



NHS Education for Scotland

Allied Health Professions (AHP)

Return to Practice Guidance: Arranging Supervised Practice

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1.0 Introduction and Context

Aim: This guidance provides an overview of arranging supervised practice as part of a formal return to practice process within the Allied Health Professions (AHP) within NHS Boards in Scotland, however processes do vary due to regional variances. Supervised practice can form an element of updating knowledge and skills for individuals who have, for whatever reason, not maintained their Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registration and who now wish to re-register with the HCPC.

Target audience: this guidance is relevant to all roles involved in arranging a period of supervised practice for former HCPC registrants, or those with a recognised qualification who have never practiced. It will be of particular relevance to potential supervisors, professional leads, managers, and returnees.

Related Documents:

This guidance refers to the following online resources:

- [NHS Education for Scotland \(NES\) Allied Health Professions Return to Practice page](#)
- [Profession-specific Standards of Proficiency \(HCPC\)](#)
- [Return to Practice guidance \(HCPC, 2017\)](#)
- [HCPC home web page](#) and [HCPC return to practice web page](#)
- [Scotland's Position Statement on Supervision for Allied Health Professions \(NES, 2018\)](#)
- [Effective Practitioner Self-Assessment Tool \(NES\)](#)
- [Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics \(HCPC, 2018\)](#).
- The National Whistleblowing Standards (Independent National Whistleblowing Officer, 2021)
- [Reflective practice \(NES\)](#)

Background: The HCPC is the regulatory body for a range of individual professions. In order to ensure the safety of the public, they maintain a register of health professionals who meet the required standards for training, professional skills, behaviour, and health.

This guidance applies to the following professions regulated by the HCPC:

Arts Therapies including Art and Music
Diagnostic Radiography
Dietetics
Occupational Therapy
Orthoptics
Paramedics
Physiotherapy
Podiatry
Prosthetics and Orthotics
Speech and Language Therapy
Therapeutic Radiography

For each profession, there are HCPC Standards of Proficiency. These are the standards that individuals must meet in order to become registered, and to remain on the register.

This guidance applies to:

- Health professionals who have been out of practice for more than two years and have not maintained their professional registration are required to re-apply for admission to the HCPC register prior to being allowed to return to practice.
- Individuals who hold an approved qualification which was awarded more than 5 years ago and who have not practised their profession.

The HCPC has specified requirements for these two defined categories of potential returnees.

This guidance may also be applied to support individuals who have maintained their HCPC registration whilst working in a non-clinical role, to prepare them for a return to clinical practice. These individuals do not need to reapply to join the HCPC register but supervised practice can assist them in refreshing their knowledge and skills to ensure the service they deliver is safe, effective and person centred.

This guidance does not apply to individuals who do not have a HCPC recognised qualification.

