



Reengagement Panel Report

Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures

Part 1 Details of provider

1.1 Applicant Provider

Registered Business/Trading Name:	The Rehab Group
Address:	Roslyn Park, Sandymount, Dublin 4.
Date of Application:	December 2018
Date of resubmission of application:	
Date of evaluation:	
Date of site visit (if applicable):	29 January 2019
Date of recommendation to the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee:	11 April 2019

1.2 Profile of provider

Rehab Group is a charity which provides training and education, employment, community care, home-support and respite services to over 17,000 adults and children in Ireland. Rehab has been in operation since 1949. Their mission is to promote independence and empower individuals to play an active role in society.

Rehab Group (formally known as the National Learning Network - NLN) delivers programmes in 33 locations and 18 satellites across Ireland. The programmes range from general learning, employability, business studies, computer skills, to graphic design, photography and performing arts. As the NLN, they have been a registered provider of FETAC awards since 2007 - the Rehab Group currently offers QQI awards from Level 1 to 6. The Rehab Group is currently re-structuring and it is the Rehab Group as a first provider which is making this application.



As a first provider they operate a continuous intake model and have 853 HSE rehabilitative places. They have 12 validated programmes (9 Major awards and 3 non Major awards) with 538 learners achieving QQI certification in 2017 and 364 learners achieving QQI certification in 2018.

Rehab Group is also a second provider for 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and is contracted to deliver specialist training programmes from Levels 3 to 6. This training is currently offered to 1803 ETB vocational training places.

The Learning and Employment division (formerly part of the NLN) is mainly funded through exchequer funding provided through the Health Service Executive and the ETBs.

Part 2 Panel Membership

Name	Role of panel member	Organisation
Keith Brumfitt	Chair	Consultant on FE and HE in the UK and EQAVET expert
Alan Hogan	Panel Member	Quality Assurance Officer, LCETB
Ruth Ní Bheoláin	Panel Member	Quality Assurance Officer, Hibernia College
Roisín McLoughlin	Panel Member	Project Officer for Quality Assurance, HSE Centres for Nursing and Midwifery Education
Dr Deborah Butler	Secretary	Former Registrar, Respond! College
Marie Cotter	Observer	QQI

Part 3 Findings of the Panel

3.1 Summary Findings

The purpose of the Re-engagement process is to evaluate the institutional capacity and quality assurance procedures of the provider against QQI guidelines with a view to a QQI decision on whether the provider's QA procedures should be approved.



Based on the information provided via the application and the site visit, the panel found that the quality assurance procedures established by the Rehab Group should be approved. The panel is satisfied that the provider has both the capacity and willingness to make any appropriate enhancements in the areas suggested by the panel.

3.2 Recommendation of the panel to Programmes and Awards Executive Committee of QQI

Approve the capacity and QA procedures of the Rehab Group.

Part 4 Evaluation of provider capacity

4.1 Legal and compliance requirements:

	Criteria	Yes/No/ Partially	Comments
4.1.1(a)	Criterion: <i>Is the applicant an established Legal Entity who has Education and/or Training as a Principal Function?</i>	Yes	<i>NLN is part of the wider Rehab group which is a public benefit entity and a registered charity since 1949. NLN is the education and training division of the organisation and they have provided accredited education since 2007.</i>
4.1.2(a)	Criterion: <i>Is the legal entity established in the European Union and does it have a substantial presence in Ireland?</i>	Yes	<i>Rehab Group (formally known as the National Learning Network - NLN) is a legal entity and delivers programmes in 33 locations and 18 satellites across Ireland.</i>
4.1.3(a)	Criterion: <i>Are any dependencies, collaborations, obligations, parent organisations, and subsidiaries clearly specified?</i>	Yes	<i>As a first provider they have 853 HSE rehabilitative places. Rehab Group is also a second provider for 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and is contracted to deliver specialist</i>



			<i>training programmes from Levels 3 to 6.</i>
4.1.4(a)	Criterion: <i>Are any third-party relationships and partnerships compatible with the scope of access sought?</i>	Partially	Quality assurance policies and procedures relating to the sourcing, teaching and assessment of work-experience element needs to be developed.
4.1.5(a)	Criterion: <i>Are the applicable regulations and legislation complied with in all jurisdictions where it operates?</i>	Yes	The Resource and Governance section of the application details how the organisation fully complies with charity regulations, HIQA regulations, HSE standards, GDPR, Garda vetting etc.
4.1.6(a)	Criterion: <i>Is the applicant in good standing in the qualifications systems and education and training systems in any countries where it operates (or where its parents or subsidiaries operate) or enrolls learners, or where it has arrangements with awarding bodies, quality assurance agencies, qualifications authorities, ministries of education and training, professional bodies and regulators.</i>	Yes	The applicant has a history of successfully dealing with education and training bodies such as City and Guilds, QQI, HSE, ETBs etc. and can demonstrate full compliance with the various regulatory requirements of each.

