

## HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Medipro Limited
Awarding body	Qualsafe Awards Ltd
Name of programme(s)	Medipro Diploma in Paramedic Practice
Approval visit date	28-29 September 2017
Case reference	CAS-11984-Q8Y3P9

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### Executive Summary

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.

The following is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as 'our standards'). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

## Section 1: Our regulatory approach

### Our standards

We approve programmes that meet our education standards, which ensure individuals that complete the programmes meet proficiency standards. The proficiency standards 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.

Programmes are normally [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to satisfactory engagement with our monitoring processes. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

### 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 undertake assessment of evidence presented through our processes. The visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make 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 meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

### HCPC panel at the first approval visit

We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC

Sheila Needham	Lay
Susan Boardman	Paramedic
Glyn Harding	Paramedic
Jasmine Oduro-Bonsrah	HCPC executive

### Other groups involved in the first approval visit

There were other groups in attendance at the approval visit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Martin Wakefield	Independent chair	BEOB foods- Managing director
Tracy Fairfax	Secretary	Qualsafe awards- Business development manager

## Section 2: Programme details<sup>1</sup>

Programme name	Medipro Diploma in Paramedic Practice
Mode of study	Full time
Profession	Paramedic
First intake	19 March 2018
Maximum student cohort	Up to 16
Intakes per year	2-4
Assessment reference	APP01741

The programme details have changed and are included in a table in section 5 of this report.

We undertook this assessment of a new programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme meet our standards for the first time.

## Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we require certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Required documentation	Submitted	Reason(s) for non-submission
Programme specification	Yes	
Module descriptor(s)	Yes	
Handbook for learners	Yes	
Handbook for practice based learning	Yes	
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes	
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes	
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes	
External examiners' reports for the last two years, if applicable	Not Required	This is a new programme

We also expect to meet the following groups at approval visits:

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<sup>1</sup> See section 5 of the report for updated programme details

<b>Group</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Reason(s) not met</b>
Learners	Yes	The visitors met with learners studying on other Medipro programmes, awarded by Qualsafe awards
Senior staff	Yes	
Practice education providers and educators	Yes	
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes	
Programme team	Yes	
Facilities and resources	Yes	

## Section 4: Outcome from first review

### Recommendation of the visitors

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors' recommend that:

- there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.
- the nature of the proposed conditions mean that a further visit would be the most appropriate method of scrutinising any further evidence provided, enabling further discussions to be conducted with key stakeholders of the programme.
- any further visit should focus on the conditions, with scope to review the wider standards if there is reason to do so, and should include meetings with the programme team, senior team, practice education providers, learners, service users and carers, and a facilities and resources review.

### Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that 23 of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

If the Committee makes the decision to require a further visit, the education provider will need to review the issues identified in this report, and decide on any changes that they wish to make. We will then require evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions, along with normal visit documentation with any updates made, at an appropriate time before the date of the visit.

The visit, if required, will be considered the education provider's first attempt to meet the conditions. If, after the further visit, there are any outstanding conditions, the education provider will be given one further opportunity to submit documentation in response to those outstanding conditions.

## **2.2 The selection and entry criteria must include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that the selection and entry requirement for Stage 1 is appropriate for the level and content of the programme, and enables learner achievement within this programme.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided, the programme website and discussions at the visit, the visitors learnt that the academic entry requirement for admission onto year one (Stage 1) of the programme is the “Achievement of level 2 (or equivalent) literacy and numeracy”. The visitors noted that this was equivalent to a GCSE in maths and English. The visitors were also clear from the documentation and the visit there is no timescale in which the applicant should have gained these qualifications. The visitors were also informed that as this is a ‘fast-track paramedic programme to lead to eligibility to apply for registration’, the nature of the programme would be ‘intense’. As such, the visitors were unclear how the entry requirements noted above will alone equip the learner to undertake this programme. For example, an individual applying to the programme could have gained their level 2 in English and Maths 20 years ago and would not have any other qualifications of recognition of prior learning. In this circumstance, the visitors are unclear how such an individual would be prepared to undertake the programme.

From the evidence provided, the visitors could not see how the entry standards for admission are appropriate for the level and the content of the programme. More broadly, the visitors were unclear how an achievement of level two (or equivalent) in literacy and numeracy will equip the learners with the knowledge they need to succeed throughout the programme. On this basis, the visitors were also unclear how such learners could achieve the learning outcomes for the programme and meet the standards of proficiency upon completion of the programme. The education provider must therefore, submit further evidence to demonstrate that the selection and entry requirement for Stage 1 of the programme will be appropriate for the level and content of the programme to enable learner achievement within this programme.

## **2.2 The selection and entry criteria must include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence of the processes in place to support learners who do not meet the entry criteria, and also demonstrate how such a process will ensure there are appropriate academic and professional entry standards in place for the programme.

**Reason:** The visitors noted that the admission material, states, “If any applicant does not meet the entry criteria they will receive a comprehensive learning programme designed to assist them in meeting the required criteria”. The visitors received no further information regarding what this ‘comprehensive learning programme’ consisted of, whether this will need to be completed before starting the programme and whether it was appropriate to support learners entering on the programme. The education provider must therefore, submit further evidence to demonstrate what this comprehensive learning programme consists of and how it is appropriate to ensure there are appropriate academic and professional entry standards in place for the level and content of the programme.

## **2.7 The education provider must ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.**

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that the admissions process implements equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants, and that these policies are implemented and monitored.

**Reason:** From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants. However, from a review of the occupational health form, the visitors noted that applicants have to give personal information about themselves, including information about their marital status. The visitors were unclear why an applicant's marital status was required to gather information about their health in relation to undertaking the programme. In addition, the visitors noted in the programme specification that the education provider states "Medipro actively supports equality, diversity and inclusion and has systems in place to monitor this throughout the programme from admission to completion". However, the visitors did not receive any further information of the systems in place to monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and learners.

Therefore, the education provider must provide further evidence of the systems in place which ensure the admissions procedures implement and monitor equality and diversity policies. The education provider must also provide a rationale for requiring applicants to disclose specific personal information, including their marital status.

## **3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how the programme is fit for purpose with regard to what level of award the programme will be delivered at, how learners will be informed about the level of award, and the basis upon which any equivalence to higher education award levels is established.

**Reason:** At the visit, the visitors were informed that this programme will be delivered as a level 6 qualification in relation to the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (OFQUAL) framework. The visitors were also informed at the visit that this programme will be delivered as a vocational level 6 programme which equates to a BSc level programme delivered in other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). In this regard, the visitors received no further evidence to demonstrate how the programme is benchmarked to the Quality Assurance Agency requirements for Level 6 awards. The visitors also noted that programme documentation and the website states that learners who successfully register with the HCPC after successful completion of this programme with an "up-to-date CPD portfolio could apply to most universities to top-up to achieve a BSc".

The visitors could not determine the level of award offered by the programme. In particular, the visitors noted no further evidence was received to support the assertion made that the programme is equivalent to Bachelors degree delivered within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) . Furthermore, the visitors noted the advice to applicants and learners around the potential to top up to achieve a higher education degree appears to be in conflict with this assertion. The visitors reviewed no further evidence, which supports the advice given to applicants around the possibility of topping up to a degree following completion of the programme. The visitors were unclear of the basis

for such an arrangement, and whether or not it had been formally explored by the programme team with the higher education sector.

Based on the findings, the visitors were not satisfied the level of award ensured the programme was fit for purpose. The visitors require further evidence which clearly articulates what level the award will be, and the basis upon which any equivalence to award levels within higher education is established. In addition, the education provider must provide further clarity around the potential options for learners who complete the programme to undertake further study, provide evidence which supports how such arrangements would work in practice and demonstrate how clear advice around such arrangements is provided to applicants.

### **3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.**

**Condition:** The education provider must confirm the maximum number of learners for the programme and provide further evidence which demonstrates that the programme is sustainable and can effectively support all learners.

**Reason:** From the documentation, the visitors noted that the education provider had initially indicated that up to 16 learners would be recruited across up to four cohorts per year. On this basis, the visitors noted the potential maximum number of learners would be 64 at any given point on the programme.

