



Reengagement Panel Report

Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures

Part 1 Details of provider

1.1 Applicant Provider

Registered Business/Trading Name:	Leading Healthcare Providers Skillnet
Address:	2A Convent Road, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, A96 FV06
Date of Application:	14 th January 2019
Date of resubmission of application:	
Date of evaluation:	
Date of site visit (if applicable):	8 th August 2019
Date of recommendation to the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee:	5 th December 2019

1.2 Profile of provider

Leading Healthcare Providers Skillnet (LHP Skillnet) commenced operation in 2008 after receiving funding from Skillnet Ireland, formerly Skillnets Ltd., to support the private healthcare sector by providing subsidised education and training to employees of member companies and the unemployed seeking to return to employment. LHP Skillnet was established as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee and initially agreed its quality assurance policies and procedures with FETAC in 2008. LHP Skillnet consists of member companies located throughout Ireland that include private hospitals, private nursing homes, private healthcare agencies and private home care providers. LHP Skillnet is governed by a Network Steering Group (NSG) comprising of up to twelve members, 2 of whom are the company directors. The NSG is responsible for governance, overseeing the operation of the organisation and for ensuring that the Network's strategic vision is implemented. The NSG also represents the range of businesses and geographical spread of the member companies.

In 2018, LHP Skillnet consisted of 173 member companies, and had 1,762 Employed Trainees and 142 Unemployed Trainees. At the time of reengagement, LHP Skillnet delivers one programme leading to a QQI Award, Certificate in Healthcare Support (NFQ Level 5). This programme is delivered off-site at



different locations throughout the country with multiple intakes annually depending on the learning needs of LHP Skillnet's member companies. During its current period of validation to date, the programme has had 3,748 enrolled learners. LHP Skillnet also provides a range of NMBI approved training courses, typically delivered over one day or half a day. LHP Skillnet is funded through a combination of course fees paid by member companies on behalf of their employees and from Skillnet Ireland, which is itself funded from the National Training Fund through the Department of Education and Skills. LHP Skillnet submits an annual grant funding application based on needs assessment of the network's member companies. Once funding is secured, a tendering and procurement process is undertaken to acquire the human resources required for the successful delivery of their programmes.

Programmes are delivered off-site at locations throughout Ireland, which include rented training facilities and member company premises where appropriate, by a panel of tutors with subject and clinical expertise, while the administrative office of LHP Skillnet is located in Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. The Network Manager, supported by the Network Administrators, is responsible for the day-to-day management of the organisation, which includes the implementation of the quality assurance system.



Part 2 Panel Membership

Name	Role of panel member	Organisation
Danny Brennan	Chair	Former Registrar, Letterkenny Institute of Technology
Dr David Mc Carthy	Recording Secretary	Quality Assurance Officer, National College of Ireland
Roisin Mc Loughlin	Subject Matter Expert	Project Officer for Quality Assurance Reengagement with QQI, Health Service Executive Centres for Nursing and Midwifery Education
Winifred Jeffers	Teaching and Learning Specialist	Consultant specialising in Adult Education
Susan McGovern:	Subject Matter Expert	Formerly O'Faich Institute of Further Education

Part 3 Findings of the Panel

3.1 Summary Findings

At the conclusion of the site visit, the panel had concerns relating to specific aspects of LHP Skillnet's QA policies and procedures and expressed these in the preliminary feedback session. These concerns were identified as proposed mandatory changes and are outlined in detail in Section 6.1 below. The panel also provided additional specific advices, which are outlined in Section 6.2 below.

As the panel believes that the proposed mandatory changes are relatively discrete and, therefore, can be addressed and remedied in a short timeframe, the panel has availed of the option to defer its decision and granted the provider six weeks to submit evidence that the issues identified have been satisfactorily addressed. The panel has agreed to reconvene upon receipt of such evidence to reconsider LHP Skillnet's reengagement application.

The panel reconvened on 8th October 2019 to conduct a desk review of the evidence subsequently submitted by LHP Skillnet. During the re-convened meeting, the panel took the opportunity to seek a number of clarifications from the provider through a Skype call. It is the panel's view that LHP Skillnet has satisfactorily addressed the *proposed mandatory changes* and responded appropriately to the panel's initial *specific advice*. The panel consequently recommends that QQI approve LHP Skillnet's QA policies and procedures.

Following the desk review, the panel had additional *specific advice* for LHP Skillnet, which is noted in Section 6.2 below.



3.2 Recommendation of the panel to Programmes and Awards Executive Committee of QQI

	Tick <u>one</u> as appropriate
Approve LHP Skillnet's draft QA procedures	X
Refuse approval of LHP Skillnet's draft QA procedures with mandatory changes set out in Section 6.1 <small>(If this recommendation is accepted by QQI, the provider may make a revised application within six months of the decision)</small>	
Refuse to approve [the provider's – insert name] draft QA procedures	

Part 4 Evaluation of provider capacity

4.1 Legal and compliance requirements:

	Criteria	Yes/No/ Partially	Comments
4.1.1(a)	Criterion: <i>Is the applicant an established Legal Entity who has Education and/or Training as a Principal Function?</i>	Yes	LHP Skillnet is a limited company by guarantee registered in Ireland whose principal function is education and training. The CRO is provided in the reengagement application (Document 1.2).
4.1.2(a)	Criterion: <i>Is the legal entity established in the European Union and does it have a substantial presence in Ireland?</i>	Yes	LHP Skillnet is established in the European Union and has a substantial presence in Ireland, providing sixteen NMBI approved short-duration training courses and one education and training programme leading to a QQI Award.
4.1.3(a)	Criterion: <i>Are any dependencies, collaborations, obligations, parent organisations, and subsidiaries clearly specified?</i>	Yes	The panel is satisfied that the provider's reengagement application includes sufficient information with regard to the company structure. LHP



			Skillnet is currently not involved in collaborative provision with any other education and/or training providers.
4.1.4(a)	Criterion: <i>Are any third-party relationships and partnerships compatible with the scope of access sought?</i>	Yes	LHP Skillnet consists of a network of private healthcare providers (250 active members as of January 2019) under the governance of LHP Skillnet Contracting Organisation and the delegated authority of the Network Steering Group. The Network Steering Group is responsible for governance, overseeing the operation of the organisation and for ensuring that the Network's strategic vision is implemented. It represents the range of businesses and geographical spread of the members who belong to the Network. The provider's QAM explains how member companies are eligible to join the Network Steering Group and the Organisation Chart outlines how third parties are engaged with by the Network Manager on behalf of the Network Steering Group.
4.1.5(a)	Criterion: <i>Are the applicable regulations and legislation complied with in all jurisdictions where it operates?</i>	Yes	The provider has submitted documentation that demonstrates compliance with the relevant regulation and legislation, and signed a statutory declaration confirming this documentation to be true and complete (Application, Document 5)
4.1.6(a)	Criterion: <i>Is the applicant in good standing in the</i>	Yes	LHP Skillnet is currently in good standing with the qualifications



