

Response to the Welsh Government's consultation on agreeing the parameters of practice for the registered nursing associate role

December 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care promotes the health, safety and wellbeing of patients, service users and the public by raising standards of regulation and registration of people working in health and care. We are an independent body, accountable to the UK Parliament. More information about our work and the approach we take is available at www.professionalstandards.org.uk
- 1.2 As part of our work we:
- Oversee the ten health and care professional regulators and report annually to Parliament on their performance
 - Accredit registers of healthcare practitioners working in occupations not regulated by law through the Accredited Registers (AR) programme
 - Conduct research and advise the four UK governments on improvements in regulation
 - Promote right-touch regulation and publish papers on regulatory policy and practice.

2. General comments

- 2.1 We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Welsh Government's consultation on agreeing parameters of practice for the registered nursing associate role in Wales. This new role (which currently exists in England but not Wales) will be regulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), a body which falls under our oversight.
- 2.2 We do not take a view on the specific activities that should fall within or outwith the nursing associate's parameters of practice as this not our area of expertise. We would, however, like to take this opportunity to highlight the regulatory implications of introducing parameters of practice, and encourage the Welsh Government to work closely with the NMC to ensure that the expectations of the role, nursing associates, and the regulator, are clear.
- 2.3 We fully acknowledge the Welsh Government's prerogative to set parameters of practice for the nursing associate role. However, we note that no such parameters exist for this role in England. As a result of setting parameters, it is likely that there will be a disparity in the tasks that nursing associates are permitted to perform in Wales as compared to England. This may have

implications in terms of both common understanding of the role and labour mobility.

- 2.4 In terms of regulation of the nursing associate role, the Welsh Government should make clear whether, and if so how, it expects the NMC to respond to breaches by nursing associates of the parameters. The NMC's Code¹ sets out the professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates. It includes the requirement to '*Recognise and work within the limits of your competence*' but does not make reference to parameters of practice. The consultation document outlines that the parameters of practice will not be '*imposed by the NMC*' but does not make clear what role, if any, the NMC will have in relation to the parameters.
- 2.5 Defining the NMC's role in relation to the parameters of practice will require a partnership approach between the Welsh Government, NHS Wales and the NMC. We trust that work is underway to ensure that any potential issues in relation to the regulation of the nursing associate role are explored and mitigated. It is vital that registrants, regulators, employers, and the public are clear about the regulatory implications of parameters of practice, and the expectations on all parties should they be breached.

3. Further information

- 3.1 Please get in touch if you would like to discuss any aspect of this response in further detail. You can contact us at:

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¹ Nursing and Midwifery Council, *The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates*: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/nmc-publications/nmc-code.pdf>