At the visit, the education provider told the visitors that there will be two Stage 1 (first year of the programme) cohorts and two Stage 2 (Recognition of Prior Learning route-RPL) cohorts each academic year. They also stated that this would apply after the first year that the programme runs, as the first intake will only be at stage 2 through the recognition of prior learning route. This model suggests there will be a separate recruitment for stage 1 and stage 2 cohorts, resulting in a total number 16 learners being recruited into four new cohorts each year.

However, in further discussions with the senior team and the programme team around the recruitment model, the visitors were informed that if 16 learners (per cohort) are not recruited at Stage 1 of the programme, the additional number totalling 16 would be recruited to join that cohort at stage 2. This model suggests that the programme may intend to only recruit students to start at Stage 1 of the programme each academic year, and will only recruit learners via the RPL route to join the programme at stage 2, if spaces exist.

In considering the evidence provided and the discussions at the visit, the visitors were unable to determine the maximum number of learners that will be recruited onto the programme. The visitors note the possible models of learner recruitment and entry across cohorts and stages all have significant and differing levels of impact on the resources required to deliver the programme. Given the ambiguity about the model being proposed, the visitors could not determine if the education provider has the resources and practice-based learning opportunities in place to support all learners on this programme. As such, the visitors were unable to determine whether the programme will be sustainable.

Therefore, the education provider must provide further evidence which clear states the model of learner recruitment in place for the programme, how many learners and learner cohorts will be scheduled for entry and how the entry routes to stage 1 and 2 will

be used to recruit the maximum learner number. In clarifying the maximum number of learners on the programme at any given time, the visitors also require further evidence which clearly demonstrates there are sufficient resources in place to ensure the programme is sustainable and can effectively support all learners.

### **3.3 The education provider must ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that they have policies and procedures in place to ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified, experienced and from the relevant part of the HCPC Register, unless other arrangements are appropriate.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors were directed to the Programme Handbook, Operations Manual and Programme Specification. From the documentation provided the visitors were informed that the managing director of Medipro Training Ltd would be the 'programme leader' with overall responsibility for the programme. The visitors noted that the managing director had the appropriate qualifications and experience to manage this programme, and is also from the relevant part of the Register. The visitors however did not see any information to demonstrate that there is an effective process in place to identify and secure a suitable person for this role if it becomes necessary to do so in the future. In particular, the visitors did not receive any evidence which articulates the requirements for fulfilling this role, or what the appointment process for this role would be.

The education provider must therefore provide further evidence to demonstrate that policies and procedures are in place which ensure that the person with overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified, experienced and from the relevant part of the Register, unless other arrangements are appropriate.

### **3.4 The programme must have regular and effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place.**

**Condition:** The education provider must show how the quality enhancement processes of Medipro and Qualsafe work together to enable appropriate updates to be made to the programme.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors reviewed the education provider's monitoring and evaluation policy. The visitors noted that there are groups such as learners and service users who provide feedback about the programme. The documentation highlights what the feedback mechanisms are, and how the education provider aims to make changes to the programme based on the feedback they receive. However, the visitors also note the qualification itself was developed by Qualsafe Awards, and any changes made to the programme would need to be agreed by Qualsafe.

As part of the education provider's 'mechanisms for approving programme changes' the visitors noted that "programme and module changes may be recommended by MEDIPRO and must be sent to the Qualsafe Awards CRE [Customer Relations Executive] who will progress them to the EQA [External quality assurer] for consultation". However, the visitors were unclear how Qualsafe will consider and



implement changes recommended by Medipro, and what mechanisms Qualsafe will use to come to these decisions. The visitors did not know what changes will be consulted on by the EQA, how Qualsafe would inform Medipro about the results of the consultation and whether changes could be implemented as suggested. The visitors were unclear how feedback relating to both the delivery of the programme by Medipro, and more fundamental feedback relating to the Qualsafe-owned qualification framework will be implemented by the awarding body.

As such, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how Qualsafe will consider and implement changes recommended by Medipro, to enable appropriate updates to be made to the programme.

### **3.5 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that there is regular and effective collaboration between themselves and practice education providers.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided and meetings at the visit, the visitors were informed that the practice education providers were involved in the stakeholder meeting to discuss the proposal and content of the programme. However, during the practice education provider meeting, the visitors learnt that the practice education provider and education provider had not yet determined how practice-based learning on this programme will take place, or how many learners they are expected to receive in their practice based learning areas. In this regard, the visitors noted that the significant areas regarding practice based learning, including the structure, capacity, availability, range and duration of practice-based learning had not yet been confirmed.

Additionally, the visitors were informed that the education provider has meetings with the non-ambulance practice education provider on an ad hoc basis, and that they plan to have regular meetings with all practice education providers moving forward. However, the visitors were informed at the visit that there are currently no formal arrangements in place to ensure these meetings are scheduled and will take place. Furthermore, the visitors were not provided with any evidence which articulates what the purpose of these will be, how often they will occur, and who will attend.

As such, the visitors were not satisfied that the education provider has effective collaboration with practice education providers for this programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure this standard is met. In particular, the visitors expect to receive clarity around the confirmed arrangements for practice-based learning, and that these arrangements are understood and committed to by all parties. In addition, the visitors require further evidence of the mechanisms in place to ensure formal collaboration takes place and will continue to take place throughout the programme, at both strategic and operational levels for the programme and that all parties are committed to supporting these arrangements.

### **3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.**

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that there is an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners

**Reason:** From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that the education provider had identified the practice-based learning opportunities learners would undertake throughout the programme. At Stage 1 (the first year) of the programme learners will undertake “a minimum of 710 hours of ambulance based practice placement” with North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust (NWAS) and Medipro Clinical Services supported by North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust (NEAS). Learners will also undertake “40 hours for the placement orientation in A&E and urgent care” with Medipro Clinical Services Limited. At Stage 2 (the second year) of the programme, learners will undertake a variety of placements including practice based-learning in non-ambulance (240 hours) and ambulance (510 hours) settings with North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, NWAS and NEAS.

However, the visitors did not receive any evidence to demonstrate that the practice education providers had formally committed to provide the amount and range of practice-based learning required to deliver the programme, as articulated by the education provider. At the visit, the practice education providers explained that due to other commitments with other education providers in the region, they currently have limited practice-based learning opportunities for learners who will be on this programme. NWAS provides practice-based learning opportunities to a number of universities in the North West of England and North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust provides practice-based learning for nursing learners within other education providers. In discussing their plans to provide practice-based learning to this programme, the representatives from NWAS explained that currently they only have the capacity to take on 12 learners at any one time. The North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust representative explained that they only have capacity for two learners at any one time.

The visitors also noted from the timetable provided at the visit that there will be a crossover of practice-based learning for Stage 1 and Stage 2 learners. In addition, the visitors also noted the lack of clarity around the maximum number of learners who will be on the programme at any given point, and were particularly unclear around the implications for this in relation to the capacity needed to support practice-based learning.

On the basis of these findings, the visitors were not satisfied the education provider has an effective process in place which ensures the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners. In particular, the visitors are unclear how the education provider has secured the required number of practice-based learning for the programme, how they have considered the regional context and how this will impact the programme and other programmes who rely on the same practice-based learning.

Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate that this standard is met. In particular, the visitors expect to receive further evidence of the formal arrangements in place with all practice education providers, and that these arrangements can support the maximum number of learners on the programme at any given point. In addition, the visitors require further evidence, which details the mechanisms in place to ensure the education provider, can understand and act on the impacts of practice-based learning capacity to the programme, and other programmes relying on the same placements in the region.

### **3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate what the plans are to involve service users and carers in the programme.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors reviewed the 'Patient and Public Involvement' (PCPI) policy and spoke to a number of groups at the visit including the service user and carers as well as the programme team. In the PCPI the education provider has outlined how the service users and carers will be involved in this programme including being involved in the admissions process and also 'reviewing the course syllabus'. However, the visitors noted in their discussions with service users at the visit, that they did not understand the scope of what their involvement will be in the programme. The service users and carers had only been informed that they can expect to be involved in acting as patient models during the assessment of learners, and were not aware that they will be expected to be involved in other aspects of the programme including the review and development of the programme. As such, the visitors were unclear how the PCPI policy will be implemented and how the service users and carers will be fully prepared and supported to be involved in the programme.

