Performance review process report

Northumbria University at Newcastle, 2018 - 22

Executive summary

This is a report of the process to review the performance of Northumbria University at Newcastle. This report captures the process we have undertaken to consider the performance of the institution in delivering HCPC-approved programmes. This enables us to make risk-based decisions about how to engage with this provider in the future, and to consider if there is any impact on our standards being met.

We have:
- Reviewed the education provider's portfolio submission against our institution level standards and found our standards are met in this area following exploration of key themes through quality activities.
- Reviewed the institution's portfolio submission to consider which themes needed to be explored through quality activities.
- Undertook quality activities to arrive at our judgement on performance, including when the institution should next be reviewed.
- Recommended when the institution should next be reviewed.

Through this assessment, we have noted:
- The areas we explored focused on:
  - How the education provider is ensuring appropriate involvement of service users and carers across their programmes
  - How the education provider is ensuring all learners have appropriate access to their Clinical Skills Centre which is the hub for their simulation technology, which they are doing through expansion and careful timetabling
  - The disparity between the approved number of learners and the number of learners on programmes. The covid pandemic forced a change in their recruitment of learners.
- The following are some areas of best practice:
  - The visitors noted the education provider's investment in facilities and technology as an area of good practice.
  - Their apprenticeship provision was developed based on extensive consultation with local service providers as part of the overall workforce development plan for the region.
- The following areas should be referred to another HCPC process for assessment:
  - The visitors noted the impact of the plans to address service user and carer (SU&C) involvement should be reviewed during the education provider's next performance review. They recommended the education provider continues to embed SU&C involvement across the programmes and

consider formalising some of the opportunities for SU&C and learner engagement.

The education provider should next engage with monitoring in four years, the 2026-27 academic year, because they are performing well in most areas. The visitors agreed a four-year monitoring period was an appropriate period relative to performance and risk. This will give the education provider adequate time to implement action plans, in particular those regarding service user and carer involvement, and evaluate the results of changes to reflect upon in their next performance review.

Previous consideration	This is the education provider's first interaction with the performance review.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: • when the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be • whether issues identified for referral through this review should be reviewed, and if so how
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: • Subject to the Panel's decision, the provider's next performance review will be in the 2026-27 academic year. • Subject to the Panel's decision, we will undertake further investigations as per section 5

Included within this report

Section 1: About this assessment

About us

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

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

Our standards

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

Our regulatory approach

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

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

The performance review process

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

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

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

Thematic areas reviewed

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

How we make our decisions

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

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

The assessment panel for this review

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

Patricia McClure	Lead visitor, occupational therapist
Fleur Kitsell	Lead visitor, physiotherapist
Jenny McKibben	Service User Expert Advisor
Sophie Bray	Education Quality Officer

We encourage reflections through portfolios to be made at the institution level wherever possible. In this assessment, we considered we did not require

professional expertise across all of the professional areas delivered by the education provider. We considered this because the lead visitors were satisfied they could assess performance and risk from the institutional level based portfolio. They felt like programme specific examples were informative and they were confident in making the recommendation.

Section 2: About the education provider

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers eleven HCPC-approved programmes across four professions, and four programmes for post registration prescribing entitlements. It is a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1995.

Their last annual monitoring was in 2019-20. An approval review for the occupational therapist profession was undertaken in 2020. There have been nine major change reviews in the legacy model for all the professions that they deliver education programmes for, as well as one for a post-registration provision. They underwent a focused review in 2021-22 which proposed an outcome to initiate an approval process for the new programmes.

Practice areas delivered by the education provider

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

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
Pre-registration	Biomedical scientist	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2007
	Occupational therapist	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	1995
	Operating Department Practitioner	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2001
	Physiotherapist	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	1995
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2020

Institution performance data

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

Data Point	Benchmark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	472	925	2022	The number of enrolled learners is much higher than the benchmark value (which shows the number of learners the programmes are initially approved for). The education provider outlined how this was due to the pandemic and the changes to entry criteria for learners, and they plan to return to approved numbers in 2023. The visitors were satisfied with their response (further detailed in quality activity 3).
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	2%	2019-20	This data point is gathered through Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data delivery. The education provider has a value of learner non-continuation lower than the benchmark which indicates good performance.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	94%	93%	2019-20	This data point is gathered through HESA data delivery. The education provider has a value slightly lower than the benchmark for learners continuing into employment/ further study. The education provider has several mechanisms to provide support to learners and reflected the lower score could be attributed to the pandemic. The visitors were satisfied with their performance and reflections in relation to this data point.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Silver	2017	The education provider received the Silver award in 2017, which demonstrates 'The student experience and outcomes are typically very high quality, and there may be some outstanding features'. Although an older data point, the education provider has a strategy to ensure continued and improved performance. The visitors were satisfied with their performance.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	75.1%	72.9%	2022	This data point is gathered through the Office for Students Summary. The education provider has a value slightly lower than the benchmark for learner satisfaction. The education provider has an action plan in place to address feedback from NSS, which the visitors are satisfied is appropriate.

| HCPC performance review cycle length | N/A | N/A | 2018-22 | The visitors have recommended a four-year monitoring period. This will be recommended to the Education and Training Committee Panel for the final decision. |

Section 3: Performance analysis and quality themes

Portfolio submission

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

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

Quality themes identified for further exploration

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

We sought out clarification on each quality theme via email communication to allow the education provider to elaborate on previous information they had sent or send further evidence documents to answer the queries.

