



Provider Access to Initial Validation of Programmes leading to QQI Awards

Report of the Quality and Capacity Evaluation Panel

Stage 1

Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures

Part 1 Details of applicant provider and its proposed education and training provision**1.1 Applicant Provider**

Registered Business/Trading Name:	Property Health Check Ltd.
Address:	20 Main Street, Kenmare, Co. Kerry, V93 R2FX
Date of Application:	14 May 2020
Date of resubmission of application:	14 December 2020
Date of site visit (if applicable):	29 September 2020
Date of reconvene meeting (if applicable):	8 January 2021
Date of recommendation to the Approvals and Reviews Committee:	3 February 2021

1.2 Profile of applicant provider

Property Health Check Ltd. (PHC), established in 2001, is a company providing property services in the Irish property market. The company operates in a number of defined locations, primarily in and around the Dublin area, while customer service is provided from a call centre based in Kenmare, Co. Kerry. PHC advises that it aims to become a nationwide provider of property services, operating in every county. Currently it provides services such as the following:

- Surveys for those in the process of purchasing a property
- Planning consultancy and related issues
- Property boundaries and mapping
- Specialist services including radon, air quality, damp surveys

PHC has indicated that it has always provided inhouse training to employees covering a range of relevant subjects such as building regulations, planning regulations and related local government structures, etc. Members of staff who act as Client Coordinators undergo a 6-week induction course to



train them in the background knowledge they will require to provide a high standard of customer service from the PHC call centre. During the 6-weeks they will acquire a range of knowledge in relation to services provided, company software used, company processes in place to enable them to become an effective member of staff dealing with queries and bookings from the general public.

Engineering staff who join the company enter with a minimum qualification of BSc Hons in Building Surveying. As this qualification is perceived as a starting point in the industry, and PHC believes further training and experience is required to become a building surveyor who can operate independently within the company, an inhouse training regime is in place for engineers to bring them to the standards expected by the company standard. PHC uses a mentor-trainer model, and each recruited engineer is assigned a mentor. The mentor works with the recruit for the initial 6-week period on a full-time basis and introduces them to the standard company procedures and work practices. The mentor ensures that the recruit has access to and are guided through the existing documented company knowledgebase and protocols. Recruited engineers are trained to undertake one service at a time (e.g. starting with pre-purchase surveys on apartments, then undertaking house surveys) additional training being provided as the range and complexity of work is expanded for the recruit.

PHC wants to commence providing in-house education and training which will lead to formal qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications, commencing with the Building Energy Rating Assessor of Dwellings qualification.

1.3 Proposed education and training provision

NFQ Level	Award Class	QQI Award / Proposed Programme Title
6	Minor	Certificate in Building Energy Rating Assessor of Dwellings

Part 2 The Quality and Capacity Panel Membership

Name	Role of panel member	Organisation
Jack O'Herlihy	Chair	Former Director of Development, Letterkenny Institute of Technology
Barbara Galvin	Panel Member	Further Education and Training Development Officer, City of Dublin Education and Training Board
Michael Kelly	Panel Member	Project Manager, Chevron Education and Training
Dr Tara Ryan	Secretary to the panel (not member)	Registrar, Irish Management Institute



Part 3 Findings of the Panel

3.1 Summary Findings

The Chairperson commended PHC on its robust quality assurance and governance structures that are reflected in its commitment to excellence and a culture of continuous improvement that permeates the organisation. Nonetheless, at the conclusion of the site visit, the panel had concerns around a number of issues. The panel identified the need for PHC to:

- 1) Develop appropriate academic and governance structures with the necessary autonomy in decision-making, i.e. separating educational decisions from commercial decisions
- 2) Include appropriate external expertise at every level of the educational structures, providing a level of independent and autonomy that provides a level of credibility
- 3) Ensure that in appeals or other similar processes, those involved in the final decision should not be involved earlier in the process.