The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the PCPI policy will be implemented, how service users will be informed of the various aspect of their involvement, and how they will be adequately prepared to undertake such roles.

### **3.9 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that they have an adequate number of staff in place, with the appropriate qualifications and experience to deliver the programme, and must demonstrate what their contribution to the programme will be.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors were directed to the Programme Specification, Programme Handbook and Operations Manual. The visitors also reviewed the staff curriculum vitae submitted as part of the documentation. During the senior team meeting, the education provider explained that there will be 4.5 Full time equivalent (FTE) staff members delivering this programme. The visitors were informed that the 4.5 FTE includes the full time role of the programme leader, and that all the members contributing to this programme will be doing so on a full time basis. During the second day of the visit, the programme team meeting informed the visitors that there will be 6.5 FTE staff members delivering this programme. The programme team told the visitors that this 6.5 includes administration staff as well as a practice placement facilitator who will also be part of the programme delivery.

However, the visitors were unclear around how the full time equivalent figure for the programme delivery team is arrived at. Whilst the visitors understood, that some of the teaching staff will be part of the programme on a full time basis, the visitors learnt that they will also have other teaching responsibilities for other programmes currently being delivered by the education provider. The visitors could not determine if all of the 6.5 FTE were Medipro Training Ltd employees, or if some were visiting lecturers who were being sub-contracted, and if this is the case, where such individuals would be involved in the programme. With regard to the programme leader, the visitors were unclear how this person will manage the programme on a full time basis whilst also fulfilling the role as managing director for Medipro Training Ltd.

Based on these findings, the visitors were not satisfied there was an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme. The visitors require further evidence, which clearly demonstrates which members of staff will be involved in the delivery of the programme, a clear understanding of each staff members role, and the teaching and learning contributions they will be responsible for. In addition, the education provider must provide further evidence which explains the full-time equivalent staff level for the programme, and which staff contributions are included in reaching this figure. The visitors also require further clarity around the full time role of the programme leader and how this will be managed alongside the role as managing director.

### **3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that all the learners on the programme will have sufficient resources to support their learning and that the educators will have the appropriate resources to deliver this programme effectively.

**Reason:** On the facilities tour, the visitors were shown the resources available to learners on the programme. The visitors were also told that all learners on the programme will receive three of the core textbooks and will have access to other reference books and learning resources at education provider. On this point, the visitors did not receive any further evidence which detailed what books, and learning resources in general the education provider will make available to learners.

During the facilities tour, the visitors were shown the teaching rooms, practical labs and an ambulance. However, the visitors were not provided with any further information regarding the equipment available to be used in these teaching and learning settings. Specifically, the visitors were unable to identify the ratio of equipment to learner numbers for practical teaching sessions.

Given these points, and the lack of clarity around the number of learners there will be on the programme at any given point, the visitors could not determine whether there will be sufficient resources to support the teaching and learning activities of the programme for all learners. As such, the education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that all the learners on the programme will have sufficient resources to support learning and that the educators will have the appropriate resources to deliver the programme effectively.

### **3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.**

**Condition:** The programme team must revise the programme documentation to ensure that the resources to support teaching and learning are accurate and appropriate to deliver an effective programme.

**Reason:** From a review of the documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors noted various instances of inaccurate, contradictory and out-of-date information. Examples include:

- In the Mentor handbook, the uniform policy highlights that learners must follow a “bare below the elbows” rule. However, in the same document it states that “no jewellery, except wedding rings or watches are to be worn”.
- There are various instances of spelling mistakes and reference to the wrong terminology. For example the education refers to Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) as “Observed Structured Clinical Examinations”
- There are various instances of out-of-date publications used as references within the documentation. These include references to the QAA benchmark statement for Paramedics (2004). However, there is a 2016 version. One of the core books, Nancy Caroline’s ‘Emergency care in the streets’ (2008) is cited, however there are newer versions including the 2016 7<sup>th</sup> edition.
- In the ‘PAD’ document there are references to teaching adhering to the 2013 Joint Royal Colleges Ambulance Liaison Committee (JRCALC) guidelines but there has been updated guideline (2016)

These are only some examples of inaccurate, contradictory and out-of-date information identified in the programme documentation, which will be made available to both learners and educators. Considering these and other instances, the visitors were not satisfied the education provider has ensured that learners will have the accurate up-to date information they require in order to support their learning. The education provider must therefore revise the programme documentation to ensure that the resources to support teaching and learning is accurate and appropriate to deliver an effective programme.

### **3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.**

**Condition:** The education provider must clarify the referencing requirements for the programme to ensure it can effectively support the learning needs of learners.

**Reason:** From a review of the documentation the visitors noted that learners will be assessed using a variety of assessment methods. The visitors also noted that as part of the guidance for citing and referencing in the Student Handbook “the Harvard Reference Style is the recommended format for documenting the sources you use in your academic writing”. However, during the meeting with the programme team the visitors learnt that learners must use the Harvard referencing style for all their academic writing, otherwise they could be penalised through the academic misconduct procedure for plagiarism. The visitors note that the advice in the Student Handbook contradicts the programme team’s expectations, and therefore they are unclear what the expectations of learners are, and how learners will understand the referencing requirements for their written academic work. The education provider must therefore clarify what the referencing requirements are for the programme to ensure that it effectively supports learning.

### **3.13 There must be effective and accessible arrangements in place to support the wellbeing and learning needs of learners in all settings.**

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that the assessment procedures support learners to achieve within the programme, In particular demonstrate how they will fairly apply the process of giving feedback to learners.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors were directed to the Programme Handbook and Programme specification. The visitors noted that learners will be assessed in a number of ways including written examinations, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) and coursework. The visitors also noted the criteria learners will be marked against. During the meeting with the learners, the visitors were told that they receive feedback within a short period of time following their assignment hand-in and that this is usually between a “few days” and a “couple of weeks” depending on how many learners are on their individual programmes. The visitors were also informed in the programme team meeting that there were no formal timescales for giving feedback to learners. The visitors note that this could be a disadvantage to learners who are in bigger cohorts than those who are not. The visitors also note that this may have a negative impact on learners who use their feedback to improve on their future assignments, as some learners may have less time with their marked work than others.

The visitors therefore require evidence which demonstrates how the education provider will ensure that the assessment procedures support learners to achieve within the programme, and in particular demonstrate how they fairly apply the process of giving feedback to learners.

### **3.14 The programme must implement and monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to learners.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how they will implement and monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to learners.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors were directed to the equality and diversity policy. Within the policy, the education provider has highlighted that they adhere to the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act (2010). The visitors however noted that only eight out of nine of the protected characteristics are mentioned in the policy, with the omission of the ‘pregnancy and maternity’ characteristic. The visitors were therefore unsure how the education provider will ensure that all learners are treated indiscriminately, and in particular how they will support learners who are pregnant or on maternity leave. The visitors also note that the education provider characterises ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ as one of the same in the protected characteristics. As part of the Equality act ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ are two different protected characteristics. However, from the visitors’ review this distinction was not made clear in the policy.

Furthermore, the visitors noted in the programme specification that it states “Medipro actively supports equality, diversity and inclusion and has systems in place to monitor this throughout the programme from admission to completion”. However, the visitors received no further information regarding the processes in place to monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to learners.

The education provider must therefore demonstrate how they will accurately and appropriately implement equality and diversity policies in relation to learners. They must also provide evidence to demonstrate how they will monitor these equality and diversity policies in relation to learners.

### **3.16 There must be thorough and effective processes in place for ensuring the ongoing suitability of learners' conduct, character and health.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure there are thorough and effective processes in place for ensuring the ongoing suitability of learners' conduct, character and health.

**Reason:** To evidence this standard the visitors were directed to the complaints policy in the Student Handbook, a section about Student Support in the Programme Specification and a section about health and fitness in the Programme Handbook.