We have reported on how the provider is performing on all areas, including the areas below, through the Summary of findings section.

Quality theme 1 – Appropriate involvement and feedback of service users and carers

Area for further exploration: The education provider identified servicer user and carer (SU&C) involvement as an area for development across all programmes. They outlined the aims of the EbE (Experts by Experience) involvement within the faculty strategy 2019. There was insufficient information about how SU&C involvement is developed and sustained, and how the development in this area would be appropriately resourced. The visitors explored what steps the education provider is taking to ensure SU&C involvement is inclusive, embedded and sustainably developed across all programmes. It is important the education provider has an achievable and sustainable plan in place to address the challenges with SU&C involvement they have identified.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider confirmed there are senior academic staff leading the development of SU&C involvement with allocated time and support. They plan for the development of the Centre for Health & Social Equity (CHASE) to increase SU&C involvement. SU&Cs will be involved in planning groups

and the Community Board for CHASE. There is an identified budget for SU&C payments and resourcing. They explained how they have formed relationships with a wide range of third sector organisations, as well as the National Health Service (NHS) and social care organisations. These organisations support SU&Cs to attend and take on various roles in teaching, learning and also research. This has encouraged contributions from a range of SU&Cs. The visitors were satisfied the education provider has appropriate plans for development of SU&C involvement with the establishment of CHASE. They agreed there is an inclusive approach to involving a wide range of SU&Cs across the programmes. They recommended the education provider continues to embed SU&C involvement across the programmes and consider formalising some of the opportunities for SU&C and learner engagement.

Quality theme 2 – Ensuring appropriate access to learner Clinical Skills Centre

Area for further exploration: The education provider explained how they have integrated simulation-based education (SBE) into all their healthcare programmes. This is delivered through their Clinical Skills Centre (CSC) which supports learners with blended learning through maximising resources. This method is used across several programmes, but it was unclear how the education provider ensures all learners have appropriate access to the CSC. The visitors explored what processes are in place to facilitate equity in access to this facility. It is important resources are appropriately accessible and managed by the education provider to support all learners.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider has acknowledged how nursing and midwifery programmes heavily utilise the CSC. This does require other programmes accessing the CSC to work around these programmes. For some of the education provider's HCPC-approved programmes, there are certain modules and activities which must be delivered prior to the placement as a requirement. To ensure there are adequate resources to meet physiotherapy programme demands, they were reallocated a larger dedicated space to carry out practical activities. They acknowledged it has been a challenge to balance all programmes' use of the CSC, but it is achieved by their timetabling team with use of some additional space. SBE is also carried out in IT laboratories which increases access to the technology. The development of CHASE will also include new facilities with clinical skills, laboratories, teaching spaces and a community engagement zone in one hub to increase timetabling capacity. The visitors were satisfied the education provider is taking steps to facilitate all learners to access the CSC appropriately.

Quality theme 3 – Clarity on large increase in learner number

Area for further exploration: The number of learners enrolled on HCPC-programmes provided by the education provider was significantly higher than the number of learners the programmes were approved against. They provided data outlining 925 learners enrolled, compared to HCPC's records of 472 approved learners. In particular, large increases in learner numbers were highlighted for their biomedical science and occupation therapy programmes. It was unclear if these were permanent or temporary changes, or if the data was taken from across several cohorts. The visitors explored the education provider's reflections on the number

variations, and if this is a sustainable expansion. It is important the education provider is able to monitor and sustain suitable learner numbers across programmes to ensure they can support and resource them appropriately.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained how the changes to learner numbers were temporary and were caused by the pandemic. The larger intake has been because of entry grade calculation during the pandemic changing. They plan to return to standard numbers for the cohort recruitment for 2023-2024 academic year. Despite this temporary increase, they state their staffing remained within the requirements of staff to learner ratio set by the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT). They outlined how the learner numbers provided for their biomedical science programme are the total numbers for applied biomedical science (three different programmes). The capacity and learner numbers for the placement sandwich year have remained steady for the last five years, and there is a maximum number of 25 places which are supported by regional NHS Trusts. The visitors were satisfied the education provider's explanation provided reassures them the increased numbers are temporary and due to the pandemic. They were satisfied the education provider plans to return to standard approved numbers.

