equality and diversity
- Thematic reflection, focusing on timely developments within the education sector
- Provider reflection on the assessment of other sector bodies, including professional bodies and systems regulators
- Provider reflection on developments linked to specific professions
- Stakeholder feedback and actions

How we make our decisions

We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint partner visitors to design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. Visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make the decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee takes decisions through different levels depending on the routines and impact of the decision, and where appropriate meets in public. Their decisions are available to view on our website.

The assessment panel for this review

We appointed the following panel members to support a review of this education provider:

Tony Ward	Lead visitor, Practitioner Psychologist, Counselling Psychologist, Health Psychologist
Sabiha Azmi	Lead visitor, Practitioner Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist
Sarah Hamilton	Service User Expert Advisor
Temilolu Odunaike	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: About the education provider

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers seven HCPC-approved programme across one profession. It is a Professional Body education provider and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2001. As a professional body, the education provider acts as the representative body for psychologists in the UK.

The qualifications provide learners the framework to develop the skills, knowledge and competence required to become a registered practitioner psychologist through engaging in supervised practice. The learner is supported in their supervised practice by a trained and approved registered psychologist who is referred to as the Co-ordinating Supervisor (CS). Learners are eligible to apply for registration as a practitioner psychologist with the HCPC upon successful completion.

All qualifications are at Doctoral level (Stage 2) and follow Stage 1 (the MSc programme), apart from Qualification in Counselling Psychology (QCoP) which is a blended Stage 1/Stage 2 qualification. Generally, Stage 1 refers to MSc programmes and Stage 2 refers to Doctoral level programmes.

Given the nature of the education provider and its programme, there are some thematic areas that we have not included through this report as we considered these not applicable to this education provider. These include:
- Assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes
- Office for Students monitoring

Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The provider is approved to deliver training in the following professional areas. A detailed list of approved programme awards can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

	Practice area	**Delivery level**		**Approved since**
Pre-registration	Practitioner Psychologist	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2001

Institution performance data

Data is embedded into how we understand performance and risk. We capture data points in relation to provider performance, from a range of sources. We compare provider data points to benchmarks, and use this information to inform our risk based decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of institutions and programmes.

Data Point	**Bench-mark**	**Value**	**Date**	**Commentary**

Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	1205	691	2022	We noted the significant difference between the enrolled numbers and the intended numbers and flagged this to visitors ahead of their review. Following their review, the visitors had no issues around the education provider's sustainability.
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	N/A	N/A	2019-2020	The education provider is not a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and does not have data provided by Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). Therefore, this is not applicable.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	N/A	Null	2019-2020	The education provider is not a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and does not have data provided HESA. Therefore, this is not applicable.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	N/A	N/A	The education provider is not a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and does not have this data which is usually provided by the Office for Students (OfS). Therefore, this is not applicable.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score	N/A	N/A	2022	The education provider is not a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and does not have NSS Scores which is usually provided by the OfS Therefore, this is not applicable.

Section 3: Performance analysis and quality themes

Portfolio submission

The education provider was asked to provide a self-reflective portfolio submission covering the broad topics referenced in the thematic areas reviewed section of this report.

The education provider's self-reflection was focused on challenges, developments, and successes related to each thematic area. They also supplied data, supporting evidence and information.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their portfolio. Based on our understanding, we defined and undertook the following quality assurance activities linked to the quality themes referenced below. This allowed us to consider whether the education provider was performing well against our standards.

Quality theme 1 – development of existing and new partnerships

Area for further exploration: The education provider noted different partnerships they have with other organisations. In recent years they have had partnerships with the Scottish Government in relation to educational psychology provision and with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) for forensic psychology. We noted the education provider's efforts to evaluate the working of these partnerships and the important lessons learnt. It was also clear that steps had been taken to ensure these partnerships work well into the future. However, the education provider's reflection did not demonstrate attempts made to ensure newer and more extensive and relevant/significant partnerships were being developed in areas where there were shortages and high levels of demand and need. For example, the National Health Service (NHS), private providers and the formation of the new Integrated Care Services and Integrated Care Boards.

Additionally, we could not determine the education provider's reflection on how the existing partnerships worked in relation to the work of the Psychological Professions Network (PPN). We considered it important to know the education provider's reflection on how they ensured the partnerships worked consistently and collaboratively to reduce duplication and that all relevant areas were covered.