These were identified as proposed mandatory changes and are outlined in detail in Section 7.1 of this report. Additional items of specific advice are included in Section 7.2. However, given that these issues were discrete, and in the panel's view could be addressed quickly by the provider, the panel availed of the option to defer its overall decision for a period of six weeks, and allowed PHC this time to submit evidence to the panel that the changes identified had been satisfactorily addressed.

The panel reconvened on January 8th 2021 to undertake a desk review of the evidence subsequently submitted by Property Health Check. It is the panel's view that PHC has satisfactorily addressed the proposed mandatory changes and has responded appropriately to the panel's initial specific advice. The panel consequently recommends that QQI approve Property Health Check's QA procedures.

3.2 Recommendation of the panel to Approvals and Review Committee of QQI

	Tick <u>one</u> as appropriate
Approve Property Health Check draft QA procedures	x
Refuse approval of Property Health Check draft QA procedures pending mandatory changes set out in Section 7.1 (If this recommendation is accepted by QQI, the provider may make a revised application within six months of the decision)	
Refuse to approve Property Health Check draft QA procedures	

**Part 4 Evaluation of the capacity of the applicant to provide quality education and training to learners****4.1 Legal and compliance requirements:**

	Criteria	Yes/No/Partially	Comments
4.1.1(a)	Criterion: Is the applicant an established Legal Entity who has Education and/or Training as a Principal Function?	Yes	The applicant's core business is the provision of property services. However, in so doing Property Check provides, and has provided over time, a model of mentoring and professional development for its staff. The applicant wishes to change the form of educational provision from informal to formal through the provision of QQI awards.
4.1.2(a)	Criterion: Is the legal entity established in the European Union and does it have a substantial presence in Ireland?	Yes	Property Check currently has its main offices in Kenmare, and provides its services throughout Ireland.
4.1.3(a)	Criterion: Are any dependencies, collaborations, obligations, parent organisations, and subsidiaries clearly specified?	Yes	None in place.
4.1.4(a)	Criterion: Are any third-party relationships and partnerships compatible with the scope of access sought?	Yes	None in place.
4.1.5(a)	Criterion: Are the applicable regulations and legislation complied with in all jurisdictions where it operates?	Yes	Tax Clearance Certification; professional indemnity insurance; proof of return of statutory company returns have been provided.
4.1.6(a)	Criterion: Is the applicant in good standing in the 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.	N/A	



Findings

Property Check meets the legal and compliance requirements to become a registered QQI provider.

4.2 Resource, governance and structural requirements:

	Criteria	Yes/No/Partially	Comments
4.2.1(a)	Criterion: Does the applicant have a sufficient resource base and is it stable and in good financial standing?	Yes	Unaudited, abridged financial accounts for the year 2019, signed by the Directors (March 3 rd , 2020) were presented. A statement of compliance by the Directors was included which states that the “financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis and in accordance with the generally accepted accounting principles in Ireland and Irish statute comprising the Companies Act 2014 and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and [in] the Republic of Ireland (FRS102)”. The panel has accepted these accounts in good faith and no analysis has been conducted.
4.2.2(a)	Criterion: Does the applicant have a reasonable business case for sustainable provision?	Yes	The applicant expressed clearly that it expects the company to exist long into the future and that its involvement in in-house training and education for its staff will grow and strengthen with the future envisaged for the organisation. The vision articulated was reasonable. Criterion three of QQI’s programme validation criteria addresses the distinct business case for a particular programme.
4.2.3(a)	Criterion: Are fit-for-purpose a) governance, b) management and c) decision making structures in place?	Yes	As previously stated, the panel is satisfied that PHC has a robust QA system that serves it well. At the conclusion of the original site visit, the pane had concerns regarding the governance and management of the proposed training programme and advised that it is appropriate that the management and governance of this be removed from the ordinary, internal, commercial management systems so that in the interest of transparency training programmes are seen to be independently managed.