Findings

The panel was satisfied that the legal and compliance requirements outlined in Section 4.1. have been broadly addressed by the Rehab Group in their application.

**4.2 Resource, governance and structural requirements:**

	Criteria	Yes/No/ Partially	Comments
4.2.1(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have a sufficient resource base and is it stable and in good financial standing?</i>	Yes	<i>The senior staff of REHAB assured the panel of its sound financial basis and stable resource base, even though funding is determined annually.</i>
4.2.2(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have a reasonable business case for sustainable provision?</i>	Partially	<i>It would be useful to have a Strategic plan for the NLN which includes an operational budget for QA and related activities.</i>
4.2.3(a)	Criterion: <i>Are fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision making structures in place?</i>	Partially	<i>Make clearer the remit of committees. The Terms of Reference of every committee and working group needs to be available on the website.</i> <i>Some of the process maps need to be developed and clarified.</i>
4.2.4(a)	Criterion: <i>Are there arrangements in place for providing required information to QQI?</i>	Yes	<i>There is a detailed system to show how all the required information is collected and relayed to QQI with one named person having overall responsibility.</i>

Findings

Rehab Group is a well - established provider and has a funding model that is sustainable although it is based on annual review of funding.

While there is an overall strategic plan for the Rehab Group, it is noted that there is no current strategic plan for the Learning and Employability division (formerly part of the NLN). It would be helpful to develop this strategic plan which includes an operational budget for QA and related activities.

There is a sound governance structure which has recently gone through a comprehensive review.

All the required information has been supplied to QQI in a timely fashion.

**4.3 Programme development and provision requirements:**

	Criteria	Yes/No/ Partially	Comments
4.3.1(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes?</i>	Yes	<i>The applicant is a well-established entity and has been a registered FETAC provider since 2007. They also have service level agreements with the HSE to provide education and training throughout Ireland.</i>
4.3.2(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have a fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff?</i>	Yes	<i>The applicant has core education and training staff in their Head Office and in each location. They operate a contingency staff cover panel which is managed at a local level.</i>
4.3.3(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have the capacity to comply with the standard conditions for validation specified in Section 45(3) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) (the Act)?</i>	Yes	<i>As well as having a dedicated education team, NLN have Programme Development Officers and new Programme development and approval processes in place.</i>
4.3.4(a)	Criterion: <i>Does the applicant have the fit-for-purpose premises, facilities and resources to meet the requirements of the provision proposed in place?</i>	Yes	<i>Training is offered in 33 locations around the country and the Head of Facilities and Premises has the remit to ensure that all resources and facilities meet the relevant requirements.</i>



4.3.5(a)	Criterion: <i>Are there access, transfer and progression arrangements that meet QQI's criteria for approval in place?</i>	Yes	<i>The Rehab Group offers a range of support and training to learners before they commence any courses and during their time with the group. They also have a follow up support service and there are individual support/action plans (IAP) in place for each learner.</i>
4.3.6(a)	Criterion: <i>Are structures and resources to underpin fair and consistent assessment of learners in place?</i>	Yes	<i>There are clear guidelines on how learners are assessed and on the adaptation of assessments to meet the needs of learners requesting reasonable accommodation. Appropriate resources are also put in place to support learner assessment.</i>
4.3.7(a)	Criterion: <i>Are arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners to meet the statutory obligations in place (where applicable)?</i>	Yes	<i>There are arrangements in place with the ETBs and HSE.</i>

Findings

The Rehab Group has experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes. It appears to have a fit-for-purpose complement of teaching staff. The quality assurance documents set out procedures covering access, transfer and progression and the procedures for dealing with assessment. Some of the advice given to the Rehab Group in the final section of this report will enable it



to enhance and demonstrate more clearly its compliance with the criteria listed above. The panel was satisfied that the criteria in Section 4.3 have been met.