1.2 Definitions

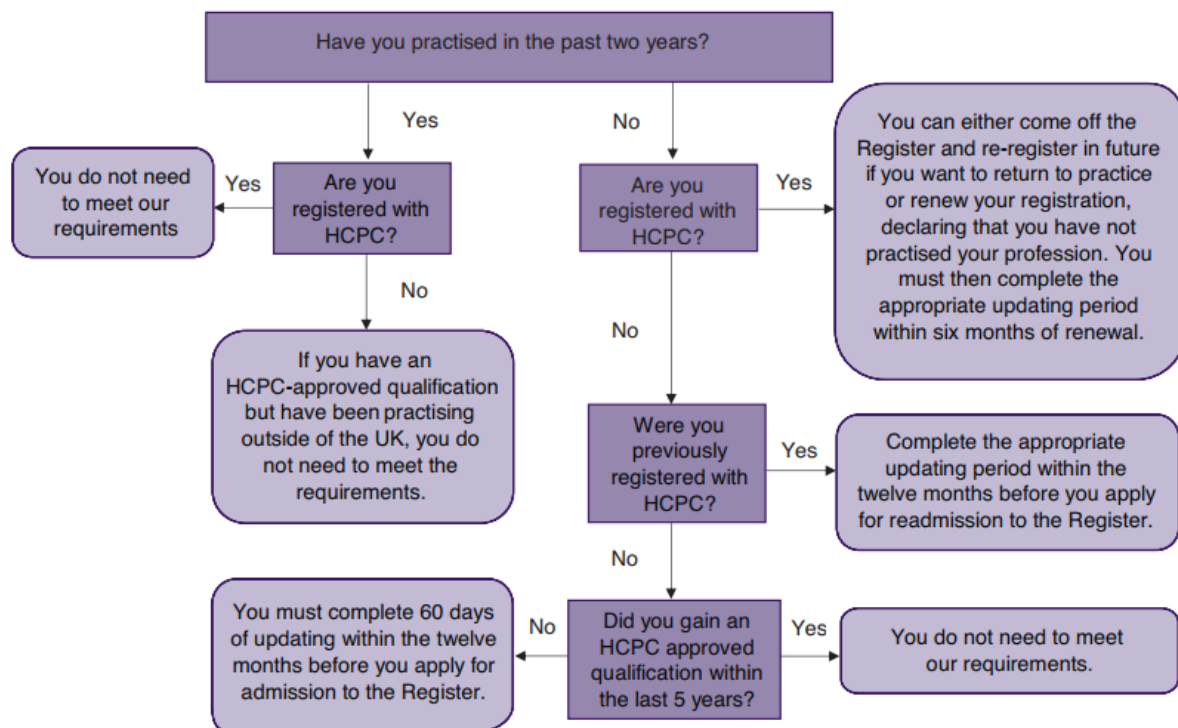
| | |
|---|---|
| Allied Health Professions Practice Education Lead (AHP PEL) | AHP PELs are a key role within health boards in NHS Scotland, to support AHPs to provide high quality practice education experiences to all learners. AHP PELs are a key point of contact in arranging supervised practice. |
| Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) | UK regulator of health and care professions including the Allied Health Professions (AHPs). |
| Formal study | A period of structured study provided by a person or an organisation, which can contribute to return to practice activity. |
| Private study | A period of study structured by the individual, which can contribute to return to practice activity. |
| Returnee | An individual participating in the return to practice process, to enable re-registration with HCPC |
| Supervisor | The supervisor provides support and supervision to the returnee; and signs off the period of supervised practice (NOT competence). Supervisor must meet HCPC requirements (see Section 2.3). |
| Supervised practice | A period of practising under the supervision of a registered health professional, which can contribute to return to practice activity. |

2.0 HCPC Return to Practice Requirements

It is advised that all parties involved in the Return to Practice process consult and become familiar with the HCPC Returning to Practice guidance for the most up to date requirements and advice. The following links are for the HCPC home page and HCPC return to practice page.

2.1 What does Return to Practice mean for the returnee?

HCPC have produced this flow chart to clarify individual requirements of return to practice applications:



(HCPC, 2017)

2.2 Updating Requirements

The returnee is required to contact the HCPC for a letter detailing the date they left the register and any previous fitness to practice issues.

This information will be required when applying for a period of supervised practice.

HCPC updating requirements

| Period out of practice | HCPC requirements for updating knowledge & skills (including supervised practice) |
|------------------------|---|
| 0-2 years | No requirements* |
| 2-5 years | 30 days of updating (1 day = 7 hours) |
| 5 years or more | 60 days of updating (1 day = 7 hours) |

According to HCPC:

- A returnee's period of updating knowledge and skills can be made up of any combination of supervised practice, formal study, or private study
- Returnees do **not** need to carry out updating of all three types
- **Private study must not make up any more than half the required period**
- A returnee's period of updating should be completed, from start to finish, within the 12 months before they apply for registration or readmission. This was extended to 24 months due to Covid-19. Please check current guidance on the HCPC website.

** An individual who has not had a gap in practice of more than two years is not required by HCPC to meet return to practice requirements, they may however wish to engage in supervised practice to gain confidence prior to applying for roles*

This guidance document applies to arranging supervised practice only. Returnees can find further information and resources to support formal and private study on the NHS Education for Scotland Allied Health Professions Return to Practice page.

2.3 Supervisor requirements

According to HCPC, the supervisor must:

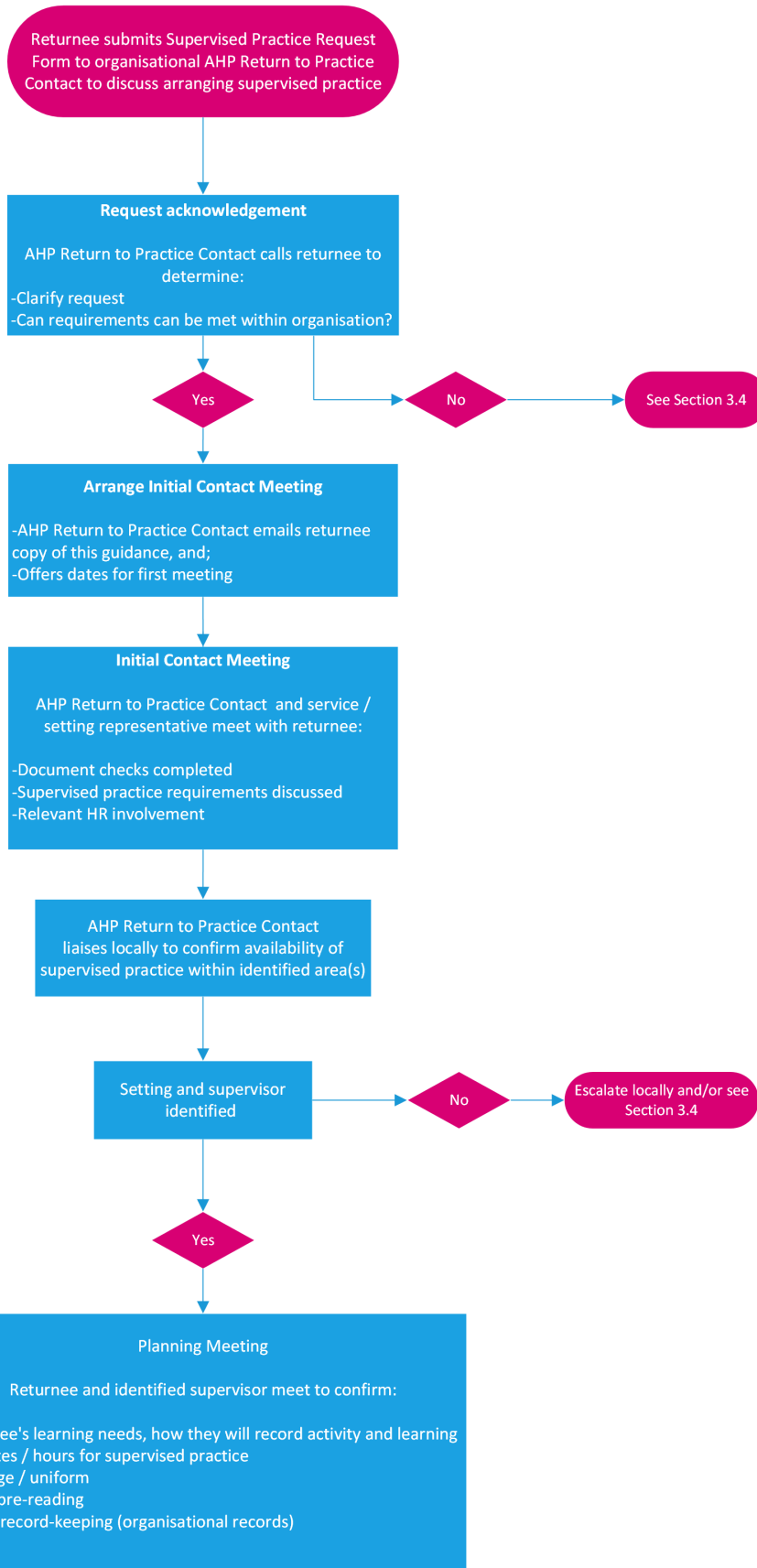
- Meet the criteria of supervisor as outlined in HCPC Return to Practice guidance (HCPC, 2017)
- Be from the same profession as the returnee
- Only supervise activities which are within their own scope of practice