			<p>While a system of committees to evidence the separation of commercial and academic decision making was presented, it was not sufficiently clear. The separation of roles, including separation of responsibilities in undertaking appeals; and the separation of the role of the employee vis-à-vis the learner were not adequate. Additional detail and precision in the allocation of responsibilities separating employer and mentor roles, as well as clearly evidencing the separation of commercial and academic decision-making was required. In an organisation of this scale, the need for independent and criterion-based decision-making is best served through the addition of externality at a variety of levels of management and governance. The inclusion of independent, external experts without any conflicts of interest was also required. The panel is satisfied that these issues, as outlined above, have all now been appropriately addressed by Property Health Check.</p>
4.2.4(a)	Criterion: Are there arrangements in place for providing required information to QQI?	Yes	<p>Property Health check meets the resource governance and structural requirements, however regarding the educational governance and management the panel suggests that a separate system be developed. Discussions with the applicant showed a clear understanding of the necessity of doing this and indicated a willingness to do so. Property Check uses a Learning Management System (LMS) called Learndash.com and intends to use it as its learner record repository for internal and external use.</p>

Findings

Property Health Check meets the **Resource, governance and structural** requirements and discussions. However, as stated under 4.2.3, some improvements were required following the initial site visit in respect of the organisation of educational governance and management. These were identified as proposed mandatory changes and have since been appropriately addressed by the provider.

**4.3 Programme development and provision requirements:**

	Criteria	Yes/No/Partially	Comments
4.3.1(a)	Criterion: Does the applicant have experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes?	Partially	The applicant has not provided programmes leading to accredited awards previously, but has experience in setting professional standards and mentoring staff in their achievement.
4.3.2(a)	Criterion: Does the applicant have a fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff?	Partially	There are 6 qualified engineers in the company (including the MD), with recruitment ongoing for a 7 th . Two of the engineering team are currently undertaking the Sustainability Energy Agency of Ireland Building Energy Rating Assessor qualification to add to their technical capacity and qualifications to act as mentors to future learners. It is noteworthy that to date there has been no participation in any formal education or training around a 'Train the Trainer' type qualification, which would be desirable, given the new educational and pedagogical role the mentors will be taking on.
4.3.3(a)	Criterion: 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)?	Yes	The provider has expressed a clear commitment and understanding of assessment standards as well as a willingness to fully engage with QQI policy, procedure and practice.
4.3.4(a)	Criterion: Does the applicant have the fit-for-purpose premises, facilities and resources to meet the requirements of the provision proposed in place?	Yes	In-house, on the job training is envisaged.
4.3.5(a)	Criterion: Are there access, transfer and progression arrangements that meet QQI's criteria for approval in place?	Yes	Property Check was very clear in its commitment to ensuring transparency in its future contracts of employment around the distinction between employee and learner, and the clear identification of responsibilities and commitment expected from employees who are also learners. However, to avoid any confusion about who is required to undertake future training or what may happen in the context of academic failure, the panel advised that it is essential that contracts and employee handbooks and learner handbooks be



			created that clearly document the rights and responsibilities and educational entitlements of the learner. Clarity about who can/must undertake the proposed educational programme was required. It was also essential that this is complemented with set criteria for entry to a programme and a transparent process by which they will be applied, and decisions made. The panel is satisfied that these issues have now been addressed by the provider.
4.3.6(a)	Criterion: Are structures and resources to underpin fair and consistent assessment of learners in place?	Yes	It is essential that independent parties are involved in the authentication and verification of assessment results and are also involved in any appeals or complaints which may arise, and this may require resourcing. At the conclusion of the initial evaluation, this form of externality had not been provided and was included as area to address, which the provider subsequently did in the revised documentation submitted in December 2020
4.3.7(a)	Criterion: Are arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners to meet the statutory obligations in place (where applicable)?	N/A	

Findings

The applicant has addressed the **Programme development and provision** requirements. Addressing the item identified – the role of the learner vs the role of the employee, and how the distinct contexts are maintained and protected - through the development of additional documentation was essential. The panel is satisfied that this has now been addressed. Greater detail is provided in Part 5 – section Support for Learners.