<i>qualifications systems and education and training systems in any countries where it operates (or where its parents or subsidiaries operate) or enrolls learners, or where it has arrangements with awarding bodies, quality assurance agencies, qualifications authorities, ministries of education and training, professional bodies and regulators.</i>		and education and training systems in Ireland. Its QA policies and procedures were originally approved by FETAC in 2008 and its sole QQI accredited programme was successfully validated in 2013. LHP Skillnet was also involved in the pilot reengagement scheme for FET providers.
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Findings

The panel is satisfied that LHP Skillnet’s legal and compliance arrangements satisfy the requirements of Criterion 4.1, as evidenced by the documentation submitted in support of its reengagement application. Following review of LHP Skillnet’s QAM and discussions with representatives of the provider during the site visit, the panel is confident of compliance with QQI’s *Core and Sector Specific (Independent/Private) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016)*, except where stated otherwise below.

The panel sought further clarification regarding LHP Skillnet’s relationships with its parent organisations and subsidiaries, in particular Skillnet Ireland and contract tutors respectively, and is satisfied with the information provided. LHP Skillnet’s scope of provision relies on detailed learning needs analysis of the network’s member companies, with programmes only delivered in response to the specified requirements of member companies and when funding is obtained from Skillnet Ireland. The provider is evidently in good standing with the relevant qualifications systems and education and training systems based on their provision of NMBI approved training courses and QQI accredited programmes. LHP Skillnet evidences sufficient QA policies and procedures to ensure compliance with QQI’s statutory guidelines and is biannually audited by Skillnet Ireland to monitor compliance with the conditions of their grant funding and to ensure its QA system is suitable for its scope of provision. The provider also employed an independent, specialist contractor to assist with the review, modification and documenting of its QA policy and procedures as part of its self-evaluation and reengagement with QQI, thus ensuring an objective and impartial analysis, with the necessary identification of good practice and of areas for immediate and ongoing improvement.

4.2 Resource, governance and structural requirements:

	Criteria	Yes/No/ Partially	Comments
4.2.1(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have a sufficient resource base and is it stable and in good financial standing?</i>	Yes	Adequate information and supporting documentation was included within the provider’s reengagement application and the panel



			<p>is satisfied that there is a sufficient resource base for their current scope of provision. LHP Skillnet has identified the need to further increase human resources relating to administration and management to ensure the QA system is properly implemented, reviewed and enhanced as the provider seeks to expand its scope of provision. The panel agrees with this assessment.</p> <p>LHP Skillnet also provided Grant Approval (2019) and Accountant Report (Application, Document 3.1) demonstrating what appears to be good financial standing.</p>
4.2.2(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have a reasonable business case for sustainable provision?</i>	Yes	<p>The panel is satisfied that LHP Skillnet has a reasonable business case for sustainable provision. The provider’s business model, as outlined in the QAM and further elaborated on during the site visit, involves a learning needs assessment of member companies and an annual funding application to Skillnet Ireland that requires detailed budget forecasting, evidence of ongoing risk management and annual audits conducted by Skillnet Ireland to ensure compliance with the conditions of successful grant funding applications.</p>



4.2.3(a)	Criterion: <i>Are fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision making structures in place?</i>	Yes, upon review of evidence submitted by LHP Skillnet following the site visit.	A number of discussions took place with representatives of LHP Skillnet during the site visit and the panel identified a number of issues with the governance, management and decision-making structures that need to be addressed. These issues are identified in the mandatory changes proposed by the panel and are discussed in further detail in Part 5 and Part 6 below. Following the desk review of additional documentation submitted to the panel to address the above issues, it is evident that LHP Skillnet's governance, management and decision-making structures are appropriate to their scope of provision.
4.2.4(a)	Criterion: <i>Are there arrangements in place for providing required information to QQI?</i>	Yes	LHP Skillnet has sufficient administrative resources in place required to provide information to QQI, which consist of the Network Manager and two full-time Network Administrators.

Findings

The panel is satisfied that LHP Skillnet's resource and structural arrangements meet the requirements of Criterion 4.2. As indicated above and elaborated in Part 5 (Section 1) below, the panel identified particular shortcomings in relation to Criterion 4.2.3(a), in respect of governance arrangements, and has proposed a number of mandatory changes that will bring the provider into compliance. However, following the desk review of additional documentation submitted to the panel following the site visit, LHP Skillnet has demonstrated complete compliance with Criterion 4.2.

**4.3 Programme development and provision requirements:**

	Criteria	Yes/No/ Partially	Comments
4.3.1(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes?</i>	Yes	LHP Skillnet is an established education and training provider with a record of accomplishment in delivering NMBI approved training courses and a QQI accredited programme since 2008 in the discipline of healthcare support.
4.3.2(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have a fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff?</i>	Yes	The panel is satisfied that LHP Skillnet has a complement of education and training staff appropriate to its current scope of provision. The provider employs contract tutors to meet its requirements and has a panel of suitably qualified and experienced tutors needed to respond to any changes in its requirements.
4.3.3(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have the capacity to comply with the standard conditions for validation specified in Section 45(3) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) (the Act)?</i>	Yes	The panel is satisfied that LHP Skillnet has the capacity to comply with QQI's validation criteria. The provider currently delivers one QQI accredited programme, which was successfully revalidated in 2013. LHP Skillnet are awaiting approval of their QA



			system before commencing programmatic review.
4.3.4(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have the fit-for-purpose premises, facilities and resources to meet the requirements of the provision proposed in place?</i>	Yes	LHP Skillnet uses external training venues in the delivery of courses; venues used are either conference facilities in hotels, member company's premises, or other educational institutions. The provider has sufficient policies and procedures in place to ensure premises, facilities and resources are fit-for-purpose (QAM pp. 65 & Supporting Documentation, No. 43).
4.3.5(a)	Criterion: <i>Are there access, transfer and progression arrangements that meet QQI's criteria for approval in place?</i>	Yes	During the site visit, representatives of LHP Skillnet provided detailed examples of their access, transfer and progression arrangements. However, the panel recommends that these should be more systematically outlined in the relevant sections of its QAM as to properly reflect how access, transfer and progression are key considerations in the provider's programme development and review processes, and the supports provided to learners from enrolment to award certification.