4.4 Overall findings in respect of provider capacity to provide sustainable education and training

The Rehab Group is a long-established provider and appears to have a strong commitment to quality assurance. The application is well presented and comprehensive giving a good insight into the activities of the Learning and Employability division and where it fits into the wider Rehab Group structure. The ethos and values of the organisation are learner-centred with a significant focus on the needs of the individual.

Tutors appear to be well qualified for the job and there are well developed QA procedures around Staff Recruitment and Learner Assessment.

There is ample experience and documented procedures around learner support.

On a micro level, the quality assurance documents lacks specific details in certain sections. Some policies are presented as summary statements of stages in a process. This is useful to those who know the specific detail behind the process but may be challenging to others. Hence all policies should be checked to ensure there is clarity about the procedures, responsibilities of individual staff and committees or stakeholders in the implementation of each policy.

The development of a strategic plan and associated timelines will be an important tool in shaping the future training provided by the Learning and Employability division. This Plan should ensure that it has the capacity and resources to meet all formal education and training requirements.

Overall, the panel was satisfied with the institutional capacity of the Learning and Employability division and the Rehab Group to provide sustainable education and training.



Part 5 Evaluation of draft QA Procedures submitted by Rehab Group/NLN

The following is the panel's findings following evaluation of Rehab Group/NLN quality assurance procedures against QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016). This section of the report follows the structure and referencing of the guidelines.

1 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Panel Findings:

The fourteen-person voluntary Board of Management (BOM) provides strategic direction and governance for the organisation. The Board members have a range of skills and knowledge and meet seven times per year. The Rehab Group is portrayed as an extremely efficient, centralised operation which delivers a range of programmes to agencies and students that appear well satisfied with the services provided.

The terms of reference of the governance committees at various levels are briefly documented in the Rehab Group annual report (2017) but this information is difficult to find on the company's website. It would be helpful to see the specific terms of reference for the Learning and Employability division and for their governance committees at local/regional level. All terms of reference should be available and easily accessible on the website.

At an operational level the provider recognises that the selection of tutors is one of the key ways of ensuring quality and the procedures applied to staff selection reflect this.

Learners are represented at different levels in the National Learning Network which underpins the Rehab Group's belief in students being able to express their needs and goals. The National Representative Council (NRC) enables National Learning Network students to play a full role in decisions made about the services they receive. Every student is automatically a member of the NRC.

The panel was satisfied that the governance arrangements for maintaining the quality of programmes of education and training within the Learning and Employability division of the Rehab Group are in broad alignment with the relevant QQI quality and assurance guidelines.

2 DOCUMENTED APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

Panel Findings:

The draft QA manual is comprehensive and has a fairly consistent approach in presentation and identifies version number, policy number, approval date, review date etc.



Understanding the QA manuals and documentation may be an issue for new staff and students as information is missing in some policies e.g. what specific steps are taken to ensure implementation, who are the decision-makers, what are the potential decisions and outcomes (e.g. the policy on the Quality of the Learning Environment).

Some of the *Process Maps* which are used to explain QA processes are not clear and they are not appropriately labelled. (e.g. the NRC Communication Process Map).

From the site visit the panel was confident that the Rehab Group staff knew the steps and who was responsible for policy implementation. However, some of the documentation lacked this detail for each procedure.

3 PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Panel Findings:

The NLN has a track record of providing education and training programmes which is supported by External Examiner reports. The Rehab Group's draft QA document sets out regulations covering access, transfer and progression. All applicants are interviewed to assess their suitability for the course. There is an appeals process for unsuccessful applicants. Extra support is put in place as required to assist each student in meeting their learning objectives.

The documented process of getting a new programme from idea to validation needs further elucidation to clarify which part of the process covers financial issues and which part covers academic issues. Normally the first step in developing a new programme is to carry out a feasibility study which includes financial aspects of provision. Who is involved and responsible for this process? What criteria are used? How long does this process take?

The process of programme review is more fully documented but would benefit from further clarity of responsibilities and detail of the internal QA processes to be applied prior to submission.

An example of a Local Training Specification ETB Training programme is provided in the application. It would be helpful if this was also available for a programme where the Rehab Group was a first provider i.e. one of the twelve validated training programmes provided by the NLN.

Overall it would be useful to have standard templates for programme exit forms; feedback forms; extension request forms; lesson plans etc. However, the panel were aware from the site visit that this documentation exists but it was not included in the application made to QQI.



4 STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Panel Findings:

The Panel compliments the Rehab Group on its high retention rate of qualified staff working on course delivery, learner support and administration. The expertise and commitment of staff who met the Panel was evident.

