
Performance review process report

Boots Hearingcare, Review Period 2018-2023

Executive summary

This is a report of the process to review the performance of Boots Hearingcare. 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 institution's portfolio submission against quality themes and found that we needed to undertake further exploration of key themes through quality activities
- Undertaken 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
- Decided when the institution should next be reviewed

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The areas we explored focused on:
 - Quality activity 1: The education provider outlined learners had started to use artificial intelligence (AI) to help with writing assignments. They had also seen an increase in instances of plagiarism. The education provider considered this challenged the academic integrity of learners. Through a quality activity, we were satisfied with the work the education provider had undertaken to deal with this issue and how it had worked.
 - Quality activity 2: The education provider outlined practice educators found it a challenge to find the time within working hours to complete their work. They stated practice educators considered they were underprepared, which lead to learners' role being more observing as opposed to participating. This had a knock-on effect of limiting their development. Practice educators were concerned they were not providing the correct experience for learners. The education provider outlined they needed to work to protect practice educators' time to help their preparation. Through a quality activity, we were satisfied with the work the education provider intended to undertake to protect practice educators time and help their preparation.
 - The provider must next engage with monitoring in two years, the 2025-26 academic year, because:
 - The education provider engaged with a range of stakeholders with quality assurance and enhancement in mind. Specific groups engaged by the
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education provider were learners, service users, practice educators, partner organisations, external examiners.

- The education provider did not engage with professional bodies. They did not consider professional body findings in improving their provision.
- The education provider did not engage with other relevant professional or system regulator(s). They did not consider the findings of other regulators in improving their provision.
- The education provider did not consider sector and professional development in a structured way.
- Through this review, the education provider has not provided data points which are equivalent to those from those in external supplies available for other organisations. It is also not clear whether this data has been externally verified. Where data is not equivalent to those in external supplies available for other organisations, nor externally verified, we need to understand risks by engaging with the education provider on a frequent basis (a maximum of once every two years).

Previous consideration	Not applicable. This performance review process was not referred from another process.
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Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• when the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be
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Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject to the Panel's decision, the provider's next performance review will be in the 2025-26 academic year
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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:

Hazel Anderson	Lead visitor, prosthetist / orthotist
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Joanna Lemanska	Lead visitor, hearing aid dispenser
Ann Johnson	Service User Expert Advisor
John Archibald	Education Quality Officer
Hugh Crawford	Advisory visitor, hearing aid dispenser

We encourage reflections through portfolios to be made at the institution level wherever possible. The performance review process does not always require profession level scrutiny which requires all professionals to be represented in the assessment panel. Rather, the process considers how the education provider has performed at institution level, linked to the themes defined in section 1. Lead visitors have the option to appoint additional advisory partners where this will benefit the assessment, and / or where they are not able to make judgements based on their own professional knowledge.

In this assessment, we considered we required further professional expertise across the professional area delivered by the education provider. We considered this because this was an area within the portfolio which the lead visitors needed further professional knowledge or expertise. These areas were related to embedding the revised SOPs, and curriculum development.

Section 2: About the education provider

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers one HCPC-approved programme across one profession. It is a private provider and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2021.

The education provider engaged with the approval review process in the current model of quality assurance in 2021. The education provider was a new institution to the HCPC. This meant we did not have any direct historical context or information to support whether institution level standards were met. Therefore, we undertook a partner-led assessment of the institution and programme to consider whether the standards were met. The education provider demonstrated all standards of education and training were met through the review. The outcome was the education provider and the programme were approved, without conditions by the Education and Training Committee in September 2021.

There are two stages to the approved programme. Stage 1 training is theoretical training, run by both face to face and via Teams. Stage 2 training is practice-based learning delivered in the field and led by practice educators.

The programme is employer-led. The education provider's recruitment strategy for the programme is targeted to specific geographical areas where it is difficult to attract qualified hearing aid dispensers. Applicants to the programme are offered a full-time

paid contract from day one of the programme with an expectation to stay with the business for a minimum of two years.

The education provider considers its customers to be the service users. Practice educators are known by the education provider as ‘supervisors’. We have used the term ‘practice educators’ throughout the report. Practice educators work for the education provider.

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	Hearing Aid Dispenser	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2021

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 programmes¹.

Data Point	Benchmark	Value	Date of data point	Commentary
Numbers of learners	20	27	2024	The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources available for the benchmark number of learners was assessed and accepted through these processes. The value figure was presented by the education provider through this submission.

