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# **Quality Assurance of Teachers' Continuing Professional Development: Design, Development and Pilot of a CPD Quality Assurance System**

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## Table of Contents

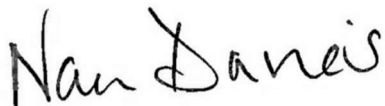
Executive summary .....	3
1. Introduction .....	5
2. Designing and piloting a CPD quality assurance (QA) system.....	6
Principles underpinning the design of the CPD quality assurance system .....	6
Aims and approach for piloting a CPD quality assurance system.....	8
Stakeholder engagement.....	9
CPD quality assurance system process .....	13
3. Evaluation .....	21
Key findings.....	21
Effectiveness of the quality assurance process .....	22
Limitations and suggestions for improvement .....	23
Looking towards a wider roll-out and long-term sustainability.....	24
4. Creating a sustainable system for CPD quality assurance .....	25
Key requirements of a CPD quality assurance system.....	25
5. Conclusion and recommendations .....	33
Summary of findings .....	33
A proposal for a system of quality assurance .....	35
Next steps .....	37
Acknowledgements.....	38
References .....	39
Appendices.....	41

## Foreword

Evidence suggests that professional development can play a crucial role in improving teaching quality, teacher confidence and teacher retention. Given this, how can schools be sure that the professional development available to their staff is effective, so that money and time – both precious commodities – can be spent well?

We asked the Chartered College of Teaching, the Teacher Development Trust and Sheffield Institute of Education, part of Sheffield Hallam University, to find out how the quality of professional development could be assured through a system of accreditation.

Phase One of their project, jointly funded by Wellcome and the Education Endowment Foundation, looked at existing quality assurance systems and tested the potential for widespread, sustainable engagement in a quality assurance system. In Phase Two, funded by Wellcome, the project team has built on this work to design, develop and pilot a quality assurance system with a small number of CPD providers. This work is the subject of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nan Davies". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nan Davies  
Education and Learning Lead  
Wellcome

## Executive summary

The more that teachers develop, the more that pupils succeed. If we can do a better job of supporting our teaching workforce, we can improve pupils' learning and help close the gap for the most disadvantaged pupils. Effective engagement with high-quality CPD can lead to an increase in pupil attainment, has a strong impact on early career teachers and supports the recruitment and retention of teachers in our profession.

However, not all CPD is equally effective. With teachers in England spending only an average of four days per year on professional development, our ambition is that their precious time is spent on only the highest quality learning opportunities; drawing upon robust expertise and engaging with experiences that are deliberately designed for maximum impact in classrooms across the country.

Through this pilot, we sought to understand whether a CPD quality assurance system is feasible in practice. We explored how it can be introduced into the sector, first and foremost to support teachers to make confident decisions about the professional development with which they engage, and to also help CPD providers to demonstrate their effectiveness, thereby stimulating market expectation about professional development quality.

Our findings and conclusions from the two cycles of design, testing and evaluation undertaken as part of the CPD quality assurance pilot indicate that the CPD quality assurance system we have developed is workable, enables valid judgements to be made based on evidence submitted by CPD providers, and has the potential to be robust, fair and valuable for school leaders and the wider system.

Based upon the key learning from this project, we have established twelve key requirements for a CPD quality assurance system:

### Key requirements of a CPD quality assurance system

1. the system must function as part of a complex and varied system of teacher professional development
2. the system must have a clear purpose which is meaningful to stakeholders
3. the system needs to be underpinned by a clear definition of 'high quality CPD'
4. assessment must be undertaken by well-trained, suitably experienced assessors; be rigorous and fair; and not privilege certain types of content, provision or providers
5. the outcomes of the process must be clear and meaningful
6. guidance should be provided to schools to support them in using the outcomes of the process to support the commissioning of high quality CPD
7. CPD providers should be supported to engage with the process and the quality assurance criteria
8. the system needs to be managed by a reputable organisation with trusted and transparent governance
9. the quality assurance system and criteria must be relevant to the broad variety of CPD available to teachers and schools
10. costs and benefits must be a consideration in any future system of quality assurance
11. any CPD accredited through quality assurance must be open to future review and reaccreditation
12. any quality assurance system that is launched into the sector must be open to ongoing evaluation and development

Engaging teachers, school leaders and CPD providers was and will continue to be essential to the success of this project and we have seen high levels of engagement throughout. This is especially significant given that this pilot coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic when stakeholders - particularly those in schools - may easily have had other priorities. The feedback we have received indicates that there is interest and desire for an effective means of quality assuring teachers' CPD. School leaders were positive about the

potential benefits of a quality assurance system in saving them time and pressure in identifying appropriate high quality CPD, and in saving money spent on less effective professional development. CPD providers engaged in the project valued the support, training and guidance they received.

As part of the work undertaken within this project we have considered how schools might be supported with commissioning CPD and utilising the outcomes of the CPD quality assurance process. We make recommendations as to what this support might look like and include exemplars which we hope school teachers and leaders may find of value.

This pilot has also highlighted some of the wider opportunities that a CPD quality assurance system may bring. For example, stakeholders and members of the advisory group have all suggested that the quality assurance criteria offer a useful framework which might support their own reflection, evaluation and development in a systematic and consistent way. Further, for the individuals and organisations involved in this pilot, engaging in the quality assurance process was perceived as being developmental: for CPD providers, participation in the process supported reflection on their CPD offer; for panel members, participation supported learning about professional development, including learning from each other. These indirect outcomes may be added benefits when it comes to building understanding around quality CPD as the system is launched and grows.

We therefore propose a system of quality assurance which we consider to be appropriate and realistically scalable within the current education system in England. This model would enable valid judgements to be made about the quality of CPD, underpinned by a set of criteria which, evaluation tells us, set a high - but achievable - bar for quality. This will set a standard for teachers' CPD that supports ongoing improvement within the CPD marketplace; and produce outcomes which are robust, meaningful and of value to teachers, school leaders and CPD providers.

The proposed model will consist of a five stage process:

**Stage 1: registration** - CPD providers would register to undertake the quality assurance process and gain access to supporting guidance and training materials.

**Stage 2: preparation** - Providers prepare to undertake the quality assurance process, as part of their preparation this might include engaging in training to increase their understanding and awareness of effective CPD design and delivery; undertaking self-evaluation against the quality assurance criteria; or engaging with support offers from an external organisation.

**Stage 3: submission** - To provide greatest flexibility, we suggest the use of scheduled submission windows, enabling providers to submit their CPD provision for quality assurance at a time they feel ready to do so - ideally within 1 year of engaging with the process. The submission would consist of a portfolio of evidence, alongside a submission form that is closely aligned with the quality assurance criteria.

**Stage 4: assessment** - To make the assessment process workable, each submission should be assessed by a single trained, paid assessor. To ensure consistency and rigour, every submission would then be reviewed at a moderation meeting, where a panel of assessors will meet to moderate judgements, under the guidance of an experienced, trained chair.

**Stage 5: award** - In order to 'pass', the submission should be expected to meet all CPD quality assurance criteria. Feedback should be given on the submission and any CPD which passes quality assurance would be able to use a designated badge within its marketing. Quality assured CPD will also be listed on a searchable online database.

To ensure ongoing trust in the system, there would be a requirement for CPD provision to be reaccredited every 2-3 years.

This future CPD quality assurance system would need to be held by a reputable and trusted organisation who would set the standard and hold oversight of the submission and assessment processes, whilst accompanying support offered to providers undertaking the process should be delivered by an external organisation.

We propose that the first stage of a wider launch of a CPD quality assurance system should be a final phase of development and testing. Moving beyond this, any future plans for a CPD quality assurance system must include planned opportunity for review, evaluation and development as appropriate to ensure it fulfils the requirements above and ultimately achieves its aims as intended, that:

1. teachers and senior leaders are able to make more effective and efficient commissioning decisions based on evidence so that..
2. the quality of CPD experienced by teachers improves...
3. while the market is not distorted (i.e. the diversity and range of providers is maintained and costs/benefits are shared evenly across different types of provider).

## 1. Introduction

There is extensive and consistent evidence that quality of teaching is the most important in-school factor influencing pupil outcomes (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2012; Burgess, 2015; Jackson, 2016). The impact of high quality teaching is particularly significant for disadvantaged pupils (Sutton Trust, 2011; Slater et al., 2012). In order to improve, teachers need consistent access to high quality CPD opportunities. Effective engagement with good quality CPD leads to increased pupil attainment and, especially for early career teachers, is associated with positive career experiences and retention (Ingersoll, 2001; Ashby et al., 2008; Hattie, 2009; Day and Gu, 2010; Desimone and Hill, 2017; Coldwell, 2017). Meanwhile, high performing jurisdictions internationally typically provide more support for teachers' CPD than is the case in England (Schleicher, 2012; Sellen, 2016).

In 2014, a Department for Education (DfE) consultation found that 'teachers [in England] report that far too much professional development is currently of poor quality and has little or no impact on improving the quality of their teaching' (Department for Education, 2014). Elsewhere, concerns have been highlighted that it can be challenging for school leaders to choose from the CPD on offer by making a judgement about its quality, even with an increased emphasis within the system on the importance of measuring its potential impact and effectiveness (Cordingley et al., 2015; Cordingley et al., 2018; Baker et al. 2018). As the OECD suggested in 2010, the UK's CPD provider market is one of the least regulated in the world (Musset, 2010).

Despite this, there is a large body of evidence about what makes effective CPD for teachers (Timperley et al., 2007; Yoon et al., 2007; Caena, 2011; Cordingley et al., 2015; Kennedy, 2016; Maandag et al., 2017; Cordingley et al., 2018) which has led to the development of the DfE's CPD Standards. While some questions have been raised recently about the quality of the evidence base underpinning some of these studies (Fletcher-Wood and Sims, 2020) and further reviews are being undertaken, for example a systematic review of evidence on Continuing Professional Development commissioned by the Education Endowment Foundation, there remains a broad consensus around some of the key characteristics of CPD which meets its intended outcomes (Cordingley et al., 2018).

However, research shows that there is a need for further evidence in relation to, for example, the quality of the facilitators of professional development and the use of effective models of planning and/or evaluation (Perry & Boylan, 2017; Boylan, et al. 2018; Perry & Bevins, 2018). Meanwhile, with no

mandatory entitlement to CPD, no shared understanding of what 'high quality' CPD is, and no systematic way for schools to identify the quality of CPD provision, the drivers for improvement of provision are limited.

Our collective experience through the Wellcome CPD Challenge, the DfE/TLIF-funded CPD Excellence Hubs, delivering school CPD audits, running TDT Advisor and of consultation with Chartered College of Teaching members suggests that schools require additional support in:

- designing and using structured approaches to identify CPD needs;
- locating and comparing CPD provision to ensure value for money and quality;
- designing, resourcing and leading in-house CPD processes that complement external provision.

Attention to these elements is important since the impact of CPD is a function of leaders, teachers and providers working together in a coherent way. The benefits of a robust system of quality assurance appear to surpass simple badging of provision. For example, the process of achieving subject-focussed quality marks in primary schools leads to increased quality of teaching, leadership and status for the subjects and, further, to increased understanding and positive outcomes for the assessors of the quality marks (Owens, 2013; White et al, 2016; Temple and Forrest, 2018). These findings suggest that a system to quality assure CPD will enable teachers and schools to make more informed choices and feel confident in them, lead to CPD being seen as a more valued route to improvement and drive up standards of CPD across the sector.

In 2018, the Wellcome Trust and the Education Endowment Foundation commissioned a project to scope the potential development of a quality assurance system for teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD). This scoping work explored existing quality assurance systems and sought to test the potential for widespread, sustainable engagement in such a system.