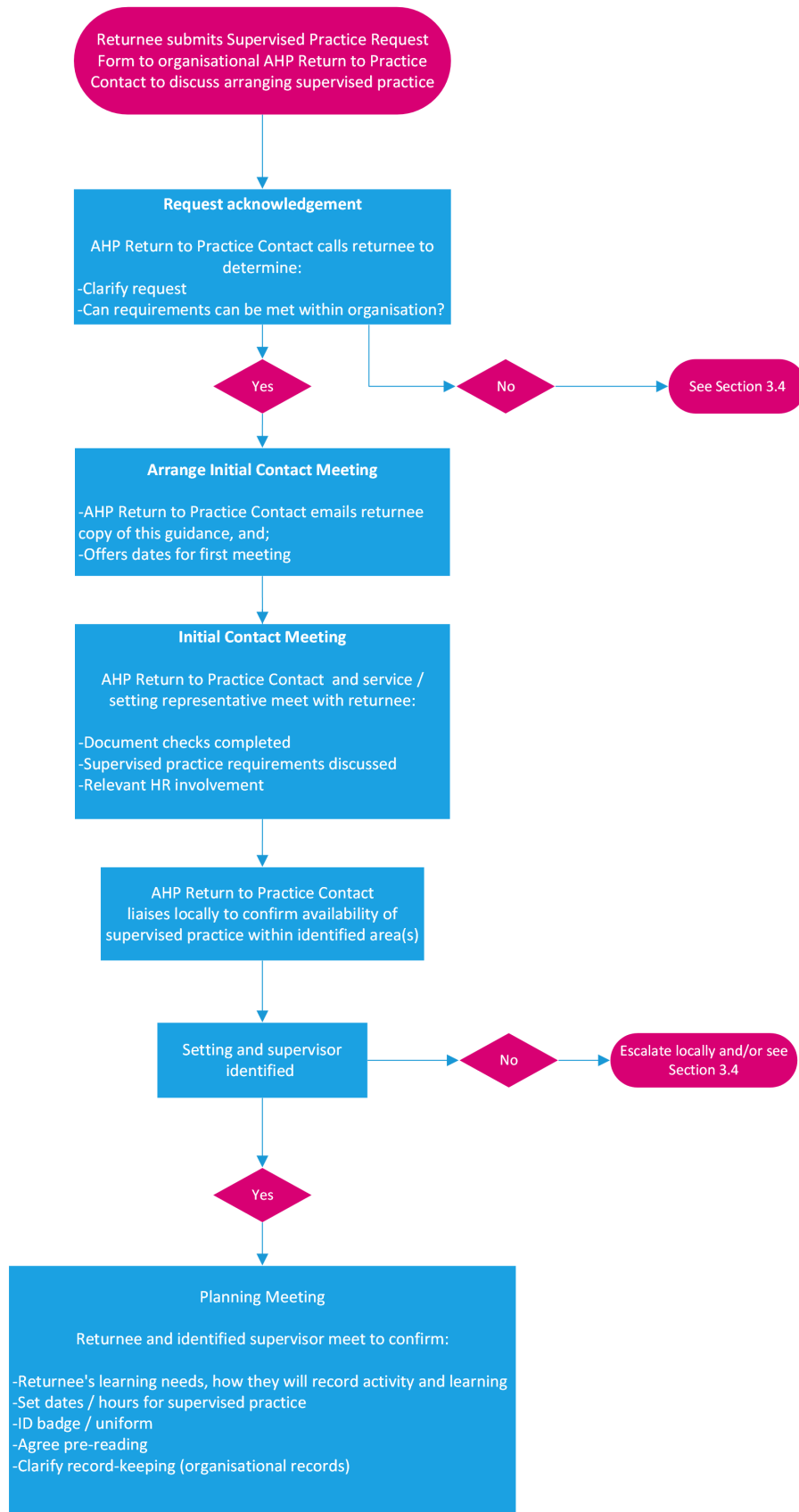
3.0 Applying for Supervised Practice

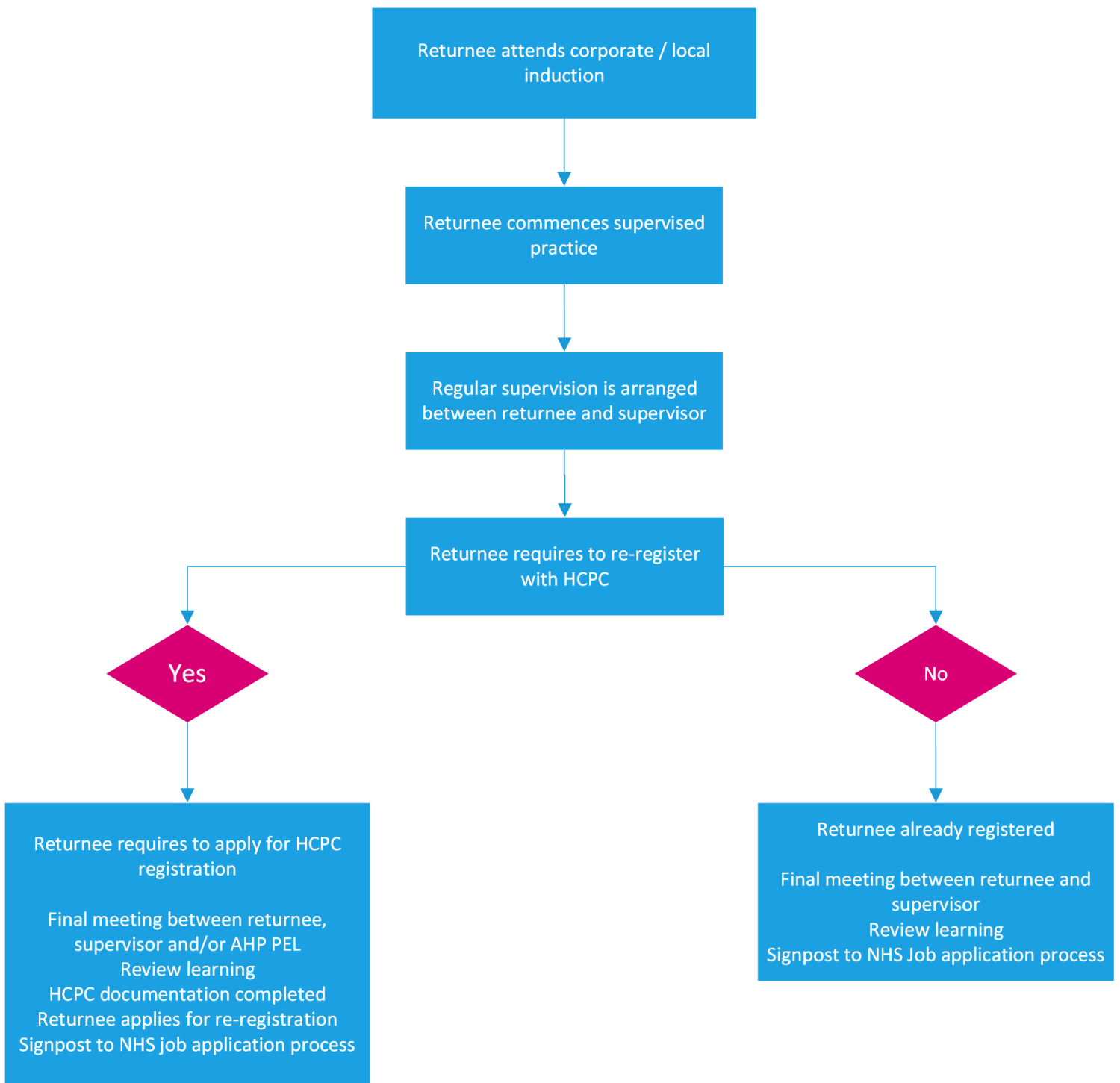
3.1 Overview of Process

Returnees are requested to only request supervised practice within one organisation at a time, this is due to the necessary communications and administration to process a request.

As each NHS Board operates individually, local processes will vary, however the following provides an example process for arranging supervised practice.







3.2 Key steps in arranging supervised practise

- Returnee completes supervised practise request form and emails the AHP return to practice key contact for one organisation
- AHP return to practice key contact acknowledges request, seeks any further information/ clarity required. If appropriate, forwards request to relevant senior role for profession or service to explore if have potential placement opportunity available.
- If supervised practise can be offered, local guidance for arranging supervised practise is shared with returnee, and all involved parties follow. AHP return to practice key contact is made aware of the outcome or directly communicates this information with the returnee.
- Meeting 1: Initial Contact Meeting is held with returnee and senior profession or service representative, and/ or potential supervisor. This meeting will determine the specifics of the period of supervised practise.
- Meeting 2: Planning Meeting held between returnee and supervisor, ideally onsite where supervised practise will be held.
- Returnee completes required organisational actions and identified pre-reading or learning, which may contribute to formal or private study.
- Returnee complete organisational induction
- Returnee commences supervised practise
- Regular supervision arranged
- Upon completion of return to practice period, returnee, and supervisor review learning, and complete HCPC documentation to allow returnee to apply for re-registration (if required)
- 3.3 Documentation for arranging supervised practice

Documentation requirements may vary depending upon local process, however, may include the following:

- Proof of identify
- Evidence of professional qualification
- Letter from HCPC stating when left register and any previous fitness to practice issues
- Profession reference (if available)
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) membership
- Occupational health questionnaire

-
- Signed confidentiality statement

3.4 Supervised practice cannot be supported

NHSScotland is committed to supporting individuals to return to practice. However, there may be circumstances when a request cannot be supported for example due to supervisor or service capacity. The returnee should consider approaching another organisation for supervised practice.

4.0 Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Supervisor roles and responsibilities

It is important for the supervisor to be aware that signing the HCPC paperwork that the returnee has undergone a period of supervised practice, does not express that the returnee is fit to practice.

