

## Written evidence submission on the Professional Qualifications Bill

### About Us

- 1 Our vision is safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery that improves everyone's health and wellbeing. As the professional regulator of almost 745,000 nursing and midwifery professionals, we have an important role to play in making this a reality.
- 2 Our core role is to regulate. First, we promote high education and professional standards for nurses and midwives across the UK, and nursing associates in England. Second, we maintain the register of professionals eligible to practise. Third, we investigate concerns about nurses, midwives and nursing associates – something that affects less than one percent of professionals each year. We believe in giving professionals the chance to address concerns, but we'll always take action when needed.
- 3 To regulate well, we support our professions and the public. We create resources and guidance that are useful throughout people's careers, helping them to deliver our standards in practice and address new challenges. We also support people involved in our investigations, and we're increasing our visibility so people feel engaged and empowered to shape our work.
- 4 Regulating and supporting our professions allows us to influence health and social care. We share intelligence from our regulatory activities and work with our partners to support workforce planning and sector-wide decision making. We use our voice to speak up for a healthy and inclusive working environment for our professions.

### Introduction

- 5 We welcome the opportunity to respond to this Call for Evidence. The Professional Qualifications Bill (PQB) is one of several pieces of legislation which will underpin the international regulatory framework after 2022.
- 6 This is a very significant area of policy for us. As of September 2021, there were 131,640 internationally trained professionals on our [register](#). This represents over 17 per cent of the registered workforce, and is one of the strongest sources of workforce growth in the UK. Internationally trained nurses and midwives make a vital contribution to people's health and wellbeing across the UK. As a result, any changes to how we regulate this cohort could have significant implications, both for public safety and for the ability of the health and care sector to recruit the staff they need.

- 7 In light of this, our position has consistently been that any legislative changes should enable regulators to design and amend their regulatory processes in line with their public protection remits, and in partnership with sector stakeholders. This is crucial if we are to meet our [strategic commitment](#) of being fair, kind, collaborative and ambitious in how we regulate.

## **Our view of the Bill**

- 8 If passed, the PQB will give all professional regulators similar powers over how they regulate international applicants to their profession(s). This includes the right to enter into formal bilateral relationships with our international equivalents.
- 9 We support the current drafting of the Bill, including recent amends to clause 4. It is essential that we retain our independent remit to make sure international applicants meet the same high standards as UK-trained nurses and midwives. These proposals will help ensure that is the case. We also welcome the Government's commitment in the Bill to formally consult with regulators before any secondary legislation is made using certain powers in the Bill.
- 10 Our view is that the Bill strikes the right balance between creating a high-level framework for regulators to work within, whilst also recognising that many of us already have well-developed assessment and registration pathways. In our case, this means that our [Test of Competence](#) should serve as the primary entry point for all international applicants to our register.
- 11 We would like to thank Lord Grimstone of Boscobel Kt and his team for their sustained engagement with us throughout the development of this legislation. This sets a positive example for how the Government can work with stakeholders to meet key policy objectives.

### **For more information, please contact:**

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