We now build upon this earlier scoping work as we have sought to design, develop and pilot a CPD quality assurance system with a small number of CPD providers. This ambitious project, commissioned by the Wellcome Trust and delivered by a consortium of the Chartered College of Teaching, the Teacher Development Trust and Sheffield Institute of Education - part of Sheffield Hallam University - was the next step in seeking to find a solution to an intractable problem: how can we ensure that teachers' precious development time is saved for the best learning opportunities, for the best expertise and for the sorts of experiences that will have the most impact in classrooms up and down the country?

In this report we outline our design for a robust CPD quality assurance system; share our findings and conclusions from the design, testing and evaluation undertaken as part of this pilot across two cycles of implementation; and identify key recommendations for how this system may be utilised moving forward to increase the quality of CPD experienced by teachers - including offering guidance to support school leaders in making informed decisions about commissioning CPD which is more likely to lead to positive pupil outcomes.

## 2. Designing and piloting a CPD quality assurance (QA) system

### **Principles underpinning the design of the CPD quality assurance system**

This pilot aimed to explore the feasibility and impact of a CPD quality assurance system in helping school leaders find high-quality professional development.

In designing a system for CPD quality assurance, we drew heavily on the findings from earlier scoping work. This work had involved two parallel strands of activity: stakeholder engagement; and a rapid review of the evidence around CPD quality assurance (Perry, Boylan & Booth, 2019).

Stakeholders were asked to consider whether and how a system of quality assurance could support better decision-making about professional development, how a system would relate to the wider education system in England, and how it might be made financially sustainable. There was general support for the idea of a quality assurance system, recognition that it could be useful in its aims as described above, and that this might be achieved by a 'badge' of quality for CPD providers and schools to use on publicity materials.

However, notes of caution were expressed around:

- cost, potential for bureaucracy and the potential for a system of quality assurance to be seen as an additional layer of accountability;
- maintaining the diversity of the CPD system in England, for example in the range of different types of CPD provider, while acknowledging its complexity;
- the need to consider and if possible include school-led and in-school CPD;
- the complexity of using pupil outcomes (or other factors) as impact measures;
- whether a quality assurance system should look at CPD at the level of provider, programme and/or facilitator;
- the importance of taking individual *and* school needs into account when judging quality and relevance of CPD;
- the need to involve teachers and school leaders within any designed solution, and of giving them a voice in decision-making;
- the importance of defining quality and quality assurance in a way that is trusted, rigorous and valid.

Interestingly, there was little agreement about who should pay for a system of quality assurance; that is, whether it should be CPD providers, schools or a centrally-funded body.

A set of design principles which could inform a quality assurance system, were tested with stakeholders. Through this a set of principles were finalised which describe the principles forming the foundation of a quality assurance system. These are:

- quality criteria are aligned with the DfE Standard for CPD and research evidence about high-quality CPD;
- quality criteria are recognised as practical, appropriate, trustworthy and relevant to all stakeholders;
- quality criteria reflect the diversity of CPD providers, do not privilege particular types of CPD provider or forms of CPD, not distort the market with unnecessary cost, bureaucracy or restriction;
- the quality assurance system will be designed for long term sustainability;
- the quality assurance system will be open to further evaluation through periodic data collection, analysis and stakeholder feedback;
- the quality assurance system will enable efficient and effective use by providers to assess and improve the quality of provision;
- the quality assurance system will enable efficient and effective use by school leaders and teachers: to aid their decision making and commissioning regarding CPD, to understand the evidence behind the quality measures and to inform quality assurance of in-school CPD;
- the quality assurance system will support system wide improvements in the quality of CPD that supports a more evidence informed profession and helps raise the status of the profession;
- teachers' and school leaders' views and influence should be the strongest factor in the system.



The rapid review of evidence (Perry, Boylan & Booth, 2019) from the UK and internationally aimed to gather information on whether and how a quality assurance system for teacher CPD might function. The review focused on literature from the last five years, from English-speaking systems, comparable systems of teacher CPD and from systems with high PISA rankings.

The review focussed on four areas of quality assurance:

- teacher CPD in the English education system;
- teacher CPD in international education systems;
- CPD in selected other professions in the UK;
- quality assurance of other aspects of the English education system.

Summarising here, we found that CPD can be quality assured through a range of systems and processes that have different purposes and outcomes. Currently, while some systems for quality assurance of teachers' CPD exist in England, they are not consistently or widely used (Perry, Boylan & Booth, 2019).

A synthesis of findings from the evidence review and stakeholder engagement led us to identify six key issues which should be considered in the design of a quality assurance system:

- Context: The English education system is complex, with multiple qualification routes career pathways and professional development opportunities
- Purpose: Systems of quality assurance may have different purposes, including benchmarking against external standards, or ensuring internal processes are robust; these need to be considered.
- Governance: How the governing organisation itself is managed and assured is important, so that the system of quality assurance is trusted, meaningful and valued.
- Process: The ways in which evidence of quality (or of internal quality assurance) is collected, what that evidence is and how it is benchmarked or assessed are critical
- Value: The costs and benefits of a quality assurance system need to be considered, including both financial and other costs (such as time and workload), and the potential outcomes and rewards of the system
- Defining quality: A system to quality assure CPD should be underpinned by a statement of what 'good quality' CPD is.

It is important that the system should be practical, appropriate, trustworthy and sustainable, working within the constraints and affordances described above.

These key issues have been revisited throughout this pilot as we developed and tested a CPD quality assurance system with a range of CPD providers.

### **Aims and approach for piloting a CPD quality assurance system**

Based on our findings from the initial scoping work, the intended impacts of a CPD quality assurance system are:

1. teachers and senior leaders are able to make more effective and efficient commissioning decisions based on evidence so that..
2. the quality of CPD experienced by teachers improves...
3. while the market is not distorted (i.e. the diversity and range of providers is maintained and costs/benefits are shared evenly across different types of provider).

Our approach to this pilot draws upon a design research methodology which typically consists of cycles of analysis, design, implementation and evaluation (van den Akker et al, 2006). The process of design research is concerned with an impact on practice and is situated in real contexts. We have adopted a series of 'microcycles' of design, implementation and evaluation (Bakker, 2018), in order to develop the criteria

and processes used in the system and aiming to produce, at the end of this pilot, a system for quality assurance which matches our shared design principles, meets its overall aims, and can be rolled out nationally.

This pilot involved:

- full design of a quality assurance system, supported by detailed policies and processes
- development of the quality assurance criteria and detailed assessments which underpin the system
- consultation with the profession on the design of the quality assurance criteria and system
- engagement with a range of stakeholders, including teachers and school leaders, CPD providers and the wider sector
- development of guidance and support for CPD providers in their production and submission of evidence, and support for schools in their use of the outputs of the quality assurance system to improve commissioning.

The CPD quality assurance system was tested across two cycles of implementation, enabling us to learn from each cycle, refine the CPD quality assurance criteria and develop the process. Formative evaluation ran alongside the two cycles of implementation; findings of this evaluation informed both the development of the system during the pilot, and also informed the recommendations for how a CPD quality assurance system might be implemented in future, beyond this pilot. A summary of this evaluation, undertaken by Sheffield Institute of Education, can be found in section 3 of this report.

### **Stakeholder engagement**

If a CPD quality assurance system is to be successfully introduced in England, it will require buy-in from stakeholders across the sector. Furthermore, the findings from our work with stakeholders in our earlier scoping work emphasised the importance of developing a set of quality assurance criteria that are recognised as practical, appropriate, trustworthy and relevant to all stakeholders; and of the need for teachers and school leaders to influence the direction of this system.

Stakeholder engagement has therefore been a vital consideration within this pilot, and has included:

- raising awareness of the project
- seeking input into the design of the system and the quality assurance criteria
- recruitment and training of CPD providers and panel members who would engage with the CPD quality assurance process as part of the two cycles of implementation

### **Raising awareness**

This pilot was launched publicly in March 2020, announced via press release and also promoted through the Chartered College of Teaching and the Teacher Development Trust's websites and social media channels. The launch also included presenting an overview of the project to over fifty CPD providers at the Teacher Development Trust 'Provider Summit' which brought together commercial organisations, charities, teaching schools and Trusts to look ahead to the future landscape of provision. Information around the launch of the CPD Quality Assurance pilot was also shared with individuals who had been involved in the earlier scoping work; and sector leaders and influencers - through both direct communications and as part of wider conversations.

In November 2020, a summary of the project along with emerging findings was presented to policy makers, school leaders, system-thinkers and influencers from across the UK who were virtually convened for the Wellcome Trust's event 'School Improvement through Professional Development' delivered by the Teacher Development Trust. At the end of the project, the final report will be shared with all individuals

who have engaged with the pilot and published on our organisation websites. Findings will be publicised via social media channels and integrated into our organisations' existing communications plans where possible to further raise the profile of this project.

### Seeking input into quality assurance system design

Coinciding with the official launch of the pilot, we launched a consultation seeking feedback on the initial design of the CPD quality assurance system and the quality assurance criteria. This consultation was shared directly with Chartered College of Teaching members, subscribers to TDT's monthly email newsletter, sector leaders and CPD providers via the aforementioned events. The consultation survey was open to all and publicised more widely beyond our networks via social media channels. 173 respondents completed the survey; this level of response was pleasing, given the consultation was launched during the Covid-19 pandemic. The outcomes are summarised later in this report and a full summary can be found in appendix 2.1.

At the start of this project we formed an advisory group, made up of 19 individuals who could contribute to the ongoing design and development of the system. Membership of the advisory group was by invitation and application - a select group of individuals were invited to provide specific input and expertise to the group, whilst additional members were recruited from registering interest as part of the consultation survey and included representation from CPD providers, panel members and teachers from different phases and contexts. The advisory group met three times during the pilot and provided feedback on the design and development of the system at key points.

We also gathered valuable feedback on an ongoing basis from those individuals who were engaging or had engaged with the CPD quality assurance process - either as CPD providers undertaking quality assurance or members of the review panel. This feedback has contributed to the formative evaluation and ongoing development of the system.

Finally, we sought further feedback from teachers and school leaders as part of the final stages of this project, holding focus groups to inform our recommendations around how this CPD system, when launched, could be most valuable and useful to school leaders commissioning CPD. In total we held three hours of focus group discussion with nine senior and middle leaders asking about their existing perceptions and decision-making processes, as well as who they would most trust to host a quality assurance system and whether they would be prepared to pay to access that information. TDT also used its informal school leaders' Whatsapp group to gauge engagement with external expertise at differing points of the year/project and polled TDT Network member schools about what types or forms of commissioning support would help them to make decisions about who to work with in future.

### Recruitment and training of CPD providers

We have used the term 'CPD provider' to include any individual or organisation (including schools) which provide CPD to schools and school staff (as defined above). We specifically sought to ensure that the CPD providers undertaking quality assurance were representative of the wide range of provider types that exist within the sector. This would inform our evaluation and help us to understand how the system could effectively quality assure CPD within a diverse and varied marketplace.

Across the two cycles of implementation, the system was tested with 19 providers in total; 10 in Cycle 1 and 9 in Cycle 2. In each cycle, this included at least one science-specific provider or facilitator, a non-STEM related subject-specific provider and a small charity or government-funded programme.

Type of Provider	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Charity, Charitable Trust or Foundation	2	3
Subject Association		2
Large scale or commercial CPD provider	1	2
Multi Academy Trust	2	1
University, College or HEI	1	
Teaching School or Local Authority Group	2	1
Independent Consultant	2	

**Table 2.1 Types of provider undertaking quality assurance in cycles 1 and 2**

Providers were recruited through a variety of channels, including through responses collected from the consultation and an expression of interest form nested on the TDT website, which was shared via email campaign and social media. Two providers applied to take part in Cycle 2 as a result of their colleagues or organisation already being a member of the advisory panel; in this case we requested that separate members of staff led on each process to avoid conflict of interest.