4.3.6(a)	Criterion: <i>Are structures and resources to underpin fair and consistent assessment of learners in place?</i>	Yes	The panel is satisfied that LHP Skillnet's assessment procedures are appropriate to the fair and consistent assessment of enrolled learners. Policies and procedures relating to assessment are included in the Draft QAM (QAM pp. 69-92).
4.3.7(a)	Criterion: <i>Are arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners to meet the statutory obligations in place (where applicable)?</i>	Yes	The provider has developed a Policy for the Protection of Enrolled Learners (QAM pp. 39 & Supporting Documentation, No. 24). However, they identified the need to seek further clarification from QQI if these arrangements offer sufficient protection to learners enrolled on their programmes (Self-Evaluation Report, pp. 8).

Findings

The panel is satisfied that LHP Skillnet's programme development and provision arrangements meet the requirements of Criterion 4.3. The provider has a history of certification with QQI and a complement of teaching and administrative staff appropriate to its current scope of provision and for engaging with its internal and external stakeholders as appropriate. LHP Skillnet's policies and procedures pertaining to programme development, approval and review according to QQI's validation criteria; to the recruitment and management of staff; to the consistent and equitable assessment of all learners; and to the quality assurance of the learning environment are each outlined in their Draft QAM and discussed in further detail in Part 5 below.



4.4 Overall findings in respect of provider capacity to provide sustainable education and training

The panel is satisfied that LHP Skillnet has the capacity to provide sustainable education and training within its current scope of provision. Appropriate evidence submitted as part of the provider's application for re-engagement is indicative of LHP Skillnet having a sufficient resource base and being in good financial standing. Their model of conducting learning needs analyses of the Network's member companies, developing programmes based on the resultant findings and applying for funding to enable the delivery of said programmes is fit-for-purpose and responsive to the changing education and training requirements of the private healthcare sector. The fact that LHP Skillnet is being supported by Skillnet Ltd to expand their network of member companies is further proof that their model of education and training provision is sustainable.

The documentation submitted as part of the provider's reengagement application evidences sufficient human resources to deliver education and training programmes according to their current model of provision. LHP Skillnet's administrative staff are evidently trained across multiple functions and the variety of roles performed by the Network Manager ensures that there is singular oversight of the organisation's core activities.

LHP Skillnet is subject to biannual quality assurance reviews conducted by Skillnet as a condition of their funding. Under delegated authority of the Network Steering Group, the Network Manager is responsible for managing risks and other potential vulnerabilities relating to the provider's teaching, learning and assessment activities. As a result, an explicit reporting structure exists between the Network Manager and the Network Steering Group, which means issues relating to the sustainability of the provider's education and training provision can be quickly raised with the relevant governing authority.

While LHP Skillnet currently delivers one QQI accredited programme, representatives of the provider expressed their intention to expand their scope of provision. The panel believes that once the mandatory changes proposed in Section 6 below are satisfactorily addressed, their QA system will be fit-for-purpose and will accommodate such expansion.



Part 5 Evaluation of draft QA Procedures submitted by LHP Skillnet

The following is the panel's findings following evaluation of LHP Skillnet's quality assurance procedures against Core and Sector Specific (Independent/Private) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016). Sections 1-11 of the report follows the structure and referencing of the Core QA Guidelines.

1 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Panel Findings:

LHP Skillnet consists of member companies from the private healthcare sector and is governed by the LHP Skillnet Contracting Organisation, which fulfils the role of a Board of Directors by acting as the contracting party with Skillnet, ensuring good corporate governance and overseeing the financial management of the Network. The Contracting Organisation also establishes the Network Steering Group, which is responsible for providing the strategic direction and control for the Network, overseeing Network performance, providing a link between the contracting organisation and member companies, and overseeing tenders received for the provision of services to the Network. Based on this arrangement as documented in the Draft QAM, the panel raised the need for structured separation between, and formal delegation of authority from, the company and the Network Steering Group with regard to responsibility for specified governance issues. As part of its mandatory change relating to "Governance and Management of Quality", therefore, the panel requests that LHP Skillnet make visible the Board of Directors within their governance and management structure, using appropriately clear language and providing evidence of a resolution to delegate functional responsibility to the Network Steering Group.

While the Draft QAM clearly indicates the current members of the Network Steering Group, the panel explained to representatives of the provider that more formal terms of reference and clarity around the selection process for membership are required (see QAM pp. 11). In particular, the QAM should specify the required skills/expertise that members should possess so that the terms of reference of the group can be satisfied. The Network Manager, supported by the Network Administrators, operates as the point of contact for subsidiary stakeholders of the Network Group, as outlined in the Organisational Chart (QAM pp. 12). The roles and responsibilities of the manager and the administrators are outlined in the supporting documentation provided to the panel, Network Manager Role Description (Supporting Documentation, No. 28) and Network Administrator Role Description (Supporting Documentation, No. 29), with responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the QA system clearly delegated to the Network Manager (QAM pp. 21) in the capacity of the QA Officer. However, the panel identified the need for complete formal delegation of QA responsibilities from the Network Steering Group to the Network Manager in the QAM to remove any potential confusion as to where ultimate responsibility for the QA system resides (see QAM pp. 10 and pp. 21).

Academic governance is provided by the Programme Board, the terms of reference of which are outlined in the supporting documentation (Supporting Documentation, No. 12). While this structure developed to meet the provider's current scope of provision, i.e. one QQI accredited programme, the panel believes that it is not fit-for-purpose, especially if the provider expands its scope of provision as it will result in multiple programme boards. For this reason, the panel requests that LHP Skillnet create an Academic Committee with all issues pertaining to academic governance formally delegated to it from the Network Steering Group; membership allowing for appropriate externality for reasons of objectivity and impartiality; and clear reporting mechanisms between it and the Network Steering Group.



Based on the documentation provided to the panel and discussions with representatives from LHP Skillnet during the site visit, the panel requests, as Proposed **Mandatory Changes**, that the provider establish clear and unambiguous units of governance, with appropriate external independent membership, which will ensure that no undue influence may be exercised by any commercial imperatives over academic decision making in the organisation; and that they include clear and specific Terms of Reference for all units of governance within the organisation that demonstrate the separation of financial and academic decision-making.