¹ An explanation of the data we use, and how we use this data, is available [here](#)

				<p>The education provider is recruiting learners above the benchmark.</p> <p>The visitors considered the education provider's performance here and were satisfied with their reflection.</p>
Learner non continuation	3%	N/A	2020-21	<p>There is no data available for this data point. The education provider supplied internal data related to this data point. However, it was not clear whether it had been externally verified.</p> <p>The visitors considered the education provider's performance here and were satisfied with their reflection.</p>
Outcomes for those who complete programmes	94%	N/A	2019-20	<p>There is no data available for this data point. The education provider supplied internal data related to this data point. However, it was not clear whether it had been externally verified.</p> <p>The visitors considered the education provider's performance here and were satisfied with their reflection.</p>
Learner satisfaction	N/A	N/A	N/A	<p>There is no data available for this data point. The education provider supplied internal data related to this data point. However, it was not clear whether it had been externally verified.</p> <p>The visitors considered the education provider's performance here and were satisfied with their reflection.</p>

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.

Data / intelligence considered

We also considered data points / intelligence from others (eg prof bodies, sector bodies that provided support) as follows:

- NHS England Midlands - We received information considering current pressures regarding practice-based learning for physiotherapy in the Midlands and considered it to be not relevant for this review.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

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

Quality theme 1 – work to combat the increase in plagiarism due to the use of AI

Area for further exploration: The education provider outlined learners had started to use AI to help with writing assignments. They had also seen an increase in instances of plagiarism. The education provider considered this challenged the academic integrity of learners. The visitors were unsure what work the education provider had undertaken to deal with this issue and how it had worked. They therefore sought more information about this.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this by requesting an email or documentary response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider informed us they had instigated a number of mechanisms to moderate the use of AI. For example:

- Module Leads had used software during marking and moderating to identify the use of AI.

- External examiners had shared best practice to identify the use of AI.
- Markers and moderators checked work knowing the style of writing to expect from learners. The education provider had been able to identify the use of AI through unusual scripts and abnormal style of writing from learners.
- Exams had been developed to reduce AI usage. AI technology had been blocked automatically through the education provider's firewalls.
- The education provider developed assignments to include areas such as personal reflections, to reduce the use of AI.
- Learners demonstrated real time application of knowledge and skills in practical examinations, group activities and presentations.
- The education provider had implemented an Academic Misconduct Policy. If AI or any form of plagiarism is identified, learner's marks were reduced.
- Learners developed and recorded videos to demonstrate the writing and delivery of scripts for different aspects of appointments.

The education provider explained the use of AI and plagiarism undermined those learners who may not absorb the information correctly and are unable to apply knowledge to practical situations adequately.

The visitors were satisfied the evidence assured them the education provider had undertaken work to moderate against the use of AI when writing assignments. We had no further areas to explore in this theme.

Quality theme 2 – protecting practice educators' time

Area for further exploration: The education provider outlined practice educators found it a challenge to find the time within working hours to complete all their day-to-day work, including attending meetings. They stated practice educators' calendars did not contain any protected time and considered they were underprepared, which lead to the learners' role being more observing as opposed to participating. This had a knock-on effect of limiting their development. Practice educators were concerned they were not providing the correct experience for learners. The education provider outlined they needed to work to protect practice educators time to help their preparation. The visitors were unsure of the work the education provider intended to undertake to protect practice educators time and help their preparation. They therefore sought more information about this.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this by requesting an email or documentary response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider outlined they had undertaken different initiatives to ensure practice educators time was protected. For example, when a practice educator is allocated to direct supervision days, these clinics have details attached to ensure practice educators have protected time to complete their

work. The education provider considered practice educators were now better placed to complete their work. They outlined this had the effect of supervisors being able to support learners more.

The visitors were satisfied the evidence assured them the education provider had undertaken work to protect practice educators time and help their preparation. We had no further areas to explore in this theme.

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 programme is recognised as an important contributor to workforce growth, and is integrated into the budgeting process. Graduates show quicker return on investment compared to graduate recruitment from other programmes.
 - New dedicated facilities in Llandudno provide training spaces for all types of learning activity. These facilities give the education provider security and confidence. The new facilities have had a positive effect on learners.
 - The education provider is a part of the Sonova Group, and the programme has achieved wider recognition within the group, who want to use it as a template for other countries. The education provider is collaborating with other companies in the Sonova Group to share best practice.
We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Academic quality –**
 - Quality mechanisms highlighted there were issues with assignments. For example, duplication of content. Consequently, some assignments had been amended or removed.
 - The education provider identified they needed to ensure all programme staff were familiar with the programme, its content and learning outcomes. Some programme staff had several years' experience, whereas others were new to the role.