Section 4: Findings

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

Overall findings on performance

Quality theme: Institution self-reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Resourcing, including financial stability** –
  - The education provider determines learner numbers in line with targets set annually by Heads of Departments. The faculty and relevant staff review resourcing twice a year and take day-to-day operational responsibility for resourcing during periods of staff leave or absence.
  - The education provider responded to challenges in recruiting an appropriate number of suitably qualified staff by improving the routes of experienced allied health professionals who can join a research or academic workforce. They created Graduate Tutor roles, joint appointments with NHS organisations and supported clinical staff to become research active. Despite these challenges, they have maintained high teaching quality and learner experience, as demonstrated through their national student survey (NSS) results regarding teaching quality feedback.
  - The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this area. The education provider demonstrated they are managing resources appropriately and responding effectively to emerging changes.

- **Partnerships with other organisations** –
  - o The education provider outlined their relationships with NHS Trusts in the Northeast of England. They demonstrated how they monitor the quality assurance assessment outcomes to ensure their suitability as a placement provider. They reflected on how they have maintained good working relationships with partners to ensure stability and sustainability for their growing cohorts of learners.
  - o They outlined changes which have occurred during the review period in relation to their partnerships. One change was the merging of two Trusts they work with into one new organisation, a nearby education provider opening Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy programmes and increasing learner numbers on their own programmes. They demonstrated a good awareness of the dynamic sector and outlined how they have managed placement capacity and opportunities for learners in response to this.
  - o In 2021, the education provider opened a physiotherapy clinic in which learners work with a registered Physiotherapist. In 2021 the education provider also established the Centre for Health & Social Equity (CHASE). CHASE brings together expertise in education, workforce development, research, and knowledge exchange under a single cross University centre.
  - o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this area as the education provider demonstrated they are managing partnerships appropriately and responding to emerging changes.

- **Academic and placement quality** –
  - o The education provider moved from an online Academic Quality Assurance System (AQAS) to an online system of continual programme performance review (CPPR). This change enabled more agile and timely interventions at module and programme level more regularly throughout the academic year.
  - o Action plans were created as a result which highlighted some of the challenges faced during the review period. These included resourcing staff for their programmes as discussed in the resourcing, including financial stability section above. For some programmes, they noted challenges with timely allocation of placements. They outlined they have addressed feedback regarding timely placement allocations by managing learner expectations of placement allocation timelines.
  - o The education provider identified lower than expected learner attendance on some activities such as debrief workshops and simulation preparation. In response, they explored the engagement issues and reviewed activities to increase engagement. At the time of their submission, they were actively reflecting on what has worked well from some of the adaptations made to academic delivery and support during the pandemic. Their aim is to implement the outcomes of their reflections in the future.
  - o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this area. The education provider demonstrated how they are monitoring academic and placement quality appropriately. They are responding to areas working well and those needing improvement.

- **Interprofessional education (IPE)** –
  - The education provider stated how they have a longstanding history of delivering IPE experiences for learners from multiple professions. These include nursing, midwifery, physiotherapy, operating department practice, social work and occupational therapy. IPE on programmes has been continually informed by learners, staff and stakeholder feedback as well as research and scholarly advancements. They outlined how IPE opportunities are continually being developed and tailored to specific programmes to optimise participation.
  - They highlighted some challenges of IPE during the review period. There were issues organising IPE opportunities without this impacting on learner's placement time, resulting in learner dissatisfaction. In response, they reconsidered timetabling to avoid overlap of placement time and IPE inclusion on the programmes.
  - They recognised challenges with ensuring IPE opportunities were realistic experiences for learners. They identified how case studies did not always give learners the same level of experience across professions. To address this, they are continually developing case studies and scenarios to provide more authentic IPE experiences for learners.
  - The education provider also recognised reduced engagement from learners when IPE experiences were moved online due to the pandemic. To increase engagement, they adopted a hybrid approach across the programmes. This aimed to facilitate an institutional experience and ethos, to build a community of interprofessional practice and to promote peer support across all learner groups.
  - The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area as the education provider demonstrated they are monitoring and developing IPE opportunities.

- **Service users and carers (SU&C)** –
  - The education provider involves SU&Cs at all levels of teaching, learning, business engagement and research activities. They are referred to as Experts by Experience (EbE). They acknowledged their potential to fall behind in the support and development of SU&Cs due to not having dedicated academic staff and administrative support to support and develop their work with SU&Cs. To address this, they created the EbE Faculty Committee who oversee SU&C involvement across the programmes. Their objective was to:
    - develop SU&C involvement for learners.
    - maintain a robust, SU&C-driven innovative and dynamic curriculum;
    - ensure SU&C involvement is valued and recognised across the programmes;
    - appropriately support SU&Cs;
    - provide examples of good practice involving SU&Cs;
    - evaluate the effectiveness of SU&C involvement.
  - They also allocated funds to evaluate the involvement of SU&Cs across their programmes, and how they can develop this in comparison

to other education providers in the sector. This area was discussed through [quality activity 1](#). The outcomes of this will be evaluated in May 2023. The visitors noted there are plans in place to address a previous lack of SU&C involvement. These plans sound beneficial for the programmes, however impact and effectiveness of them will need to be monitored.