4.4 Evaluation of capacity to provide the proposed education and training provision - Overall Finding:

The applicant has many strengths and demonstrated great thought and consideration in addressing the QQI Initial Access to Validation process. The panel members were very impressed with the thoughtfulness and clear understanding the applicant had of the challenges and benefits of the process. There is evident capacity from an intellectual and physical resource perspective. Notwithstanding this, the panel identified some areas in which the applicant needed to develop additional systems and quality assurance processes which required additional resources. These were identified as proposed mandatory changes and are set out in Section 7.1 of this report.



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The panel reconvened in January 2021 to review revised documentation submitted by Property Health Check in December 2020. The panel is now satisfied that the provider has appropriately addressed each of the proposed mandatory changes identified. As a consequence, the panel is happy to recommend approval of the Property Health Check's QA procedures to QQI. The panel has identified some items of Specific Advice for the provider, which are set out in Section 7.2 of this report.



Part 5 Evaluation of draft QA Procedures submitted by Property Health Check

The following is the panel's findings following evaluation of Property Health Check's quality assurance procedures against QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016) and Topic Specific QA Guidelines on Blended Learning. Sections 1-11 of the report follows the structure and referencing of the Core QA Guidelines.

1 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Panel Findings:

During the meetings, the Chairperson commended PHC on its robust quality assurance and governance structures that are reflected in the commitment to excellence and a culture of continuous improvement that permeates the organisation. As indicated above under paragraph 4.2.3, the structures in place at the time of the virtual site visit for the governance and management of education and training provision needed further refinement to ensure independence and adequate protection of learners' interests. The Panel found that given the scale of the organisation, it is essential to mitigate against the risks of group think, bias (inadvertent or deliberate), the conflation of commercial and educational interests, and to do so through a system of independent decision-making bodies, rather than through the allocation of educational decision-making to already existing management structures. The culture of the educational groupings should be different for example from the marketing groupings.

The Panel also found that, in addition, the various decision-making bodies should ensure independence through the inclusion of external parties with educational management or governance knowledge. Confidence in the provision of national standards can be provided through the involvement of independent, external parties. At the time of the virtual site visit, the Panel found that terms of reference for committees should be more complete and include purpose, scope, quorum, chair, frequency of meetings, reporting lines in terms of educational process. It would also be important to note the formal transfer of any independent education decision-making authority from the Board of Directors to anybody/group/committee established for that purpose. To assist in improving the governance and management, the Panel recommended that the applicant look carefully at other providers of education and training who may be of similar scale and benchmark themselves against them. These issues are reflected in the proposed mandatory changes set out in Section 7.1 of this report. Having reviewed the revised documentation submitted by Property Health Check in December 2020, the panel is now assured that these issues have been appropriately addressed.

2 DOCUMENTED APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

Panel Findings:

The applicant presented a Quality Assurance Handbook which addressed all required areas and indicated an appreciation of monitoring and review. In articulating their Core Values of the Five E's:

- E-tegrity
- Education
- Expansion



Effective
Efficient

and how they are implemented it was evident that holistic quality system approach to the business is in existence. While not within the scope of the evaluation, the managerial approaches to business planning, monitoring and review were commendable. Tools such as App.ninety.io were demonstrated to the panel, and it appeared it could be used to very good effect in the implementation of the quality assurance system.

The detail provided under some of the headings will need review and enhancement in time, as during implementation improvements will be identified, but it is clear that there is a monitoring and review culture in place which will enable these enhancements. An example is how the both the learner and tutor will provide feedback to the QA team on programme and system enhancements.