The visitors were satisfied that successful applicants must undergo enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) check, and all learners must complete a "health screening questionnaire / declaration which will form part of their personal file" prior to starting the programme. However, the visitors could not find any information regarding how the education provider will ensure there are thorough and effective processes to continuously reassess the suitability of learners' conduct, character and health while undertaking the programme. The visitors could not determine whether these processes exist and therefore could not determine if they were appropriate, fair and / or supportive to help learners deal with concerns raised about their conduct, health or character. The visitors therefore require evidence which demonstrates that there will be thorough and effective processes in place for ensuring ongoing suitability of learners' conduct character and health.

### **3.18 The education provider must ensure learners, educators and others are aware that only successful completion of an approved programme leads to eligibility for admission to the Register.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how they will make learners and educators aware of the exit awards, and that they will not lead to eligibility to apply for admission to the Register.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors were directed to the Programme Handbook and Programme Specification. The visitors noted in the documentation that "upon successful completion, the learner will be 'eligible' to apply for HCPC registration as a paramedic". At the visit, the visitors were told that there may be exit awards for this programme, for example if a learner successfully completes stage 1 of the programme they may be awarded a 'level 5 diploma in First Response Emergency and Urgent Care' (FREUC).

However, the visitors note that this is not included within the documentation and were therefore unclear about how learners and educators are made aware of the exit awards. Furthermore, the visitors were unclear how learners will be told that the FREUC qualification will not lead to eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register. The education provider must therefore provide further evidence about what the exit awards will be for this programme, how they will be communicated to learners and educators, and that they do not lead to eligibility to apply for registration with the HCPC.

#### **4.2 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.**

**Condition:** The programme learning outcomes must ensure that learners understand their scope of practice and meet the expectations of professional behaviour.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors were directed to the Programme Handbook, Programme Specification and Module PP12 (Professional Ethical and Legal Aspects of Practice Module). The visitors also noted that the education provider had referred to the HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics throughout the programme documentation. However, the visitors noted that learners will be required to administer drugs as part of their training to meet relevant learning outcomes. In year two of the programme for example, learners are expected to administer medicines such as morphine sulphate and diazepam. However, as part of the medicines legislation (Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) and guidance set out by the College of Paramedics, learners are not able to administer these drugs, even under direct clinical supervision of appropriately registered mentors.

Given these findings, the visitors are unclear how the education provider will ensure the learners understand and work within their scope of practice whilst in training, particularly regarding the administration of drugs, and know when to appropriately refer service users to a practitioner. Additionally the visitors received no information on how learners will be supported to understand what professional behaviours are expected of them, to ensure service user safety, especially, in relation to drug administration. The visitors therefore, require further evidence to demonstrate how the learning outcomes ensure that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour. In particular, the education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate how they will ensure learners understand their scope of practice, particularly in relation to drugs administration.

#### **4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.**

**Condition:** The education provider must submit further evidence detailing how the qualification remains relevant to current practice, and the mechanisms in place to ensure it remains so in the future.

**Reason:** The visitors were directed to the Programme Handbook and Mentor Handbook as evidence to meet this standard. The visitors note the various guidance reference points which have been used to develop the Level 6 award. The visitors also note the processes in place to enable changes to be made to the programme in future, and how feedback and programme development is used to inform this process. The visitors also note the qualification itself was developed by Quallsafe Awards, and any further changes being made to the programme would need to be agreed by QualSafe.

Due to this, the visitors were unclear how the award has been developed, and the mechanisms in place around programme development will ensure it remains relevant in the future. In particular, the visitors did not review any specific evidence around the development of the award by QualSafe, and the structures and individuals involved in this process. The visitors were also unclear how changes to the award would be made by QualSafe, how feedback received from the education provider in this regard would be acted on, and how appropriately qualified individuals will be involved in this process.



As such, the visitors require further evidence of the development of the award itself, evidence to support how the programme is benchmarked against various external reference points, including the Quality Assurance Agency subject benchmark statement for Paramedics (2016) and the College of Paramedic curriculum guidance (2016). Furthermore, the visitors require further evidence of the mechanisms there are in place to develop the award in the future, and what profession specific and educational expertise will be involved in such processes. The visitors also require further information regarding how Quallsafe will manage feedback from the education provider, how it will be used to inform the development of the qualification, and how curriculum changes will be implemented on this programme.

#### **4.5 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the programme.**

**Condition:** The education provider must articulate the structure of theory and practice learning, and must demonstrate how the learning approach will enable learners to meet the SOPs for paramedics.

**Reason:** Following the review of the documentation, the visitors noted that “the Diploma in Paramedic Practice consists of 2 stages, each of which is equivalent to a year’s full-time study...this is a 40 week per year programme”. At the visit, visitors were showed timetables for learners who will be on this programme for each stage of the programme from March 2018 to 2021. The visitors noted that in each year of the programme learners would firstly undertake their theory based work at the education provider for a number of weeks and then they will undertake their practice. However, from the timetable provided the visitors noted discrepancies between how much time learners will have to complete their theory and practice. The number of weeks learners have to complete for their theory and practice for Stage 1 is different for each cohort across the 3-year span. Similarly, the number of weeks learners have to complete their theory and practice for Stage 2 of the programme across the 3-year span is also different. In addition, the visitors note that the structure and delivery of practice-based learning has not yet been agreed. In particular, the visitors noted that the practice education providers were not aware that the programme is proposing to deliver block placements, which from their perspective would not be suitable.

Given these findings, the visitors are not satisfied structure and delivery of practice-based learning will enable the integration of theory and practice. The education provider must therefore articulate the structure of theory and practice learning and how the programme is designed to support it. In addition, the education provider must clarify how the timetabling of theory and practice based learning will ensure all learner cohorts are provided with an equitable opportunity to integrate theory and practice, to meet the learning outcomes for the programme and the standards of proficiency upon completion of the programme.

#### **4.8 The delivery of the programme must support and develop evidence-based practice.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how the delivery of the programme supports and develops evidence-based practice.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors were directed to the Programme Handbook, Programme Specification and Mentor Handbook. The visitors noted that throughout the

documentation provided it states “students will develop their critical appraisal skills in year 2 which are embedded throughout the programme which aims to promote evidence based care in paramedic practice as an intrinsic part of the programme”. The visitors also noted that by the end of the programme, learners “are expected to understand the critical appraisal of research evidence to inform paramedic practice”. The visitors noted in the assessment of the last module of the programme (Module PP12) that learners will be expected to engage in and demonstrate evidence based practice.

However, in relation to the statements and from discussions at the visit, the visitors were unclear how the delivery of the programme supports and develops learners’ evidenced-base to inform their practice. In particular, the visitors could not determine how the programme would encourage learners to develop their analytical and research skills relevant to paramedic practice, beyond the assessment contained within Module PP12. The visitors gathered no further evidence to indicate that evidence-based practice was embedded throughout the programme and that learners were provided opportunities throughout to develop their ability to use an evidence-base to inform their practice. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence, which clearly articulates how the delivery of the programme will support and develop evidence-based practice as a learner progresses through the programme.

#### **4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.**

**Condition:** The education provider must articulate how they will ensure that learners will learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors were directed to the Mentor Handbook, Programme Handbook and Programme Specification. The Programme Specification states “student paramedics will have the opportunity to work alongside and engage with other healthcare students within the programme, for example when on clinical placements”. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors were told that there will be ‘opportunities for interprofessional learning’ including shared simulation sessions with firefighters and police. Specifically, learners will be taken to Serco’s international fire training centre, where this simulation would take place. The police and firefighters would go through a simulated fire experience or multi-casualty/ major incident, with the learners expected to engage in this activity as paramedics would. Furthermore, the visitors were told that learners would learn from specialist paramedic professionals who will hold guest lectures at the education provider.