- o The education provider consistently received positive feedback from learners regarding working with SU&Cs. SU&Cs are involved in simulated placements and teaching on programmes. The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area as the education provider demonstrated they are monitoring and developing SU&C involvement across their programmes.

- **Equality and diversity** –
  - o The education provider stated they value diversity and are committed to equality for all, as outlined in their institutional wide Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) Policy. They provided EDI statistics for learners and staff, demonstrating they are collecting data in this area. They identified challenges related to only having a small number of learners from different ethnic backgrounds. This included learners not feeling included, having a sense of belonging or having appropriate role models. They also identified how a lower proportion of learners from an Asian origin gain employment after graduation compared to learners from other ethnic backgrounds. They outlined the actions taken to support learners from all backgrounds, including literacy support.
  - o The education provider highlighted several initiatives started during the review period which have worked towards the development of their EDI goals. For examples, they are working on a collaborative project with four North East education providers to support Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic students to participate in postgraduate research. They also launched the Unacceptable Behaviours Policy in 2021 alongside a reporting portal.
  - o Their Access and Participation Plan Impact Report (2019-20) showed expected progress against the recruitment of learners from minority ethnic groups. There was more limited progress in recruitment of disabled learners. There is an action plan in place to address this. The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area as the education provider demonstrated they are continually developing their approach to EDI to benefit learners.

- **Horizon scanning**:
  - o The education provider reflected on the planned external regulatory and professional body changes and how they will be affected. This includes the changes to HCPC Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) being implemented 2023. The new biomedical sciences QAA benchmarks will also be introduced in 2023.
  - o They identified potential challenges which may arise from the development of the NHS England (NHSE) Workforce Plan. They predicted it is likely to set ambitious targets to increase recruitment to

pre-registration programmes. Further to this, the upcoming NHSE and Health Education England (HEE) merger (in April 2023) poses potential challenges to placement capacity issues. HEE currently determine learner number targets which are higher than the education provider's internal number targets. The education provider's target is restricted by placement capacity, and they acknowledged the merger may impact on this. They acknowledged increased recruitment onto programmes required development of placement capacity (or alternative provision), improved facilities, and better learner experience.

o The education provider is part of a new Integrated Care Board (ICB) which provides opportunities for the development of regional workforce planning. This will enable the collation of local workforce intelligence which will help inform their programme planning, learner recruitment as well as supporting increasing placement capacity. They recently launched CHASE (Centre for Health and Social Equity) as a new flagship education, research, and workforce development centre.

o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area as the education provider demonstrated they are identifying potential future challenges. They identified ways they plan to manage risks and utilise opportunities appropriately.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: The visitors identified a lack of formal and regular involvement of SU&Cs across the programmes. They noted there is a plan to increase involvement which will be evaluated in 2023, and suggested this is an area for follow-up during the education provider's next performance review. They were satisfied the education provider has some positive ideas and intentions for the future, however there were no timeframes given regarding the embedding of standardised interactions with SU&Cs.

Outstanding issues for follow up: The visitors agreed the above risk should be followed up during the education provider's next performance review. They were satisfied it is not a significant risk, however as the education provider has identified this is an area of development for themselves, the visitors think it would be valuable for the impact of their improvement strategy to be evaluated.

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review:
- The visitors recognised how initiatives have been developed to bring service users and carers to the centre of decision-making by professionals, statutory authorities and in developing models for delivering services.
- They agreed the education provider demonstrated good practice through creating additional practice space on campus. They developed the use of technology to manage increasing learner numbers on the physiotherapy programme.

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Embedding the revised Standards of Proficiency (SOPs):**
  o The education provider stated how all programme leads joined a series of working meetings to consider the implications of the new standards

of proficiency. This involved the Directors of Accreditation and Quality Assurance, and Quality and Teaching professional support. They confirmed the new standards have been mapped against the existing programmes. Examples of inclusion of promoting public health and preventing ill-health within modules were provided.

- o They provided reflections on how they plan to further centralise the service users in their programmes. This included a thorough induction of SU&Cs and supportive measures from module leads. This will adequately prepare SU&Cs for their role and what is required from them. There was evidence they are given appropriate opportunity to influence and shape content of programmes.
- o The education provider reflects how leadership is considered within modules and on placement throughout the programmes. They provide examples of how modules include leadership workshops, submission of a portfolio to evidence reflection based on leadership and opportunity to undertake the Edward Jenner leadership programme. The visitors were satisfied leadership is facilitated within both academic and placement modules.

- **Impact of COVID-19**:
  - o The education provider adopted a blended approach to education delivery during the pandemic. Significant emphasis and subsequent infrastructure were placed on provision of a pedagogy which embedded Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL). They invested in an institutional role out of Blackboard Ultra virtual learning environment (VLE) in 2019-20 and expansion of their TEL Support Team.
  - o They supported learners by maintaining limited in person teaching, adjusting specialist practical sessions and creating new online resources. To respond to the impact of the pandemic on placements, they trailed or switched placement orders allowing leaners to make up time in the following year. They carried out an evaluation activity in 2021-22 where learners noted the positive impact particularly around academic and personal skills.
  - o Teaching staff were supported through guidance, support sessions and tutorial materials. The expansion of the team enabled support of wider pedagogic development and best practice in remote learning and teaching. The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area as the education provider reflected on what worked well from some of the adaptations made to academic delivery and support.

- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods:**
  - o The education provider integrated simulation-based education (SBE) into all their healthcare programmes. This was done through quality-assured educational approaches which were supported by pedagogic research.
  - o They recognised how the increased number of learners on their programmes had put demand on placement capacity. They addressed this demand through greater reliance on simulation. They modified delivery of programmes to facilitate and maintain effective delivery so

learners could achieve competencies. They developed a video library to support learners, developed mechanisms to communicate through online platforms and developed a simulated placement.

- o The education provider reflected on how teams have become more flexible and responsive when considering and ensuring all innovations are fit for purpose. The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider reflected on the development of their digital platforms and new ways of working. They have responded to the needs of learners through simulation and modification of programme delivery.

- **Apprenticeships:**
    - o The education provider developed Degree Apprenticeships in the Operating Department Practitioner (ODP) and Occupational Therapy (OT) programmes in 2020. These supplement the provision of the traditional pre-registration routes.
    - o They identified potential issues of a four-year apprenticeship with regards to releasing staff for a prolonged period before they entered the profession as a qualified practitioner. To address this, they developed a three-year programme so new professionals are qualified more quickly.
    - o There is a dedicated Apprenticeship support team who work with learners, staff, mentors and assessors to ensure they are supported. They ensure there are appropriate learning opportunities, and this is reviewed regularly. They recognised challenges for work-based Practice Assessors/Supervisors who were new to the role and provided training and support. They focused on the skills and expectations of people in these roles and have regular meetings.
    - o The education provider plans to create a regional apprenticeship network. This aims to bring together the apprentices from the three provider organisations across the region to allow greater networking, collaborative learning and research opportunities. Programme leads are also working with partner trusts to expand the number of apprenticeship places. The education provider worked closely with employers for development of the curriculum and supporting applications by horizon scanning with the assistant workforce. There was ongoing support to applicants with the RPL (recognition of prior learning) process.
    - o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider reflected on developments and plans for expansion, outlining how sustainability depends on local market demand which is currently supportive of their provision.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review:
- The visitors noted how blended learning delivery formed part of the University Education Strategy throughout the period 2018-23. The education provider

placed significant emphasis and subsequent infrastructure on provision of a pedagogy which embeds Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), and this was identified as an area of good practice.

- The visitors identified the introduction of SBE across their programmes as an area of good practice. SBE has increased the resources available to learners through a well-resourced environment.
- The new apprenticeship provision was developed based on extensive consultation with local service providers as part of the overall workforce development plan for the region. This was highlighted as good practice by the visitors.

Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education**:
  - The education provider outlined how their programmes are subject to several other regulatory standards from other bodies. This includes:
    - Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP)
    - Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS)
    - Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS)
    - Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT)
    - The College of Operating Department Practitioners (CODP)
    - Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC),
    - The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)
    - Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
    - Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfAaTE)
  - They reflected on how the ongoing compliance of their programmes to all relevant bodies is resource intensive and challenging. They noted how the introduction of the degree apprenticeships has added complexity to this. To manage this, they moved from an annual review approach to a continuous review process of modules and programmes. They changed internal module and programme approval documentation to ensure they include and consider every element of each regulator. This ensured ongoing competency/standard compliance and that it satisfied sector benchmark requirements.
  - They integrated the additional complex monitoring requirements and explored system requirements to capture accurate data for programmes. They introduced a proposal for an additional system to manage the apprenticeship learner journey. This was approved and was being rolled out. The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider reflected on developments in processes to ensure their programmes have ongoing compliance with all relevant organisations.

- **Assessment of practice education providers by external bodies:**
  - The education provider audits all practice education providers (PEPs). These audits assessed the PEPs Care Quality Commission (CQC) report and findings. This is managed by a dedicated practice placement team.

- o They identified how despite their growing portfolio of PEPs, the processes in place are robust and have ensured all external body feedback is captured, reviewed and addressed. They reported no critical incidents within the monitoring period. There are regular reviews of the governance of all PEPs by senior programme staff. They provided an example of monitoring, when a PEP was rated as 'inadequate' by CQC. Through the Raising Concerns Policy, the programme and subject lead contacted the PEP to inform them they would suspend future allocation of learners to them. They agreed to a meeting in 2023 to discuss the PEP's plans to address the concerns raised by the CQC and how moving forward we could ensure the support of learners within the practice placement environments.
- o They are piloting the development of an internal NMC (The Nursing and Midwifery Council) Practice Placement. If this is successful, the education provider plans to set up a HCPC Practice Placement Forum that reports to HCPC management team. The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider reflected on their regular monitoring of an increasing portfolio of placement providers, and demonstrated how they respond to concerns.