- Development was also required on delivery skills and learner engagement. The education provider held development sessions. These focused on developing trainer skills, for example how to use Teams, coach a variety of tools to deliver programme content, and make effective use of resources. Each member of the programme team had a one-to-one coaching session.
- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Placement quality –**
 - There are no external bodies who assess the quality of the education provider's clinics which are used for practice-based learning. The education provider uses them routinely for business purposes and is confident there is no challenge with their quality.
 - As discussed in [quality theme 2](#), practice educators needed to be prepared for their learners and understand what experience they were to facilitate and support. The self-directed practice educator course had a lot of content, and the education provider found it difficult to ensure all practice educators attend monthly meetings at the same time as working full time in their clinic. Some clinics were very busy, and it was challenge for some practice educators to have enough time with a learner.
 - The education provider is exploring the option to use clinics which have spare capacity. This would mean practice-based learning would not take place in busier clinics.
 - The education provider planned to undertake work to consider the training with practice educators and whether it should hold face to face training days instead of self-directed learning.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Interprofessional education (IPE) –**
 - Learners work cross functionally with Boots Opticians and Pharmacy. Boots is developing a 'one health' strategy which would facilitate more opportunities for IPE. This considers different areas of health to be interlinked.
 - The education provider had found timetabling with external agencies to provide IPE to be an issue. They had sometimes had to change plans, as other parties may not have the same flexibility to change dates. For example, when IPE takes place within Boots Pharmacy and Opticians, not all stores have learners or relevant professionals.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Service users and carers –**
 - The education provider outlined the feedback process had provided areas which had changed the programme. Service users and carers had fed back about the arrangements for practice-based learning. This feedback had influenced the delivery of practical assessment

arrangements and the redesign of the learner's logbook, to ensure time was used efficiently.

- The education provider stated service user and carer feedback will be included in programme curriculum review.
- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Equality and diversity –**
 - The education provider had found it a challenge to ensure the policies in place are understood and applied so learners who have declared mental health issues can access the right support. The education provider outlined it has been unclear at times what referral routes are available locally and nationally for learners and what support groups they can access. They worked with Human Resources (HR) and an Occupational Health contractor to identify individual needs and suitable interventions.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Horizon scanning –**
 - The education provider has successfully piloted a 'Test and Fit' model of service delivery. This was piloted in the business as a response to customer feedback and how to benefit from remote audiology services. They now intended to integrate it. Integrating new services from company pilots meant learners receive first hand tuition. It also kept the programme relevant to HCPC standards and their business strategy. The education provider intends on including 'Test and Fit' and remote audiology into the programme's curriculum.
 - The education provider intends on linking trainers to professional body works streams and committees. They considered connections with professional bodies can provide them with opportunities to contribute and discover forward-thinking directions. These in turn can support the programme to ensure it maintains relevance in the profession. Programme team members have volunteered to join British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists (BSHAA) working parties.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Embedding the revised Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) –**
 - The education provider had informed us they already incorporated most of the new SOPs and no revisions had been required in most

areas. They found the updated standards were not a challenge to integrate. The education provider knew changes were not required as the revised SOPs were already established in their standard ways of teaching and learning. For example, the module Professional and Business Studies focused on HCPC standards, professional body and legal guidance and protocols along with the company ways of working. The module was updated to use the revised SOPs.

- The programme team delivered a series of webinars and continuous professional development activities to share the changes within the SOP to all colleagues impacted and provided a copy of the latest SOPs.
- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Learning and developments from the COVID-19 pandemic –**
 - The programme was developed during COVID-19, and the first cohort started in September 2021. When restrictions imposed by Covid-19 were in place, the education provider developed alternative ways of working which they integrated into the programme, post-pandemic. For example, they developed ways of completing practical sessions over MS Teams through sharing screens and allowing learners to take control.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods –**
 - As discussed in [quality theme 1](#), the education provider has seen learners starting to use artificial intelligence (AI) to assist in writing assignments. They have also seen an increase in plagiarism. They have considered how they can support learners to not adopt this practice, and for the programme team, ways to identify plagiarism and the use of AI. The education provider has introduced the use of plagiarism checkers and an Academic Misconduct Policy. This details the expectations of learners and the consequences of breaches. They have also explored how to block the use of AI technology websites on computers. Learners have to declare when submitting their work that it is their own authentic work.
 - The education provider has expanded the way they can use their system to make remote learning easier. They use simulation software such as OTIS, a simulated patient, to demonstrate and practise different audiological tests. The education provider considered this provides greater flexibility for teaching support. Learners are spread nationwide, but trainers can provide direct practical and theoretical support.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.