Staff recruitment procedures appear robust and there is a system in place to support new staff.

The staff attending the panel meeting outlined the different types of staff development, support and engagement that the Rehab Group provides. These can either be at the request of management or in response to a request from a staff member. Support for staff development is provided to part time staff.

Staff development as described in the documentation supplied to QQI does not appear to apply systematically to all education and training activities and related services e.g. does staff development cover pedagogical and assessment techniques. This should be re-examined.

The Panel feel that policies on CPD, appraisal and performance management would benefit from greater clarity on the specifics of timeframes, individual responsibilities, potential decisions and outcomes. It would be useful if the amount allocated to the staff training and development budget was clear and how decisions are made when using these funds. Currently all staff delivering and assessing vocational training must meet the ETB criteria for trainers. The Rehab Group trainer criteria are currently being developed and it will be helpful to see how, in due course, the two training criteria can be integrated.

There were numerous examples of best practice discussed during the panel visit and the Panel was advised that much of this is placed on *SharePoint* which can be accessed by all staff. CPD is the responsibility of the individual but the Panel questioned what would happen if an individual does not buy-in to this approach? The Panel is of the view that the Learning and Employability division should be more systematic in managing and sharing of good practice and strengthen the existing structured approach to staff development.

5 TEACHING AND LEARNING

Panel Findings:

From the documentation supplied to QQI, feedback on the learning experience from tutors and learners appears to be encouraged. There appears to be a strong ethos of respect and support for learners' diverse needs.



The tutors who provided an input during the panel visit were enthusiastic and passionate about their work with their respective groups. They described their shared vision and learner-centred approach to teaching and learning and how it is applied to the sector.

As mentioned earlier, more documentation on the procedures is required on how teaching and assessment skills are improved. In particular how is the peer review process taking place and how is the feedback from the self-assessment audit contributing to improving teaching and assessment skills?

Quality assurance policies and procedures relating to the sourcing, teaching and assessment of work-experience element needs to be developed. How is the quality of teaching and learning and fairness and reliability of workplace assessments ensured? Further elaboration is required on how employers are selected and the quality of their provision monitored; feedback from employers is collected; and the process which is used to incorporate this information and data into general course improvement.

6 ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

There are robust QA procedures particularly around ensuring the reliability of assessments and security.

The *Assessment of Learners Guide for Tutors (2018)* is to be commended as the NLN provides extra support for students as required. There are clear guidelines given on the adaptation of assessments to meet the needs of learners requesting reasonable accommodation.

There is a limited amount of information on the programme level assessment strategy. How is this considered/developed? This will be of further importance in the development of future awards.

Some of the process maps concerning the *Appeals process* and the *VT TQAS Assessment process* need to be developed further and clarified to demonstrate the various stages in each process.

7 SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

The Rehab Group's learner profile is very diverse and includes people with learning difficulties, physical and sensory disabilities, mental health issues, early school leavers and people with low literacy and numeracy levels.

The Rehab Group offers a range of support and training and puts individual support/action plans (IAP) in place for each learner. These cover environmental areas, psychosocial areas, medical areas etc. as well as educational areas. This is an important aspect to the service offered by the provider and again it would be beneficial to have more documented procedures on the IAP process.



There are clear guidelines and arrangements in place for a learner to enter a programme and rather than turn someone away, applicants are given advice and support in choosing the most suitable programme in line with their own capabilities.

8 INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Panel Findings:

The NLN has policies and procedures to ensure that published information is clear, accurate, objective, up to date and easily accessible. The policy on *Information for Learners* could benefit from more detail on procedures and the flow-chart relating to *Admissions and Transfers* needs further clarity.

All relevant programme and award information is available to prospective and current learners on Rehab's website.

There is an eLearning platform to supplement the teaching and learning experience. This houses a significant amount of material relating to each available QQI award and the plan is to further develop the platform over the coming months.

The provider is compliant with Data Protection and has a Retention of Records policy.

9 PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Panel Findings:

The provider has an informative website for prospective learners and potential employers. This is supplemented with course brochures.

The panel recommends that the website is extended to include specific information pertaining to the Terms of Reference of every committee and working group.

The *Best Practice Communication Process* flow-chart needs to be further developed.

**10 OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING (incl. Apprenticeships)****Panel Findings:**

Rehab Group holds first provider status with QQI and provides programmes from Levels 1 to 6. They also work with the HSE and act as an ETB Specialist Training Provider. There are detailed and signed service agreements and Operating Guideline documents for both.

