

Annual Quality Assurance Summary

This summary provides an overview of how an organisation is meeting our standards for medical education and training as detailed in [Promoting excellence: standards for medical education and training](#). It provides an overview of the QA activities undertaken over the course of a year and an overview of findings including any areas of notable practice or requirements and recommendations we have set. The summary is published.

Organisation	NHS England - Midlands
Review period	December 2024 – November 2025 (Year 2 of cycle)

Overview of findings

Overall findings statement

From the SAQ submission, and the clarification of some points during the SAQ meeting, we consider that NHS England - Midlands is meeting the standards set out in the GMC's *Promoting excellence: standards for medical education and training*.

The QA activities that we have carried out in this annual cycle have provided good opportunities to observe how NHS England – Midlands meets our standards in Theme 1 (Learning environment and culture), Theme 2 (Educational governance and leadership) and Theme 4 (Supporting educators).

We set requirements and recommendations where our standards are not being met. Of note, we have set a recommendation against Theme 4 (Supporting educators).

In 2025 we decided that medical schools and postgraduate training organisations (PTO) that had completed an initial cycle of four self-assessment questionnaires could move to a biennial submission, following an assessment of their previous submissions. As a result of this assessment NHS England – Midlands has now moved to a biennial model so does not submit a self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ) in 2026. The next date of submission is 17 January 2027.

Quality Activity undertaken

	Activity	Date	Summary
1	SAQ submission	17 January 2025	The SAQ was submitted on time and covered all five themes of <i>Promoting excellence</i>. The submission included a list of planned NHS England - Midlands activities that we could observe for quality assurance purposes. We are satisfied that where further information and/or clarification is still required that this can be provided in the next SAQ submission.
2	SAQ feedback meeting	25 February 2025	This meeting was held to provide feedback to NHS England - Midlands on its 2024/25 SAQ submission, and to seek clarification and additional information on the submission where required. We also discussed potential QA activities we could undertake in this annual cycle. These activities were selected to improve our understanding of NHS England – Midlands’ processes. We did not identify areas of risk during the SAQ meeting. Following this meeting, NHS England - Midlands was provided with written feedback on the SAQ submission.
3	Annual quality engagement meeting	3 November 2025	The annual quality engagement meeting was attended by members of the GMC’s education QA team and the NHS England - Midlands Quality team. We reflected on how we work together, discussed the 2025 National Training Survey (NTS) results and priority list, and reviewed the 2024 NTS priority list. We also discussed the management of enhanced monitoring concerns, the regional response to the maternity review, and QRS (Quality Reporting System) items. Our discussions highlighted that the team at NHS England - Midlands continues to demonstrate strong awareness of the survey results and of the training environment across the region.

			The next steps were agreed upon, with NHS England - Midlands continuing to have oversight of how the organisations on the priority list will be monitored.
4	Observation of Regional Education Quality Group	26 June 2025	NHS England – Midlands told us about this group at our SAQ meeting. The group allows senior educators to share concerns or good practice in relation to quality, allowing for a consistent approach. This is a peer led group which allows for rich feedback to be taken by the PTO, then fed back into the organisation as well as to the GMC. NHS England - Midlands has shared concerns with us regarding educator time for training and educator recruitment freezes, so we felt observing this forum will be beneficial to understand how the PTO collects information in relation to challenges educators are facing and subsequently uses this for continuous improvement. For the purposes of our activity, we focused on themes 2 and 4. It was valuable to observe the Regional Education Quality Group meeting and gain insight into how the PTO facilitates peer discussion to promote best practice. The group brought together senior educators from across the region to discuss live issues such as quality intervention agendas, thresholds for interventions, educational supervisor reports, and educator recognition. While led by the Associate Postgraduate Dean and supported by the PTO's Quality Manager, the meeting was inclusive and collaborative, with attendees sharing experiences and offering practical advice. The open format allowed for meaningful dialogue, and it was encouraging to see the group used as a platform to gather feedback on PTO policies and processes, reinforcing a commitment to continuous improvement.
5	Q&A sessions with Directors of Medical Education (DMEs) across the region	9 September and 10 October 2025	We met with two groups of DMEs from the East and West Midlands to gather their feedback on working with the PTO, as well as their healthcare providers. In advance of the meeting, we collected feedback on the

			topics we planned to discuss at the meeting from the DMEs to focus the discussion. For the purposes of our activity, we focused on themes 1, 2 and 4. The Q&A sessions took place virtually over two meetings: one with DMEs in the East Midlands, and the other with DMEs in the West Midlands. During the sessions, we invited the DMEs to share their experiences, along with the feedback they had gathered from their educators. They were encouraged to provide examples of what they and their educators enjoyed about their roles and highlight areas they believed could be improved. Topics discussed included: raising concerns, educational governance, educator development, pastoral support, training and development. Following the Q&A sessions, we met with representatives from the PTO on 25 November 2025 to discuss the recurring themes identified during the meetings. This discussion allowed the PTO to provide additional context on the issues raised. We have set a recommendation in relation to the feedback provided by the DMEs.
6	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan (including differential attainment)	28 January 2025	Each year we ask all postgraduate training organisations to submit an action plan detailing how they are working to address the attainment gap in their region. We met with NHS England - Midlands to discuss some of the areas of their action plan. The purpose of this discussion was to explore the interventions in the action plan, as well as plans for the year ahead. During the meeting, we learnt more about the support available to learners, including the buddy schemes introduced by several postgraduate schools and the 'one-to-one' meetings with Training Programme Directors (TPDs) offered to international medical graduates (IMGs) in the East Midlands ahead of their first UK placement.