The visitors noted the education provider's email response described several strategic initiatives. It also mentioned some of the qualifications as having partnerships in place. However, neither the reflection nor response provided sufficient detail on how the education provider had ensured, monitored or reflected on how their various qualifications engaged with partners for example, to ensure that curriculum is up to date. Therefore, the visitors considered further clarification was required.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this initially by requesting an email response to provide further clarification to the issues raised. We considered this the most appropriate way for the education provider to elaborate on previous information submitted.

We then decided to explore the outstanding questions by holding a meeting with the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the remaining themes as we decided it would give the HCPC Panel an opportunity to discuss this with the education provider.

Outcomes of exploration: From the email response, the education provider described their approach to developing partnerships as strategic and noted they have high level relationships with key employers of psychological professionals

across the four nations. We noted their partnership with NES helped in developing the Qualification in Health Psychology which has helped to meet the demand for health psychologists. Similarly, their partnership with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has helped in training occupational psychologists.

Regarding partnership with PPN, the education provider reflected on the work they had done with them, which included delivering webinars, careers and recruitment resources whilst contributing to other initiatives of the PPN to promote the profession within the NHS.

In the virtual meeting, the education provider further discussed the different partnerships they have in place including partnership with the Scottish government. They also elaborated on how they had engaged with their partners to ensure training is up to date, relevant and meets the need of the workforce. We understood that at the time the performance review portfolio was submitted, there was no strategic plan with their partners. However, we understood the education provider developed a Qualifications Committee in 2022 who are responsible for ensuring their processes around working with their partners are robust.

We understood the education provider met regularly with the different groups to discuss overarching curriculum development to ensure it was up to date and fit for purpose. They also discussed how they have strengthened their work with employers and the workforce. The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's response but also highlighted the need for consistency and possibly updating their terms of reference to correspond with the new structure in place as they continue to engage with their partners. The visitors had no further questions for this quality theme.

Quality theme 2 – assessment of practice-based learning

Area for further exploration:

The education provider's reflection demonstrated most of the learners undertook their practice-based learning within their workplaces. However, we noted a significant number of learners still used voluntary practice-based learning sites and it was not clear how these were evaluated and any evaluation undertaken. We considered that even where placements took place outside the work environment it was still appropriate to conduct assessments to ensure the appropriate arrangements were in place. For example, in relation to counselling psychology, we considered it necessary to ensure that new clients were assessed as being suitable for a new learner, and that arrangements were made around the work environment. For example, to ensure that lone working did not take place without safeguards.

The visitors considered the education provider's response which described placement approval, was re-assuring. However, there was no detail about how the education provider had monitored or reflected on certain aspects of practice-based learning. For example, what placement issues had arisen during the review period, across the programmes. Therefore, the visitors considered further clarification was needed.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this initially through email response to allow the education provider to elaborate more on previous information submitted.

We then explored the outstanding questions by holding a meeting with the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the remaining themes as we decided it would give the HCPC Panel an opportunity to discuss this with the education provider.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider stated in their email response that all practice-based learning, whether paid or voluntary, were evaluated in the same way across all qualifications. The education provider also reflected on their enrolment application process which ensured the suitability of practice-based learning for each learner. In addition, we understood there were clear channels for learners and supervisors to raise concerns or complaints in relation to practice-based learning. The visitors appreciated this clarity. However, they noted it lacked detail around any reflections on how the education provider dealt with issues that may have arisen in practice during the review period. Therefore, we sought further clarification through a virtual meeting with staff members from the education provider.

From discussions with the education provider, we understood they have recently set up a new Qualifications Committee (QC) whose remit includes ensuring the quality of practice-based learning. This committee was not in place at the time the portfolio was written. We also noted there was not sufficient time to have received further reflections about QC's work following the education provider's initial response. We considered that more time would be needed for the education provider to have reflected on how they have dealt with specific placement issues, thereby monitoring the quality of practice-based learning. Therefore, we will review this area again at the education provider's next performance review.

Quality theme 3 – implementation of equality and diversity

Area for further exploration: We noted the education provider's reflection demonstrated they had monitored equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in relation to the programmes. They were also aware of the need to take future steps to ensure greater access for diverse learner groups. However, a few areas of the reflection remained unclear and the visitors sought clarification on these.
We sought further information about:
- What the education provider was doing to ensure that it meets expectations around EDI in the future, beyond being aware that there are current shortfalls in the diversity of the various intakes.
- How the programme content/curricula were evaluated to ensure it met EDI perspectives, particularly in relation to working with and meeting the needs of diverse communities learners may be working with once qualified.