The Panel considers the relationship between the NLN and placement providers to be critical in the context of skill acquisition and assessment. Help to learners in the provision of placements, mentor agreements, reflective diaries, information manuals and the compilation and distillation of employer / learner feedback are critical ingredients in supporting learners. These aspects of the relationship with employers require continuous review, quality assurance and documentation. This area requires further attention.

11 SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW**Panel Findings:**

From the site visit, the Panel are assured that the Learning and Employability division engages in regular monitoring and review activity. It is clear that the provider is committed to the on-going monitoring of programmes and their outcomes.

The Programme Self Evaluation process map, the NLN Self- evaluation questionnaire template and the Rehab Group Programme Review Report template are examples of good practice.

In due course more detail on the self-evaluation, monitoring and review processes would be useful. This could include what are the indicators of effectiveness for each of the policies and procedures within the QA document; how frequently are they evaluated; the mechanisms for carrying out this evaluation and review; and the processes for implementation of any recommended changes to practice

Evaluation of draft QA Procedures - Overall panel findings

The Panel concluded that the provider, the Rehab Group, has established an internal quality system appropriate to their context. The Panel has arrived at this conclusion based on a review of a comprehensive set of documents presented by the provider and information provided during the site visit. The established track record of the provider with QQI provides additional reassurance.

There is specific advice which the Panel has to offer to enhance the QA system and this is outlined in Section 6.2.



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

The Panel commends the high level of dedication which the staff involved in the organisation demonstrate. Their willingness to engage with the Panel to enhance their quality assurance systems is welcomed. There is a strong commitment to learners and this was in evidence throughout the meeting of the Panel. The provider demonstrates a strong learner-centre approach.

The Panel wishes to thank the Rehab Group for the vibrancy and honesty that it brought to the reengagement process.



Part 6 Mandatory Changes to QA Procedures and Specific Advice

6.1 Mandatory Changes

1.

N/A

6.2 Specific Advice

The re-engagement concludes that the Rehab Group be approved by QQI and advise that the following areas are reviewed:

1. Develop clearer *step-by-step* procedures for ALL policies mentioned in the quality assurance document. Consider how to make the policies more explicit and clarify process maps to support the staff and students who use them.
2. Document more clearly and develop processes to use the information collected (on Dashboard and other sources) for improvement in particular areas. Be more systematic in managing and sharing of good practice.
3. Make clearer the remit of committees. The Terms of Reference of every committee and working group needs to be plainly available on the website. Progress publishing all policies on the website.
4. The quality assurance of the learners' work experience element needs attention and a systematic process of including employers' feedback into programme enhancement needs to be developed and its use monitored

Part 7 Proposed Approved Scope of Provision for this provider

NFQ Level(s) – min and max	Award Class(es)	Discipline areas
Levels 1 to 6	Major and minor awards.	Healthcare, Business, Engineering, Construction, Horticulture and IT.



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Part 8 Approval by Chair of the Panel

This report of the panel is approved and submitted to QQI for its decision on the approval of the draft Quality Assurance Procedures of the Rehab Group.

Name:

Keith Brumfitt

Date: 28/2/19



Annexe 1: Documentation provided to the Panel in the course of the Evaluation

Document	Related to
Rehab Presentation	Session 1 and Session 2
Integrated Approach to QA	Session 2 and Session 3
Self-Evaluation Template	Session 2 and Session 3

Annexe 2: Provider staff met in the course of the Evaluation

Name	Role/Position
Mo Flynn	CEO Rehab Group
Pauline Newman	Director Quality and Governance
Linda Coone	Head of QA and Improvement
Seamus Dillon	Chief Risk Officer
Helen Keoghan	Senior Development Officer
Jeanette Haughey	Quality Improvement Officer
Cormac Woods	Head of Learning
Adrian Stewart	Head of Employability
Yvonne Hogg	Instructor



Tania Murray	Instructor
Petrina Murray	Programme Development Officer
Linda Lynch	Talent Acquisition Business Partner
Shaun Durkin	Head of Learning and Organisational Development
Karen Caulwell	Rehabilitation Psychologist
Loreto Meagher	Rehabilitation Psychologist
Head of Business Development	Eoin Sally
Mark Bibby	Information Security and Data Protection Officer
Lisa Ryan	Administrator
Sarah Kennedy	Integrated Service Manager
Laurie Flynn	Administrator