- **Apprenticeships in England –**
 - The programme is a nationwide programme and covers all the UK. Apprenticeship availability has not had an impact on recruitment.
 - The education provider considered they had faced no challenges in this area. They intended to plan and undertake research and information-gathering about the Apprenticeship for Hearing Aid Dispenser and how it may differ from the education provider's programme.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies –**
 - There was no regulatory or professional body oversight or regulation. The education provider outlined any associated professional bodies had not asked about their provision nor asked to undertake any assessments.
 - The education provider explained they planned to become involved with the BSHAA. They have representation on the BSHAA education and quality committee.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Quality theme: Profession specific reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Curriculum development –**
 - The education provider is delivering a programme for one profession only, hearing aid dispenser. The only curriculum development required was to integrate the revised Standards of Proficiency into the programme. Focus on the updated standards is included in the Professional and Business Studies module and content was updated accordingly. No other curricula changes were required for the programme.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.

- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance –**
 - The British Society of Audiology (BSA) and BSHAA Onward Referral criteria were updated in April 2023. The education provider implemented these to ensure learners and trainers understand the new criteria. Inclusion of the updated referral criteria means learners are current and following best practice guidance. Programme materials were updated accordingly.
 - Other changes to professional body guidance, for example BSA determination of Uncomfortable Loudness Levels procedure, had been integrated into the programme's curricula. The education provider reviewed which modules the changes would affect. Both theoretical and practical teaching materials had been updated.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Capacity of practice-based learning (programme / profession level) –**
 - The education provider outlined there is no shortage of practice-based learning opportunities.
 - They found some clinics for practice-based learning are extremely busy. It can therefore be difficult to always have sufficient time for learners to complete all tasks during their day. Learners may not have had the opportunity to ask questions or have enough time to practise new skills if they are working with a practice educator who was busy. The education provider considered this could lead to a disengaged relationship between learner and practice educator, and a lack of confidence in a learner's 'real life' service user management skills.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Quality theme: Stakeholder feedback and actions

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Learners –**
 - Learners have a variety of opportunities to feedback on the programme and their experiences. For example, the National Student Survey (NSS) learner feedback survey was used as a basis to design an end of programme survey. This was sent to learners on the cohorts and 21 responses have been received and reflected upon. Feedback from learners is actively encouraged so the education provider has an honest understanding of programme delivery and impact.
 - Learners feedback highlighted employment issues. This was especially so for the initial cohorts, who started when the business was changing the pay, benefits, and sales targets for all hearing aid dispensers. This

caused confusion and was a distraction for these learners. The education provider has now clarified all learner's contracts, so remuneration issues are no longer a concern of learners. They saw that learners can now focus on their learning as opposed to their employment experience.

- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.

- **Practice placement educators –**

- As discussed in [quality theme 2](#), practice educators fed back they found it a challenge within their working hours to complete their work. They said their calendars did not contain any protected time. They considered they were underprepared and overwhelmed. Their calendars were overbooked which impacted their time to support learners and led to learners undertaking more observation rather than participation. This in turn can impact learners' development. Practice educators were concerned about not providing the correct experience for learners, whilst balancing providing the best care for customers. The education provider outlined they intended to work internally to protect practice educator's diary and help practice educators to prepare.
- Practice educators fed back they enjoyed the role and being able to see the learner grow and flourish. The education provider intended on further supporting both practice educators and learners to celebrate and recognise practice educator contributions.
- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.

- **External examiners –**

- External examiners help with external moderation and exam Board decisions. They moderate exam papers and review the internal moderation. They support the development of exams, assessments policy and guidance, as well as guiding decisions about specific learner situations. They highlight any current challenges within higher education institutions, procedural changes and share ways of working.
- As discussed in [quality theme 1](#), external examiners have highlighted challenges with the use of AI technology. The use of AI is a challenge for the education provider, who recognised they need a standard and robust method to manage. The external examiner suggested the use of AI checkers, plagiarism checkers and explored the consequences of misuse. The programme team worked with their IT department to trial different AI and plagiarism checkers for marking. If any AI content is identified, it is to be sent to external examiners for further checking. Learners are to be informed of the introduction of the Academic Misconduct Policy.
- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Data and reflections