The panel availed of the option to defer its decision to allow LHP Skillnet an opportunity to consider and respond to the above within a six-week period. The panel reconvened on 8th October 2019 to evaluate evidence submitted by LHP Skillnet in support of the proposed changes. During the reconvened meeting, the panel took the opportunity to seek a number of clarifications from the provider through a Skype call. The panel is now satisfied that the provider has established clear and unambiguous units of governance, with appropriate external independent membership. This has been achieved by establishing an Academic Committee, with delegated authority from and reporting responsibility to the NSG regarding all teaching, learning, and quality assurance activities (QAM Section 1.5.2). The Chair of the Academic Committee is selected and appointed by the NSG. LHP Skillnet have also committed to further embed externality and independence within its governance structure by appointing an Independent Chair to the NSG (QAM Section 1.5.1). The revised documentation stated that the Chair of the Academic Committee is selected and appointed by the NSG. During the Skype call, it was clarified that the external member of that Committee would likely be appointed as Chair. The provider has compiled clear and specific Terms of Reference for the units of governance as requested, and these demonstrate the satisfactory separation of financial and academic decision-making within LHP Skillnet.

In its response to the panel's interim report, LHP Skillnet indicated its intention to employ an Operations Manager to support the Network Manager. As a **Specific Advice**, the panel recommends that the responsibilities and allocated activities of this role are included in the relevant section of the QAM given the importance of this role to the implementation of the provider's quality assurance system.

2 DOCUMENTED APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

Panel Findings:

While LHP Skillnet has drafted policies and procedures for the majority of components of its education and training provision, the panel is not satisfied that the presentation and structuring of the Draft QAM in its current form will effectively enable and facilitate the implementation of their QA system. The provider has stated its commitment to implementing a documented approach to quality assurance (QAM pp. 24). The Network Manager is currently responsible for the overall management of the QA system but is in the process of delegating its day-to-day management and implementation to the Network Administrators.

As part of its self-analysis, LHP Skillnet identified that the coding, referencing and organisation of the Draft QAM needs further refinement to enhance its accessibility and usability. The panel agrees with this observation and raised this issue with representatives of the provider during the site visit. While the provider acknowledges that the QAM is an organic document subject to regular review and modification to reflect changes in the scope of their provision, the panel believes that the Draft QAM



needs to be presented in plain language and easy to navigate formats. This will ensure that it is accessible to learners and staff, and more importantly, that it reflects the high value that the provider places on embedding a culture of quality assurance and enhancement in the organisation. Accordingly, as a Proposed **Mandatory Change**, the panel requests that policies and procedures are comprehensively reviewed to remove unnecessary duplication and to reflect a consistent format using a standard template. The panel explained to representatives of the provider that the QAM should be the single repository for all policies and procedures. For example, in its current format, there is no policy or procedure for dealing with instances of suspected/actual plagiarism in the QAM. LHP Skillnet's approach to plagiarism is only briefly outlined in the Student Handbook (Supporting Documentation, No. 20) and in Tutor Handbook (Supporting Documentation, No. 22). The panel explained to the representatives of the provider that all policies and procedures relating to the quality assurance and enhancement of its current education and training provision should be included in the QAM, with supplemental and information documents referring to this document as the single repository for QA policies and procedures.

LHP Skillnet provided a significant amount of supporting documentation that supports and supplements the policies and procedures that comprise its Draft QAM. However, a number of these documents outline key components of the provider's QA system and should be incorporated into the QAM, i.e. Policy for Protection of Enrolled Learners (Supporting Documentation, No. 24), Network Manager Role Description (Supporting Documentation, No. 28), Network Administrator Role Descriptor (Supporting Documentation, No. 29), Student Complaints Procedure (Supporting Documentation, No. 45), Internal Verification Process (Supporting Documentation, No. 56) and Assessment Appeals Process (Supporting Documentation, No. 67). The panel believes that this change will make the QAM concise, context-specific and easy-to-use, a stated objective in the provider's reengagement application.

The panel availed of the option to defer its decision to allow LHP Skillnet an opportunity to consider and respond to the above within a six-week period. The panel reconvened on 8th October 2019 to evaluate evidence submitted by LHP Skillnet in support of the proposed changes. The panel is satisfied that this has been achieved by the provider reorganising its Draft QAM to separate the QA system, QA policies and QA procedures, by using a standardised template for all policies and procedures, and incorporating content previously provided as supporting documentation into the QAM itself. The panel appreciates that a complete review of the QAM is a substantial task and while LHP Skillnet has not completed it within the allocated six weeks, the panel is satisfied with the provider's progress to date and their commitment to continuing this review prior to publication.

As a **Specific Advice**, the panel recommends that the provider properly differentiate between policies and procedures in their QAM, ensuring that the policies are concise and declarative, and that each procedure accurately documents the process through which its corresponding policy is implemented rather than reiterating the policy itself. Please refer to Policy on Programmes of Education and Training and the related Procedure for Programme Design and Development, Procedure for Programme for Approval, and Procedure for Validation and Re-Validation. These procedures all relate to programme development and can be merged into a single workflow as distinct stages. The Admissions Workflow (QAM pp. 96) exemplifies the standard to be maintained throughout the document.

Overall, LHP Skillnet is advised to review all QA documentation prior to publication to remove any remaining duplications and inconsistencies, and to ensure appropriate language and tone is used throughout. For example, in the TORs of the Academic Committee, the language used to explain how the "NSG has the right to alter the operation of the Academic Committee and can, at its discretion, disband or reconstitute the committee" is not accurate as it is not the role of the NSG to disband or reconstitute the academic committee. Similarly, the language and tone in the Policy on Academic Good Practice, "students are expected to act in accordance with common social values - namely



fairness, honesty and kindness - in all aspects of their engagement with LHP Skillnet”, is not suitable in the context of QA policies and procedures.

In addition, LHP Skillnet is advised to review all policies and procedures to ensure they adhere to sectoral best-practices and industry standards, especially those developed following the 2012 QQI Act. For example, the Procedure for Assessment Appeals refers to the “QQI National Appeals Process” (QAM pp. 177), which is no longer in operation as education and training institutes are expected to have an entirely provider-owned quality assurance system.

3 PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Panel Findings:

The panel is satisfied that LHP Skillnet’s policies and procedures meet the requirements set out in this component of QQI’s Statutory QA Guidelines. The provider’s policies pertaining to programmes of education and training are included in their Draft QAM, in particular Programme Design and Development (QAM pp. 28-29), Programme Approval (QAM pp. 30), Student Admission, Early Exit, Progression, and Recognition (QAM pp. 32-37) and Annual Programme Review (QAM pp. 108-109). The provider has incorporated QQI’s criteria for validation into its programme development and review processes.

