**Update on Workforce Registration and Qualifications – Melanie Minty**

* The Parliamentary Review confirmed what we already know, that workforce is a key area for providers. We are seeing a number of groups being set up to look at the recruitment issues across the sector and we will be asking Welsh Government to ensure that there is a joined up approach and clear lines of accountability.
* Voluntary registration begins next month for domiciliary care workers, with compulsory registration coming in April 2020. Undoubtedly this will then be rolled out to the care home sector.
* We are pleased that Welsh Government has listened to our concerns and agreed that our current workforce can be grandfathered over to the register subject to having worked for 3 years in the sector and confirmation of competence from the provider.
* However, people with less than 3 years’ employment in the sector and new starters will need to either register with the full level 2 qualification or will need to pass the level 2 All Wales Induction Framework award within 6 months of starting. If they register on the basis of the AWIF, they will then need to pass the full qualification before re-registering in 3 years’ time. Whilst the registration requirements are administered by SCW, accountability for publicly funded qualifications sits with Qualifications Wales. As members of the National Provider Forum, we met with SCW and Qualification Wales recently to highlight some of our concerns.
* The All Wales Induction Framework is being launched officially on 25 April. CFW has been involved in the SCW stakeholder reference group and will be involved in piloting the new framework. We are broadly happy with the content and material, but we have concerns about how realistic it is to expect someone to achieve the award within 6 months, especially for people who work part time. Nor do we know how much internal assessment will impact on Registered Managers’ time; how the additional training time and backfilling will be funded; how external assessment will be funded prior to April 2020 or how qualifications will be funded for people who work less than 16 hours per week.
* Qualifications Wales are reviewing both the Wales Essential Skills Test and the sector qualifications with a view to streamlining them and making them more contextualised, vocational and competence based rather than academic. We are pleased to hear that the required communications element has been reduced from level 3 to 2. However, we are looking for reassurance that they have a clear understanding of the learning needs of our workforce, in particular with regard to how competence is assessed. We are particularly concerned to avoid people having to be tested under controlled conditions when we know they perform better and give a more accurate account of themselves through face to face questioning and observation. The current proposal seems to be that 20% of the assessment should be based on a multiple choice test.
* For Registered Managers, the news is that level 4 has now been introduced, following the success of the pilot “Step into Management”, and this will now be the starting point before level 5.

We will be writing to the Minister highlighting our outstanding concerns shortly, including how we can reward professionalism on current fee levels. In the meantime, we urge members to sign up for the next phase of engagement events with Qualifications Wales, which continue into April. You can register for the events or complete a survey here at <http://qualificationswales.org/english/get-involved/events/hsc-engagement-events/> And, of course, SCW will be at our Essential Updates.