3 PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Panel Findings:

As indicated in respect of Governance and Management of Quality, it is recommended that the applicant look carefully at other national providers of the programme (or programmes) Property Health Check wish to provide, and benchmark themselves against them. PHC has a very strong commitment to professional standards and to the provision of staff development and training. The approach of the company to the establishment of standards for the work of its employees and the provision of in-house training over a sustained period of time is commendable and it will assist the team in the development of programme standards and in the design of a learning model by which they will be attained. Learner involvement in monitoring and review processes has been provided for. However, since the learner is also an employee, there needs to be clear distinction between the roles and protection for the learner in sharing feedback and insights.

As indicated in the section on Teaching and Learning, at the close of the initial evaluation, the panel found that clarity was required about entry to the programme. Specifically, the panel required that the questions of whether new employees have to undertake the programme, and how entry requirements are explicitly addressed during the employee recruitment process be clarified in the documentation. Transparency on the learner's access to the programme was not sufficiently clear.

The panel is satisfied that these questions were appropriately addressed in the revised documentation submitted by the provider in December 2020.

The panel also noted that it would be useful to consider the QQI Guideline on Blended Learning to see how it could inform future programme provision. Training currently being provided on the VLE was viewed by the panel, and it was evident that there is a good base from which to develop programmes which meet standards of the National Framework of Qualifications.

It is important to note also, that all minor programmes are linked to a major programmes and external authentication is mandatory. This is addressed below under section 6 on assessment of learners.



4 STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Panel Findings:

PHC has five engineers who currently act as mentors and trainers to staff. Two of these are undertaking additional technical training in preparation for the provision of the BER Assessor qualification. As indicated in section 4.3.2 above, it is acknowledged that it is important that due consideration is given to the appropriate professional qualifications and professional development required for those acting in a mentor role. While their technical qualifications are in place, these should be complemented with formal fit for purpose educational/pedagogical qualifications. This is important in order to add credibility to the mentor role when guiding a learner towards a formal qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications. There may also be opportunities for mentors to participate in national forums or events to support them in their educational roles.

It was also noted that PHC is currently recruiting for additional engineer roles and the new postholders will participate in the programme.

5 TEACHING AND LEARNING

Panel Findings:

The current teaching and learning environment is one based on a mentor-mentee relationship in an employment context, and where no formal qualification is attained. It was clear to the panel that PHC sets clear standards for itself and its employees, which will be a benefit in defining learning outcomes and establishing how to support learners in their attainment. It is of note that a project is currently underway to move existing training to the Learner Management System. This project prepares the pathway to standardise the training process across the organisation and ease access to materials and mentors. Transparency about the standards of teaching and training will be enhanced by the attainment of train the trainer qualification or equivalent as suggested above.

Given that the learners on the proposed programme are solely internal candidates it is important that there are clear guidelines for how learners are selected, assessed and supported and the standards need to be clearly understood by all. The relationship between the learner and mentor and the work placement elements of the programme merit particular attention to differentiate it from the normal working relationships and ensure appropriate protection for learners. As much of the training will be undertaken 'on the job', under the guidance of a more experienced professional mentor, it is expected that the learner will have a positive learning experience. The Panel advised that guidance for the learner for the on-the-job work experience should be provided. This was addressed by the provider.

6 ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

The manual addresses a variety of aspects of assessment and does so in a thoughtful way. It is commendable that some excellent tools such as Appendix A – Assessment Strategies, Assessment and Outcome mapper and Appendix B – Assessment Process – Assessment Scheduler are included.



As indicated under criterion 3 above, external authentication is required in respect of all assessment to assist in the evidencing of the achievement of a national standard. This is especially critical in a small organisation where the learner is also an employee. External oversight must be provided.

In addition, all appeals processes must be wholly independent from the parties who were involved in any initial assessment decision. The model initially described in the draft QA manual did not provide for this. However, the panel is satisfied that Property Health Check appropriately addressed these lacunae in its revised documentation submitted in December 2020.