Upon confirming participation in cycle 1, the first ten pilot providers were able to access training and guidance materials which included:

- The CPD QA Virtual Hub hosted on Chartered College’s MyPD platform, from which they could download the submission template in which to start compiling their portfolio of evidence, and then upload up to three files applying to each criterion.
- The project’s working definition of CPD and full set of CPD quality assurance criteria
- A document of suggested evidence, providing (non-exhaustive) examples of what ‘types’ of evidence might be appropriate for each different criterion.
- A policies and procedures document, detailing the full CPD quality assurance process for cycle one and further information about e.g. appeals processes, conflicts of interest and data protection.
- A 20-30 minute ‘induction call’ with TDT.

In cycle 2, providers additionally accessed:

- Two virtual training sessions, one explaining the principles of effective CPD behind the quality assurance criteria and another upskilling providers in how to identify appropriate evidence to support their submissions.
- A summary of common pitfalls experienced by providers in cycle 1 with suggestions of how to avoid making the same mistakes.
- A worked example of a sample portfolio, accompanied by narrative to explain the rationale behind choices made.

CPD providers involved in both cycles of implementation were able to provide feedback as part of the formative evaluation of this project. Staff from a small number of CPD providers who undertook quality assurance in cycle 1 also joined the review panel for cycle 2 and were able to provide feedback on their experiences in both roles.

## Recruitment and training of panel members

Individuals were invited to register their interest to become members of the review panel as part of the initial consultation. All of those who registered an interest were invited to formally apply for this role and were selected based on:

- experience of participating in, evaluating impact, commissioning and/or leading CPD in schools
- experience of delivering CPD to schools
- knowledge of effective CPD practices and the education sector
- experience of quality assurance and/or assessment, badging, awards

A total of thirty-two panel members were recruited over the two cycles of implementation. Twenty panel members were recruited for cycle 1 and all were invited to return to cycle 2. Fifteen panel members returned for cycle 2, including six who returned as chair. Twelve new members were recruited to join the panel in cycle 2, including a small number of providers from cycle 1 and a small number of providers who had previously applied to be involved in cycle 1, but were turned down due to the limited number of spaces available.

In cycle 1, over half of the panel were teachers or school leaders. In cycle 2 we chose to test the system with increased representation of CPD providers sitting on the panel:

	Teachers / School Leaders*	CPD providers or consultants*	Individuals with expertise in CPD or QA*
Cycle 1	60%	25%	15%
Cycle 2	41%	52%	7%

**Table 2.2 Panel membership groups for cycles 1 and 2**

*\*A number of individuals fitted into more than one category and therefore these figures represent the predominant category they identified with.*

Panel members were provided with detailed assessment guidance and were required to complete set training in order to undertake this role. Panel member training was delivered online and included a combination of written guidance, online learning content, videos and a training webinar.

The aims of the training was for panel members:

- to understand the aims and purpose of the CPD quality assurance pilot
- to familiarise with the procedures and processes for undertaking quality assurance within the pilot
- to develop a secure understanding of the quality assurance criteria which they make judgements against
- to develop confidence in undertaking assessments and using evidence to make inferences against predefined criteria.

Training content included both evidence-informed content around effective CPD, quality assurance and assessment, alongside practical guidance for undertaking quality assurance as a member of the review panel. In addition to the training provided, members of the project team were contactable via email for any questions panel members had during the pre-assessment process, and were available during the review panel meetings to answer queries and provide clarifications relating to the criteria, assessment materials or process. Members of the project team were not involved in agreeing judgements of quality.

In the second cycle of implementation, some panel members took on the role of panel chair. These panel members were provided with additional written guidance to support them with the practicalities of the chairing process.

Panel members were invited to feed back on their experiences as part of the formal evaluation of this project (see section 3 for further detail). Evaluation activity included representation from panel members from each cycle and some who had participated in both cycles.

### CPD quality assurance system process

Initial development of the CPD quality assurance system led us to design and test a four-stage process for this quality assurance system:

1. A carefully designed set of 'CPD quality assurance criteria' set the standard for quality CPD
2. CPD providers collate a portfolio of evidence demonstrating how they meet each of the quality assurance criteria and submit this for quality assurance via an online platform
3. Each portfolio of evidence is reviewed by a review panel of up to five panel members who meet to make a judgement about the extent to which each quality assurance criterion has been met
4. The outcomes of the review panel meeting are shared with the provider alongside feedback on strengths and potential areas for development.

In the long-term, it would be our intention that CPD providers who meet the criteria would receive recognition for doing so, for example through 'badging' and/or the publication of outcomes on a quality assurance website. This would then be utilised by school leaders to support the commissioning of CPD in their schools. Providers did not receive any formal recognition as the result of undertaking quality assurance within this pilot, however throughout this project we have sought to understand which kind of information would be useful and of value to school teachers and leaders *and* CPD providers as the ultimate outcomes for this process.

We will look more closely at the outcomes and propose recommendations for a future system later within this report. It is first useful to look more closely at the initial design of the CPD quality assurance system and criteria and how these were developed across the two cycles of implementation within this pilot.

### Defining 'quality' CPD

In order to create a system which is able to assess the quality of CPD effectively, we first needed to agree a definition of what we mean by 'high-quality' CPD.

For the purposes of this CPD quality assurance pilot, we have defined 'continuing professional development' (CPD) as:

***'intentional processes and activities which aim to enhance the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers, leaders and teaching staff in order to improve student outcomes'.***

This can include (but is not limited to): training courses; one-off events and conferences as well as sustained programmes of CPD; accredited programmes, and leadership programmes; mentoring and coaching programmes; facilitated networks, reading and study groups; online training.

For the purposes of this pilot, our definitions do not include: statutory training that you have to undertake as part of working in a school to comply with the law (for example, health and safety, safeguarding, fire safety, first aid training).

We recognise that some schools and organisations use different terms for CPD, such as professional learning, CPDL and INSET; our definition of CPD encompasses the activities which fall into these definitions.

We have revisited this definition of CPD for each cycle of implementation and throughout the evaluation to ascertain the extent to which those involved in the project agree with this definition and whether and how this definition might be improved.

Rather than provide a singular definition of what we mean by 'quality CPD', our definition is instead situated within the quality assurance criteria which together provide an indication of what 'quality CPD' might look like. These CPD quality assurance criteria have been developed from the evidence around effective teacher professional development and in consultation with teachers, school leaders, CPD providers and with input from individuals with expertise in CPD from the wider UK education sector. The two cycles of implementation provided an opportunity to test, refine and develop these definitions. Once again, a primary focus of the evaluation within this project has been to understand whether these criteria are meaningful and appropriate as measures of quality.

### The CPD quality assurance criteria

Initial design led to the development of twelve potential criteria, drawn from existing research around effective professional development and broadly aligned with the Standard for Teachers' Professional Development (2016). These criteria were shared with the sector for feedback via a consultation. A full summary report from this consultation, and a copy of the proposed criteria can be found in appendix 2.1, however there were a number of key findings that informed the development of the final CPD quality assurance criteria that were tested in cycle 1:

- broadly, there was a consensus that the criteria were well-chosen and that each of the criteria were important; some potential overlap between some of the criteria was noted
- there was an emphasis on the importance of providing clarity around the meaning of terminology in order to establish collective understanding
- there were questions about whether some criteria were more important than others; whether all providers would be required to meet all criteria; and whether all criteria would be relevant to all types of CPD provider
- the need for providers to submit evidence was deemed as being important, however there was some words of caution about the nature of the evidence and the process becoming unnecessarily burdensome
- criteria that referred to 'impact' of CPD were viewed by a number of respondents as being problematic as it was queried whether this was potentially outside the scope of the CPD providers themselves.

The advisory group were also invited to provide feedback on the initial criteria and offered some cautions and suggestions which would be revisited throughout the pilot. The greatest concerns were around the extent to which valid conclusions about 'quality CPD' could be drawn from this process. For example, questions were raised as to whether a written submission format would actually enable those reviewing the CPD to gain a sufficient insight into the quality of the provision; further questions asked whether the process would be robust enough to make a judgement about a providers' entire offer - particularly if they



offered a range of programmes - and whether it was the provider who was being quality assured or the individual CPD programmes that each provider offers. The advisory group noted that it would be important that the process did not make assumptions about a full repertoire of CPD provision which may not be accurate when only a small sample had been seen.

A final concern was raised around the problems of evidencing longer-term impact on practice and outcomes - and whether this was the role of the provider or school. It was noted that the criteria would need to reflect that whilst providers had *control* over some criteria, they only had *influence* over others.

In reviewing the feedback from the initial consultation, the advisory group agreed with the sentiment that there was overlap between some of the criteria and suggested that these were simplified and potentially grouped in themes.

### Cycle 1 design and implementation

Following this initial consultation and feedback, the quality assurance criteria were reduced from twelve to nine criteria, and grouped in three sections. A copy of the revised criteria can be found in appendix 2.2.

A total of ten CPD providers submitted their CPD provision for quality assurance in cycle 1. Depending on size and context, each provider selected whether to submit a portfolio related to one of the following options:

- A single programme, course or service
- Multiple options from a suite of CPD programmes and/or services
- Internal processes and structures for facilitation

Providers received written guidance to support them with this process which included suggestions of the types of evidence they might include and suggestions for how they might present their submission for the review panel. Providers submitted their portfolios of evidence via an online platform. The portfolios were then allocated to review panels for assessment.

Each review panel reviewed three portfolios of evidence with panel members reviewing each portfolio independently before attending a review panel meeting to agree and finalise their judgements. Review panel meetings were chaired by members of the project team who recorded judgements and were available to provide guidance on the process, however did not participate in decision-making.

When undertaking assessment, the review panel were asked to make judgements about the extent to which each criterion had been met. To assist them with this, the panel were provided with assessment materials which included assessment indicators and descriptors of practice for each criterion.

In cycle 1, judgements focused on the *quality* of the evidence submitted; review panel members were asked to make judgements against the assessment indicators and overall descriptors for each criterion, depending on whether they had assessed the supporting evidence provided to be *limited*, *good* or *strong*. Review panel members reviewed the submissions and made judgements for both the indicators and the overall criterion in advance of the meeting. At the review panel meeting, the review panel discussed the evidence seen and agreed final judgements against both the assessment indicators and overall descriptor for each criterion.



1.1 The provider clearly identifies the intended impact and designs CPD which aims to develop participants' beliefs, knowledge, understanding and/or teaching practice					
Assessment indicators	Limited evidence ✓	Good evidence ✓✓	Strong evidence ✓✓✓	n/a or no evidence -	
1.1a. The provider has clearly identified the intended impact of the CPD and has demonstrated how this is made explicit to participants (and schools commissioning CPD, where appropriate)					
1.1b. There is a clear intention to increase school and/or teacher effectiveness with the ultimate aim of improving pupil outcomes					
1.1c. There are clear aims which relate to the development of participants' beliefs, perceptions, knowledge, understanding and/or teaching practice					
1.1d. The provider has demonstrated how the broad content and individual CPD activities are linked to these aims					
Overall score:					
	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	n/a	Additional feedback / areas for development
There is little or no information about the intended impact of CPD or it is not clear how the CPD will impact on participants, their schools and/or pupils.	The evidence provided gives some indication of the intended impact and/or aims of the CPD programme(s) on participants, their schools and/or pupils.	The evidence provided suggests that the programme(s) and the activities within, have a clear intended impact and that CPD is designed to develop participants' beliefs, knowledge, understanding and/or practice.	As described for good, plus: The evidence provided comes from a range of relevant evidence sources and consistently demonstrates that the programmes and the activities within are designed to develop participants' beliefs, knowledge, understanding and/or practice and have a clear intention of improving school / teacher effectiveness with the ultimate aim of improving pupil outcomes.	This criterion is not relevant for this programme and/or the provider did not submit evidence for this criterion	

Figure 2.1 Example of assessment materials used by panel members during cycle 1

At the end of the review panel meeting, panel members agreed overall strengths and areas for consideration for the submission.