LHP Skillnet’s provision is determined by a Learning Needs Analysis Survey (Supporting Documentation, No. 8) conducted by the Network Manager. The panel is satisfied, therefore, that the provider identifies and meets the educational and training needs of its members, and that the decision to progress proposed programmes to design and development is evidence-based. Regarding the delivery of education and training programmes, the panel is satisfied that the provider has appropriate arrangements to ensure programmes are properly reviewed during the period of validation. The Network Manager is responsible for collating all feedback pertaining to programme delivery and performance, and presenting this to the Programme Board for analysis. As part of its self-assessment, the provider identified the need to formalise the collection of the qualitative and quantitative data that supports this monitoring mechanism.

While LHP Skillnet currently only delivers one QQI accredited programme, representatives of the provider explained during the site visit that they are in the final stages of developing another programme that will be submitted to QQI for validation. As discussed in Section 2 above, there are shortcomings in the documentation supporting LHP’s QA system. As part of its mandatory change relating to a “Documented Approach to Quality Assurance”, the panel requests that the provider outlines its programme development and approval procedures using appropriate flowcharts and process maps. It was apparent from discussions with representatives of LHP Skillnet during the site visit that there are procedures currently in place that ensure all relevant stakeholders are engaged with during the development of education and training programmes, and that the Network Manager centrally manages the process, with final oversight provided by the Network Steering Group. While these procedures are evidently fit-for-purpose, they need to be captured more coherently in the QAM so that the specific responsibilities of key roles involved in the development of programmes can be better understood. Subject Matter Experts are contracted for programme development as outlined in Draft QAM (pp. 116) to ensure that programme structure, training methodologies, materials, delivery, and assessment methodologies are designed to meet the needs of their target market, potential students, the requirements of the awarding body (if applicable) and the needs of the sector.



4 STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Panel Findings:

The panel is confident that LHP Skillnet satisfies this particular component of QQI's Statutory QA Guidelines. Given the model of LHP Skillnet's education and training provision, the panel queried the provider's capacity to ensure a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced tutors are available to deliver their QQI validated programme concurrently at multiple locations. The panel is satisfied that the provider's current arrangements for recruiting and managing staff are suited to its scope of provision and have sufficient contingencies to ensure programmes are delivered to consistent standards. The panel is satisfied that the provider has appropriate procedures in place to ensure there are sufficient human resources to meet the teaching, learning and assessment components of their current scope of provision. However, LHP Skillnet has identified the need to further increase human resources relating to administration and management to ensure the QA system is properly implemented, reviewed and enhanced as the provider seeks to expand its scope of provision. The panel agrees with this assessment.

The provider's Staff Recruitment, Selection and Induction policy (QAM pp. 41-45) outlines how all staff are recruited and selected on clear and transparent selection criteria based on qualifications and ability. As LHP Skillnet employs contract tutors to deliver their programme, the panel specifically reviewed and is satisfied with the procedures in place for recruiting teaching staff, as evidenced by "Criteria for the Selection of Tenders" (Supporting Documentation, No. 27). Representatives of the provider explained how tutors are recruited through an annual tendering process due to Skillnet's funding model and how this procedure consequently ensures that tutors' suitability to deliver the QQI validated programme is continuously reviewed outside of the conventional programme review process. The provider also has a robust tutor induction programme, as evidenced by the Tutor Induction Checklist (Supporting Documentation, No. 32), and the responsibilities of this role are concisely outlined in the Tutor Handbook (Supporting Documentation, No. 22).

The Network Manager is responsible for the management of teaching staff and identifying specific training and development needs, as outlined in the Staff Management and Communication policy (QAM pp. 46). The panel is satisfied that the procedures outlined in the "Support for Tutors" policy (QAM pp. 50) ensures that tutors have sufficient supports and resources for the delivery of the programme. Of particular note is the "buddy-system" in place that allows newly appointed tutors to partner with more experienced tutors and learn best practices. The procedures outlined in the Quality Assuring Tutors and Tutor Performance policy (QAM pp. 48) are sufficient for the provider's scope of provision and explains how tutors are responsible for their professional development in-line with reviews of their performance based on feedback from multiple stakeholders and programme-performance data. LHP Skillnet are also in the process of drafting standard operating procedures for activities undertaken by the Network Administrators.

As a **Specific Advice**, the panel recommends that the provider should enhance its current practice in the area of staff development and develop a formal system whereby tutors can network together to develop a shared understanding of best practices and to enhance the quality of programmes. While the Internal Verification Day permits this to a certain extent, a more structured and formalised procedure could be introduced that complements the existing process and ensures consistent high standards of teaching, learning and assessment are achieved across all instances of the programme.

5 TEACHING AND LEARNING

Panel Findings:



The panel is satisfied that LHP Skillnet's policies and procedures relating to teaching and learning meets the standards related to this Statutory QA Guideline. The provider's Teaching and Learning policy is clearly outlined in its Draft QAM (QAM pp. 51) and is implemented through Monitoring of Training and Learning (QAM pp. 52-53). During the site visit, the panel discussed this component of the provider's education and training provision with Imelda Duffy, a contracted tutor, and Ken Hogan, a Network Steering Group Member who is involved in enhancing pedagogical practices at LHP Skillnet.

It is evident from the Draft QAM and supporting documentation that the provider has a robust system in place for monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of teaching and learning practices in its QQI accredited programme, including Tutor Feedback (QAM pp. 54-55), Student Feedback (QAM pp. 56-57), and Feedback from Stakeholders (QAM pp. 58). Given the model of LHP Skillnet's education and training provision, the panel enquired as to how teaching and learning is quality assured at multiple locations and consistent standards are maintained. The Network Manager is responsible for monitoring feedback, acting upon it accordingly and reporting to the Network Steering Group. The provider also schedules an Internal Verification Day at the conclusion of each programme that is attended by the Programme Team, the Network Manager, the Network Administrators and students to review the delivery of the programme. This event also provides learners with an opportunity to view their work, talk to the tutors about their marks and appeal their grades, if warranted.

Following review of this documentation and discussions during the site visit, the panel is satisfied that the provider has appropriate procedures in place to ensure consistently high standards are maintained in the area of teaching and learning relating to the theoretical components of programmes. LHP Skillnet has also demonstrated sufficient arrangements for ensuring the learning environment is fit-for-purpose (QAM pp. 65-66). However, as part of its mandatory change relating to a "Documented Approach to Quality Assurance", the panel requests that the provider develop clear procedures in relation to quality assuring the clinical learning environment, including a Memorandum of Agreement where appropriate, particularly in the case of work placements at organisations outside the network. This will complement the Host Placement Handbook that LHP Skillnet is developing to outline the responsibilities of member companies and other placement locations toward students and the reciprocal duties. The provider also outlined their intention to introduce supports for workplace mentors in 2020 to further ensure work-based learning is consistent for all enrolled learners.

