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Call for Evidence: A Review of Coherent provision and Sustainability in Further and Higher Education

NHS Education for Scotland welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this consultation exercise.

Overall NES appreciates the partnership working with SFC, particularly through helpful engagement with Helen Raftopoulos. The development of outcomes for controlled subjects helps to focus activity aligned to Scottish Government policy. Accordingly NES fully supports ongoing constructive collaborative engagement with SFC.

What do you think works well in the current further and higher education arrangements that we should keep in order to secure Scotland's inclusive social and economic recovery from the current pandemic?

- Focus on widening access, and encouraging relationships between NES, SG, HEIs and FE.
- There are already well-established networks and relationship. The size of Scotland facilitates cross sector and cross regional engagement to inform future priorities.

How can we best preserve and strengthen those features of education, research and innovation in Scotland that we most prize, in a very challenging funding environment?

- Strengthen shared opportunities for high quality education research and consider techniques which are relevant to functioning in a context of uncertainty and with a requirement to create more rapid and innovative responses to emerging workforce, business and learning priorities. As part of this, consideration should be given to different types of support, drawing on expertise of the college, university and wider education and business communities.

What do you think colleges, universities and specialist institutions should stop doing, or do differently, in order to contribute effectively to an inclusive social and economic recovery?

- A more flexible approach to delivery of programmes to address geographical challenges in ensuring adequate workforce in remote and rural areas.
- More flexible curricula to facilitate maximum use of practice placements to meet professional regulator requirements.



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- Further development for staff on online teaching.
- Greater support for FE to enable articulation of nursing students into year 2.
- More productive collaboration would be helpful to reduce what may be perceived as unnecessary and wasteful competition
- Need to coalesce around common need/education solution and give consideration to new knowledge and skills that may be required for preparation of learners for working in a COVID-19/post Covid context.

How can colleges, universities and specialist institutions best support Scotland's international connectedness and competitiveness in the post-pandemic, post-EU membership environment?

- Support international placements for NMAHP
- Support for nursing and midwifery research posts. Currently demands of teaching do not always support research as well.
- Explore new partnerships for shared activity e.g. global effects of pandemic/ the new public health/innovative learning technologies.

What opportunities and threats does the post-pandemic environment hold for colleges, universities and specialist institutions?

Opportunities

- Programme design/models to reflect new or altered employment and service delivery models if able to respond to demands may be an opportunity for programmes. However, if not rapid responding may risk becoming irrelevant or obsolete.
- Opportunity for remote access to education improving opportunities for remote and rural communities to access HE especially island boards

Threats:

- The consequences of the disruption of placements for the nursing, midwifery and allied health professions (NMAHP) student journey, combined with the increased demand for placements in the new academic year cannot be quantified at this time but there is consensus across the sector that it will be considerable.
- Given the significant amount of both recovery of placements and the practice education needs for NMAHP students commencing or recommencing their programmes in September, it is unlikely the capacity for safe practice education will be sufficient for a normal or near normal approach. Joint working with universities, regulators, professional bodies and practice education providers, would enable exploration of creative solutions to support meeting the learning needs to avoid the risk to workforce supply that these capacity issues represent.
- The requirement for rapid restructure of programme flows, theory and placements, to accommodate COVID-19 safeguards (social distancing etc.) and the increased demands on placement capacity is challenging and further compounded by uncertainty around service redesign in a rapidly changing landscape will require additional support.

- It is anticipated there will be delayed programme completions beyond 2020, as well as the potential of reduced rates of retention of students, which will ultimately have an impact on projected numbers entering the NMAHP workforce in future years and implications for bursary extensions for nursing and midwifery students this year and beyond.
- Clinical placements comprise a significant proportion of undergraduate courses in healthcare disciplines. It is not clear what the impact of service redesign will be on placement numbers. However, placement providers indicate that mitigation plans are in progress across Scotland but are cautious that service redesign and reconfiguration is a constantly evolving process which will impact on completion of programmes. The extent of the challenge here will vary across healthcare disciplines with an anticipated major impact on delivery of undergraduate dental education.

What forms of collaboration within the tertiary education eco-system would best enable a coherent and effective response to these challenges and opportunities?

- Move beyond traditional collaborations and seek out views of wider groups in society which could provide different perspectives and innovative thinking on contemporary ecosystems for learning, teaching and research.

How can SFC, alongside government and other enterprise, skills and education-focused agencies, best support colleges, universities and specialist institutions to make their full contribution to Scotland's inclusive, green and education-led recovery?

- Collaboration between multi-professional education programmes – Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing Allied Health Professionals, Midwifery, Biomedical Scientists
- Viability of small and vulnerable professions and health services such as Podiatry and Prosthetics and Orthotics
- Prioritise completion of programmes whereby essential workforce/ services will be negatively affected by delays.
- Priorities for the re-introduction of placements
- Final year students on extended programme,
- Students who missed significant placement weeks due to the disruption,
- Consider implications of modifications to programmes to allow for social distancing and those with shielding requirements,
- Student safety, managing their expectations and addressing concerns.
- Greater collaboration with SFC/ SAAS/ NES and SG Particularly around widening access support such as FE student articulation into year 2 of nursing and midwifery programmes.
- Staffing levels for nursing and midwifery programmes will need to be reviewed due to additional demands- repeat teaching, 'catch-up' theory and placements to meet NMC requirements as well as pressure for students to complete on time to meet workforce needs.
- Support for increasing clinical simulation resources (impacted by social distancing).
- Due to increase in unemployment greater support for those who take the opportunity to change career - promote increase men in nursing.
- Collaboration between Health, Social Care and HEI.

I hope that these comments are helpful.

Yours faithfully

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