Following panel review, providers were given a 2-page summary report including their general strengths and weaknesses and a more detailed assessment report which also included the agreed judgements against each assessment indicator and overall criterion. Providers were also offered a phone call to discuss next steps. Providers were not offered a pass or fail for this cycle and no judgements were made as to the overall quality of the CPD.

The following table shows the outcomes for each submission mapped against each criterion:

Submission	Quality Assurance Criterion								
	1.1	1.2	1.3	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	3.3
#01	Good	Good	Strong	Good	Good	Good	Limited	Good	Insufficient evidence
#02	Strong	Good	Good	Insufficient evidence	Limited	Limited	Strong	Limited	Insufficient evidence
#03	Good	Good	Limited	Limited	Insufficient evidence	Limited	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
#04	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
#05	Good	Good	Limited	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence	Limited	Limited	Limited	Insufficient evidence
#06	Good	Good	Good	Limited	Limited	Good	Limited	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
#07	Good	Good	Good	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence	Good	Limited	Limited	Insufficient evidence
#08	Strong	Good	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
#09	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Good	Limited	Limited	Limited
#10	Good	Good	Good	Good	Limited	Good	Limited	Limited	Insufficient evidence

Table 2.3 Outcomes for providers against quality assurance criteria for cycle 1

## Key learning from cycle 1

Analysis of the outcomes from cycle 1 inform us that section 1 was consistently assessed as being the strongest section; typically, providers were able to articulate the intention and aims of their CPD clearly, and were able to provide evidence to show for example, how their communications with participants reflected and supported these aims.

For section 2, submissions commonly provided an outline of the content or design however where judged as 'limited' or 'insufficient evidence' submissions often did not articulate *how* or *why* content and activities were purposefully and deliberately selected, organised and sequenced with participants' learning in mind.

Section 3 was consistently the weakest area. In many of the submissions, portfolios contained general - and sometimes irrelevant - information about evaluation and delivery, however the narrative and/or evidence provided did not explicitly address the individual quality assurance criteria within that section. Additionally, where providers submitted information around evaluation, this typically summarised key learning from evaluation undertaken but did not provide sufficient insight into how this feedback was used formatively to support ongoing improvements to the CPD provision.

There were also valuable insights gained from testing the quality assurance system with different provider types:

- Submission #04 was from a provider who submitted multiple programmes for quality assurance. When reviewing the evidence submitted, whilst there was evidence that the quality assurance criteria were met for some of the programmes, the review panel did not feel that there was sufficient evidence to make a judgement across *all* of the programmes as a whole.
- Submission #05 consisted of a CPD programme that was externally designed and facilitated by the provider. The panel did not feel that adequate judgements could be made about the content and design of the programme when this was not within the control or remit of the individual undertaking the quality assurance process.

These findings led us to revise the eligibility requirements for providers undertaking the quality assurance process in cycle 2 so that providers could only submit a single programme of CPD *or* a one-off event (or suite of one-off events on a linked theme) for quality assurance. Additionally, the process would not cover those facilitating CPD on behalf of external organisations.

Feedback from those engaged in the assessment process in cycle 1 - and from the project team - was that the assessment process was thorough but laborious. Panel members typically spent many hours reviewing the evidence contained within the submission and the meetings themselves required panel members to discuss each assessment criterion which was time-consuming.

Testing in cycle 1 highlighted a number of areas of the CPD quality assurance process which had potential to be improved, and prompted further questions which would inform the development of the CPD quality assurance system for cycle 2. In particular:

1. Can the assessment process be refined to make it more time-efficient, without compromising the rigour?
2. How might we support providers to ensure their submissions are more closely aligned with the criteria?
3. Would there be value in making the process more *developmental* for providers?
4. What is the minimum requirement for a submission to 'pass' quality assurance and what should the final outcome look like?

## Cycle 2 design and implementation

A further ten CPD providers were recruited for the second cycle of implementation. The quality assurance criteria were refined for this cycle in light of testing and feedback received in cycle 1. The refined quality assurance criteria used in cycle 2 this pilot are shown below:

### *CPD criteria for cycle 2*

#### **Section 1: intent**

- 1.1 The intended impact of the [training/CPD/CPD programme] is clear
- 1.2 The [training/CPD/CPD programme] aims to develop participants' beliefs, knowledge, understanding and/or teaching practice
- 1.3 Support is given to participants and/or their schools to identify CPD requirements, support implementation and monitor and evaluate the impact of CPD in their own contexts

#### **Section 2: design**

- 2.1 The [CPD / training / programme] design and content is underpinned by robust evidence and expertise
- 2.2 [Training/CPD/Programme] design takes into account the prior knowledge, experiences and needs of participants and/or their school contexts
- 2.3 CPD activities are deliberately designed to facilitate sustained changes to practice - activities may include opportunities for application, practice, reflection, collaboration and expert challenge

#### **Section 3: delivery**

- 3.1 Effective processes are in place to ensure the [CPD / training / CPD programme] is delivered to a high standard
- 3.2 Internal and external evaluation processes are used to review impact and inform ongoing improvements to the [CPD/training/programme]
- 3.3 Consideration is given to addressing broader factors that may impede the effectiveness of the [CPD / training / CPD programme] - participant experience; value for money; staff time

A glossary of key terminology was developed to be used alongside the quality assurance criteria. A copy of the glossary can be found in appendix 2.3.

Drawing on what we had learnt from the first cycle of implementation, a small number of changes were made to the CPD quality assurance system, as follows:

- More extensive training for providers to build a shared understanding of the quality assurance criteria and underpinning research.
- The introduction of a submission form containing key questions closely aligned with the quality assurance criteria and supporting a more structured approach to signpost supporting evidence.
- Introduction of an optional online self-evaluation tool and action plan resource to test whether a more developmental approach to quality assurance may be of value.
- Introduction of an online assessment tool used by panel members when undertaking their initial assessment, enabling judgements to be collated in advance of the review panel meeting so that discussions could focus on just the top level criteria, rather than the assessment indicators which support them.
- Further adaptations to the assessment materials, to provide greater clarity and exemplification of the quality assurance criteria and assessment indicators.
- Reduction in the number of submissions allocated to each panel from three to two.
- Recruitment of 'panel chairs' who chaired the review panel meetings and drafted the outcome reports that providers received at the end of the process.
- We also introduced a two-stage process to reviewing submissions which enabled the review panel to request further evidence from a CPD provider if they felt there was insufficient information upon which to agree a judgement. Additional evidence was reviewed and the outcome report agreed at a final review panel meeting approximately two weeks after the initial review panel meeting.

In an attempt to avoid the process of collecting and presenting evidence becoming too onerous or time-consuming, providers were increasingly encouraged to use video, audio or media clips as a time-saving exercise, which some providers chose to do. This was only effective when the providers offered very specific pinpointing towards where the panel should look. In cycle 1 a 'contextual information' form was used to gather background details about the CPD being submitted for quality assurance, e.g. size of organisation, number of facilitators, year of launch, cost to participants. However where these details were relevant to the submission, they were often duplicated in the portfolio itself, therefore this was omitted for cycle 2 as it tended to add additional time both to providers and panellists without adding significant value to the assessment process.

In light of reducing the number of submissions reviewed by each panel from three to two, we recruited a total of 27 panel members for the second cycle (including 6 panel chairs). These panel members sat across six review panels with each panel reviewing two submissions. This meant we could allocate a single submission to more than one panel, giving us the opportunity to test the consistency of judgements and undertake calibration.

To support assessment in cycle 2, we introduced three levels of descriptor for each criterion: *not met*, *partially met* and *met*. In a change to the process used in cycle 1, when panel members assessed the portfolio in advance of the review panel meeting, they **only** assessed against the assessment indicators. This assessment was conducted using an online tool and the outcomes collated in advance of the review panel meeting to give an average rating for each indicator. At the review panel meeting, the panel reviewed the aggregated pre-assessments, discussed the evidence seen and used this to agree final judgements for each criterion using the descriptors provided.

1.1 The intended impact of the [training/CPD/CPD programme] is clear	
<b>Assessment indicators</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The provider has clearly identified the intended <b>impact</b> of the [CPD / CPD programme]</li> <li>✓ There is clear intention to enhance teacher/school effectiveness with the ultimate aim of improving pupil <b>outcomes</b></li> <li>✓ The intended <b>impact</b> is explicitly communicated to participants</li> <li>✓ The intended <b>impact</b> is explicitly communicated to schools commissioning CPD, where appropriate</li> </ul>	<b>Not met</b> There is little or no information provided about the intended impact of the CPD
	<b>Partially met</b> The evidence provided gives some indication of the intended impact of the CPD but it is not clear how this is made explicit to participants.
	<b>Met</b> The evidence provided suggests that the CPD has a clear intended impact and that this is made clear to participants.

Figure 2.2 Example of assessment materials used by panel members during cycle 2

As in the previous cycle, panel members agreed overall strengths and areas for consideration. However, in a change to cycle 1, the panel also had the opportunity to request additional information from the provider. This additional information was reviewed at a final review meeting approximately 2 weeks after the initial panel meeting. At this meeting, the panel agreed overall judgements for each criterion and this was shared as part of the outcome report. In cycle 2, the outcome report contained aggregated panel judgements against the assessment indicators, overall judgements for each criterion and a summary of strengths and areas for consideration.

While ten providers were initially recruited to undertake quality assurance in cycle 2, one provider did not complete the submission process. The table below shows the judgements made for each of the nine providers who submitted, mapped to each quality assurance criterion:

	Quality Assurance Criterion								
Submission	1.1	1.2	1.3	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	3.3
#11	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Partial	Partial
#12	Met	Met	Met	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial
#13	Met	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial	Met
#14	Met	Met	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial	Met	Partial	Partial
#15	Met	Met	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial	Not met
#16	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Partial	Partial
#17	Met	Met	Partial	Partial	Partial	Met	Met	Partial	Partial
#18	Met	Met	Partial	Not met	Not met	Partial	Partial	Not met	Partial
#19	Partial	Met	Partial	Met	Partial	Partial	Met	Met	Met

Table 2.4 Outcomes for providers against quality assurance criteria for cycle 2

### Key learning from cycle 2

Cycle 2 saw general improvements in the quality of the submissions - information provided matched the quality assurance criteria more accurately and evidence was closely aligned with content of the submission forms.

It is worth noting that submission #14 prompted significant discussion amongst the review panel, and it was questioned as to whether the CPD provision adhered to the definition of CPD used for this project. With the exception of submission #14, the review panel felt that all of the quality assurance criteria were relevant to all CPD provision submitted, and judgements were able to be made for each provider against each criterion. Where the same submission was given to more than one panel, overall judgements for each criterion were generally aligned - though in one instance one panel asked for further information to support a judgement.

Outcomes for each of the three sections were similar to cycle 1, with section 1 being consistently judged to be the strongest section. In section 2, those submissions where criterion was judged as 'partially met' once again often did not articulate *how* or *why* content and activities were purposefully and deliberately selected, organised and sequenced with participants' learning in mind. For section 3, in a number of instances where criterion 3.1 was judged to be partially met, the submission did not demonstrate how evidence from internal monitoring and evaluation processes was used to inform ongoing improvements. Criterion 3.3 required CPD providers to demonstrate that they had given consideration to four key areas: participant experience, value for money, teacher workload, inclusivity and equalities. Typically, providers were deemed to have not met this criteria due to a lack of evidence relating to just one area - often, but not always, this was equalities and inclusivity or teacher workload.