However, the visitors understand that the arrangements for the fire simulation with Serco have not yet been finalised, as it is just in its planning stages. The visitors note there was no reference made to this type of simulation in the documentation, which outlined how this simulation will work and at which point in the programme it would be delivered. The visitors were also not satisfied that such a simulation would constitute evidence of interprofessional learning to meet this standard. Although learners will be working in a multidisciplinary environment, the visitors were unclear how this simulation would enable learners to learn with, and from relevant professions, as each professional would be working as they normally would within their professional roles, in the same environment alongside other professionals. Additionally, the visitors could not determine how paramedic learners’ learning from guest lecturers constituted learning with and from professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Further to these proposals, the visitors could only identify that learners may have contact with other professionals through the practice-based learning environment, which would take place on an ad hoc basis, rather than in a structured considered manner that would ensure learners interact with and learn from other professions.

Given these findings the visitors are not satisfied that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions. Therefore, the education provider must provide further evidence which demonstrates what interprofessional learning there will be on the programme, and how this ensures that learners on this programme will learn with, and from professionals in other relevant professions.

#### **4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that there will be effective processes in place to obtain appropriate consent from service users and carers who will be involved in the programme.

**Reason:** From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that a 'student consent form' was included in the submission. Following the scrutiny of the form, the visitors agreed that it was appropriate to gain consent from learners who act as service users in practical and clinical sessions. The visitors did not however review a consent form for service users and carers who will be involved in the academic taught sessions of the programme. At the visit, the programme team informed the visitors that service users and carers would have to sign a consent form prior to being involved in any academic activity on the programme.

However, as the visitors did not review this consent form, and therefore they could not determine its appropriateness. The education provider must therefore provide further evidence to demonstrate that there will be effective processes in place to obtain appropriate consent from service users and carers who will be involved in the programme.

#### **4.11 The education provider must identify and communicate to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and must have associated monitoring processes in place.**

**Condition:** The education provider must clarify what the attendance monitoring processes are and how this will be communicated to learners.

**Reason:** From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted there was an attendance policy included in the submission. The programme team also informed the visitors at the visit what the attendance requirements are and how attendance will be monitored. The visitors were informed that there will be a register taken during each taught session to be submitted to the human resources department, who will be responsible for monitoring attendance.

However, the visitors noted the attendance policy highlights that "records of attendance will be kept by Medipro Ltd", but, the Student Handbook states that the "monitoring of attendance may take place at any point during the year". The visitors note that this information could be misleading as learners are informed that attendance 'may' be

monitored, whereas the policy states that this will always take place for taught sessions. The education provider is therefore required to provide evidence which clarifies what the attendance monitoring processes are for the programme and how this will be communicated to learners.

### **5.1 Practice-based learning must be integral to the programme.**

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that there are formal arrangements in place to secure practice-based learning for all learners on the programme.

**Reason:** To evidence this standard the visitors were directed to the Programme Handbook, Mentor Handbook and Programme specification. At the meeting with the practice education providers, the visitors were informed that the structure and detail of how practice-based learning for this programme will work has not yet been determined. The visitors noted that the practice education providers have not confirmed whether these will be block placements, and how many learners they are expected to receive at any one time, and whether these learners will be at Stage 1 or Stage 2 of the programme. In addition, the visitors receive no further evidence to demonstrate that formal arrangements are in place with each practice education provider to secure practice-based learning opportunities for all learners on the programme.

The visitors also note that the education provider has identified Medipro Clinical Services supported by North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust (NEAS) as a practice-based learning opportunity. The visitors were informed of the relationship and contract Medipro has with NEAS, however no formal documentation, which details the arrangements for this contract with NEAS was provided to the visitors, and NEAS were not represented at the visit itself.

As such, the visitors were not satisfied the education provider has formal arrangements in place to secure practice-based learning for learners. The visitors were also not satisfied that the education provider had developed and finalised how practice-based learning will be delivered, and that these arrangements would be supported by practice education providers. As such, were not satisfied that practice-based learning is an integral part of the programme.

Therefore, the visitors require further evidence, which demonstrates that there are formal arrangements in place to secure practice-based learning opportunities for all learners on the programme. In particular, the visitors expect to review formal contracts with all practice education providers which detail, amongst other things, the number of learners to be supported, the range of placements to be offered and the timings for when practice-based learning will occur. The education provider must also provide further evidence to demonstrate that all parties understand and are committed to how placement-based learning will be delivered to support learning and achievement of the learning outcomes for all learners on the programme.

### **5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how the range of practice based learning settings that learners will experience will support the achievement of the learning outcomes and standards of proficiency for paramedics.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided, the visitors understood that the majority of practice-based learning would take place in an ambulance service setting. This was confirmed in meetings with the programme team and with practice education providers. These discussions also clarified that learners would have the opportunity to experience placements in alternative (non-ambulance) settings (such the emergency department, urgent care, theatres, and elderly / acute wards) at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust.

However, the visitors noted that practice-based learning in both ambulance and non-ambulance based settings had not yet been secured. In particular, the visitors noted that the practice education providers and education provider are currently discussing the logistics of how this will work and are yet to agree formal arrangements. As mentioned in previous conditions, the practice education providers were also unclear on the number of practice-based learning opportunities they could provide and how these practice-based learning opportunities would be scheduled for delivery within the programme. The NWS representatives confirmed they would only provide capacity to take up to 12 learners at any given point. Additionally, the representative from North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust explained that can only accommodate two learners in the trust at any one time.

Based on this information, the visitors were not satisfied all learners will be able to undertake practice-based learning. In particular, the visitors were unclear how all learners would be able to complete 240 hours of practice-based learning in the non-ambulance setting identified, within 40 weeks. More broadly, the visitors were unclear how the programme can ensure all learners have the opportunity to experience and complete a range of ambulance and non-ambulance based placements. The visitors therefore require further evidence to show how the education provider ensures a range of practice-based learning to support the achievement of the learning outcomes and standards of proficiency for paramedics.

## **5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.**

**Condition:** The education provider must define what the structure of practice-based learning on the programme will be, and demonstrate that this structure supports the achievement of the learning outcomes and standards of proficiency.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors were directed to the Programme Handbook, Mentor Handbook and Programme specification. Additionally, at the visit the visitors were shown the timetable for learners who will be on the programme. As highlighted in previous conditions, there are discrepancies between the programme structure for different cohorts, including discrepancies regarding practice-based learning for learners. In addition, during the meetings at the visit, the visitors noted there were inconsistencies between what the practice education providers' needs were and what the education provider was proposing regarding the practice-based learning model. In particular, the practice education providers expressed that they would not be able to offer block practice-based learning. However, from the timetable provided, the education provider highlighted that they would require a block practice-based learning provision for learners as key component of the overall programme delivery.

Furthermore, in discussions with the education provider, the visitors were informed that learners will be non-supernumerary for 'about 50 per cent' of their Stage 2 practice-

based learning. During the meetings with the learners and the programme team, the visitors were told that some of the learners will be employees of Medipro Services Ltd and they would sometimes be non-supernumerary. However, it was unclear when non-supernumerary hours would need to be achieved, in which setting, and whether all learners in stage 2 would be required to undertake non-supernumerary placements. Furthermore, as the visitors were unclear on when and how this programme will offer a non-supernumerary provision, they could not determine whether this non-supernumerary model will be appropriate to support the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Therefore, the visitors require further evidence, which confirms the structure of practice-based learning for the programme and clear details around how this structure will be delivered consistently for all learners. In addition, the visitors require further evidence that such a structure is formally supported by the practice education providers to enable the achievement of the learning outcomes. Lastly, the visitors require further evidence to show where and when supernumerary for learners at practice-based learning settings will be achieved. The education provider will need to detail how this non-supernumerary model will support learners to fulfil the requirements of the programme, meet the relevant learning outcomes and meet the standards of proficiency upon completion of the programme.