The current composition of the Network Steering Group ensures that matters pertaining to teaching and learning receive sufficient consideration. Subject-matter experts are also involved in the programme development process to ensure teaching and learning resources and activities are appropriate to programme learning outcomes and the needs of target learners.

While the provider does not currently utilise a VLE, the panel is satisfied that learners are provided with all necessary teaching and learning materials. The Student Handbook and Induction Checklist ensures that learners are aware of the policies and procedures relating to teaching and learning, in particular the processes for raising and addressing dissatisfaction, and recommending improvements.

6 ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

The panel is satisfied that LHP Skillnet's policies and procedures pertaining to the assessment of learners meets the requirements of this Statutory QA Guideline. The provider's policies and procedures relating to assessment are comprehensively outlined in their Draft QAM, in particular Assessment Planning and Design (QAM pp. 72), Security and Integrity of Assessment (QAM pp. 76), Consistency of Marking between Tutors/ Assessors (QAM pp. 79), Internal Verification (QAM pp. 83), External Authentication (QAM pp. 85) and Results Approval and Issue of Results (QAM pp. 87). In their capacity as the Programme Leader, the Network Manager is responsible for coordinating the various



stages in the assessment lifecycle, specifically the design of assessment activities and ensuring the security and integrity of assessment instruments. The provider is in the process of completing an entire overview of all assessment materials and supporting documentation, and is awaiting approval of their QA policies and procedures before they can implement the resultant changes as part of their programmatic review.

Given the model of LHP Skillnet's education and training provision, the panel enquired as to how standards are maintained across multiple instances of the same programme being delivered in different locations. Representatives of the provider explained how the Network Manager, in collaboration with tutors with expertise in particular subjects, develops assessment instruments, assignment briefs and examination questions, outline solutions and marking schemes that are distributed to all tutors. The Network Manager is also responsible for ensuring consistency of marking between tutors and assessors. The panel is satisfied, therefore, that the provider has appropriate arrangements in place for the internal moderation and verification, and the external authentication of assessments for their current scope of provision. The terms of reference of the Results Approval Panel (Supporting Documentation, No. 61) are concise and outline the final stage in the quality assurance of assessment standards. Certification cannot be obtained without final sign-off from the panel, who review Internal Verifier and External Authenticator Reports, examining and rectifying all discrepancies and variations in grades. LHP Skillnet provided extensive documentation as further evidence of how they ensure consistent standards are maintained across all components of the assessment lifecycle, including External Authenticator Report Template (Supporting Documentation, No. 58), Internal Verification Report (Supporting Documentation, No. 55), Results Approval Process Checklist (Supporting Documentation, No. 62) and Results Issue Letter Template (Supporting Documentation, No. 64).

LHP Skillnet has appropriate policies and procedures in place relating to Reasonable Accommodations (QAM pp. 81), Feedback to Students on Assessment (QAM pp. 91), Assessment Appeals (Supporting Documentation, No. 67) and Student Appeals and Complaints (Assessment) (QAM pp. 92). They have identified the need to develop a more formal structure for the internal verification of assessments and have introduced guidelines for invigilators to ensure consistent standards in the conduct of examinations across all instances of a programme. Representatives of the provider explained how they change the External Authenticator after three certifications and is in the process of creating a panel of suitable individuals to ensure objectivity and impartiality. All parts of the assessment lifecycle are considered in the provider's review of programmes and form a key part of the Internal Verification Day, where all stakeholders can provide feedback and raise pertinent issues relating to the assessment of learners.

7 SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

The panel is confident that LHP Skillnet satisfies the requirements of this Statutory QA Guideline. The policy and procedure relating to learner support services are outlined in the provider's Draft QAM (pp. 59-61) and specify the responsibilities of the Network Manager and tutors. In addition, the provider included other policies and procedures that supplement its supports for learners, in particular Student Complaints (QAM pp. 62), Facilitating Diversity (QAM pp. 63), Quality Assuring Physical Premises,



Equipment, and Facilities (QAM pp. 65-66), Reasonable Accommodation (QAM pp. 81-82) and Protection of Enrolled Learners (Supporting Documentation, No. 24).

Given the off-site nature of LHP Skillnet's education and training provision, the panel discussed the provider's processes for approving programme venues. The provider's representatives outlined the high specifications in place for programme venues, as evidenced by the Training Venue Checklist in their reengagement application (Supporting Documentation, No. 43). The Network Manager is responsible for assessing the suitability of such venues prior to the delivery of a programme and for monitoring their continued suitability as part of programme review.

During the site visit, the provider explained how they ensure students are properly informed of the learner support services using their Induction Checklist (Supporting Documentation, No. 21). Further information is also provided in the Student Handbook (Supporting Documentation, No. 20). Through its arrangements for managing student information, discussed in Section 8 below, the Network Manager can monitor learner attainment and make the necessary interventions to ensure learners are continuously supported throughout their studies.

LHP Skillnet has a class representative system (QAM pp. 57) in place that enables learners to raise issues relating to support services, and the suitability and accessibility of learning resources and locations to tutors and the Network Manager, respectively. As part of its self-assessment, the provider has identified the need to provide further guidance to tutors with regard to accommodating learners with additional educational needs. While LHP Skillnet utilises teaching and learning resources published by AHEAD, representatives of the provider confirmed that further training in areas of diversity and inclusion for members of the programme team is currently being explored as part of its staff development.

8 INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Panel Findings:

The panel discussed the information and data management component of LHP Skillnet's Draft QAM and is generally satisfied with the arrangements the provider has in place. As part of its self-assessment against QQI's Statutory QA Guidelines, the provider identified the need to have a robust Data Protection policy, with associated procedures, that addresses its responsibilities as a Data Collector in its relationship with Skillnet and as a Data Controller in its relationship with QQI. While LHP Skillnet do not have a Data Protection policy in place at the time of re-engagement with QQI, the panel is satisfied that this policy is in the final stages of development as the provider awaits confirmation of Skillnet's Data Protection policy so that its responsibilities can be incorporated into it. The panel believes that having a single Data Protection Policy that satisfies its responsibilities to both Skillnet and QQI will preclude confusion amongst the associated stakeholders and ensure its consistent implementation across all of the provider's activities.

The provider uses a bespoke web-based software application system, SONRAÍ, to process and manage student information and this software has sufficient reporting functionality for the organisation's requirements. This component of LHP Skillnet's information management procedures is documented in their QAM (pp. 93-94) and was discussed with the panel during the site visit. The software allows for online reporting to Skillnet and the analysis of training activities and financial information. The Network Manager is responsible for maintaining this system and for ensuring that storage of learner records and data retention complies with Skillnet's Operating Guidelines and relevant legislation. The



Network Administrator is responsible for maintaining records and the provider monitors enrolment and completion rates using an internal database. The panel is satisfied that this particular model is appropriate to the provider's scope of provision as learners can complete the programme on a modular basis, and staff and tutors can effectively monitor their attainment and progression.