A number of providers opted to undertake the initial self-review. This was sometimes used to identify gaps and areas for development - where this occurred, these gaps were typically aligned with the judgements of the review panel.

Following the first review meeting, the review panel requested additional information from all nine providers. Further information was received from eight providers, however the initial judgements made by the panel did not change in light of the information provided.

Feedback from those engaged in the assessment process in cycle 2 suggested that the improvements made to the system were broadly effective; the process was more efficient, however still very time-consuming overall. The submissions were closely aligned with the quality assurance criteria and the evidence provided was appropriate, meaning judgements could be reached in most cases.

It is interesting to note that none of the submissions were deemed to have fully met every criterion; feedback given to providers identified specific gaps that needed to be addressed before the criterion could be awarded. Whilst a short window was available for providers to submit additional evidence, it seems potentially that many of the identified gaps would take longer to address, perhaps indicating the benefits of a submission process which would facilitate this moving forward.

### 3. Evaluation

A formative internal evaluation ran alongside the design, development and piloting of the system of quality assurance to inform both the development of the system during testing and also future developments of the project beyond this pilot. The evaluation also sought to inform our understanding of the benefits and challenges of the process of quality assurance, its outcomes and potential long-term sustainability.

In this section, we summarise key findings from the evaluation and look in more detail at three key aspects of the findings: the effectiveness of the quality assurance process, its limitations and suggestions for improvement, and look towards its wider roll-out and long-term sustainability. Full details of the evaluation are provided in a separate report.<sup>1</sup>

#### Key findings

- The potential value of a quality assurance process to the overall system of teacher professional development in England is seen as very high by all participant groups; participants saw their engagement in this pilot project as a way of contributing to something which is needed and useful in the system.
- The organisations leading this project are seen as trustworthy and appropriate to be carrying out this work.
- Overall, CPD providers and panel members agreed that the quality assurance process as tested in this project has the potential to be workable, robust, fair and valuable for school leaders and the wider system.
- Overall, CPD providers and panel members agreed with the definition of professional development and with the criteria for quality used in the project.
- Where changes were suggested to the definition of CPD or the quality criteria used in the pilot, these were intended to be more inclusive of a range of types and models of professional development, more flexible in their application, or to provide greater rigour in the process of quality assurance.
- The time involved in collating and submitting or assessing evidence is significant. For panel members, in the long term this may need to be offset by a payment or other system of benefits.

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<sup>1</sup> Perry, E., Booth, J., Boylan, M., Wolstenholme, C., Chedzey, K. & Cunningham, M. 2021. *Quality Assurance of Teachers' Continuing Professional Development: Design, development and pilot of a CPD quality assurance system: Evaluation report*. Chartered College of Teaching. London.

- The support and training available to CPD providers and panel members were highly valued; this could be extended to include a range of exemplars from the process and further training around bias.
- The process is developmental: for CPD providers, participation in the process supported reflection on their CPD offer; for panel members, participation supported learning about professional development, including learning from each other.
- Care needs to be taken that participation in the process does not become a ‘tick-box’ exercise and that there is a process of regular revalidation.
- It is not clear what the most useful format of outcome would be for school leaders; they said they would be interested to see both the outcomes of the quality assurance process and the details of how these were achieved, and that a ‘badge’ could be useful in supporting decision-making.
- There is some evidence that CPD providers and, possibly, school leaders might be prepared to pay for participation in or access to the outcomes of a quality assurance process, with school leaders suggesting a model where access to the outcomes is part of a subscription model.
- For all involved, the potential to join a group of like-minded stakeholders with an interest in improving professional development is seen as a positive reason for involvement.

### Effectiveness of the quality assurance process

Overall, the evaluation suggests that the quality assurance process developed and tested in this phase of the project is effective in leading to a judgement of quality against the evidence submitted.

Our findings indicate that the quality criteria developed for use in the process are meaningful for CPD providers to submit evidence and for panels to make judgements of the quality of evidence submitted for CPD. The process, as tested, is perceived, overall, as rigorous and fair, with the potential to lead to meaningful outcomes which can support school leaders to make decisions about professional development, and CPD providers in reflection on and further development of their offer.

The processes used to identify and train assessment panel members were effective and highly valued. Training for CPD providers was also valued and important in building understanding of the process and the criteria. The online platform used to submit and review evidence was perceived as straightforward to access and use, containing useful guidance and information. Changes made in cycle 2 were perceived as improvements on cycle 1, leading to a more efficient, effective process.

Although designed as a quality assurance process, a common theme from all participants was that participation in itself was developmental. CPD providers and, especially, panel members reported learning from participation in the process, through structured reflection on professional development. They enjoyed the opportunity to join a community of stakeholders with an interest in professional development. All participants reported learning about professional development and that participation would influence their own practice whether as leaders of professional development leaders and/or as CPD providers.

*Being on the review panel was a great experience and helped me to reflect on what our organisation does too.*

Cycle 1 panel member



*I found the process very powerful and developmental as it made me critically reflect on the processes that we have in place ... [the criteria] were a bit different to the things that we routinely think about. So, for example, it was about communicating the intended impact and actually we do that, and we do that effectively, but I hadn't really thought about it in that way before ... the criteria gave us a different way of looking at our CPD.*

Cycle 2 CPD provider

*We found the process incredibly useful in terms of reflecting on our practice. It is often easy to focus on feedback and impact but this process was a much more holistic approach. The process itself was very beneficial to me in my role as a CPD course designer and facilitator.*

Cycle 2 CPD provider

Even in the relatively limited time that panel members worked together there were indications of the formation of embryonic professional learning communities as shared understanding and interpretations of criteria and meaning of quality in CPD developed. It is notable that there was a crossover of roles, with CPD providers in cycle 1 becoming panel members in cycle 2, thereby extending the community of learning across the project participants. In a wider roll-out, the benefits to all participants could be used as a stimulus for recruitment of participants.

Further, the developmental benefits and potential for a sense of shared mutual endeavour and indicate ways that the benefits of this quality assurance process might be retained while mitigating some of the limitations of the process (see below). For example, a group of CPD providers working together in a peer assessment process could support collaborative reflection, boosting the building of a community of learning about professional development, while potentially reducing the time required for more operational aspects of the process as it exists.

### **Limitations and suggestions for improvement**

As discussed elsewhere, the pilot was designed with two cycles of testing to enable improvements to be made during the pilot. The evaluation data from cycle 2 suggests that changes made from cycle 1 to cycle 2 were largely successful. Here, we suggest further improvements drawn from the evaluation findings.

The suggestions for changes made by providers and panel members in the evaluation were offered with the aim of either increasing the clarity and focus of the quality assurance criteria and/or adapting the system to be more accommodating of a range of CPD offers. One consideration in moving beyond this phase of the process is to ensure greater clarity between the assessment of the quality of evidence submitted or the assessment of the quality of the CPD itself. A suggestion from participants to support this may be the addition of further dialogue between CPD providers and the assessment panel, perhaps extending this to observations of professional development activity and further feedback from past CPD participants.

*I really struggle with it being a written submission and I know that other people in my group had similar feelings. If you could interview these people or talk to these people or go and see it in action.*

Cycle 2 panel chair



*Having a conversation with someone about what I'd submitted and if they had any questions to be able to somehow respond to that, that might be helpful ... having an extra part in the process where reviewers could engage with the providers to tease out any questions they might have and anything they're not sure of, I think that would have been helpful.*

Cycle 1 CPD provider

Further attention might be paid to three aspects of the panels carrying out the quality assurance process. Firstly, the breadth of expertise of panel members as it relates to the content of the CPD being quality assured. In this pilot, the process of quality assurance did not appear to be particularly hindered by panels assessing CPD where they had little experience of the content or its aims. However, some panel members expressed concern about the representation of particular areas of expertise on the panels, and so, in a larger rollout it would be beneficial to ensure that, where appropriate, specific subject or phase expertise relating to the CPD being assessed is available to the panel.

Secondly, training for panel members could be extended to include exemplars of evidence portfolios and assessment reports, and further training around managing bias - conscious and unconscious - for panel members.

Finally, the panel chairs played a crucial role in the process. This group of participants needs particular care in their selection, training and support.

The major limitation of the quality assurance process as it has been tested is the time required for participation, whether as a CPD provider or a panel member. Although this would almost certainly reduce over time and with further experience of participation, the time commitment required may need, for assessment panel members, or perhaps only those chairing the meetings, to be offset by a financial reward.

*If you had people who did it regularly, then that wouldn't be an issue and they would be confident in their judgements and it would be fine to all come together.*

Cycle 1 panel member

### **Looking towards a wider roll-out and long-term sustainability**

On wider roll-out, communications should promote the potential benefits of a quality assurance system in improving professional development. This seems especially important in a system where schools are increasingly moving away from external CPD provision towards more in-school approaches.

Additional support may be needed around the limitations of the quality assurance process alongside its benefits. For example, school leaders should not be given the impression that professional development which has achieved the 'badge' (or other positive outcome) will lead to its intended outcomes without having in-school systems in place to support this. Further, CPD providers may need to be made aware that participation in the process may not lead in the short term to improved engagement, but, through the developmental aspects of the process, may lead in the medium to long term to improved outcomes from their professional development.

To end, it is worth repeating that those involved in this phase of the project have been extremely positive about the potential benefits of a quality assurance system to support school leaders' decision-making about professional development, thereby reducing the time and money spent on less effective professional development. The high levels of engagement in the evaluation are a reflection of this. The recommendations for improvement offered by participants, and reported here, are given with the intention of further improving the system so that it might achieve its potential benefits.

*The currency that is of most value for providers and school very often is time. Trying to make judgements based on very clear information but not having to go all round the houses to find the information and so on. So, I do think that the process will be very useful for schools because it will, I would imagine, help them to find professional development that has met a certain standard that they can be confident.*

Cycle 2 panel chair

*As a headteacher I would have loved something like this that would point me in the direction of something that had been deemed to be high quality ... hopefully it will lead to a process where the best CPD will get used more and also nudge everybody to make sure that they are delivering high quality stuff.*

Cycle 2 CPD provider

#### 4. Creating a sustainable system for CPD quality assurance

The aim of this project was to design and pilot a system for quality assurance which could ultimately be introduced into the sector to support schools with commissioning CPD; which would be valued by school teachers, school leaders and CPD providers; and which would ultimately improve the quality of CPD experienced by teachers and therefore impact positively on pupil outcomes.

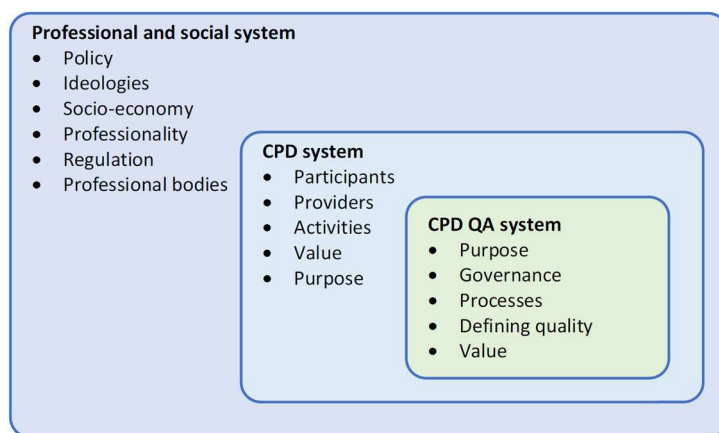
As we further explore the potential for the CPD quality assurance system beyond this pilot, there are some key requirements which we believe would facilitate the success of this system if it were to be fully launched into the sector. Each of these requirements is drawn from what we have learnt from this pilot, and from the earlier scoping work.

