**Joint Consultation Response:**

Health Education England Global Strategy Refresh – 2022-2025

This is a joint response from the Commonwealth Pharmacists Association (CPA) and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS). The CPA is a registered charity, leading and developing the pharmacy profession to benefit the people of the Commonwealth. The RPS is responsible for the leadership and support of the pharmacy profession within England, Scotland and Wales. Both organisations are fully in support of the HEE Global Strategy Refresh 2022-2025. The CPA have led the pharmacy and medicines taskforce around the HEE global strategy since 2017 and it is encouraging to see this moving forwards after being interrupted due to COVID19.

We welcome this opportunity for Pharmacists to participate in global exchange programmes that develop the workforce and build capacity, as well as improve work quality and patient safety. In these current times, reciprocal working and the exchange of knowledge and skills have proven to be both invaluable and inclusive.

The HEE proposal for a more systematic approach to global learning is welcome and builds on a number of international programmes run by CPA in particular the Commonwealth Partnerships for Antimicrobial Stewardship (CwPAMS); a partnership programme to tackle global antimicrobial resistance run in partnership with the Tropical Health Education Trust (THET). Focussed on antimicrobial stewardship, including surveillance and infection prevention control, the project leverages the expertise of pharmacists, UK health institutions, volunteers and technical experts - to strengthen national workforce capacity and local health systems in Commonwealth countries using the longstanding valuable health partnership approach. The long term vision for pharmacists trained in this programme, is a cohort of leaders who use the skills acquired through the partnership to contribute towards the continuous improvement of health systems in their countries, and in parallel to develop skills of NHS pharmacists and bring back benefit to the NHS.

Pharmacists are now officially considered to be a profession in demand, with shortages particularly in critical care services [1] and but also seen in other patient care services across the UK. With the oversupply in other nations, it would make sense to investigate the reciprocal working arrangements that have existed with other Commonwealth countries in the past to help meet the needs of the UK health system, whilst giving others the experience of working in the NHS.

Across the globe, health workforce shortages are also an ongoing issue, becoming more acute during the past few years. This is particularly pronounced in lower middle income (LMIC) settings, encompassing many Commonwealth countries. In Great Britain, a new post-registration foundation curriculum was launched in August 2021, and HEE training programmes delivering this curriculum will have workplace learning and assessment at their core. Recent scoping work with 8 LMICs in Africa has shown this to be a novel approach to education delivery, and there is relatively little structured post registration support and development. There has never been a better time to explore how global working can develop knowledge and skills against this new curriculum, to the benefit of both the NHS and LMICs.

There is a huge demand out there for education, training and support across the nations. CPA recently announced a collaboration with University College Hospitals London (UCLH), whereby 6 free places were offered to Commonwealth Pharmacists, on the ‘UCLH Fundamentals of Critical Care’ course. This proved highly popular with overwhelming expressions of interest for these 6 places. This indicates to us the sheer need for upskilling and knowledge exchange, particularly for pharmacists working with COVID patients. The CPA are also supporting the education of pharmacists around the Commonwealth (and globally) through their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) online learning platform, which aims to provide education and training for pharmacists and build communities of practice.

In summary, the CPA and RPS are keen to continue to work with the HEE further developing programmes and partnerships that help deliver the HEE Global Strategy for the benefit of all patients.

Signed on behalf of the CPA and RPS:

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31.8.21 31.8.21

References:

1. The Pharmaceutical Journal, PJ, August 2021, Vol 307, No 7952;307(7952)::DOI:10.1211/PJ.2021.1.101130