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Learner non continuation:**
 - The education provider supplied their own data.
 - Based on this, the first cohort had the highest attrition rate so far. The education provider outlined this was a result of inconsistent selection criteria being used to offer to applicants. The programme also started during the pandemic.
 - They recognised it is unlikely that they will ever achieve 100% learner continuation. Based on this, the education provider intends on working with their HR department on developing support mechanisms. They also plan to enhance the recruitment budget so they can offer higher than actual workforce required numbers.
 - The education provider has put together a short reference guide for applicants so they can understand the demands of the programme. They considered this helps applicants to be sure of the programme they are applying for and avoids non-continuation due to lack of understanding about the programme.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Outcomes for those who complete programmes:**
 - The education provider supplied their own data.
 - Based on this, no learners appear to fail or are expected to fail. Only learners who have passed the full 240 credits will graduate from the programme and be eligible to apply for HCPC registration. Learners who have not met the full 240 credits, but have achieved 120 credits, may be eligible to work as a Hearing Wellness Adviser (HWA).
 - The education provider outlined the data supplied was for the first three cohorts. Since submitting this, the fourth cohort has subsequently finished, and one learner has failed the programme. The individual returned to an HWA role. In the fifth cohort, one learner has not been able to successfully complete practical elements. The practical elements are not condonable, and the learner has also returned to an HWA role.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Learner satisfaction:**
 - The education provider supplied their own data. They created their own survey by adapting a version of the NSS, so it reflected an employer-led programme. The education provider stated that the first three

cohorts have completed it and each cohort will now be asked when completing the programme.

- Learners had raised a grievance about remuneration, so the education provider found it a challenge to ask them to separate their experience on employment terms from the academic programme. The education provider outlined they had received adverse comments and some less than satisfied scores.
- For example, some learners raised the issue that different trainers had provided conflicting instructions. The education provider reviewed adverse comments or scores to identify the root cause. They will ensure all trainers have a common understanding. They outlined this issue has improved with each cohort and expect less occurrence of this with later cohorts.
- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Programme level data:**
 - The education provider outlined they work with a crossover of cohorts - a new cohort will start when learners have completed stage 1 of the programme and have moved onto stage 2. The original plan was for a maximum of three cohorts per year, with 20 learners per cohort. The education provider has run two cohorts per year, with 26 and 27 learners per cohort.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.

Proposal for supplying data points to the HCPC: The education provider engaged with this area, and provided data from internal sources. However, it was not clear whether the data had been externally verified.

Our normative data requirements are for:

- Numbers of learners
- Learner non continuation
- Outcomes for those who complete programmes
- Learner satisfaction

It is our requirement this data should be externally verified. For example, by an external examiner. We would like to work with the education provider to establish regular data reporting to the HCPC to satisfy our normative requirements.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Section 5: Issues identified for further review

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

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

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 2025-26 academic year

Reason for next engagement recommendation

- Internal stakeholder engagement
 - 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
 - The education provider did not engage with professional bodies. They did not consider professional body findings in improving their provision.
 - The education provider did not engage with other relevant professional or system regulator(s). They did not consider the findings of other regulators in improving their provision.
 - The education provider does not consider sector and professional development in a structured way
- Data supply
 - Through this review, the education provider has not established how they will supply quality and performance data points which are equivalent to those in external supplies available for other organisations. Where data is not regularly supplied, we need to understand risks by engaging with the education provider on a frequent basis (a maximum of once every two years)
- What the data is telling us:
 - From data points considered and reflections through the process, the education provider does not consider externally verified 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 two year monitoring period is:

- The education provider has provided data points. However, these are not equivalent to those from external suppliers which are available for other organisations. For example, it is not clear whether this data has been externally verified nor agreed with the education provider, how frequently it could be supplied to HCPC. Where data is not equivalent to those in external supplies available for other organisations, nor externally verified, we need to understand risks by engaging with the education provider on a frequent basis (a maximum of once every two years).

Education and Training Committee decision

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

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that:

- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2025-26 academic year

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

Appendix 1 – summary report

If the education provider does not provide observations, only this summary report (rather than the whole report) will be provided to the Education and Training Committee (Panel) to enable their decision on the next steps for the provider. The lead visitors confirm this is an accurate summary of their recommendation (including their reasons) and any referrals.

Education provider	Case reference	Lead visitors	Review period recommendation	Reason for recommendation	Referrals
Boots Hearingcare	CAS-01373-S0X7F7	Hazel Anderson and Joanna Lemanska	Two years	Through this review, the education provider has not provided data points which are equivalent to those from those in external supplies available for other organisations. It is also not clear whether this data has been externally verified. Where data is not equivalent to those in external supplies available for other organisations, nor externally verified, we need to understand risks by engaging with the education provider on a frequent basis (a maximum of once every two years).	There were no outstanding issues to be referred to another process.

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
Boots HearingCare Qualification in Hearing Aid Dispensing	WBL (Work based learning)	Hearing aid dispenser			01/09/2021