The supervisor should:

- Familiarise themselves with HCPC Return to Practice information and make sure they meet the requirements to be a return to practice supervisor.
- Assist returnees to identify the skills and knowledge they need to update and practice safely and effectively within the scope of practice for the role they plan to return to. This may be facilitated by using the Effective Practitioner Self-Assessment Tool if required.
- Use the returnee's identified learning needs as a basis for the level of supervision required and tasks to be carried out while undergoing their period of supervised practice.
- Arrange for the returnee to have access to the relevant IT and computer systems, and to any local return to practice support information the organisation holds.
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of a supervisor as outlined in the Scottish Position Statement on Supervision and Quality Standards for Practice Based Learning for Return to Practice (Appendix 3).
- Ensure the entire multidisciplinary team is aware of the returnee's role to ensure a whole-team support approach is delivered.
- Sign the returnee's paperwork verifying that they have undertaken and completed the period of supervised practice.

4.2 Returnee roles and responsibilities

The expectation is that the returnee will:

- Take responsibility for their return to practice including the supervised practice period, making sure they meet the HCPC standards before applying to return to the register.
- To have read and understood their role as a returnee as outlined in the Quality Standards for Practice Learning (QSPL) Return to Practice document (Appendix 3).
- Meet with the supervisor at the start of the supervised practice period to discuss their self-identified learning needs and outcomes they hope to achieve during supervised practice.
- Agree a learning and supervision agreement in conjunction with the supervisor using appropriate documentation (See Appendix 2).
- Adapt their learning needs throughout the period of supervised practice, through reflective practice and feedback from their supervisor, team, and service users to develop their professional knowledge and skills.
- Develop a portfolio to demonstrate learning and development which should include reflective practice and an organisational record of supervision to be shared with their supervisor.
- Raise any concerns in relation to their supervised practice experience in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Provide feedback about their supervised practice experience.
- Make a professional decision as to whether the period of supervised practice undertaken is enough to allow safe and effective practice.

5.0 Supervised Practice

5.1 Support and supervision for returnee

From the start of the supervised practice period, the returnee should have regular supervision meetings with their supervisor in line with Scotland's Position Statement on Supervision for Allied Health Professions (NES, 2018). The importance of supervision is also discussed by the HCPC as part of the standards for all registrants.

It may be helpful for the returnee to complete a self-assessment of their learning needs to identify areas for improvement and consolidation of their skills. If the returnee requires assistance in identifying their learning needs, it is recommended that they read their profession's HCPC Standards of Proficiency and complete the NHS Education for Scotland Effective Practitioner Self-Assessment Tool.

The returnee's learning needs can then be used to facilitate the initial supervision between the returnee and supervisor and establish a learning and supervisory agreement to be formed between both parties. Appendix 2 provides an example of a learning and supervisory agreement.

The length of the period of supervised practice will vary dependent upon the requirements of the returnee. The amount of direct supervision given to the returnee should be jointly decided. This is likely to change over time as the returnee updates their skills and confidence.

It may be helpful initially to approach the level of support in a similar way to a newly qualified practitioner, while also recognising that they are a practitioner with previous experience, rebuilding their confidence and skills.

If it is identified through the period of supervised practice that the returnee requires additional support, the period could be extended to allow them the opportunity to meet their learning needs.

HCPC require the supervisor to confirm that the returnee has completed a period of supervised practice.

Reminder: HCPC registration is a *self-declaration*, by the returnee, that they are fit and competent to practice. Supervisors are *not* signing that returnees are competent.

5.2 Providing a supportive learning environment

To provide a supportive learning environment, the Quality Standard for Practice Learning: Return to Practice (Appendix 3) states the expectations of both the returnee and supervisor throughout supervised practice. The key principles of this include:

- Ensuring a supportive learning environment
- Allowing for formal and informal supervision
- Opportunity for professional and personal development
- Promoting the well-being of the returnee
- Encouraging open and honest conversations
- Providing early support if issues are identified
- Feedback is timely, objective, and constructive
- A written record of supervision sessions should be made, jointly agreed, and signed by both the returnee and the supervisor to meet the organisation's local policy.

6.0 Professional Practice

6.1 Confidentiality, consent & record keeping

Confidentiality, gaining consent from service users and record keeping should be discussed with the returnee at the start of their supervised practice to ensure that they are complying with local requirements and HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (HCPC, 2018). The returnee should follow the organisation's policies and procedures during their supervised practice and be aware of any restrictions that apply to them.

Prior to providing any care, treatment, or other services, service users and other team members should be aware that the returnee is undertaking a period of supervised practice to enable their reregistration.

It is recommended that the returnee signs their record keeping with their name, profession, and 'Returnee to Practice' as their title. It is suggested as good practice for supervisors to check and debrief on record keeping by the returnee. Relevant local policy and procedures should be made available and followed.