##### Key requirements of a CPD quality assurance system

1. the system must function as part of a complex and varied system of teacher professional development
2. the system must have a clear purpose which is meaningful to stakeholders
3. the system needs to be underpinned by a clear definition of 'high quality CPD'
4. assessment must be undertaken by well-trained, suitably experienced assessors; be rigorous and fair; and not privilege certain types of content, provision or providers
5. the outcomes of the process must be clear and meaningful
6. guidance should be provided to schools to support them in using the outcomes of the process to support the commissioning of high quality CPD
7. CPD providers should be supported to engage with the process and the quality assurance criteria
8. the system needs to be managed by a reputable organisation with trusted and transparent governance
9. the quality assurance system and criteria must be relevant to the broad variety of CPD available to teachers and schools
10. costs and benefits must be a consideration in any future system of quality assurance
11. any CPD accredited through quality assurance must be open to future review and reaccreditation
12. any quality assurance system that is launched into the sector must be open to ongoing evaluation and development

## Requirement 1: the system must function as part of a complex and varied system of teacher professional development

A CPD quality assurance system sits within and interacts with the wider system of teacher professional development and in turn the wider system of teaching.



**Figure 4.1 Model of quality assurance systems of professional development**

A sustainable system for quality assurance must be able to function appropriately within this system, being flexible, adaptable and responding to changes within it. In the long term it would be hoped that the quality assurance process should be responsive to the wider system, so that changes to CPD delivery models and priorities are reflected in changes to the processes. Ultimately the wider system might also be influenced by the quality assurance process itself.

Since the initial scoping work that preceded this pilot, there have been two notable shifts that demonstrate how the complex system of teacher professional development changes and evolves: first, the recent pandemic has seen a shift towards online delivery of CPD. Two CPD providers in cycle 2 submitted online CPD programmes for quality assurance. This shift was anticipated and whilst the quality assurance criteria were inclusive of such programmes, the assessment indicators were revised to articulate more specifically how providers support participants to access their programmes, including support to access online content where appropriate. A further example relates to a shift in schools' commissioning of CPD: since our earlier work in 2018, there is some evidence to suggest that schools have moved away from external CPD provision and are delivering more CPD in-house; again, a number of schools submitted their provision for quality assurance within this pilot and the system, as designed, facilitated this effectively. However, there may be more opportunity to revisit the CPD quality assurance system design in order to support development of school-led CPD provision more specifically in future.

The opportunity for school teachers and school leaders to engage with CPD providers in an increasingly meaningful way is a clear benefit of the CPD quality assurance system; with teachers making up a significant proportion of the review panel this enables those who are 'consumers' of CPD to feed back into the system and drive improvement. Furthermore, school leaders participating in the evaluation indicated that they are increasingly looking to engage in dialogue with CPD providers to ensure that CPD meets the particular needs of their school and context. By utilising the outcomes of the quality assurance system in the long-term *and* being involved in the quality assurance process itself, there is potential for teachers, school leaders and CPD providers to work collaboratively and affect the development and improvement of CPD provision available to teachers so that it is of higher quality and more closely aligned with the needs of teachers, and ultimately pupils.

It is also worth considering how the system itself aligns with wider system initiatives and whether further work can be undertaken to embed the CPD quality assurance system within the work of the sector more widely. Individuals involved in the pilot and the advisory group identified a number of potential areas where such alignment may be of benefit, including links with DfE policy around CPD, large-scale national initiatives such as Teaching School Hubs, other evaluation processes, or the work of HE or ITE providers.

### Requirement 2: the system must have a clear purpose which is meaningful to stakeholders

Throughout this pilot we have been explicit about the intended aims and impact of the quality assurance system. Generally the evaluation has found that the purpose of the CPD quality assurance system piloted is clear and is perceived to be of potential benefit and value to the sector.

In cycle 2 we sought to establish whether there was value in making the process more developmental for CPD providers, thus questioning whether the approach to quality assurance should be formative or summative in purpose. The main intention of this process is to provide externally-accredited recognition of quality. However, one value in the system as tested was that it appeared to be developmental for both CPD providers and panel members, providing opportunities for reflection on CPD and, for panel members, learning together.

The purpose of the CPD quality assurance system remains that it should be summative, with the intention of improving the quality of the CPD experienced by teachers by setting a high standard for CPD within the sector; offering recognition to encourage CPD providers to meet that high bar; raising awareness and establishing a shared understanding regarding what high-quality CPD provision looks like; and providing guidance to schools on commissioning CPD effectively.

### Requirement 3: the system needs to be underpinned by a clear definition of 'high quality CPD'

This means having a clear definition of what we mean by 'CPD' as well as how we articulate quality. Evidence from the evaluation suggests that the definition of CPD used within this pilot was generally considered to be appropriate and useful. However there were also concerns that the definition was perhaps not broad enough to encapsulate all of the nuanced and varying outcomes of teacher professional development, or whether it is broad enough to cover the full range of types of CPD on offer. This was evident in the discussions that took place around submission #14 which panel members felt did not align with the definition provided. However, for this CPD provider, and some others, there was a feeling that, while the process was helpful in stimulating reflection, the format of the portfolio of evidence was not able to capture a 'true' reflection of the CPD offer.

As discussed in section 1, our definition of quality CPD was situated within the quality assurance criteria; these criteria draw upon evidence around teacher professional development and are aligned with the Standard for teachers' professional development (DfE, 2016). The criteria provide a baseline for what 'quality' should look like. Again, evidence from the evaluation indicates that these criteria are valuable and important as indicators of quality. However, there were cautions that whilst the criteria may be appropriate, it is likely that they will need to be applied differently to different types of provider. For example, criterion 3.1 looks at the systems and processes used for recruitment and facilitation; these systems and processes would look different for an individual or small organisation delivering CPD than they would for a large organisation and so when applying this criterion, a judgement would need to be made that any systems and processes in place would be appropriate for the scale of delivery. Some small CPD providers lack formal policies and records, making it harder in places to submit evidence against particular criteria; conversely some large CPD providers struggled to select from large amounts of potential evidence. Members of the quality assurance review panels felt that, in some places, the process could be made more robust through tighter, more refined criteria.

#### Requirement 4: assessment must be undertaken by well-trained, suitably experienced assessors; be rigorous and fair; and not privilege certain types of content, provision or providers

If this quality assurance system is to be of value, it is important that the assessment process enables valid conclusions to be drawn about the quality of CPD provided. The evaluation reported on the substantial time that it took for CPD providers to collate and submit evidence and for panel members to review submissions and on the quality of discussions that took place at the review panel meetings themselves.

The evaluation found that there was agreement that the process was rigorous, valid, and also fair. However, for any future system to be workable, it needs to find a better balance in terms of the time costs associated with achieving this level of rigour, without compromising the robustness of the assessment process.

Within the evaluation it was noted that the processes used to identify and train review panel members were effective and highly valued. Ensuring that panel members are well-trained will be essential for maintaining the rigour of a quality assurance system and should include specific training around managing bias - conscious and unconscious. There is perhaps further work to be done here; building panel members' experience will undoubtedly be of value, but it may also be of value for the panel to draw upon specific expertise, utilising subject-specific experts or individuals with expertise in particular CPD models for example. Additionally, as highlighted within the evaluation summary in section 3, training for panel members could be extended to include more exemplars of evidence portfolios and assessment reports, whilst the role of chair needs particular care in their selection, training and support.

In the long-term development of the system, it could be useful to gather evidence of the rigour of the process through, for example, the implementation of further moderation procedures, the re-accreditation of CPD offers and data collection to map outcomes of the quality assurance process to reported impacts and outcomes of CPD programmes.

#### Requirement 5: the outcomes of the process must be clear and meaningful

If this quality assurance system is to have long-term impact on the quality of CPD experienced by teachers, there needs to be a collective understanding about what the outcomes of the process mean for schools, how they can be used to support decision-making and how they can be used by CPD providers to improve their offer.

A key focus of this project has been to explore what the potential outcomes of a quality assurance system should look like.

In our initial scoping work, we looked at the different approaches to quality assurance that exist presently, including kite-marking and professional recognition. In this pilot we have sought to answer a number of questions, relating to the outcomes of the quality assurance process, particularly:

1. Does CPD provision need to meet all of the criteria in order to 'pass' quality assurance?
2. Would there be benefit to different 'levels' of outcome (e.g. bronze/silver/gold badging)
3. What information would school leaders commissioning CPD find useful?

Information gathered from stakeholder consultation and the evaluation indicates that each quality assurance criterion was deemed to be important in indicating quality. Therefore it would seem important to expect that each of the criteria would be required to be met to some degree to successfully 'pass' the quality assurance process. Providing a descriptor or feedback for each criterion could also be useful to exemplify further *how* or *the extent to which* that criterion was met.

It was not clear from the evaluation what format of outcome would be most useful for school leaders, though suggestions were made which included ratings systems, detailed reports, searchable databases and the opportunity to have access to general programme information from multiple providers in one place. Despite the lack of consistency regarding the preferred approach, there was a general consensus that it would be of value for school leaders to have access to the outcomes of the process when commissioning CPD.

The above questions were also a focus for discussion within the advisory group meetings which took place throughout this pilot. Concerns were flagged about the 'currency' the outcome would hold; if the outcome was a badge for example, this created potential for the badge to be misused and therefore clear guidance must be given as to the purpose and remit of an outcome of this kind. The advisory group warned against oversimplifying the outcomes. The question of 'levels of badging' also prompted discussion, particularly around what added value this would offer. Whilst it may assist school leaders when it comes to selecting CPD which has been awarded the highest level of award, there is potential for devaluing the quality assurance process overall if lower levels of badges are deemed undesirable rather than steps within a developmental process. Meanwhile, some school leaders suggested that being able to see the detail of the outcomes against the individual criteria would support them to prioritise particular aspects of CPD, so that a CPD provider who has not achieved the highest standard in all the criteria might still be chosen if they have achieved the highest standard in the criteria most relevant to that school's CPD needs.

Learning from this pilot would suggest that it would perhaps be useful to offer a single level of award, with accompanying guidance provided where this was recognised through 'badging'. This would need to be accompanied by more detailed information which could offer an insight into the particular strengths and details of the CPD provision on offer.

Whilst there is still scope to refine the format of the outcomes, in terms of credibility, it is vital that the process or the quality assurance criteria are not perceived as being a simple 'checklist for CPD' to tick off; there is substantial work to be done to communicate the full complexity of the quality assurance system to those who will be engaging with it at all levels.

#### **Requirement 6: guidance should be provided to schools to support them in using the outcomes of the process to support the commissioning of high-quality CPD**

In order that the quality assurance system has value to CPD providers as well as schools, it is important that the 'badge' is actually utilised by teachers and school leaders to make decisions about CPD. Ongoing stakeholder engagement is vital here. As a consortium, by communicating the outcomes of this pilot to our organisations' networks, members and audiences and by promoting the CPD quality assurance system once it has been launched, we can simultaneously stimulate demand in teachers and school leaders and can market to a range of CPD providers.

As this pilot has progressed, ongoing consultation with schools about commissioning suggests that understanding of what constitutes effective CPD has developed in recent years, and that leaders are generally more discerning customers when it comes to teacher development. As the Wellcome CPD Challenge interim evaluation report (Leonardi et al., 2020) describes, understanding and defining high quality CPD is a crucial first step to implementing this in practice and enact school-wide change. However, across the system there are varying perceptions of quality in professional development and awareness (e.g. of the DfE CPD Standards) varies greatly between schools.

While the existence of a badge of quality should stimulate a drive for quality in the marketplace, any accompanying support to the CPD quality assurance system needs to take into account these differing starting points of schools. It should ideally help users to understand the principles that underpin the



process, as well as have full clarity about the in-school systems, processes and culture that will allow the impact of teacher development to be sustained over time and be embedded into practice.

