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Date: 17 September 2018
Our Ref: CL_CSHS_BoardGovernance/JM
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Email: Caroline.Lamb@nes.scot.nhs.uk

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Re: NHS BOARDS GOVERNANCE ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

Thank-you very much for your letter of 5th September. Although this relates mainly to matters within the territorial NHS Boards, you do touch on the important matter of the appropriate supervision of junior medical staff – doctors in training.

I therefore thought it would be helpful to brief you on the role NHS Education for Scotland (NES) in quality assuring postgraduate medical education in Scotland and how this work contributes to patient safety within NHS Scotland.

NES is tasked by The General Medical Council (GMC) with the Quality Management of all postgraduate medical education and training in Scotland.

This education and training takes place almost exclusively within the clinical settings of Scotland's territorial Health Boards who in turn are required to demonstrate they meet the 10 standards set out in the GMC document '*Promoting excellence: standards for medical education and training*'¹.

Patient safety is at the core of these standards. The GMC's belief is that patient safety is inseparable from a good learning environment and culture which values and supports trainers and doctors in training. The aim is to ensure that training takes place where patients are safe and where education and training are valued. Training and education at all sites must meet these GMC standards.

The role of NES is to Quality Manage Health Boards against these standards and require Health Boards to implement improvements as required. Since August 2015 we have carried out this role via our Quality Management-Quality Improvement (QM-QI) Framework.

¹ <https://www.gmc-uk.org/education/standards-guidance-and-curricula/standards-and-outcomes>



Chair: David Garbutt
Chief Executive: Caroline Lamb

In line with the QM-QI Framework we collect and analyse the following sources of information:

- Annual **GMC National Trainee Survey** of junior doctors in Scotland's Health Boards, including free text comments which are shared with Health Board for their comment
- **GMC National Survey of Trainers** in Scotland's Health Boards
- **Scottish Trainee Survey** – an end of post survey undertaken by NES across Scotland's Health Boards that include free text comments that are individually reviewed.
- Reports from **NES Training Programme Directors** who work across Scotland's Health Boards
- Reports from **Directors of Medical Education** who work in each of Scotland's Health Boards in which we seek comment on RAG indicators such as workload and supervision.
- **Notifications of concern** – a process by which trainees, trainers or other relevant staff can report a concern to NES throughout the year
- Previous **visit reports** – including details of actions taken to respond to previous requirements
- Local intelligence provided from Specialty Training Committees.
- Information contained within the GMC's online Dean's Report.

This information is systematically considered and acted upon within the structure of the QM-QI Framework. The QM-QI Framework is purposely based on a system of named accountability, & monitors and engages across 8 specialty groupings, that cover all of Scotland's Health Boards. Specialty quality groups use data, information and intelligence to address concerns and drive improvement. This includes visits to sites and formal requests for action plans in direct response to standards and requirements not being met.

Illustratively, if a trainee doctor encounters a problem or issue that causes concern in a Health Board unit, that perhaps relates to patient safety or to bullying and undermining, we have a process - alongside existing Health Board channels - that may be used to highlight the concern. After outlining first line routes for reporting concerns, NES has an on-line reporting system that allows trainees to raise issues with us. All concerns are acknowledged within 3 working days with a commitment to act regarding the concern within 20 working days via a sensitive process that carefully manages the concern raised to a satisfactory conclusion.

In being fully committed to patient safety, we recognise the importance of strong governance and the value of being open and transparent. All our visit reports are now published on the Deanery website in line with the GMC who publish Enhanced Monitoring reports on the GMC website.

Further to this, as part of Scotland's response to Recommendation 35 of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry NES, as part of the **Sharing Intelligence on Health and Care Group (SIHCG)**, now shares information with six other Scottish national organisations viz. Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Audit Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland, The SPSO and Public Health & Intelligence of NSS. In this respect NES brings information we hold relating to the 14 territorial NHS boards and Special Health Boards

that provide frontline care for collective consideration along with the data and intelligence held by the SIHCG partner organisations. The NES contribution comprises data, information and intelligence reflecting the experiences of our doctors in training in hospital departments and in GP practices around Scotland from the NTS, STS and from visit reports; increasingly we are working to extend this data and intelligence to other staff groups, including student nursing placements. SIHCG provides a forum to identify potential or actual risks to the quality of health and social care and, where necessary, to initiate further action in response to these risks. The key conclusions are fed back by the joint Chairs of the SIHCG via a report that is discussed with senior representatives of each Board.

In summary, we wish to reassure you that NES is fully committed and actively engaged with patient safety, playing a key role because of the valuable information we collect and hold. This is confirmed by the GMC who reported an extremely positive picture of medical education and training in Scotland in their National Review of Medical Education and Training in Scotland that was published earlier this year². Their report concluded that NES is aware of what is happening across Scotland and has robust systems in place for identifying and managing concerns over safety or quality.

Yours sincerely



Caroline Lamb
Chief Executive, NES

² <https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/gmc-national-review---scotland-national-report-2018-74421424.pdf>