- **National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes**:
  - o The education provider received positive feedback through NSS, indicating learner satisfaction. They acknowledged how despite their adaptations and support; the pandemic severely disrupted the learner experience. This caused some issues such as delays in assessment when placements had to be adapted, which were reflective of those dips in satisfaction scores.
  - o The education provider responded to this by developing an action plan which is integrated into their CPPR process. This includes:
    - A new approach to learner recruitment, welcome and induction was developed for 2022-23.
    - Full time teaching and learning returned to on-campus provision in 2022-23. They adopted supporting technology principles which were developed and successfully delivered during the academic years 2019-20 and 2021-22.
    - Broader work on the University Education Strategy delivery plan to include areas such as work on learner retention and success, the academic year structure and inclusive education.
    - The NSS Operations Group prepared for the launch of NSS 2023, with a full analysis of the effectiveness of the 2022 NSS completion events at department and programme level.
  - o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider reflected on their processes to monitor learner satisfaction and developments they plan to make to improve this.

- **Office for Students monitoring:**
  - o The education provider outlined how they had not been subject to any monitoring by OfS during this period other than the annual reporting requirements. In 2020, their Annual Programme Monitoring (APM) process was reviewed to assess its effectiveness against the

expectations of the ongoing conditions of registration. This resulted in the development of a new CPPR. They stated this is a learner outcome focused, agile quality assurance tool and process. The new process was evaluated and amended by academic stakeholders in 2021-22 before being applied to all programmes. The education provider explained there will be continuous evaluation of this system to ensure its effectiveness.
- o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider reflected on their processes to monitor their programmes and how they have developed and improved their processes.

- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies:**
  - o The education provider communicated with multiple external regulators and bodies, as outlined above in the 'Assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education' section. They outlined how during the review period, they completed Annual Programme Monitoring Reports, responded to pandemic regulation requirements and the impacts of Brexit. They also responded to a cyber incident.
  - o The cyber incident disrupted all communications and programmes resulting in some exams being cancelled in 2020. They issued an institutional communication to all professional statutory regulatory bodies (PSRB) regarding risk mitigation.
  - o During the pandemic and Brexit, the education provider communicated with relevant PSRBs to adjust their programmes. This was in response to any specific requirements, restrictions or guidance set by them. All programmes were reviewed to evaluate the most effective way of delivery.
  - o Some reapproval events from PSRBs were delayed which caused a delay in delivery against the new RPS 2021 standards. The education provider ensured the revised standards were updated in the relevant programmes within the review period and delivered to cohorts from January 2021. The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider reflected on their processes to engage with PSRBs and the results of engagement. The visitors noted their reflections showed transparency and how they work with guidance and recommendations from PSRBs.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review:
- The visitors noted there are a range of mechanisms in place to share best practice within and across programmes relating to engaging with professional regulators and bodies. They recognised the creation of the Teaching Innovation Group (TIG) as excellent for sharing good practice and creative ideas. The Universities Consortium Conference was also an example of an excellent avenue for sharing good practice.

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Curriculum development:**
  - The education provider outlined their processes to monitor and develop the curriculum of their programmes. This included their new CPPR process, periodic review and strategic review. They reflected on how mid-year developments are often due to sector change and demand and when PSRB standards are updated to reflect changes in profession specific standards. The Programme Framework for Northumbria Awards (PFNA) was implemented in the academic year 2015-16 to facilitate cross-institutional consistency to the structure and delivery of all programmes.
  - The education provider outlined factors which have influenced changes in the curriculum for each HCPC approved programme. The majority of these are changes to reflect updates in standards or guidance from the relevant PSRBs. There is more detail on this in the previous section 'Sector body assessment reflection'. They described changes they have made to timetables, delivery of programmes and structure of modules. This was in response to improving learner experiences and mapping to professional body standards changes.
  - The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider reflected on their processes to review programme curriculum. They have identified where changes have been made and the justifications for these changes.

- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance:**
  - The education provider outlined how several of their programmes are accredited by more than one professional body. This requires them to ensure all programmes are appropriately aligned to different standards and guidance. In their portfolio, the education provider outlined some examples of developments they have made to reflect changes:
    - Occupational Therapy programmes mapped to the new RCOT learning and development standards for pre-registration education. This was approved in 2021.
    - Changes to the Degree Apprenticeship Standards for Occupational Therapy were embedded in 2021.
    - Responses to PSRBs guidance during the pandemic
    - Withdrawal of the Dip HE Operating Department Practice on request of HCPC. This led to successful development and approval of the BSc (Hons) ODP and ODP Degree Apprenticeship.
  - There is more detail on the education providers reflections on working with professional bodies in the previous section 'Curriculum development' and 'Sector body assessment reflection'. They have recognised there will be development needed for their non-medical prescribing programme. This is due to the 2023 NMC revised standards which indicate that RPS should be increasing their use of simulation.

o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider provided examples of responses to professional body guidance changes, illustrating their responsiveness and appropriate means to address changes.