The visitors noted the education provider's initial email response. However, they remained unclear about how the education provider did / intended to improve equality and diversity across their programmes and therefore, sought further clarification

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We initially sought further clarification through email response. We considered this would allow the education provider to elaborate on previous information submitted.

Because a few areas remained unclear following the email response, we decided to explore the remaining questions by holding a meeting with the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the remaining themes as we decided it would give the HCPC Panel an opportunity to discuss this with the education provider.

Outcomes of exploration: Regarding implementation, the education provider explained that as their programmes are at level 8, they were only able to recruit from a pool of applicants who had already been through the accredited programmes previously. The education provider also worked closely with the Association for the Teaching of Psychology (ATP) to increase access to psychology in schools. The education provider noted the student ambassador programme and careers team focused on increasing participation from diverse communities and their learnings were shared with the qualification and marketing teams.

In terms of the programme content, we were made aware learners were required to meet competencies as part of their portfolio of evidence and they were assessed against these competencies. Covid –19 also helped to increase accessibility for learners all across the UK, particularly through attending remote training sessions and meetings with their practice educators. The education provider also mentioned a new research project with learners which is being commissioned by the Education and Training Board. The focus of this will be on learners' experience around racism and the education provider intends to feed the outcome of this back to the board for recommendation/guidance.

From our meeting with the education provider, we understood they have now introduced a new customer systems relationship management which has led to the recruitment of a new EDI manager who is responsible for collecting and analysing data to identify trends. We were made aware that at the point of submitting their portfolio, this arrangement was not present and EDI management was segmented across the programmes rather than being undertaken as an institution. We understood the Qualifications Committee (QC) is also involved in this development to ensure EDI continues to be appropriately monitored. The visitors were satisfied with this response but considered this remains an area to review again when next the education provider engages with the performance review process. The visitors considered this would give the education provider additional time to have further reflected on how the QC has developed in terms of monitoring EDI.

Quality theme 4 – impact of Covid-19 on assessment and progression

Area for further exploration: We noted the education provider's reflection around how Covid-19 had impacted upon the various provision. However, it was not clear what mitigations had been put in place for example if learners were not able to meet deadlines due to Covid-19 related reasons. We therefore requested to know the

education provider's reflection on how they ensured learners were not disadvantaged in terms of assessment and progression during the pandemic.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought further clarification through email respond so the education provider could elaborate on information previously sent.

Outcomes of exploration: We understood from the education provider's response that during the pandemic, they were quick to offer a degree of flexibility on all qualifications. Examples of this included, being able to move between assessment tracks, where training was delayed and being able to interrupt enrolment where there were instances of illness or redundancy, for example.

The education provider also stated that their Qualifications Committee allowed the provision of online supervision for the first time to ensure that learners were receiving the support they required, and online viva assessments were offered to ensure that learners were not delayed in completing their qualification and being able to qualify. In addition, the education provider was open with its communication to all learners and provided general guidance throughout the pandemic, as well as hints and tips specific to each qualification. Staff were able to work remotely, responding to applicants/learners by email, phone and teams or zoom calls. Learners had better access to their practice educators and there was widespread implementation of new technologies including teams and zoom and the virtual learning platform BPS Learn. This enabled learners to attend webinars, training events and even conferences remotely.

We were satisfied with this clarification which demonstrated Covid-19 did not negatively impact on how learners were assessed and how they progressed on the programmes. We noted that any impact was effectively managed, therefore, we considered that the education provider's response had adequately addressed our concerns around this area and did not require any further quality activity going forward.

Quality theme 5 – practice-based learning capacity

Area for further exploration: We noted most learners are employed as psychologists and use their work to evidence their achievement of the competencies. As such, we noted the education provider's reflection lacked how practice-based learning capacity was monitored. We noted that in most of the professional areas it was left to the responsibility of learners to source practice-based learning.

We considered it important to be able to gauge the education provider's reflection on how they ensured practice-based learning met the standards required, was safe but also ensured increasing accessibility for those learners who may have struggled to access practice-based learning, for example, those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. As such, we requested further reflections on this.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought further clarification through email response to allow the education provider to elaborate on information they had previously sent.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider's response emphasised that unlike most HEIs, the majority of their learners are employed, and their practice-based learning was arranged by their employer, who was also responsible for ensuring accessibility. The education provider further explained that in the few cases where a learner was not employed, they engaged their process of working with the Stakeholder Representation Engagement Group (SREG) and the learner's coordinating supervisor to source suitable practice-based learning. Because the programmes are delivered across the UK, we understood volunteer practice-based learning was also made by some learners, however, this was local to their home address.