#### **5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how they ensure practice-based learning settings have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to support learning.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided the visitors understood that the majority of practice-based learning would take place in an ambulance service setting. This was confirmed in meetings with the programme team and with practice education providers. These discussions also clarified that learners would have the opportunity to experience placements in alternative (non-ambulance) settings, such as the accident and emergency department at North Tees and Hartlepool Hospital. In the evidence provided and at the visit the visitors were shown an audit process, which states that “all clinical practice placement areas have an adequate number of clinical mentors / educators who are registered healthcare professionals with, or working towards, a recognised teaching and / or mentoring qualification”. In addition, the audit form states that “the Clinical Practice Placement area has an up-to-date copy of all Clinical Mentors/Educators Professional Registration details”. Following a review of the audit process document, the visitors could not determine how these requirements will ensure that there are an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in the practice-based learning environment. In particular, the visitors were unsure of what the education provider deems an adequate number of appropriately qualified staff to effectively support learners needs and could not determine how they will monitor this through the mechanisms they reviewed. In addition, as explained in the condition for SET 5.1, the education provider does not currently have formal arrangements in place to secure practice-based learning for all learners. There is uncertainty around what the practice-based capacity and availability will be, and therefore the visitors are unclear how many staff there will be within the practice education providers to support practice-based learning.

Therefore, the visitors require further evidence of how the education provider ensures an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff will be in place within practice-based learning settings. In particular, the visitors require further evidence of how the audit process to assess and monitor practice-based sites will record that there are appropriate numbers of staff. The visitors also expect more evidence of the capacity available with all practice partners to support learners, and that formal agreements exist which will ensure these resources are available to the programme.

**5.6 Practice educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, must be on the relevant part of the Register.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that all practice educators who supervise and mentor learners have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning in practice settings.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided the visitors understood that the majority of practice-based learning would take place in an ambulance service setting. This was confirmed in meetings with the programme team and practice education providers. These discussions also clarified that learners would have the opportunity to experience placements in alternative (non-ambulance) settings, such as the accident and emergency department North Tees and Hartlepool Hospital. In the evidence provided and at the visit the visitors were shown an audit process in which the education provider has stated that the “all clinical practice placement areas have...educators who are registered healthcare professionals with, or working towards, a recognised teaching and / or mentoring qualification”. The education provider told the visitors that all mentors who do not hold an appropriate mentorship qualification would have to undertake the ‘L3A for mentors in prehospital care (RQF) qualification’. The visitors noted that this is a recognised qualification, which will help the education provider to determine that the mentors will have the knowledge, skills and experience required to support safe and effective learning in practice-based learning settings. Additionally, in the documentation provided and at the visit, the visitors learnt that Stage 1 learners will be mentored by ambulance technicians or paramedics and Stage 2 learners will be mentored by a paramedic or “other registered professionals”. The visitors were informed that these other registered professionals will mostly be from non-ambulance practice-based learning settings and they could be either be nurses or doctors.

Based on these findings, the visitors were unclear what alternative teaching and / or mentoring qualifications the education provider would accept, or how someone working to a qualification would make them suitable to supervise learners. In addition, the visitors were unclear how the programme ensures other healthcare professionals who may not be registered with the HCPC would be deemed appropriate to support learners for this programme.

Therefore, the education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that all practice educators who supervise and mentor learners have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning in practice-based learning settings. In addition, the visitors require further clarification around the requirements for supporting learners, particularly where practice educators do not hold the stated required qualifications, or where they are working towards a qualification. The education provider must also provide evidence to demonstrate how practice educators

who are not on the relevant part of the HCPC Register are appointed and on what basis this is deemed appropriate to support learners for the programme.

### **5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure practice educators undertake appropriate regular training.

**Reason:** The education provider told the visitors that all mentors who do not hold a mentorship qualification would have to undertake the 'L3A for mentors in prehospital care (RQF) qualification' and that this qualification would form part of the training. The visitors however noted that not all practice educators would undertake this training before supervising learners and the visitors do not know what other teaching / mentorship qualification mentors could hold before supervising learners.

In discussions with the programme team informed the education provider that they would hold regular update training for mentors. This training would be specific to the programme to ensure practice educators can support learners appropriately. However, the visitors received no information regarding what the regular training sessions for mentors will include, how often these training sessions will be, and whether or not this training is required before learners can be supported in practice.

The visitors were also informed by the practice education providers that they would prefer to have joint regular training sessions with the other education providers to save time and resources and avoid repeating similar refresher trainer sessions. In this regard, the visitors note there are currently no formal partnerships and effective processes in place to ensure effective collaboration, and as such are unclear whether these arrangements have been agreed with the practice education providers.

Based on these findings, the visitors require further evidence which demonstrates how practice educators undertake appropriate regular training, in order to sufficiently support the learners' needs and to ensure that they are kept up-to-date with the expectations of their role. Additionally, the education provider must demonstrate what this training will be, the requirements placed on practice educators to complete it, and that these arrangements are supported and formally agreed with all practice placement providers.

### **6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.**

**Condition:** The education provider must revisit the assessment strategy and design to ensure that it is appropriate to ensure that those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for paramedics.

**Reason:** The visitors noted in the Practice Assessment Document (PAD) for both year 1 and 2 that learners need all competencies signed off, in order to pass the practice modules. The visitors also noted that learners would have to achieve each competency three times such as invasive skills in clinical practice and demonstrate administering drug therapy. The visitors were unclear how the learners will achieve this, as in practice there could be limited opportunities to demonstrate these competencies. On this point,



the visitors also noted that the education provider has mentioned that there will be other arrangements such as more practice-based learning hours to be completed or for simulation to be arranged. The visitors were unclear how such arrangements would be managed in practice, particularly as it may be difficult to secure additional practice hours or difficulties in arranging simulations at short notice with limited resources.

Furthermore, the practice education providers also noted that learners will not be allowed to undertake certain competencies detailed in the PAD, especially the demonstration of administering drug therapy. As explained in previous conditions, the visitors note that learners are not allowed to administer certain drugs whilst in training to become a registered paramedic.

Given the findings, the visitors are unclear how learners will be able to demonstrate that they meet all the competencies set out in the PAD, as learners will either not have the opportunity to do so, or are not permitted to by law. The education provider must therefore revisit the assessment strategy and provide further evidence that it is appropriate to ensure that those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for paramedics. In particular, the visitors require further evidence, which clarifies how the education provider ensures all learners, will have the opportunity to demonstrate required competencies, and where learners do not, what arrangements are in place to ensure learners are appropriately assessed.

#### **6.4 Assessment policies must clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.**

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that the assessment policies specify what is expected of learners, to enable them to achieve and progress within the programme and enable them to achieve the SOPs for paramedics.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors noted in the programme documentation that there was no information which outlines the resit policies for this programme and the maximum amount of time a learner can take to complete the programme. During the learners' meeting, the visitors noted that learners are currently unaware of how many times they could resit, what elements of the programmes they could resit, the time period in which the resit would need to take place, and the maximum time they had to complete their qualification.

As such, the visitors were unclear about how learners will be informed about the requirements for progression on the programme and require further evidence to ensure this standard is met. In particular, the visitors require further evidence of policies in place regarding opportunities for learners to resit elements of the programme and where limits apply in relation to this. Furthermore, the visitors require further clarity around the maximum time allowed to complete the award, and how all information around progression and achievement is communicated to learners.

## **6.7 The education provider must ensure that at least one external examiner for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.**

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that the external examiner is independent from the programme, that they have the appropriate qualifications and experience, and are from the relevant part of the Register, unless other arrangements are appropriate.

**Reason:** From a review of the documentation and discussions at the visit, the visitors learnt that an external quality assessor (EQA) and external examiner had been recruited for this programme. According to the education provider, the person fulfilling the EQA role must be “A suitably qualified and [Qualsafe Awards] QA approved EQA who meets the required criteria to quality assure the QA Level 6 Diploma in Paramedic Practice (RQF), on behalf of QA”. The awarding body, Qualsafe Awards appoints the EQA, and their role includes providing “comment on course content, balance and structure, and on the modes of teaching, learning and assessment used, to support on-going development of the programme”.

Currently, the EQA is an employee of the awarding body. As part of the requirements of an external examiner highlighted in the policy by the education provider, an external examiner must not be “influenced by previous association with the module/programme, the staff or any of the students”. Furthermore, they have outlined that the “external examiner should be impartial in making judgement and not have previous close involvement with Medipro Ltd, which might compromise their objectivity”. However, the visitors learnt that the EQA will also act as the external examiner for this programme. Considering that Qualsafe Awards provide Medipro with the programme’s curriculum, the visitors were not satisfied the external examiner will be able to maintain their objectivity, as they are not independent from the programme.