- **Capacity of practice-based learning:**
  o The education provider works with several major NHS Trusts, local authorities, Integrated Care Boards and partners across the Private and Voluntary Sector. They explained how placement modelling is undertaken with HEE and NHS partners through engagement with the Multi-Professional Education and Training Investment Plan (METIP). This established the required intake numbers for each profession, for each academic year enabling the education provider to set targets for recruitment.
  o They reflected on the challenges with placement capacity during the review period. They determined these challenges were down to pressures on staffing and services, and increased routes to qualifications requiring more placements. There were also more education providers offering programmes in physiotherapy and occupational therapy who were competing for placements. Placements for these programmes are set at a regional level. This required the education provider to approach placement providers prior to allocation to ensure there is appropriate capacity for learners. They acknowledged this approach can cause difficulties and at times lead to challenges with identifying placements needed to support their learners. They are aware HEE has been exploring the feasibility of moving to a model that would agree set capacity and are in support of this.
  o They recognised the pandemic had a negative impact on placement capacity. To minimise the impact, they ensured simulated practice was utilised fully. Placement hours which were missed were built into the programme, and appropriate extensions were given to learners.
  o The education provider supplied data to demonstrate they have been able to maintain and grow placement capacity over the last five years. They are exploring the use of Long Arm Supervision (LAS) to increase the capacity, opportunity, and quality of their placements. They also developed a physiotherapy clinic to provide more placements for learners. They explained how they will continue to develop, pilot, research and engage fully with developments such as role emerging placements, Long Arm Supervision Placements, development of clinics and simulated practice learning.
  o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider provided examples of responses to challenges with placement capacity and have provided a range of examples of innovations to increase opportunities for learners.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review:
- The visitors noted the education provider appointed a Head of Portfolio Development within the Strategic Performance and Planning Team to lead and manage the institution's approach to programme and portfolio development. They identified this as good practice.
- The visitors agreed the range of projects and innovations to increase placement capacity demonstrated good practice.

Quality theme: Stakeholder feedback and actions

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Learners:**
  - The education provider collects feedback from learners through module and programme surveys, student-staff programme committees, graduate surveys and National Education and Training Survey (NETS). They reflected on challenges with low response rates, limiting the feedback they received from learners. They have a 'you said, we did' communication with learners, and invite ongoing feedback so they can respond to issues in a timely manner.
  - The education providers moved to the new CPPR system enables them to use the most up-to-date data to drive pro-active recommendations and decision-making. CPPR ensures the learner's voice is at the centre of decisions to improve learner experience. There is a plan for a regional approach to be developed, regarding how they raise awareness of the issue of Freedom to Speak Guardian.
  - The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider provided examples to show they acknowledged and responded to feedback and are seeking to find ways in increasing the number of responses.

- **Practice placement educators:**
  - The education provider highlighted how they engaged with practice placement educators (PPEs) in curriculum design, validation of programs as well as partnership working to meet operational and strategic objectives. Most feedback from PPEs was gained through communication between them and personal tutors. There are also regular strategic partnership meetings to obtain feedback and for PPEs to raise concerns.
  - They identified challenges in relation to receiving feedback from PEPs. These included pressures on staffing and services, and reduced placement capacity increasing the workload of PPEs. They ensured they provided access to Practice Educator Training during the pandemic by developing an online supported teaching programme. They also set up a HCPC Practice Placement Forum which PPEs were invited to join.
  - The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider acknowledged the challenges relating to receiving PPE feedback and developed ways to increase this. They demonstrated how they have continued to provide support and training to PPEs during the pandemic.

- **External examiners:**
  - The education provider received annual external examiner (EE) reports which form part of the CPPR process. They identified minor issues from the reports, which were addressed. One of these issues was regarding the consistency of feedback and a need for regularised format, structure and depth of assessment feedback. They made improvements to ensure consistent use of rubrics, comments in the text and summary comments.
  - The education provider acknowledged their system for sharing data with EEs was difficult to use. To address/rectify this, they developed a new online EE annual report system to improve accessibility for EEs. They also carried out a review of their External Examiners policy. This led to a new policy with changes to aspects of the external examiner role and processes being released in 2021-22. They stated how EEs commented positively on how issues and recommendations had been addressed either by changes or satisfactory explanations from programme teams.
  - The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider acknowledged the challenges relating to receiving PPE feedback and developed ways to increase this. They demonstrated how they have continued to provide support and training to PPEs during the pandemic.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Data and reflections

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Aggregation of percentage of learners not continuing:**
  - The education provider's programme retention rates are slightly below the HCPC benchmark. They have support in place to retain learners and take steps to engage with learners experiencing issues that impact on their progression during their studies.
  - The support includes personal tutors, Student Life and Wellbeing Service and a Student Portal. The education provider also monitors attendance and engagement, which informs decisions to offer learners more support where appropriate. The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this area.
- **Aggregation of percentage of those who complete programmes in employment / further study:**
  - The education provider identified how small cohort sizes and low response numbers may have impacted the results for this data point. Generally, the data they supplied shows programmes are exceeding the HCPC benchmark value, showing positive rates of employment/ further study of their learners.
  - The education provider identified scope for further intervention to support learner awareness of career opportunities in the surrounding

areas. There is also extensive employability and future study support offered to learners which contributes to graduate outcomes. The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this area.