We were satisfied with this response and considered the education provider has adequately managed capacity of practice-based learning for all learners. Following this quality activity, we had no further questions.

Quality theme 6 – involvement of service users and carers, and learners

Area for further exploration: We noted the education provider's reflection did not demonstrate there was extensive input from external service users and carers (other than from the learners themselves who may undergo a user role as part of their training). Therefore, we requested the education provider's reflection on how they involved external service users and carers in their programmes. We sought to understand how this had worked in terms of co-production and ongoing monitoring/ evaluation and review of this process.

Regarding learner involvement, we noted the education provider reflected on their mechanisms for surveying learners. We noted this happened periodically. However, it was less clear to what extent there was systematic feedback and import from learners. We needed to understand the education provider's reflection around the extent to which they involved learners in the development and management of the various provision.

The email response clearly outlined the education provider's reflection on learner involvement and how learner feedback had helped to improve the programmes. However, we noted a lack of detail in the education provider's response around their reflections on service user and carer involvement.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We requested initial further clarification through email response as we considered this will provide us with further clarification on the education provider's reflection around this area.

As the email response did not adequately address the issues raised around service user and carer involvement, we decided to explore the remaining questions by holding a meeting with the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the remaining themes as we decided it would give the HCPC Panel an opportunity to discuss this with the education provider.

Outcomes of exploration: Through their email response, the education provider further reflected on how they collaborated with their stakeholders via SREG to

deliver qualifications, and associated services, to the psychological profession. In addition to the input from SREGs, the education provider explained feedback was collected during the development of qualifications, through focused surveys, at workshops and on an informal on-going basis.

As part of learner involvement, we understood learner feedback was via surveys from the point of enrolment and then throughout the programme. Feedback was also received by the SREG where there was a learner representative on the group, as well as a past learner who was able to provide more detailed feedback in relation to delivery and assessment. Both current and past learners were involved in acquiring and reporting feedback, with a staff member present at all meetings to ensure feedback was collected and collated for discussion by each Qualification Leadership Team. Feedback was collected in relation to the design, delivery and assessment of all programmes and recommendations were implemented in line with the education provider's Stakeholder Engagement Policy. Learners, practice education providers and employers were then notified of recommendations/actions by email, at workshops or through newsletters as appropriate.

Following this clarification, the visitors were satisfied the education provider had adequately addressed their concerns around the involvement of learners. However, for service user and carer involvement, they noted the education provider's response did not outline how they had reflected upon their level of engagement with service users and carers. Therefore, the visitors requested additional quality activity to allow the education provider to further demonstrate how they had performed in this area.

From our meeting with the team, we understood the education provider had recently created a Qualifications Committee who would be responsible for monitoring the involvement of service users and carers to ensure they continue to contribute to the overall quality of the programmes. Although we did not have any further questions following this quality activity, we have considered this an area to review again when next the education provider engages with our performance review process. We considered this would have provided the Qualifications Committee an opportunity to have further reflected on how they have developed around the involvement of service users and carers.

Section 4: Summary of findings

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings for each portfolio area, focusing on the approach or approaches taken, developments, what this means for performance, and why. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

Overall findings on performance

Quality theme: Institution self-reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Resourcing, including financial stability** –

- o We noted how the annual income generated through direct debit, in addition to the income from new enrolments, helps to ensure financial stability of the provision. In addition, the Qualification in Educational Psychology (Scotland) (QEP(S)), is a one-year programme funded by the Scottish Government helps to ensure financial stability of the education provider.
- o One of the challenges noted by the education provider was the flexible start dates which resulted in peaks and troughs in the flow of work over the year. The education provider also highlighted the significant manual input to the production of management information which meant some trends were not recognised until later and therefore resulted in a time-consuming process of evaluating responses to changes.
- o Given the flexible nature of the programmes, the education provider has put in place a series of mitigations to ensure the programmes continued to be adequately resourced. Such mitigations included planning for the resource requirement, including a timeline showing advertising of positions, recruitment, induction and training. The new fee structure also allows learners to pay for the services they require, which the education provider considered a more equitable structure for all concerned. Increased flexibility in offering employment contracts to meet peak demand and the use of technology to move qualification delivery and assessment online were also some of the achievements the education provider reflected on during the review period.
- o The visitors considered the education provider's reflection demonstrated they were evaluating their financial position well and taking steps to ensure the viability of their various programmes. Therefore, we have considered the education provider has performed well in this area.