As a **Specific Advice**, the panel recommends that LHP Skillnet develop and implement an appropriate data protection policy to ensure compliance with national legislation and that will allow them to meet their different responsibilities as a Data Collector for Skillnet and a Data Controller for QQI.

9 PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Panel Findings:

The panel is satisfied that LHP Skillnet's policies and procedures pertaining to public information and communication meets the requirements of this Statutory QA Guideline. Following its self-assessment, the provider identified the need to develop a mechanism for disseminating the outcomes of its internal programme review procedure. Having explained its proposal during the site visit, the panel is satisfied that the provider is committed to publishing said outcomes, in addition to its QA policies and procedures, on a dedicated subpage of its website. This is due to be commence by Q4 2019 as explained in the provider's application for reengagement.

LHP Skillnet's policies and procedures regarding information provided to prospective and enrolled learners are clearly outlined in their Draft QAM (pp. 99-104), including publication of provider information, publication of programme specific information, mandatory information for all programmes and the publication of QA documentation. The Network Manager reviews all programme-related information prior to publication, which includes all information relating to QQI's criteria of validation. The Network Administrator is responsible for day-to-day maintenance of the provider's website and acts as the primary point of contact for programme-related queries from prospective and enrolled learners. The panel is satisfied that they observe the procedures relating to the publication and communication of public information as well as the ongoing review and update of public information.

The panel is also satisfied with the policy and procedure relating to the provision of information to learners as outlined in the provider's Draft QAM (pp. 74-75). Tutors are responsible for providing accurate and timely information to students regarding module timetables and assessment schedules. The provider included a copy of the Student Handbook in its reengagement application (Supporting Documentation, No. 20) and, upon review, the panel is satisfied that it contains all relevant information required for learners to engage with their programme, to understand the policies and procedures in place in to ensure its successful delivery, and to identify what is expected of them and what they can expect from the provider in return.

10 OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING (incl. Apprenticeships)

Panel Findings:

At the time of its reengagement application, LHP Skillnet does not have any collaborative arrangements in place with other organisations for the development or delivery of education and



training programmes. According to its current scope of provision, the panel is satisfied that this particular component of QQI's Statutory QA Guidelines is met. While the provider expressed the intent to explore potential collaborative partnerships in the medium to long-term, they recognise the need to develop additional quality assurance procedures in advance of expanding the scope of its provision in this manner.

LHP Skillnet aims to increase the number of member companies in the network and is working with a Skillnet Development Advisor to this end. The provider's policies and procedures for involving other parties in education and training programmes are concisely documented in the Draft QAM and supporting documentation, i.e. the selection criteria for External Evaluators (QAM pp. 116), Subject Matter Experts (QAM pp. 116) and External Authenticators (QAM pp. 117). The recruitment and selection process for contracted tutors is discussed in Section 4 above. Representatives of the provider also explained how decisions relating to membership of the Network Steering Group reside with existing members following evaluation of applications from suitably experienced employees of member companies.

11 SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Panel Findings:

The panel is satisfied that LHP Skillnet's policies and procedures pertaining to self-evaluation, monitoring and review meets the requirements of this Statutory QA Guideline. It is evident from the Draft QAM and supporting documentation that the provider has a robust system in place for obtaining feedback from stakeholders and programme performance data, analysing this information, and reviewing and reporting on programmes according to the findings. LHP Skillnet has recently started reporting against KPIs using student information as part of the internal verification of programmes. The provider's policies and procedures are clearly outlined in Internal Evaluation and Monitoring (QAM pp. 105-106), Annual Programme Review (QAM pp. 108-109) and Programmatic Review (QAM pp. 110-111). The Network Manager, supported by the Network Administrators, is responsible for coordinating the monitoring and review of LHP Skillnet's current education and training provision.

LHP Skillnet provided extensive documentation as evidence of the self-evaluation, monitoring and review mechanisms that form a central part of their quality assurance system, including Programme Board Report Template (Supporting Documentation, No. 11), End of Programme Evaluation (Supporting Documentation, No. 36), Class Rep Meeting Record Template (Supporting Documentation, No. 38), Annual Programme Review Agenda (Supporting Documentation, No. 42) and Work Placement Supervisors Report (Supporting Documentation, No. 49). The provider also has sufficient arrangements in place for the internal evaluation and external authentication of programmes, as outlined in Internal Verification Process (Supporting Documentation, No. 56) and External Authenticator Contract and Guidelines (Supporting Documentation, No. 59).

During the site visit, representatives of the provider elaborated on the function of the Internal Verification Day, which forms a key part of the LHP Skillnet's monitoring and review process and provides all relevant stakeholders with an opportunity to effectively engage in the quality assurance and enhancement of programmes. While the provider demonstrates the ability to gather a balance of quantitative data on and qualitative feedback from students and tutors, they have identified the need to formalise how they gather programme review feedback from other stakeholders, i.e. member companies, work placement hosts, employers, etc. LHP Skillnet's internal monitoring and review mechanisms is complemented by quality assurance reviews conducted by Skillnet Ltd as a condition of their funding arrangements.



As the provider of a QQI accredited programme, LHP Skillnet has appropriate procedures in place to facilitate programmatic reviews. They also employ an external evaluator to contribute to this process to increase objectivity regarding the effectiveness of their QA system and the standards of their programmes and learner support services.

Evaluation of draft QA Procedures - Overall panel findings

Based on review of the Draft QAM, and supporting documentation, and discussions with representatives of LHP Skillnet during the site visit, the panel is generally satisfied that the provider meets the requirements of the majority of QQI's Core and Sector Specific (Independent/Private) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016). However, there are a number of issues pertaining to Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 1 (Governance and Management of Quality) and Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 2 (Documented Approach to Quality Assurance) that require immediate redress to demonstrate complete compliance with these statutory guidelines.

At the conclusion of the site visit, therefore, the panel identified a number of concerns relating to governance and documentation and expressed these to representatives of LHP Skillnet during the preliminary feedback session. These concerns were identified as proposed mandatory changes and are outlined in detail in Section 6.1 below. The panel also provided additional specific advices, which are outlined in Section 6.2 below.

As the panel believes that the proposed mandatory changes are relatively discrete and, therefore, can be addressed and remedied in a short timeframe, the panel availed of the option to defer its decision to allow the provider six weeks to submit evidence that these proposed mandatory changes have been satisfactorily addressed. The panel has agreed to reconvene upon receipt of such evidence to reconsider LHP Skillnet's reengagement application.