			We discussed the In Training Assessment Profile (ITAP) in more detail, noting its long-standing use in the East Midlands and its continued roll-out in the West Midlands, with more than 300 GP resident doctors having completed the programme. We heard that qualitative evaluation indicates the ITAP is valued as an important source of support. We also discussed the governance structure and were pleased to note that the PTO continues to have clear and transparent governance systems to address DA. From the plan we have received and the follow-up discussions we have had with NHS England - Midlands, we are assured that the organisation is committed to addressing DA and ensuring that education and training is fair and based on principles of equality and diversity. Following this meeting, NHS England - Midlands was provided with written feedback on their action plan, which includes the areas where we would like to receive an update in the next submission. We will follow-up with NHS England - Midlands on progress against the action plan through our proactive quality assurance process.
--	--	--	---

Recommendations

We set recommendations where we have found areas for improvement related to our standards. They highlight areas an organisation should address to improve, in line with best practice.

No.	Theme	Recommendation	Date set
1	Theme 4: Supporting educators (R4.5)	NHS England - Midlands should review their current information sharing process and communicate this to the DMEs. This should include communicating their responsibilities in relation to managing trainee absences, CCT dates, LTFT adjustments, information about training sessions, delivery and rotations. They should also outline and review their information sharing process for their Foundation School	17 June 2026

		Directors, particularly in relation to fitness to practise concerns from medical schools.	
--	--	---	--

Quality Reporting System (QRS)

We use the QRS to monitor concerns raised by organisation when they identify that our standards are not being met in an education and training environment. Concerns are managed locally by the responsible organisation until resolution.

Activity	Date	Summary
Quality Reporting System (QRS)	Ongoing	NHS England - Midlands have 19 open items on the QRS. NHS England - Midlands is engaged with the QRS system and continue to provide frequent and detailed updates. We are assured that our thresholds for reporting via the QRS are embedded and adhered to.

Enhanced Monitoring

Enhanced monitoring is used to promote and encourage local management of concerns which adversely affect patient or trainee safety, doctors' progress in training, or the quality of the training environment. During enhanced monitoring, the GMC provides an increased level of monitoring and participate in activities organised by the deanery/HEE local office. We tailor our support to each enhanced monitoring case to help address the concern(s) and develop a sustainable solution. We have summarised the enhanced monitoring activity this organisation has undertaken over the last 12 months below. For further information on enhanced monitoring please [visit our website](#).

Activity	Date	Summary
Enhanced monitoring activities	Ongoing	NHS England - Midlands currently have one open enhanced monitoring cases within the West Midlands. NHS England - Midlands follows the GMC's enhanced monitoring process appropriately, updating the GMC on live cases. They also update the GMC on potential cases and include the GMC in decisions regarding escalation to and de-escalation from enhanced monitoring.

		The GMC has been involved in quality visits alongside NHS England - Midlands as part of the enhanced monitoring process, and further information on enhanced monitoring visits can be found on the GMC website.
--	--	---

Next steps

The GMC's responses to the information submitted in the SAQ gives feedback on each theme to help NHS England - Midlands complete the updates to the questionnaire in the next annual cycle. These include:

Theme one

LEC1-06 - Ongoing review to strengthen how feedback from educators is captured

LEC1-06 - Update on any further changes made to the engagement strategy

LEC1-10 - Plans to improve the current induction on the PGVLE

Theme two

EGL2-01 - Progress of the complaints process review and development of the associated protocol

EGL2-04 - Progress of work to operationalise learner involvement in quality-review visits

EGL2-09 - Broadening access to quality-survey outcomes

EGL2-10 - Formal rollout of the 'Roadmaps' tool for trajectory planning

Theme four

SUE1-01 - Challenges with undertaking recruitment to educator posts

SUE1-04 - Continued efforts and initiatives to ensure educators have appropriate time in their job plans to meet their educational responsibilities

Further to this, and based on our findings from the quality activities we have undertaken, in the next SAQ we would like an update on the following:

1. How the Three Streams meetings have been communicated to the DMEs and some specific examples of how they have been used to enhance communication with DMEs and LEPs.
2. Progress on the introduction of the Link Associate Postgraduate Deans role in the East Midlands
3. How the Professional Support and Wellbeing process is communicated to DMEs, to support expectations and enhance their understanding of the process.
4. Reflections on the DME's ARCP feedback and how this may be taken forward.

5. Whether weekly clinics with the Associate Postgraduate Dean have been introduced in the West Midlands to mirror the approach in the East Midlands. We would also like to know how the process to “close the loop” for those who have raised concerns has been formalised in the West Midlands.
6. Whether the West and East Midlands Postgraduate Deans have attended further regional job planning sessions.
7. The outcomes of the meetings with CEOs to emphasise the importance of job planning and any steps introduced to support this.

Organisation's response

The organisation has the right to reply to the AQAS; if they have responded it will be included below.

Organisation's response

Many thanks for sharing the above.

We would like to note one point in relation to the next steps above. The job planning session referred to in point 6 was a one-off regional session organised by the NHS England Medical Directorate. The Regional Postgraduate Dean was part of the national working group on SPAs which fed into the national job planning guidance, and so is now discontinued. Therefore, there are unlikely to be any further meetings to attend.