- **Partnerships with other organisations** –
  - o Although the education provider had traditionally dealt with their learners as individuals, they have noted they have now focused on greater partnership working in recent years.
  - o The education provider looked to develop strategic partnerships to allow them to provide better service to their partners. The education provider noted they have recruited a Stakeholder Manager to help relationships at institution level rather than local level.
  - o As part of their working partnerships, they established new provision - Qualification in Education Psychology (Scotland) – with the Scottish Government. This followed a workforce training analysis undertaken by the Scottish Government in 2017 where they identified a shortage of qualified educational psychologists over the following five-year period.
  - o The education provider has also established another partnership with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) formerly known as Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to deliver qualifications in forensic psychology.
  - o Through their reflection and additional information provided through quality theme 1, the visitors have determined the education provider has continued to develop formal partnerships with different organisations. We considered the education provider has also

maintained robust relationships with their partners which has enhanced their provision. Therefore, the visitors are satisfied the education provider has performed well in this area.

- **Academic and placement quality**
  - o The education provider supports their learners to develop and demonstrate competence through supervised practice. They noted that, because their qualifications are based on independent study, this, occasionally brought about challenges in ensuring supervision was done in a consistent manner. To mitigate this, the education provider launched an eLearning programme. Chief Supervisors were supported on a regular basis through clinics and workshops and this was moved online in 2020. The education provider reflected that the delivery of the new parallel eLearning programme went well and that feedback showed learners enjoyed the blended approach with online modules and workshops using a range of learning styles.
  - o As part of their successes, the education provider noted they now have 100% of their Chief Supervisors educated to doctorate level. The education provider has also commenced the process of transferring courses and engagement with the Chief Supervisors online using Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).
  - o We are aware a new Qualifications Committee has been set up and part of their responsibility is to ensure placement quality. As there was not sufficient time for the education provider to have reflected on the Committee's performance, we will review this area again when next the education provider engages with the performance review process.

- **Interprofessional education** –
  - o Learners are employed, either in a paid or voluntary role, and have formal and informal interprofessional education (IPE) within their own settings. Learners often engage in IPE within professional multi-disciplinary teams in their employment or through the interactions required to support service users.
  - o Workplace educators as well as line managers are responsible for ensuring learners have the opportunities to learn with and from each other for the benefit of service users. IPE is captured and assessed on all programmes.
  - o The education provider's weekly mailings to all their members highlights learning opportunities which cover online learning, workshops, webinars, conferences, monthly meetings/networking, talks and discussions. IPE is also covered in the education provider's monthly network newsletter and their quarterly newsletter.
  - o The education provider has developed continuing professional development (CPD) which is available to all learners to supplement their training. The majority of these are accessible through the VLE and include webinars with some face-to-face events emerging after Covid-19 restrictions.
  - o The education provider's reflection demonstrated that learners have continued to learn with and from other learners in a way that benefits

the service user. Therefore, we are satisfied they have performed well in this area.

- **Service users and carers** –
  - o The education provider uses the umbrella term 'stakeholder' to describe all their service users including learners, employers and supervisors and they use 'client' or 'end user' to describe the client. Their Stakeholder Engagement Policy outlines the type of stakeholder they engage with, how feedback is collected and used and what support mechanisms are in place. The Qualifications Committee (QC) ensured that the Policy is complied with, through the reporting process, at each committee meeting. Learners are required to collect feedback from their clients, discuss it with their co-ordinating supervisor and report it via the monitoring forms. This feedback is reviewed by the Chief Supervisor, who reports it to the board and includes it in a report to QC, if appropriate or there are common themes or issues.
  - o Stakeholder Reference Engagement Groups (SREGs) have been established and meet regularly. The provision of workshops on the premises of large employers has been useful in engaging directly with the service users.
  - o Through the initial reflection submitted and the additional information provided as outlined in quality theme 6, the visitors have considered the education provider's performance in this area satisfactory given the unique nature of the education provider. However, to ensure new developments highlighted continue to be monitored to ensure its effectiveness, we will review this area again when next the education provider engages with the performance review process.