- **Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award:**
  - The education provider was awarded a TEF Silver award in 2017 where they demonstrated robust performance in both Academic Support and Non-continuation. They have recognised the challenge of developing research capacity of staff whilst maintaining teaching quality. They stated they are committed to the development of their academic workforce and have designed a new Post Graduate Academic Practice qualification and developed a career framework. They developed an extended probation scheme and research mentoring to support staff to become independent researchers.
  - The education provider took part in subject level TEF pilots. Through this, they introduced target interventions at subject level to improve teaching quality and learner experience. The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this area.
- **National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27):**
  - All programmes exceeded the HCPC benchmark until 2021 and 2022 when Occupational Therapy dropped below that level and Physiotherapy in 2021. The education provider acknowledged that despite their adaptations and support, the pandemic severely disrupted the learner experience. This caused some issues such as delays in assessment when placements had to be adapted, which were reflective of those dips in satisfaction scores.
  - The education provider responded to NSS results, developing new approaches to learner onboarding, learner retention and programme structure. This action planning is integrated into the CPPR process. The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this area.
- **Programme level data:**
  - The visitors were satisfied there is an appropriate staff to learner ratio across the education provider's programmes. The education provider reflected on the challenges with recruiting suitable staff. They state how there is a shortage of experienced practitioners who want to move into academic roles. They have taken several actions to improve this, including developing Graduate Tutors, joint appointments, and Newcastle Health Innovation Partners (NHIP) research and PhD opportunities. They are also exploring the development of pre-registration Doctoral programmes to improve numbers of researchers and academics and develop the potential for clinical academic careers. The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review:
- The visitors noted the introduction of the Graduate Tutor role as an area of good practice for supporting learners.

Section 5: Issues identified for further review.

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

Referrals to next scheduled performance review

<u>Embedding of servicer users and carers into their programmes</u>

Summary of issue: The visitors identified a lack of formal and regular involvement of SU&Cs across the programmes. They noted there is a plan to increase involvement which will be evaluated in 2023, and suggested this is an area for follow-up during the education provider's next performance review. They were satisfied the education provider has some positive ideas and intentions for the future, however there were no timeframes given regarding the embedding of standardised interactions with SU&Cs. The visitors agreed this should be followed up during the education provider's next performance review. They were satisfied it is not a significant risk, however as the education provider has identified this is an area of development for themselves, the visitors think it would be valuable for the impact of their improvement strategy to be evaluated.

Section 6: Decision on performance review outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:
- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2026-27 academic year.
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out in accordance with the details contained in section 5 of this report

Reason for next engagement recommendation
- Internal stakeholder engagement
  - o The education provider engages with a range of stakeholders with quality assurance and enhancement in mind. Specific groups engaged by the education provider were learners, service users, practice educators, partner organisations, external examiners.
- External input into quality assurance and enhancement
  - o The education provider engaged with several professional bodies. They considered professional body findings in improving their provision.
  - o The education provider engaged with other relevant professional or system regulator(s) (NMC and OfS)]. They considered the findings of these regulators in improving their provision.
  - o The education provider considers sector and professional development in a structured way.

- Data supply:
  - Data for the education provider is available through key external sources. Regular supply of this data will enable us to actively monitor changes to key performance areas within the review period.
- What the data is telling us:
  - From data points considered and reflections through the process, the education provider considers data in their quality assurance and enhancement processes and acts on data to inform positive change.
- In summary, the reason for the recommendation of a four-year monitoring period is:
  - The visitors were satisfied the education provider is performing well in the majority of areas. They suggested a four-year monitoring period as they felt this was an appropriate length of time, relative to performance and risk. This will give the education provider adequate time to implement action plans and evaluate the results of changes to reflect upon in their next performance review.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2007
BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science	PT (Part time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2007
BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science (Sandwich)	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/03/2012
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/05/1995
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy Degree Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2021
MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2003
BSc (Hons) in Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/08/2021
BSc (Hons) in Operating Department Practice Integrated Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2020
Diploma of Higher Education Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2001
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/1995
MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/01/2004
Non-Medical Prescribing Programme (level 7) (Supplementary Prescribing)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/03/2020
Non-Medical Prescribing Programme (level 6) (Supplementary Prescribing)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/03/2020

Non-Medical Prescribing Programme (level 6) (Supplementary Prescribing, Independent Prescribing)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/03/2020
Non-Medical Prescribing Programme (level 7) (Supplementary Prescribing, Independent Prescribing)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/03/2020