For the CPD quality assurance badge to be used as effectively as possible by leaders and decision makers within schools, we suggest that any wider rollout of a quality assurance system would be supported by promotional materials which would raise awareness of its existence. This would include signposts to resources or guidance (examples of which can be found in appendix 4.1) covering a range of areas, including:

1. Understanding what makes effective professional development
  - Clarifying the definition of CPD
  - Exemplification of the CPD Standards in practice
  - Case studies or detailed examples from schools
2. Supporting schools to know what the CPD QA process does (and does not) tell us
  - Summarising the quality criteria
  - A caution of what still needs to be considered or checked
3. Accompanying resources for commissioning expertise
  - The role of school leader as customer
  - Starting by identifying what CPD is needed
  - Where to look for external CPD opportunities

As part of this pilot, the Teacher Development Trust consulted its network of schools to understand how leaders currently find out about CPD opportunities and what specific accompanying resources (mentioned above) would best support their commissioning needs. The most common way in which leaders reported identifying external CPD opportunities was by relying on past experiences and approaching providers with whom they've previously worked; followed by word-of-mouth recommendations and direct marketing materials. Leaders felt that there was a lack of centrally available, impartial information about which external providers of CPD can offer greatest quality and when asked about what resources would be most useful to support future decision-making, felt that a list of CPD providers who have been awarded a quality badge would be most helpful. Alongside this, schools felt that having a CPD commissioning framework based on a set of quality criteria would be just as valuable; reflecting leaders' awareness of their own active role in the commissioning process and in ensuring they are choosing CPD that meets needs or priorities that have been robustly identified in their contexts.

#### Requirement 7: CPD providers should be supported to engage with the process and the quality assurance criteria

All providers involved in this pilot received a variety of resources and guidance documents to support their understanding, both of the CPD quality assurance criteria and the practicalities of how to collate and submit their portfolios of evidence for the panel to review. These resources had to be designed specifically to meet the needs of both large-scale providers and small or independent providers, and differentiated for those submitting e.g. a suite of one-off CPD activities as opposed to a single programme. Minor changes and additions were made to the support for CPD providers in cycle 2 to reflect the updated quality assurance criteria and submission process, as well as to reflect lessons learnt in cycle 1 of implementation.

The evaluation found that the support offered was highly valued in terms of understanding the process of evidence collation and submission. Additionally, when providers involved in the pilot were questioned about what they might be willing to pay to take part in future, some responded that this would be dependent on the level of training and support available and believed it reasonable to pay more for a model that included this.

Many providers remarked that unless they had undertaken a quality assurance or badging exercise before, it was a novelty or rarity to look at their programmes and materials through an external lens and have to present evidence in a way which articulated the decisions made and demonstrated deliberative design choices.

Often the one-to-one conversations with providers in the lead up to submission involved providing reassurance that a particular criterion had been interpreted correctly, or querying the definition of particular phrases used in the assessment criteria. Despite a glossary having been shared and the quality assurance criteria explained in the online training, this suggests there could in future be some additional, perhaps optional training support available to providers about the principles of effective CPD and the evidence underpinning the quality criteria.

Stakeholder management appears to be a crucial aspect of supporting providers to engage in the CPD quality assurance process and for them to value the experience. For the purpose of clarity of messaging, the pilot would suggest it is beneficial for the provider to nominate a key contact to lead the organisation's submission, whilst also being able to draw on the capacity of colleagues to support with evidence collection and collating the portfolio. At a practical level, feedback suggests that providers would benefit from some more specific expectations set from the outset around the time commitment of submitting a portfolio for quality assurance, including a suggested number of days or hours that the task would typically take, so that relevant arrangements can be made to divide up tasks and allocate internal capacity accordingly.

Further feedback and testimonials from CPD providers involved in the two cycles of implementation can be found in appendix 4.2.

#### **Requirement 8: the system needs to be managed by a reputable organisation with trusted and transparent governance**

One of the key findings from the scoping work that preceded this project was that how the governing organisation itself is managed and assured would be important in terms of the system being trusted, meaningful and valued.

These sentiments were reiterated by those individuals engaged in this pilot; the evaluation found that the organisations involved in this project were perceived as trustworthy and appropriate for carrying out this work - and this was deemed to be important. Whilst there may be other organisations who could also fulfil this role in future, it was clear that whoever managed the quality assurance system in the long-term needs to be an organisation with credibility within the sector, with expertise in professional development and the ability to lead stakeholder engagement in the process.

#### **Requirement 9: the quality assurance system and criteria must be relevant to the broad variety of CPD available to teachers and schools**

This has been a common thread which has been highlighted throughout this report and elsewhere within these requirements; in particular, whether the definition of CPD used is broad enough to accommodate all types of CPD on offer; and whether the criteria themselves are appropriate, relevant and applicable to all CPD provision.

Across the two cycles of implementation, we sought to purposefully test the quality assurance system with as broad a range of CPD provision as possible. This included online and face to face CPD provision; sustained programmes of CPD and one-off CPD events or training days; leadership and practice-focused CPD; subject-specific, general CPD and CPD which focused on specialisms such as inclusion or pastoral support; internal and external school-led CPD; commercial CPD; and CPD delivered at a range of scales,



from independent consultants through to large-scale commercial providers. Through this testing it was clear that the system and criteria were broadly relevant to all of those who submitted for quality assurance, although CPD providers felt that further development would enable the process to be appropriate for a greater range of types of provision. Where CPD providers did not meet particular criteria, it was not necessarily because their CPD was of lower quality, but, in some cases, because they lacked submissible evidence or had submitted but the panel had not recognised it as such. In many cases, CPD providers were aware, on submission, of which criteria they would achieve and which they were likely to 'miss'.

For a future quality assurance system, it will be important to monitor and review the system and criteria moving forward to ensure that they are accessible, relevant and of value to all. A key challenge to negotiate will be ensuring the criteria are *broad* enough to assess a variety of CPD and *narrow* enough to ensure valid, rigorous assessment can take place.

#### Requirement 10: costs and benefits must be a consideration in any future system of quality assurance

The time commitment for the process as tested in this phase of the project is high, and so consideration needs to be given to this in future roll-out of a quality assurance process. For panel members, one option is to explore ways of reducing the time needed for assessment panel members in the assessment process. Another is to offer compensation, whether financial or through other benefits, for their commitment to the process. The ideal solution may be a combination of the two. For CPD providers, it would be hoped that the time commitment for participation in the process would be compensated for by the long-term benefits of participation, both in terms of the developmental nature of the process and in terms of the potential to drive commercial activity through including the outcomes or 'badge' in marketing materials, etc.

It seems likely that, for the process to be financially viable in the long-term, a payment should be made for participation by CPD providers and/or by schools to access the outcomes. Most participants in this pilot agreed that schools should not or would be unlikely to pay to access the outcomes of the process. On the other hand, some school leaders felt that payment might be feasible if knowledge of the outcomes of the process would help them to make better, easier decisions around professional development. One suggestion was that this could be achieved through a subscription model, so that access to the outcomes of the quality assurance process forms part of a wider package of membership benefits.

CPD providers did not consistently agree that they themselves should pay to participate in the quality assurance process. This is not necessarily because of the financial cost, but in some cases because of the nature of their organisation or their CPD offer, and, for a small number, because they were already satisfied with their commercial reach to schools. The actual cost for CPD providers will need to be set so that it does not disadvantage smaller organisations. Other areas cited by providers as factors which would inform their decision to pay (and how much) included the level of support and training offered alongside the quality assurance, and the 'currency' of the badge or outcomes - i.e. how widely it would be recognised and valued - by schools.

#### Requirement 11: any CPD accredited through quality assurance must be open to future review and reaccreditation

An obvious risk to the credibility of the system is the potential that quality may not be maintained following award, or that evidence comes to light which conflicts the standard of quality as set out in the quality assurance criteria. It will therefore be vital to ensure that the system includes a requirement for periodic reaccreditation. Such reaccreditation may focus on a reduced version of the original quality

assurance process, but must provide the opportunity to ascertain whether the quality has been maintained since the point of award.

### **Requirement 12: the quality assurance system must be open to ongoing evaluation and development**

The CPD quality assurance system and criteria has been reviewed and refined across two cycles of implementation. Formative evaluation has identified that there may be further opportunities to refine the system for any future iteration that is launched into the sector.

The system has been developed by drawing upon the existing evidence-base - in terms of both the evidence around existing quality assurance programmes and also the evidence relating to what constitutes effective teacher CPD. It is important to note that although there is generally a consensus around the characteristics of effective teacher CPD, the quality of this evidence is contested (e.g. Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2020). As the evidence-base develops further, the CPD quality assurance system must develop alongside this and contribute to it. It will therefore be vital to review the criteria which provider the definition of quality underpinning this system as new evidence comes to light, whilst systematic review of the systems and processes is vital to ensuring the smooth-running, reliability and efficiency of the system as it grows. Ongoing changes to reflect the developing nature of the evidence, and to contribute to the evidence base, can be communicated to stakeholders, thereby strengthening the reach of the project in terms of developing knowledge of high quality professional development.

## **5. Conclusion and recommendations**

In this final section, we combine the insights gained from this pilot and the preceding scoping work to draw conclusions and propose plans for a CPD quality assurance system that we consider to be appropriate and realistically scalable within the current education system in England; which will set a standard for teachers CPD that supports ongoing improvement within the CPD marketplace; and the outcomes of which will be robust, meaningful and of value to teachers, school leaders and CPD providers.

### **Summary of findings**

Throughout this project, we have seen high levels of engagement from the sector - this includes CPD providers, teachers, school leaders and sector leaders. This is especially significant given that this pilot coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic when stakeholders - particularly those in schools - may easily have had other priorities. The feedback we have received indicates that there is interest and desire for an effective means of quality assuring teachers' CPD. Furthermore, as we have highlighted elsewhere in this report, the potential value of a quality assurance process to the overall system of teacher professional development in England is high. Participants viewed their engagement in this project as a way of contributing to something which is needed and useful in the system, and as joining a community of like-minded practitioners and stakeholders.

Through this pilot we have designed, developed and tested a system for quality assurance that is workable, enables valid judgements to be made based on evidence submitted by CPD providers, and is underpinned by a set of criteria which set a high - but achievable - bar for quality. CPD providers and panel members agreed that the quality assurance process as tested in this project has the potential to be robust, fair and valuable for school leaders and the wider system. The organisations involved in this pilot were viewed as trustworthy and appropriate to be carrying out this work.

This pilot has also highlighted some of the wider opportunities that a CPD quality assurance system may bring. For example, stakeholders and members of the advisory group have all suggested that the quality assurance criteria offer a useful framework which might support their own reflection, evaluation and development in a systematic and consistent way. Further, for the individuals and organisations involved in this pilot, engaging in the quality assurance process was perceived as being developmental: for CPD providers, participation in the process supported reflection on their CPD offer; for panel members, participation supported learning about professional development, including learning from each other. It also offered them the chance to join a community of like-minded stakeholders, with the shared aim of improving the system of teacher professional development. The support and training available to CPD providers and panel members was highly valued. These indirect outcomes may be added benefits when it comes to building understanding around quality CPD as the system is launched and grows.

## Key challenges

We have already identified a number of key requirements which would need to be considered when thinking about any future quality assurance system. In addition to these, there are a number of challenges that were identified within this pilot and which it may be helpful to highlight here. Following this, we consider some potential solutions which can support meeting these challenges in a long-term or wider roll-out of the quality assurance process.

### **1. The time involved in collating and submitting or assessing evidence is significant**

This has been a substantial challenge throughout this pilot, and despite adaptations to the system and process for the second cycle, remained an issue with both CPD providers and panel members spending a substantial amount of time on each submission. The processes would benefit from further refinement and there may be benefit in remunerating panel members for their time if we want to retain experienced panel members within the review panel moving forward.