7 SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

As identified in part 4, as the applicant is intending to provide education and training to its staff, therefore the intended learner is both an employee and a learner. There are potential conflicts in the rights and duties of an employee vs a learner, and therefore it is very important that the two roles are separated and the rights and responsibilities which accrue to each are explicitly and clearly documented. A complaint by a learner about an educational matter, including any relationship issues with a mentor, should have a distinct process outside of employee complaints process. The boundaries between the contexts and how to address problems should be clear for all parties.

At the close of the initial evaluation, the panel found that contracts of employment for prospective learners needed to be clear on the educational and employment expectations, including any issues around examination or accreditation fees; implications of failure of any programme, etc. The panel is satisfied that that Property Health Check has appropriately addressed these issues in the revised documentation submitted in December 2020.

8 INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Panel Findings:

The panel noted that the applicant is aware of GDPR and Data Privacy requirements. An employee privacy statement is in place. It may need to be added to or complemented to take consideration of an employee's data, when that employee is a learner, or when that person becomes a graduate, and is no longer an employee.

The panel also noted that the applicant has a Learning Management System in place and that it is intended to use it as a record repository as well as a virtual learning environment.

9 PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Panel Findings:

The panel recommends that should the applicant succeed in having a programme validated by QQI, that clear and accurate information on the programme, including its level on the National Framework of Qualifications, and its credit, be provided by the applicant where there is reference to the programme in the public domain.



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Future evaluations or validations conducted by QQI will be published on the QQI website. The applicant may wish to provide links to these reports on its own websites.

10 OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Panel Findings:

N/A

11 SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Panel Findings:

As noted under criterion 2, Documented approach to quality assurance, the applicant has evidenced throughout its draft Quality Assurance Manual, a model of planning, monitoring and review.

12 TOPIC-SPECIFIC QA PROCEDURES: BLENDED LEARNING

Panel Findings

The panel notes that the applicant intends to provide on the job training and face to face mentoring and complement this with online content. The panel is satisfied that the applicant has the capacity to use digital tools to appropriately assist in the learning process. It would be important to evidence this fully in any future programme validation application.

EVALUATION OF DRAFT QA PROCEDURES - OVERALL PANEL FINDINGS

The panel confirms that PHC effectively addressed, and provided evidence of addressing the proposed mandatory changes outlined in Section 7.1 within the allocated 6 week period. As a consequence, the panel recommends that QQI approve PHC's QA procedures.



Part 6 Conditions of QA Approval

6.1 Conditions of QA Approval

Part 7 Mandatory Changes to QA Procedures and Specific Advice

The following proposed mandatory changes were identified at the conclusion of the virtual site visit on 29 September 2020 by the panel. The panel availed of the option to defer its decision to allow Property Health Check an opportunity to address these issues within a six-week period. Following the meeting of the panel on January 8th 2021, the panel confirmed that the mandatory changes were satisfactorily addressed as indicated below.

7.1 Mandatory Changes

1. Develop appropriate academic and governance structures with the necessary autonomy in decision-making, i.e. separating educational decisions from commercial decisions.

Following resubmission

PHC revised its draft QA documentation to address this concern and lines of responsibility are now much clearer. Additionally, an academic committee has been established and it includes external membership. Concerns around the separation of educational and commercial decision-making have been addressed. The panel notes that the allocation of the role of chair to the external nominee may have been influenced by this need, however it is suggested that PHC retains the role of chair and involves the external person as a facilitator of dialogue and educational decision-making, rather than as chair.

2. Include appropriate external expertise at every level of the educational structures, providing a level of independent and autonomy that provides a level of credibility.

Following resubmission

As indicated in respect of mandatory change 1, this has been addressed.

3. Ensure that in appeals or other similar processes, those involved in the final decision should not be involved earlier in the process.

Following resubmission

The revised appeals procedure as presented in Appendix 26 now meets the key criterion of independence.