- **Equality and diversity** –
  - o As a professional body, the education provider noted a number of institutional initiatives they have in place to address equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). One of these is their Equality Diversity and Inclusion Board which reports to the Board of Trustees to promote equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation and to challenge prejudice and discrimination. Their Strategic Framework aims to define the purpose, vision, values and initiatives of the education provider until the end of 2022 and is supported by their EDI policy.
  - o The education provider is working to increase the diversity within the profession by promoting the psychology curriculum in schools and by emphasising the importance of diversity and inclusion though their accreditation process for HEIs.
  - o The education provider is also introducing a new system which will help drive the collection of better data to inform service improvement. They intend to continue to support the implementation of their EDI Strategy, gathering and analysing data to understand learners better and support activities to increase the diversity of the profession.
    As noted through quality theme 3, the education provider is taking clear steps to enhance EDI. However, the visitors considered some of these are in development. As such, they considered this an area to review

again when the education provider next engages with the performance review process.

- **Horizon scanning** –
    - The education provider noted their qualifications operate in an increasingly complex and dynamic environment. There has been an increase in the demand for psychologists following an increased emphasis on wellbeing and mental health which has been magnified by the impact of Covid-19 pandemic. The education provider is looking to explore opportunities to improve their qualification offering. For example, by considering whether increased support for learners, enhanced communication as well as the use of new technology will assist in achieving this.
    - In their portfolio submission, the education provider outlined several challenges they are currently faced with but also detailed a series of mitigations they are putting in place to address the challenges and the impact of these. For example, they noted how increased external competition had impacted on their programme. For example, the Sports and Exercise Psychology programme delivered by a new education provider. To ensure their programmes remain competitive, the education provider ensured they understood competition in good time. They have also reflected that understanding the marketplace has aided their marketing strategies to inform and attract new applications. In addition, they noted the rising profile of social media has also helped the marketing team in getting out messages on different social media platforms.
    - The visitors considered the education provider had adequately scanned the horizon and considered effective ways of dealing with long term challenges. Therefore, the visitors are satisfied the education provider has performed well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: We will need to assess how the newly developed Qualifications Committee has performed around how they manage the involvement of service users and carers and the steps they have taken to improve EDI. Similarly, we will consider their performance around how they ensured the quality of practice-based learning.

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Impact of COVID-19** –
    - Prior to March 2020, a number of elements on the programmes were carried out face-to-face, including workshops, board meetings, examinations and viva. Due to the restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic, some learners struggled to source practice-based learning. For example, the education provider noted some learners on the Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology (QSEP) struggled to

source practice-based learning. This was due to cancellation of sporting events at local, national, and international levels. However, registration on other qualifications such as the Qualification in Counselling Psychology (QCoP) increased.

o To mitigate the challenges posed by the pandemic, the education provider moved to an online submission system, working with partner organisations to address security concerns. QC and qualification board meetings were moved online. Exams were also moved online via the VLE, and Vivas, training events and other meetings were all moved online and were conducted via Zoom/MS Teams.

o These ensured the education provider was able to continue delivering their programmes during the pandemic and mechanisms were put in place to effectively support learners. The education provider has continued to gather feedback from learners through their annual online survey to inform strategic planning.

o Through quality theme 4, the visitors were satisfied learners were not disadvantaged in terms of assessment and progression during the pandemic. Therefore, they considered the education provider had performed well in this area.

- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods** –
  o As noted above, qualifications were largely delivered through paper-based mechanisms as of 2018/19. In 2019, the education provider tendered for a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) as a learning platform through which they could deliver all their programmes. In 2020, a VLE Manager was recruited before work commenced on putting together the necessary structure to develop the qualification delivery and assessment portals.

  o The education provider reflected on the several benefits they have had from the use of technology. New qualifications are running successfully with positive feedback from learners, assessors and qualification board members. The process of adding qualifications to the VLE gave a real opportunity to improve accessibility, streamline and offer better customer service for each qualification. Marking of assessments on the VLE has increased transparency of the marking/ assessment process. It has also allowed the Chief Assessor to identify trends which can then be incorporated into the best practice workshops and assessor training.

  o The visitors considered the education provider was aware of the changing technological environment and is working towards putting its qualifications into an online learning environment. The visitors considered the education provider has performed well in this area.

- **Apprenticeships** –
  o All programmes are delivered at Level 8 apart from the QCoP which is an integrated level 7/8 qualification. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) has not yet approved any apprenticeship standards at Level 8, although the education provider is lobbying the government, along with employers including the NHS, to consider this apprenticeship route.