6.2 Professional Indemnity Insurance

Health Boards within Scotland are covered by the Clinical Negligence and Other Risks Indemnity Scheme (CNORIS) for all health services directly provided by the Health Board as part of its statutory functions. It states that for Work Experience and Student Placements CNORIS provides indemnity to member organisations in relation to their legal liability associated with work experience recruits of whatever age acting on behalf of the member organisations. CNORIS will similarly provide indemnity to member organisations in relation to their legal liability associated with students working with the member organisation on placement from an educational establishment.

Membership of some professional bodies provide returnees with professional indemnity insurance.

7.0 Concerns and dispute resolution

7.1 Raising concerns, early resolution & wellbeing

Any concerns from either the supervisor or returnee ought to be discussed as soon as possible, and an early resolution sought. If a concern or disagreement cannot be resolved, then the manager for the service should be contacted and informed to facilitate a resolution. If necessary, the AHP Practice Education Lead and/or Professional Lead can be contacted to support early resolution of issues. If the returnee's wellbeing becomes a concern, following discussion and consent, the organisation's occupational health service will be offered to the individual.

Reminder: the supervisor is not signing that the returnee is fit for HCPC registration.

If the supervisor has serious concerns about a returnee's fitness to practice, at the end of the supervised practice period, the HCPC advises two options that are available to the supervisor:

1. Explain concerns about signing the form to the returnee, to help them plan additional updating activities.
2. Sign the form, and then raise a fitness to practice concern with HCPC.

More information is available in the HCPC Return to Practice guidance (HCPC, 2017).

7.2 Whistleblowing / Speaking Up

If a returnee identifies a whistleblowing concern relating to the NHS service "where an act or omission has created, or may create, a risk of harm or wrong-doing" (Independent National Whistleblowing Officer, 2021), they are encouraged to raise this concern following local policy. If a returnee raises a whistleblowing concern to the supervisor or service manager, local procedures should be followed, ensuring the returnee is well supported throughout.

Raising concerns can be very difficult for returnees. A returnee must have access to the same support available to staff and should be made aware of this (Independent National Whistleblowing Officer, 2021).

7.3 Discontinuing supervised practice

The supervisor is entitled to ask the returnee to discontinue the period of supervised practice if the returnee fails to comply with organisational policies or procedures, or if the health or ongoing conduct of the returnee is considered to be detrimental to the welfare of service users, staff, or service delivery.

8.0 Completion of supervised practice & exit interview

At the end of the supervised practice period, both the returnee and supervisor should sign the required paperwork to verify the number of days completed. This will be used as evidence for the returnee's application to re-join the HCPC register.

Local arrangements should be made to ensure returnees can feedback on their experience, in order to support continuous improvement.

Acknowledgements: with thanks for guidance and content contribution from Paul Chapman, Natasha Pisarski and Natalie Matchett, Return to Practice Team, Health Education England

Appendix 1: AHP Return to Practice - Request for Supervised Practice Form

Instructions: please record responses in the white cells below and email this form to the NHS Board AHP Return to Practice Contact to initiate your request to undertake supervised practice.

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Returnee Name | | Date of application 00/00/00 | |
| Profession | | Email address | |
| Preferred NHS Board to undertake supervised practice | | Have you been registered with the HCPC or HPC before? Yes/No | |
| When did you leave the HCPC/ HPC register? Enter date/ year or Not Applicable | | Are you subject to any Fitness to Practise proceedings with the HCPC? Yes/ No | |
| Are you currently suspended from the HCPC register? Yes/No | | Preferred days of week to attend supervised practice. | |
| Requested hours of supervised practice per week e.g. 10, 37 hrs | | Number of days of supervised practice requested e.g. 10, 30, 60 | |
| Name of education institution that you graduated from, and country. | | | |
| Years since graduating | | | |
| Previous Professional Experience | | | |
| Preferred Supervised practice site(s) (if known) | | | |
| Preferred speciality / setting for supervised practice | | | |
| Preferred service user group you wish to gain experience with e.g. adults, children. | | | |

Appendix 2 Example AHP Learning & Supervision Agreement

Purpose of supervision

- To enable returnee to reflect on relevant learning needs and identify specific goals during supervised practice.
- To develop identified knowledge, behaviour, and skills contributing to safe practice to support re-registration with HCPC.
- To provide a supportive environment to allow the returnee time to reflect and develop.

Organisation of sessions

- One-to-one supervision sessions carried out regularly between the supervisor and returnee completed in an agreed time scale dependent on the needs of the returnee.
- Ad-hoc/informal supervision as required to meet the returnee's needs.