4. Ensure that arrangements and procedures for external authentication of assessment are in place in respect of all assessment to assist in the evidencing of the achievement of a national standard. This is especially critical in a small organisation where the learner is also an employee.

Following resubmission

This mandatory change has been addressed. The response provided gives rise to an additional point of Specific Advice included below in paragraph 7.2 as number 7.

5. Provide clarity on entry criteria and routes to programmes. Specifically, clarify whether new employees have to undertake the programme, and how entry requirements are explicitly addressed during the employee recruitment process.

Following resubmission

This mandatory change has been addressed. Clarity has been provided on entry requirements are outlined at interview and be part of contract of employment only if explicitly agreed during the selection process.

7.2 Specific Advice

It is advised that the applicant:

1. Benchmark against providers of similar scale/type and also against providers of similar intended programmes.
2. It would be appropriate for trainers to complete the Training Delivery and Evaluation NFQ Level 6 award as part of their professional development.
3. As procedures are implemented, continue to ensure there is clarity between the rights and responsibilities of an employee vis-à-vis their role as a learner (a number of areas where this might apply are highlighted in the body of the report).
4. In any future programme validation application evidence fully the capacity to use digital tools to appropriately assist in the learning process.
5. Guidance for the learner for the on-the-job work experience should be provided.
6. Consider adding to or complementing the existing privacy statement to take consideration of an employee's data, when that employee is a learner, or when that person becomes a graduate, and is no longer an employee.
7. In continuing the benchmarking exercise, look specifically at processes around internal verification and external authentication. It is further suggested that PHC encourage its trainers to seek to become external authenticators for other organisations and engage in the associated training. For example, ETBI's are currently recruiting. Engaging in training of this nature will assist in building internal capacity.



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In addition, look at providers offering different programmes to those proposed by PHC and consider the types of LMS used and how they are used, and study skills provided. During the coming period, in which preparation of the programme for submission for validation will occur, use the opportunities in conducting dialogue with other providers to consider exactly how things will operate when PHC is providing the programme and ensuring that there is a robust learning environment in which the intended programme learning outcomes can be achieved.

Part 8 Proposed Approved Scope of Provision for this provider

NFQ Level(s) – min and max	Award Class(es)	Discipline areas
6	Minor, Special Purpose Awards	Property, Engineering, Building, Surveying, Energy

Part 9 Approval by Chair of the Panel

This report of the Quality and Capacity Panel is approved and submitted to QQI for its decision on the recommendation to approve the draft Quality Assurance Procedures of Property Health Check and approve its progression to Stage 2 of the initial programme validation process.

Date: 11 January 2021



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

Document	Related to

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

Name	Role/Position
Peter Sweeney	MD, CEO, Visionary
Anna Devlin	Quality Assurance Manager
Maria Ward	Integrator
Stella Moran	Finance and HR Manager

Appendix: Provider response to the Initial Access to Validation Panel Report

20th March 2021

Response to the Report of the Quality and Capacity Evaluation Panel

Many thanks for the Report of the Quality and Capacity Evaluation Panel, dated January 12th 2021, based on Property Health Check Ltd.'s (PHC) application for provider access to Initial Validation of Programmes leading to QQI Awards.

PHC welcomes the panel's findings in this report and greatly appreciates the time and effort the panel members have given to the application process. The panel meeting on September 29th, and subsequent findings, were particularly constructive and supportive to the process of developing our quality-assured procedures.

PHC responded to the initial report dated November 3rd 2020, addressing 5 mandatory changes and 6 specific advices. Following resubmission of the application on December 14th 2020 the panel were satisfied that all mandatory changes required had been appropriately addressed.

PHC's response to particular points made in the January 12th Report is as follows: -

Part 5 Section 2 Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

PHC acknowledge the point made by the panel that "the detail provided under some of the headings will need review and enhancement in time, as during implementation improvements will be identified", and will ensure that the monitoring and review culture in place in the organization will continue to question the documentation and processes developed in the spirit of continuous improvement.