- o Although the education provider does not currently deliver any apprenticeship programmes, we are satisfied that if they do start to deliver apprenticeships, they are aware of any impact it could have on their existing provision. Therefore, we considered the education provider has performed well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Assessment of practice education providers by external bodies** –
  - o The education provider stated this area is not applicable to them as they do not have to meet the requirements of any other external bodies. The visitors were satisfied the nature of this education provider and the way they deliver education and training has meant their practice education providers were not assessed by an external body. The visitors were satisfied with this information.
- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies** –
  - o As the professional body for practitioner psychologists themselves, the education provider considered this area is not applicable to them as they do not deliver any other regulated qualifications. The visitors understood this given the nature of the education provider. They were therefore satisfied with this information.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Profession specific reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Curriculum development** –
  - o The education provider's qualification boards maintained a proactive dialogue with different divisions within the education provider, via the SREGs. This has ensured that their members fed into the qualification review processes. The objective of the review was to ensure the qualification delivery and assessment structure is fit for purpose and that any structural decisions did not impede delivery as an independent qualification.
  - o As part of their successes, the education provider noted three qualifications have been developed and proportionate changes have been made to other programmes to address issues raised by Chief Assessors, Chief Supervisors, and learners.
  - o The visitors have considered the education provider has a good system for overviewing its qualifications and maintaining import from a range of stakeholders through the relevant training committees. Therefore, they are satisfied the education provider has performed well in this area.

- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance** –
  - As a professional body themselves, the education provider has historically used the Qualification Reference Groups (QRGs) to obtain feedback from stakeholders and clients/end users. As an example, the education provider noted guidance on assessment by the Association of Scottish Educational Psychologists (ASPEP) and Scottish Division of Educational Psychologists (SDEP) which was published by Educational Psychologists in Scotland. They noted this formed a significant basis for the features of good practice in educational psychology in Scotland.
  - The education provider reflected on their effective working relationship with the HCPC which has helped them to ensure any necessary changes to processes/ qualifications can be implemented successfully. They have also continued to monitor the effectiveness of SREG so they are able to make changes at qualification level which are signed off by QC.
  - The visitors considered the education provider's reflection adequately covered how they have responded to changes within the profession and the environment. Therefore, the visitors were satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area.

- **Capacity of practice-based learning** –
  - As the qualifications are an independent route to recognition as a practitioner psychologist, the education provider noted most learners are employed as psychologists and used the work they did within their employment to evidence their achievement of the competencies. This delivery model allowed learners to formulate their path through the programme, based on their opportunities for practice-based learning.
  - The education provider's model of operation provided safeguards to ensure that learners reflect on the links between practical application and theory. At admission stage, learners had to submit a plan of training which detailed the practice opportunities which they used to support their work towards achieving the qualification. This was assessed by the Chief Supervisor (CS).
  - The education provider reflected that their approach to planning and monitoring practice-based learning has worked well. However, they considered it is reliant on the quality of supervision provided by the CS and workplace educator, hence their emphasis on supervisor training.
  - Through further information received as outlined in quality theme 5 , we noted how the education provider had supported learners to access alternate practice-based learning for example, learners who were unemployed. We are therefore reassured that the education provider has performed well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Stakeholder feedback and actions

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Learners** –
  - The education provider noted that all their programmes are delivered remotely, although feedback is gathered in both formal and informal ways. Learners accessed support by contacting the education provider directly via email or phone. Learners also attended clinics and workshops with the Chief Supervisor and fed back through the available networks. Learners were also able to make formal complaints and appeals on more serious issues.
  - The education provider reflected on their success around gathering feedback. They acknowledged that whilst they have been able to gather feedback from learners which resulted in improvements to their programmes, they had been less successful in gathering feedback about their performance. For example, they noted a low response rate of less than 10% to a survey they carried out as an alternative to The National Education and Training Survey (NETS).
  - The education provider however noted learners were fully involved in the development and consultation of the new versions of several of their programmes that were launched between 2018 and 2021. The education provider also reflected on how their Stakeholder Policy has enabled a richer conversation with stakeholders and learners and led to significant changes. In addition, because of the complaints/appeals received from learners who sat their written examinations remotely, the education provider has been able to provide better support and guidance for learners.
  - From the education provider's initial reflection and additional information gathered through quality theme 6, the visitors were satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area.

- **Practice placement educators** –
  - The education provider noted a range of practice placement educators they engage with. We understood the primary person who takes responsibility for the learner's work is their Chief Supervisor (CS). The CS has an overarching oversight of all activities undertaken as part of the programme. The education provider was responsible for approving additional supervisors who played a supplementary role in the programmes.
  - The education provider reflected on how the CSs supported the development of the new version of the Qualification in Counselling Psychology (QCoP), Qualification in Occupational Psychology (QOP) and Qualification in Forensic Psychology (QFP) qualifications launched in 2018, 2019 and 2020 respectively.
  - The education provider also reflected on their commitment to CSs by designing and developing more robust supervisor training to ensure excellence and consistency in the role. The education provider also considered the online supervisor training has also ensured supervisors have an opportunity to network, sharing best practice and concerns whilst also providing a platform for the education provider to acquire direct feedback.