Additionally, as part of the criteria of appointment for external examiners outlined in the external examiner policy document, it states that external examiners “can meet the applicable criteria set by the Professional, Statutory of Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)”. However, the visitors could not be certain from this evidence that this would mean that the HCPC standard would be met. It is not defined in the external examiner policy whether the external examiners would have to be from the relevant part of the HCPC Register and, if not, that there is an appropriate reason for appointing an examiner who is not from the relevant part of the Register.

The education provider is therefore required to appoint an external examiner who is independent from the programme, has the appropriate qualifications and experience and is from the relevant part of the HCPC Register.

## Section 5: Outcome from second review

### **Second response to conditions required**

Following the visitors’ recommendations from the first review outlined in section 4, a documentary submission and a revisit was required as a first conditions response. The Education and Training Committee agreed that the further visit should focus on the conditions, with scope to review the wider standards if there is reason to do so.

## Details of the visit to consider the first conditions response

The visit took place on 6-7 March 2018. We met the following groups as required in the recommendation by visitors' in section 4.

Group	Met	Reason(s) not met
Learners	Yes	The visitors met with learners studying on other Medipro programmes, awarded by Qualsafe awards
Senior staff	Yes	
Practice education providers and educators	Yes	
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes	
Programme team	Yes	
Facilities and resources	Yes	

## Other groups involved in the visit

There were other groups in attendance at the revisit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Jonathan Fletcher	Independent chair	PG Legal Commercial Solicitors – Director
Tracy Fairfax	Secretary	Qualsafe awards – Business development manager

## HCPC panel for considering the conditions response

We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC. For revisits, it is appropriate that we appoint different visitors to the original panel, as other appropriately qualified individuals are able to use the action based conditions, and make judgements about whether they are met.

Frances Ashworth	Lay
Anthony Hoswell	Paramedic
David Whitmore	Paramedic
Jasmine Oduro-Bonsrah	HCPC executive

## Updated programme details

Following the first conditions response and the revisit, the education provider has made amendments to the programme details.

Name of Programme	Medipro level 6 Paramedic Practice
First intake	Revised their intended first intake date from 1 March 2018 to 1 August 2018
Maximum learner cohort	Revised their intended maximum number of learners per cohort from 16 to 12

Intakes per year	Revised their intended intakes from 2 – 4 per year to 2 per year
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Following their consideration of the documentary response, and from discussions at the revisit, the visitors were not satisfied that a number of the conditions were met. Therefore, in order for the visitors to be satisfied that the following conditions are met, they require further evidence.

## **2.2 The selection and entry criteria must include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that the selection and entry requirement for Stage 1 is appropriate for the level and content of the programme, and enables learner achievement within this programme.

**Reason condition not met at this time:** The education provider directed the visitors to the amended entry requirements as evidence to meet this condition. Applicants now have to demonstrate that they have 5 GCSEs and an “achievement of a level 3 Regulated course (RQF, QCF or equivalent) with at least a 20 credit value within a health related subject, completed within the last 5 years”. At the revisit the programme team explained that the 20 credits could be in any level 3 regulated health or social care programme. The visitors were unclear how a 20 credit module within a health related subject will equip the learners with the knowledge they need to succeed throughout the programme for the following reasons:

- The visitors could not determine how the credit value requirement is appropriate to enable learners to achieve through the programme once admitted.
- The requirement of this 20 credit module could either be within a health programme or a social care programme, but not specifically within a health or care related area within this programme. The visitors noted that this means that the module achieved could be in an area such as study or research skills.

The visitors considered that if applicants could demonstrate that they have sufficient understanding in a health subject, this would give them a better grounding to succeed through the programme. The visitors were again informed that the nature of this programme would be ‘intense’ and therefore, could not see how the entry standards are appropriate for the level and the content of the programme.

**Suggested documentation:** Further evidence to demonstrate how the entry criteria for stage 1 of the programme is appropriate to enable learners to achieve through the programme. The visitors require evidence to demonstrate that the credit value and the subject area required for admission is appropriate to equip learners with the knowledge to undertake and succeed through the programme.

## **2.7 The education provider must ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.**

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that the way in which information is gathered about applicants in relation to equality and diversity policies is appropriate.

**Reason condition not met at this time:** The education provider directed the visitors to the process used to monitor the equality and diversity data of applicants in their

response to this condition. The visitors agreed that the equality and diversity monitoring form was appropriate. However, the visitors noted that the form was attached to the application form. At the revisit, the visitors were informed that applicants are expected to fill this out at the same time as the application form. The visitors therefore note that, with the current format used to gather and monitor information about applicants in relation to equality and diversity, will not be confidential or anonymous. The education provider must therefore ensure that the gathering of information in relation to equality and diversity policies is anonymised.

**Suggested documentation:** Evidence that demonstrates that the format used to gather information about applicants in relation to equality and diversity will enable confidential and anonymous disclosure and reporting.

### **3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how learners will be informed of the level of award and their options for progression upon successful completion of the programme.

**Reason condition not met at this time:** As a response to this condition, the visitors were directed to the programme documentation and website. The visitors noted in the commonly asked questions that applicants and learners are informed “as a registered HCPC Paramedic with an up-to-date CPD portfolio, many [if not all] universities would welcome you to top up to BSc status”. From discussions, the senior team informed the visitors that they have had conversations with local universities, who may take on learners from the programme to top up a BSc. The visitors note that telling applicants and learners that ‘many if not all’ universities will take on learners to top up to a BSc could be misleading. The education provider did not demonstrate how this statement is conclusively factual. Topping up to a degree is not a guarantee and although there ‘may’ be a possibility to top up at the institution discussed, this statement suggests learners could go onto a degree programme with the diploma and up-to-date CPD portfolio. As such the visitors were not certain learners will have all the information they require to make an informed decision about what further study options may be available to them following successful completion of this programme.

**Suggested documentation:** Evidence to demonstrate that potential learners have correct information about what the progression routes are upon successful completion of this programme.

### **3.3 The education provider must ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that there is an effective process in place for appointing an appropriately qualified and experienced person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme.

**Reason condition not met at this time:** To demonstrate how this condition is met, the visitors were directed to the Job Specifications in the ‘policies’ document, and page 18 in the operations manual. Firstly the visitors noted that there were discrepancies in the description of what is required to appoint the person with overall professional

responsibility for the programme across the two documents. In the Job Specification document for example, the person is required to be a “Qualified Internal Quality Assurer and Compliant, investigation and restriction free” and this is not mentioned in the operations manual. The visitors could therefore not determine what qualification and experience the person with overall professional responsibility for the programme will be appointed, as there were inconsistencies in what is required of this individual.

Additionally, the visitors noted in the job description that a ‘Higher Education Qualification’ is required of the person with overall responsibility, and that the operations manual states a “minimum of Level 4 education and training” is required. The visitors could not determine from the conversations and the documentation what this level 4 education and training will be, including the level and the subject that the qualification will be in. The visitors were not concerned with the level of pre-qualification paramedic training that the individual will have achieved. The visitors were however unsure how a person holding a level 4 qualification would equip them with the knowledge and expertise required to deliver and manage a level 6 programme under the OFQUAL framework.

**Suggested documentation:** Evidence demonstrating that the required level of qualification is appropriate to deliver the programme effectively. The evidence must also include a clear rationale for why the criteria for appointing the person with overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriate to ensure that the person responsible will do so effectively.

### **3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.**

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that all learners on the programme will have sufficient learning resources to support their learning in all settings.