Part 5 Section 4 Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

In line with the panel's suggestion, PHC will look for opportunities for mentors to participate in national forums or events to support them in their educational roles.

Part 5 Section 9 Public Information and Communication

As suggested by the panel, PHC will consider providing links to future QI evaluations or validations on the PHC website.

Part 7 Section 7.1 Mandatory Changes to QA Procedures

1. PHC note and accept the panel's suggestion that the role of chair of the Academic Committee be retained within the organization and that the external person be involved as a facilitator of dialogue and educational decision-making rather than as chair.
2. A final proof has been undertaken of the documentation and no mention of the term "external educator" has been found.

Part 7 Section 7.2 Specific Advice

- 1. *Benchmark against providers of similar scale/type and also against providers of similar intended programmes.***

Property Health Check recognizes that it can learn from other providers of training and education by identifying, understanding and adopting best practices and new approaches across its training activities. The process of benchmarking has been incorporated into our QA procedures.

- 2. *It would be appropriate for trainers to complete the Training Delivery and Evaluation NFQ Level 6 award as part of their professional development.***

PHC commit to the development of staff to the highest quality, so, staff who are technically qualified to provide training programmes will undertake the Training Delivery and Evaluation NFQ Level 6 award in preparation for the provision of training programmes to other PHC staff as part of their professional development.

- 3. *Ensure there is clarity between the rights and responsibilities of an employee vis-à-vis their role as a learner.***

The PHC Learner Handbook has been developed to provide information for a learner and to clarify rights and responsibilities of a learner/ employee.

- 4. *In any future programme validation application evidence fully the capacity to use digital tools to appropriately assist in the learning process.***

Property Health Check commits to showing our capacity to use digital tools to assist in the learning process during any programme validation application that may follow this Initial Access to Validation process.

- 5. *Guidance for the learner for the on-the-job- work experience should be provided.***

Guidance for the learner in relation to work experience during a programme of training is included in the PHC Learner Handbook.

- 6. Consider adding to or complementing the existing privacy statement to take consideration of an employee's data, when that employee is a learner, or when that person becomes a graduate, and is no longer an employee.**

The Privacy statement in the Employee Handbook has been complemented by the notice included in the PHC Learner Handbook.

- 7. Conduct a final proof of the documentation to ensure that there is no confusion or mistake in the allocation of the roles of 'external authenticator' and 'external educator'. Role profiles for each of these roles may be helpful.**

A final proof has been undertaken of the documentation and no mention of the term "external educator" has been found. A role profile of the External Authenticator is included in the QA document as PHC External Authenticator Terms of Reference.

- 8. In continuing the benchmarking exercise, look specifically at processes around internal verification and external authentication. It is further suggested that PHC encourages its trainers to seek to become external authenticators for other organisations and engage in the associated training. For example, ETBI's are currently recruiting. Engaging in training of this nature will assist in building internal capacity.**

In addition, look at providers offering different programmes to those proposed by PHC and consider the types of LMS used and how they are used, and study skills provided. During the coming period, in which preparation of the programme for submission for validation will occur, use the opportunities in conducting dialogue with other providers to consider exactly how things will operate when PHC is providing the programme and ensuring that there is a robust learning environment in which the intended programme learning outcomes can be achieved.

PHC welcome the suggestions provided in relation to benchmarking exercises and will look specifically at processes around internal verification and external authentication and include looking at: -

- Trainers training for / becoming external authenticators for other organisations
- Types of LMS used and how they are used by other providers
- Study skills provided by other providers
- Further exploration of how things will operate when PHC is providing the programme

Finally, PHC thanks QQI staff and external panel members involved in processing the initial validation application. We appreciate the work undertaken by the panel and value the feedback, insights and advice provided during the initial validation process.