- o Overall, the visitors are satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area.

- **External examiners** –
  - o The education provider descried the External Examiner as an academic subject or professional expert appointed to each qualification from outside the Assessment and Awards Team. The External Examiner ensured that the standards of the qualification were met, and that learners' work was marked fairly and consistently. The External Examiner reviewed a random data sample of marked and moderated assessments, from the previous 12 months. This sample enabled them to review the marking and moderation undertaken by Assessors and Chief Assessors.
  - o The education provider's reflection demonstrated no serious issues were highlighted during the review period and qualification standards were considered to have remained rigorous and appropriate. There was improvement work undertaken following the External Examiner report, which included additional supervisor training and telephone clinics.
  - o The visitors were satisfied with how the education provider had used appropriately qualified External Examiners to ensure that the standards are rigorous and applied correctly. Therefore, they considered the education provider has performed well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Data and reflections

Findings of the assessment panel: The visitors considered the education provider has engaged thoroughly with the process. In relation to each of the significant portfolio areas they have evaluated their performance, any current issues, and their responses to these. Although the education provider was able to submit some data points around continuation rate, the lack of formal, regular data has meant we are unable to recommend more than two years review period.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Section 5: Issues identified for further review

This section summarises any areas which require further follow-up through a separate quality assurance process (the approval or focused review process).

There were no outstanding issues to be referred to another process.

Referrals to next scheduled performance review

Involvement of service users and carers

Summary of issue: We recognised that part of the responsibilities of the newly developed Qualifications Committee is to ensure service user and carer involvement is monitored in a way that ensures its effectiveness. Therefore, we will review this area at the education provider's next performance review engagement when the Committee would have been further developed to undertake this role effectively.

Implementation of equality, diversity and inclusion

Summary of issue: Similar to the above, the Qualifications Committee would have had more time to further develop and reflect upon how they implement equality, diversity and inclusion by the time the education provider next engages with the performance review process. Therefore, we will review this area again at this time.

Assessment of practice-based learning

Summary of issue: Assessing the quality of placements is another area where we would require to see the education provider's reflections, following a more detailed work undertaken by the Qualifications Committee. Therefore, the education provider is required to include this in their reflection when they next engage with the performance review process.

Section 6: Decision on performance review outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2023-24 academic year.

Reason for this recommendation:

We considered the portfolio submission was well-considered and thorough, providing a detailed reflection of the education provider's performance over the review period. The visitors are satisfied with the education provider's performance in many areas and they did not identify any risks to how our standards continue to be met. However, the lack of externally sourced and verified data has meant we are unable to extend the review period beyond two years. We also considered a two-year window from this portfolio submission would allow the education provider to have time to further develop the three areas highlighted to be reviewed again at their next performance review engagement.

Education and Training Committee decision

Education and Training Committee considered the assessment panel's recommendations and the findings which support these. The education provider was also provided with the opportunity to submit any observation they had on the conclusions reached.

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that:
- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2023-24 academic year.
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out as noted through the report.

Reason for this decision: The Panel agreed with the visitors' recommended monitoring period, for the reasons noted through the report.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
Qualification in Counselling Psychology	FLX (Flexible)	Practitioner psychologist	Counselling psychologist		01/01/2004
Qualification in Educational Psychology (Scotland (Stage 2))	FLX (Flexible)	Practitioner psychologist	Educational psychologist		01/09/2011
Qualification in Forensic Psychology (Stage 2)	FLX (Flexible)	Practitioner psychologist	Forensic psychologist		01/01/2010
Qualification in Health Psychology (Stage 2)	FLX (Flexible)	Practitioner psychologist	Health psychologist		01/01/2001
Qualification in Occupational Psychology (Stage 2)	FLX (Flexible)	Practitioner psychologist	Occupational psychologist		01/01/2007
Qualification in Occupational Psychology (Stage 2) (2019)	FLX (Flexible)	Practitioner psychologist	Occupational psychologist		01/02/2019
Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology (Stage 2)	FLX (Flexible)	Practitioner psychologist	Sports and exercise psychologist		01/01/2008