Responsibilities

Supervisor & Returnee will:

- Ensure they have a learning and supervision agreement in place.
- Prioritise and plan for the sessions.
- Work together to create a safe learning environment and supportive yet challenging supervisory relationship.

The Supervisor will:

- Supervisor will provide timely and constructive feedback to the returnee. This will be given timeously, objective, balanced, observed, and specific. This feedback should be given as near to observation and not wait for formal organised supervision sessions.
- Supervisor may wish to give more in-depth feedback to supervisee during supervision based on what supervisee brings to supervision.

The Returnees will:

- Returnee is prepared for the sessions.
- The returnee will keep their own private record of reflections and may choose to share these as part of their re-registration.

Recording Supervisions Sessions:

- Sessions should be recorded and signed by both parties to meet the organisation's requirements. This should include the names of the parties involved, with a minimum of date, times and actions arising.
- All supervision sessions are confidential, apart from the disclosure of risk of harm to self or others, contravention of law, professional code of conduct or local policy becomes known. The supervisor has a duty to inform the returnee of how this will be escalated.

Issue Resolution

In the event of problems developing between returnee and supervisor, both parties will discuss these issues with each other where possible. If this is not possible or appropriate, they may seek further advice as required.

Cancellation

Supervision is prioritised within the service and should only be cancelled due to unavoidable absence and in discussion with your supervisor. Wherever possible the session should be rearranged for the earliest available opportunity.

Statement of Agreement □

I have read, understood, and agree with the above Agreement

Supervisee: _____ **Date:** _____

Supervisor: _____ **Date:** _____

Review date: _____

Appendix 3 Quality Standards for Practice Based Learning: Return to Practice-Supervised Practice

Section 1

The Standards

Individuals undertaking supervised practice.

Section 1A:

As a returnee undertaking supervised practice you can expect:

- 1.1 An initial discussion to identify learning needs and outcomes: including discussions around the range of other learning opportunities available
- 1.2 To have any reasonable adjustments met to enable achievement of your learning outcomes
- 1.3 An environment that is welcoming and in which you will be encouraged to feel part of the team
- 1.4 Support from nominated individual(s) who have been suitably prepared for their role and therefore able to offer a range of learning opportunities to support achievement of your learning outcomes
- 1.5 Regular feedback to discuss progression towards achievement of returnees learning outcomes
- 1.6 To have access to support from the AHP Practice Education Team (where applicable) when required

Section 1B:

As a returnee undertaking supervised practice you have a

responsibility to:

1.7 Access information about the supervised practice environment to prepare for the supervised practice experience

1.8 Actively participate in achieving learning outcomes

1.9 Use self-reflection and feedback from team and service users to identify areas for development

1.10 Provide feedback of your supervised practice experience

1.11 Raise any concerns in relation to your supervised practice experience in a timely and appropriate manner.

Section 2:

Individuals supporting and supervising returnees in the practice environment

Standard 2A:

Individuals supporting and supervising returnees in the workplace can expect:

2.1 To be suitably prepared for their role in supporting and supervision of a returnee.

2.2 Access to a practice education network of support to enhance excellence in practice learning

2.3 Timely information regarding returnees and their learning needs prior to the supervised practice commencing

2.4. Time to support returnees to achieve their learning outcomes and facilitate reflective learning, which can include peer learning

Standard 2B:

Individuals supporting and supervising returnees in the workplace have a responsibility to:

2.5 Understand the proficiencies and learning outcomes they are supporting individual returnees to achieve

2.6 Be suitably prepared for their role in enabling a supportive and welcoming environment

2.7 Use good interpersonal skills to support, teach and facilitate returnees according to the returnee's identified learning needs.

2.8 Have knowledge of the paperwork required to be completed at the end of the supervised placement.

2.9 Provide constructive, timely feedback to the returnee to facilitate their development

2.10 Continue to proactively develop their professional practice and knowledge in order to fulfil their role

2.11 Allocate time to support returnee to achieve their learning outcomes and facilitate reflective learning, which can include peer learning

Section 3

Managers supporting supervised practice

Standard 3A:

Managers supporting supervised practice can expect:

3.1 Access to a practice education network of support to enhance excellence in supervised practice.

Standard 3B:

Managers supporting supervised practice have a responsibility to:

3.2 Work in partnership with others to continuously improve the supervised practice environment using a quality improvement approach

3.3 Ensure returnees are supported by at least one nominated individual who has been prepared for their role

3.4 Support individuals in the supervised practice environment to raise and respond to returnee's performance concerns