**Reason condition not met at this time:** To meet this condition the visitors were taken on a facilities tour at the revisit. From the facilities tour the visitors saw a number of books and reviewed the reading lists in the module specifications. In their review the visitors were not satisfied that learners will have sufficient learning resources to support their learning in all settings for the following reasons:

- In the reading list and following the review of the learning resources at the visit, the visitors noted that there was not a sufficient range of learning materials required for the level and content of the programme.
- The curriculum relies on a small number of core texts. There were no journals or E-books, and were a limited amount of books at the education provider. The visitors consider that having a wide range of learning resources will enable learners to develop their autonomous and reflective thinking as well as critical analysis skills.
- At the visit, the programme team informed the visitors that learners could access the library in North Tees and Hartlepool Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust once admitted onto the programme. However, there is no resource loaning system which will be available to learners on the programme within the Trust. The visitors note that some learners may not always be able to physically access the resources in the Trust.

- The visitors were unsure how learners could access learning resources at either the education provider or at the Trust whilst they are out on their ambulance placements, as they will be based at North West Ambulance Service (NWAS).
- At the visit, the programme team told the visitors in the feedback meeting that they will now have access to NHS Athens, which would enable learners to have access to online resources. However, beyond this verbal assurance, the visitors were not given any evidence to demonstrate that this resource will be available to learners, or what resources will be available within NHS Athens to ensure it is appropriate to support learning.

As such, the visitors could not determine how the learning resources at the education provider will equip learners to achieve throughout the programme, or how learners will be able to access the resources they require to support their learning in all settings.

**Suggested documentation:** Evidence to demonstrate that all learners on the programme will have sufficient learning resources to support their learning in all settings.

### **3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.**

**Condition:** The programme team must revise the programme documentation to ensure that resources to support teaching and learning are accurate and appropriate to deliver an effective programme.

**Reason condition not met at this time:** To meet this condition the education provider informed the visitors that the examples of inaccurate information given in the report had been rectified. The visitors noted that most of these examples had been rectified. However, there are still examples of inaccurate information and references.

Examples include:

- During the meeting with practice-based learning providers and programme team, the visitors learnt at stage 1 of the programme, learners will have to complete 750 hours, and 750 hours including 240 hours for Non-ambulance placements at stage 2. The visitors were satisfied with the duration, range and structure of the practice-based learning. However, there are inconsistencies in programme documentation of what hours learners are expected to complete. In the programme handbook for example it mentions 710 hours for stage 1 placements.
- There are still examples of out-of-date references to 'Nancy Caroline's 'Emergency care in the streets'. The reading list for Module PP01, for example, cites the 2008 edition. There are newer versions including the 2016 7<sup>th</sup> edition.
- There are various references to different editions of the UK Ambulance Services Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPGs) in the module descriptions, and the visitors note there is no reference to whether it is the electronic version with the supplements.
- To meet the 4.4 condition set the visitors were directed to the operations manual. The visitors reviewed the range of evidence which outlines how the curriculum remains relevant practice and were satisfied with the evidence provided. However, the visitors, noted the sentence "other arrangements for ensuring samples of students work (as seen by external examiner)". This is an incomplete

sentence and the visitors were therefore not clear how this statement will be effectively communicated to educators and learners.

As mentioned in the previous reasoning for this condition, these are only some examples of inaccurate, contradictory and out-of-date information, which will be made available to learners and educators. The education provider should revisit the programme documentation and amend all discrepancies to ensure it is accurate and up-to date.

**Suggested documentation:** Evidence to demonstrate that all the programme documentation available to educators and learners is accurate and appropriate to deliver the programme effectively.

#### **4.8 The delivery of the programme must support and develop evidence-based practice.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how the delivery of the programme supports and develops evidence-based practice, appropriate for the level of the programme.

- **Reason condition not met at this time:** In their response to this condition the education provider directed the visitors to learning outcomes in Module PP04 and PP12 as well as various pages in the Practice Assessment Document (PAD). However, the visitors noted the learning outcomes highlighted do not support the delivery evidence-based practice appropriate for the level of the programme. For example, for the PP12 module, learning outcome 3 is to “Understand how to use a range of research methods to review evidence in order to inform best practice”. The assessment of this learning outcome includes the; “use of different types of data, including qualitative and quantitative”;
  - “interpreting findings including types, strengths and weaknesses”; and
  - “summarising how research contributes to paramedic practice”.

From the assessment of the learning outcomes associated with evidence-based practice, the visitors note that the descriptors used are not congruent to developing evidence-based practice for the level of the programme. This programme has been developed and will be delivered at level 6 under the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF). The visitors note that there is a reliance on ‘descriptive’ assessments, rather than applying methods and techniques that have been learned and consolidated, along with a lack of critical analysis.

In addition, the visitors were not clear how the assessment methods used for the above modules are appropriate to assess the learning associated with evidence-based practice. For example, the visitors were directed to learning outcome 4 in Module PP04, which requires learners to “know how to conduct research relevant to prehospital care practice”. The assessment methods for this module for example include “student workbooks and OSCE’s”. The visitors therefore could not see how the assessment methods, associated with these modules will enable learners to demonstrate that they meet the associated learning outcomes.

Lastly, the education provider must ensure that the assessment of evidence-based practice is objective, fair and reliable to measure learners’ progression. From a review of the documentation and discussions with the programme team, mentors are required



to sign of competencies for evidence-based practice and best practice. In the year 2 PAD, for example, learners must “Identify and demonstrate evidence based and best practice when undertaking an appropriate and comprehensive cardiovascular examination”. From the discussions, learners would discuss with their mentors why the methods they have adopted are evidence based and best practice. The visitors were unsure, when learners would fully be able to explain why that specific technique is evidence-based or best practice, given the nature of practice-based learning. Learners will be in high-pressured environments and may not be able to have clear, constructive discussions around why their methods are appropriate, and demonstrate evidence-based and best practice.

The visitors also consider that mentors may not be well placed to make these decisions in the practice-based learning environment. Mentors will be required to make decisions based on abstract conceptions of what they believe is evidence base or best practice, based solely on the learner’s explanations, and their own knowledge. The mentors may not have access to the resources exemplifying the evidence-base or best practice mentioned by the learner to make an objective decision about its appropriateness. Therefore, the assessment of these competencies may not be a consistent and thorough measure or learner understanding of evidence-based and best practice.

The visitors consider that it may not be appropriate to assess the competencies associated with evidence-based practice in practice-based learning environments. Learners and mentors will be faced with a variety of pressures including lack of access to academic resources and time to be able to demonstrate and assess that these competencies are met. As such the visitors were not satisfied that learners will be assessed objectively, fairly and reliable through their practice, in particular around evidence-based practice.

The visitors are not satisfied that this condition is not met for the following reasons:

- They could not determine how the module descriptors associated with developing evidence-based practice is appropriate for the level of the programme.
- They could not determine how the assessment methods, associated with these modules will enable learners to demonstrate that they meet the associated learning outcomes.
- And they could not determine how evidence-based practice could be objectively, fairly and accurately measured through the practice-based learning environment.

This condition requires further evidence to indicate that evidence-based practice was embedded throughout the programme and that learners will be provided opportunities throughout to develop their ability to use an evidence-base to inform their practice.

**Suggested documentation:** Evidence which clearly articulates how the delivery of the programme will support and develop evidence-based practice as a learner progresses through the programme. The evidence must also include, how evidence-based practice will be assessed and that this assessment is objective, fair and reliable.

### **Recommendations**

We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. Recommendations do

not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

There were no recommendations set on the programme following the original visit, however a condition was set on the standard below. The visitors were satisfied that the condition was met due to discussions at the revisit and documentation received as part of the conditions response, but are making the following recommendation based on these discussions and documentation.

### **3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider recruiting more service users and carers to ensure continued involvement in the programme.

**Reason:** At the revisit, the visitors met with two service users who will be involved in the programme. As part of the conditions response, the visitors were directed to the Patient Carer and Public Involvement (PCPI) policy. This policy included what activities service users and carers will be involved and how they will be supported. The visitors were therefore satisfied that the standard was met. However, the visitors note that the current number of service user and carers could impact on their ability to be sufficiently involved across the programme. The service users and carers we met have other responsibilities which take priority over their involvement in the programme. The visitors therefore suggest that the education provider recruits more service users and carers to the programme to ensure that the involvement in the programme is adequate and maintained.

## **Section 6: Visitors' recommendation**

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, and the request for further evidence set out in section 5, the visitors are satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 24 May 2018 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).