The panel reconvened on 8th October 2019 to conduct a desk review of the evidence subsequently submitted by LHP Skillnet. It is the panel's view that LHP Skillnet has satisfactorily addressed the *proposed mandatory changes*. The panel, therefore, recommends that QQI approve LHP Skillnet's QA policies and procedures.

Part 6 Mandatory Changes to QA Procedures and Specific Advice

6.1 Mandatory Changes

The panel has decided to defer its decision regarding the re-approval of LHP Skillnet's Draft QA policies and procedures to allow the provider time to address a number of outstanding concerns. These concerns were explained to the representatives of the provider during the preliminary feedback session that concluded the panel visit. As a result, the following mandatory changes relating to Core Statutory Guideline 1: Governance and Management of Quality and Core Statutory Guideline 2: Documented Approach to Quality Assurance are requested by the panel.

Governance and Management of Quality



The panel notes that a number of changes are required before it can be satisfied that the groups or units responsible for the oversight of the provider's activities are clearly identified in the provider's Draft QA pertaining to governance. The following mandatory changes are therefore required:

1. Establish clear and unambiguous units of governance, with appropriate external independent membership, which will ensure that no undue influence may be exercised by any commercial imperatives over academic decision making in the organisation.
2. Include clear and specific Terms of Reference for all units of governance within the organisation that demonstrate the separation of financial and academic decision-making. These should include:
 - a. Purpose, including scope of responsibilities
 - b. Membership and tenure
 - c. Appropriate titles, roles and responsibilities of the officers of the unit, including additional human resources as required
 - d. Operating procedures
 - e. Powers of decision-making
 - f. Reporting relationships
3. Make visible the Board of Directors within the structure, using appropriately clear and specific information as per the previous point. Provide evidence of a resolution to delegate functional responsibility to the Steering Group.

Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

The panel is not satisfied that the presentation and structuring of the Draft QA in its current form will effectively enable and facilitate the implementation of the provider's QA procedures. The provider's QA manual needs to be presented in plain language and easy to navigate formats. This will ensure that it is accessible to learners and staff, and more importantly, that it reflects the high value that the provider places on embedding a culture of quality assurance and enhancement in the organisation. The panel, therefore, is proposing the following additional mandatory changes:

4. Policies and procedures need to be comprehensively reviewed to remove unnecessary duplication, and to reflect a consistent format, using a standard template. The Provider is advised that good practice would be to have a single, clearly written source from which the student handbook content is directly extracted (or hyperlinked to). The policy on plagiarism is a case in point.
5. The revised version of the QA manual must include clearer procedures in relation to the clinical learning environment, including a MoA, where appropriate.

The panel reconvened on 8th October 2019 to conduct a desk review of the evidence subsequently submitted by LHP Skillnet. It is the panel's view that LHP Skillnet has satisfactorily addressed the *proposed mandatory changes* above. The panel, therefore, recommends that QQI approve LHP Skillnet's QA policies and procedures.

6.2 Specific Advice



The panel provides the following specific advice in relation to LHP Skillnet's Draft QA policies and procedures:

1. As part of their staff development policy, the provider should enhance the current practice and develop a system whereby the tutor group may share experiences and develop a shared understanding of best practice, to enhance the quality of programmes.
2. The provider should develop a data protection policy that satisfies the requirements of QQI and Skillnet.

Following the second meeting of the panel and its decision to recommend the approval of LHP Skillnet's QA policies and procedures, the panel provides the following additional specific advice to the provider:

3. Include the responsibilities and associated activities of the Operations Manager in the relevant section of the QAM, especially as they relate to the practical implementation of the provider's quality assurance system.
4. Consistently differentiate between policies and procedures in the QAM, ensuring that the policies are concise and declarative, and that each procedure accurately documents the process through which its corresponding policy is implemented rather than reiterating the policy itself.
5. Review all QA documentation prior to publication to remove any remaining duplications and inconsistencies, and to ensure appropriate language and tone is used throughout.
6. Review all policies and procedures to ensure they accurately reflect the most up-to-date best-practices and conform to industry standards, i.e. appeals, protection of enrolled learners, student complaints, etc.

Part 7 Proposed Approved Scope of Provision for this provider

NFQ Level(s) – min and max	Award Class(es)	Discipline areas
Level 5	Major Award	Healthcare
Level 5	Minor Award	Healthcare



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Part 8 Approval by Chair of the Panel

This report of the panel is approved and submitted to QQI for its decision on the approval of the draft Quality Assurance Procedures of LHP Skillnet.

Name:

Date: 25th November 2019



Annexe 1: Documentation provided to the Panel in the course of the Evaluation

Document	Related to
Draft Quality Assurance Manual (Softcopy)	Quality Assurance System
Supporting Documentation (Softcopies)	Quality Assurance System
Provider's Presentation (Softcopy)	Reengagement Process
Assessment Brief (Hardcopy)	Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Annexe 2: Provider staff met in the course of the Evaluation

Name	Role/Position
Seamus Crawley	Contracting Organisation (Promoter) and Director
Carmel Kelly	Network Manager, Quality Officer and Programme Leader
Ken Hogan	Network Steering Group Member, Programme Board Member and Results Approval Panel Member
Imelda Duffy	Contracted Tutor and former Network manager
Ted Panek	Senior Network Administrator, Internal Verifier
Tom Lordan	Network Administrator, Internal Verifier

Appendix: Provider response to the Reengagement Panel Report

Leading Healthcare Providers Skillnet
2A Convent Road
Dun Laoghaire
Co. Dublin

Ms. Marie Cotter
Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
26-27 Denzille Lane
Dublin 2
D02 P266.

4 November 2019

Re: LHP Skillnet Formal Response to the Reengagement Panel Report on the Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures

Dear Marie

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the members of the panel who carried out the site visit for their efforts in the lead up to and on the day of the site visit and for the thorough and insightful Reengagement Panel Reports they produced. We also welcome the panel's vote of confidence in LHP Skillnet in recommending the approval of LHP Skillnet's draft QA procedures to the QQI Programmes and Awards Executive Committee.

We have reviewed the panel reports in-depth and agree that the final report represents a very comprehensive and accurate account of the outcomes of the process. We have suggested one minor correction which is set out in the *Factual Accuracy Feedback Form 04112019* attached.

The re-engagement process has been a challenging but useful and very worthwhile exercise and we are very glad to be at this point. Thank you also for all your help and advice throughout. It was very valuable and very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Carmel Kelly

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