### **2. Concerns remain as to whether the system will be applicable to and accessible to all types of CPD provider**

Whilst we have tested the system with a range of CPD types and provider types and they appear to work well, the variety of CPD available to schools is vast and ever-changing. In the long term, it may be that the quality assurance system and criteria will require greater adaptation to reflect this. One provider-type which the system in its current form does not support is the consultant facilitator delivering an externally developed programme - considering how the system may be applied with greater flexibility to support this provider-type would also be worthwhile.

### **3. The system as tested may not be applicable to the full range of CPD offered by a provider**

Making valid judgments about the quality of CPD requires a thorough assessment and scrutiny of the CPD provision. To make judgements about a wider range of CPD (e.g. multiple programmes offered by a provider) or about the quality of CPD offered by a provider generally, would require a vast submission which samples evidence from across the entire CPD offer. At the moment, this is not feasible within the constraints of the system without compromising the rigour of the judgement or substantially increasing the amount of time involved in assessment, which is already lengthy. It would be useful to explore this further, particularly looking at which elements of the quality assurance criteria might apply to the provider as a whole (e.g. section 3) and whether there can be flexibility in applying these criteria across programmes.

### **4. There is a risk that the system may inadvertently favour certain types of organisations or CPD**

By necessity, the quality assurance needs to set a consistent standard of quality underpinned by a consistent approach to assessing that quality. There are risks that a one-size-fits-all approach

may be of greater benefit to some CPD providers than others. Considerations must be made to ensure that CPD providers are not unduly restricted from engaging with or successfully undertaking quality assurance for example as the result of financial inequality, lack of staffing; or more significantly that the criteria do not prioritise one type of CPD approach over another. Linked to this, there is a question as to whether the process assesses the quality of the CPD or the quality of the evidence a provider submits. It is important that the assessment processes are robust enough to ensure a focus on CPD quality - and that assessors are open to the broad range of evidence which might be submitted, triangulating this with accompanying narrative to make judgements of quality against the indicators provided.

#### 5. A narrow definition of quality may reduce innovation within the sector

We have already emphasised that the quality assurance criteria should not be used as a checklist and whilst we believe that the criteria as they stand provide a good definition of 'quality' CPD, this does not mean that no other indicators of quality may exist beyond the criteria. The system itself must look to learn from new approaches and new developments in the realm of teacher professional development and must seek to encourage rather than hinder innovation.

### A proposal for a system of quality assurance

Learning from this pilot has informed a proposal for a system of quality assurance which we believe will:

- build upon key learning from the pilot
- address the twelve key requirements identified in section 4
- be financially viable, scalable and accessible

In line with the feedback from this pilot, we propose that the CPD quality assurance system is held by a reputable and trusted organisation. In the model described below, this organisation would set the standard and hold oversight of the submission and assessment processes, whilst providers would be able to access support in undertaking the process by engaging with an external organisation. It will also be important to commission external evaluation as the system is scaled in order to best understand the impacts of any new approaches adopted, and the system as a whole.

The proposed model will consist of a five stage process:

**Stage 1: registration** - CPD providers would register to undertake the quality assurance process and gain access to supporting guidance and training materials.

**Stage 2: preparation** - Providers prepare to undertake the quality assurance process, as part of their preparation this might include engaging in training to increase their understanding and awareness of effective CPD design and delivery; undertaking self-evaluation against the quality assurance criteria; or engaging with support offers from an external organisation.

**Stage 3: submission** - To provide greatest flexibility, we suggest the use of scheduled submission windows, enabling providers to submit their CPD provision for quality assurance at a time they feel ready to do so - ideally within 1 year of engaging with the process. The submission would consist of a portfolio of evidence, alongside a submission form that is closely aligned with the quality assurance criteria.

**Stage 4: assessment** - To make the assessment process workable, each submission should be assessed by a single trained, paid assessor. To ensure consistency and rigour, every submission would then be reviewed at a moderation meeting, where a panel of assessors will meet to moderate judgements, under the guidance of an experienced, trained chair.

**Stage 5: award** - In order to 'pass', the submission should be expected to meet all CPD quality

assurance criteria. Feedback should be given on the submission and any CPD which passes quality assurance would be able to use a designated badge within its marketing. Quality assured CPD will also be listed on a searchable online database.

Whilst the focus of this system is on recognising or 'badging' CPD provision that meets the standard of quality outlined in the quality assurance criteria, the system described above also offers a flexible approach to submission to facilitate development of CPD provision where this may be of value.

## Reaccreditation

To ensure ongoing trust in the system, there would need to be a requirement for CPD provision to be reaccredited - typically we would expect that reaccreditation would occur around every 2-3 years and would involve a light-touch version of quality assurance and may be subject to a reaccreditation fee.

## Fees

The time costs associated with the quality assurance process are significant; in this pilot, time associated with the organisation and administration of the quality assurance process was substantial. Furthermore, any judgement of quality needs to be trusted to be reliable and therefore a significant amount of time must be taken by reviewers to scrutinise, evaluate and judge the evidence submitted as part of the quality assurance process. This is likely to require financial reimbursement and therefore CPD providers submitting their provision for quality assurance would be required to pay fees which cover:

1. The direct costs associated with assessment process - fees for assessment and moderation
2. Contribution towards additional costs associated with running the system:
  - a. the administration of the process - to cover staffing costs and maintenance of the online platform
  - b. development of support and guidance materials and ongoing review and quality assurance of the system itself.

We would anticipate that within this proposed system, CPD providers would be required to pay to engage with the process. This fee could comprise of two parts - an initial fee could provide access to the training and materials. The fee could vary depending on the size of the CPD provider and would contribute to the general running of the CPD quality assurance system, whilst a further payment could be made to cover assessment and moderation costs at the time of submission.

Offering a staggered registration fee linked to provider size would ensure that the CPD quality assurance system is accessible to all sizes and types of CPD provider, whilst keeping the submission fee at a level which only covers costs ensures that there is no financial benefit associated with the outcomes for the organisation overseeing the process. Providers may incur additional costs associated with commissioning additional support with the process, or through staffing costs associated with preparing a portfolio of evidence for quality assurance.

We anticipate that the costs associated with undertaking quality assurance should be outweighed by the long term benefits for CPD providers, in particular:

- badging provides reassurance to teachers and schools making them more likely to commission CPD from recognised providers
- the opportunity for formative evaluation and feedback facilitates improvement of CPD provision, impacting positively on participants' experiences and outcomes
- engaging with the CPD quality assurance process has the potential to be a valuable professional development for those individuals involved in submitting CPD provision for quality assurance

- CPD providers who have undertaken CPD quality assurance could be invited to be involved in the system moving forward, for example they may have the opportunity to join the review panel or support other providers going through the process.

## Governance

We propose that a single organisation should set and hold the standard for quality assurance. Robust policies and systems will need to be in place to ensure the credibility and robustness of the system; for example, within this pilot, measures included procedures for managing conflicts of interest to ensure the independence of assessments; procedures to ensure confidentiality, including requirements for assessors to sign non-disclosure agreements; an appeals policy, so that a provider could challenge a result that they felt did not meet their expectations or represent a reasonable return on their investment; and a two-stage complaints procedure, with a further option for a review involving a committee of the Chartered College of Teaching's Council.

Whilst the managing organisation should oversee assessment and management of the quality assurance system, the organisation itself should not be directly involved in the decision-making process; instead, decisions about quality assurance should reside with a panel of well-trained assessors - perhaps overseen by a further governance committee or assessment board whose role it is to ensure that appropriate and robust assessment, moderation and quality assurance processes are in place and followed. Whilst initially this committee or board may be made up of individuals with expertise in CPD and quality assurance from across the sector, in the long-term, both the board and review panel should include significant representation from individuals who are themselves CPD providers or who work for organisations who have successfully undertaken the CPD quality assurance process as CPD providers; alongside teachers or school leaders - meaning that the system is self-governing and less-dependent on the influence of the governing organisation.

## Next steps

Evidence from the evaluation of this pilot suggests that the definition of CPD, the quality assurance criteria and the assessment processes used in cycle 2 are appropriate for a CPD quality assurance system. They appear to enable valid judgements to be made and set a high bar for quality. We know that there are areas where the system may benefit from small changes, for example, there are some quality assurance criteria that require further clarification or exemplification.

We propose that the first stage of a wider launch of the system should be a final phase of development and testing of the above proposed system, providing an opportunity to test the system in its final form and on a larger scale than that of the cycles of implementation used within this pilot. This would include testing models of charging providers and providing payment for assessors as well as further streamlining of the process for CPD providers and support for schools in using the outcomes of the process.

Further, the launch of the system moving forward must include planned opportunity for review, evaluation and development as appropriate to ensure it fulfils the requirements identified in section 4 and ultimately achieves its aims as intended, that:

1. teachers and senior leaders are able to make more effective and efficient commissioning decisions based on evidence so that..
2. the quality of CPD experienced by teachers improves...
3. while the market is not distorted (i.e. the diversity and range of providers is maintained and costs/benefits are shared evenly across different types of provider).

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the many individuals and organisations who have engaged with this project, including the CPD providers, panel members and school leaders who engaged with the quality assurance process; the individuals who contributed their time and expertise as members of the advisory group; and all of those who responded to our stakeholder consultations.

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## Appendices

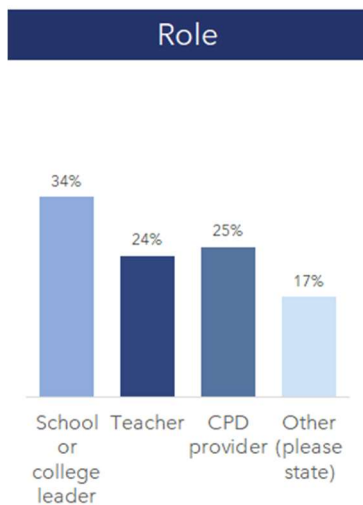
### Appendix 2.1 Summary of outcomes from consultation survey

Between March 2020 and May 2020, we consulted the sector on the design of the CPD Quality Assurance system and proposed criteria.

A total of 173 individuals responded to the consultation.

#### Respondent breakdown by role

The graph below shows the breakdown of respondents by role:



#### Summary

- 173 respondents in total
  - 57% teachers / school leaders
  - 25% CPD providers
  - 17% other
- Of those who were school teachers or leaders, breakdown by phase/setting was as follows:
  - 71% secondary
  - 21% primary
  - 3% EYFS
  - 3% specialist settings
- 54% of teachers / school leaders responding to the survey had responsibility for CPD within their setting.

#### Standard for teachers' professional development

The consultation asked whether respondents were familiar with the DfE Standard for teachers' professional development:

- 78% of respondents reported that **yes** they were familiar with the standard
- 18% responded **no**
- 4% responded that they were **not sure**

#### The Quality Assurance Criterion

##### *CPD criteria for consultation*

**Criterion 1:** the provider is clear about the intended impact of the CPD on teachers and pupils

**Criterion 2:** the provider considers the specific contexts of teachers and their schools, using this to inform CPD design

**Criterion 3:** the provider ensures content makes explicit links between theory, evidence and classroom practice

**Criterion 4:** the provider ensures content is underpinned by robust evidence and expertise

**Criterion 5:** the provider designs CPD to affect a change in teachers' beliefs, knowledge or understanding

**Criterion 6:** the provider designs CPD which encourages purposeful collaboration, with a focus on the intended pupil outcomes

**Criterion 7:** the provider designs CPD which facilitates sustained changes to practice

**Criterion 8:** the provider provides challenge, support and guidance to schools to facilitate a strategic and purposeful approach to CPD

**Criterion 9:** the provider works with teachers and schools to facilitate sustained changes to practice and evaluate impact

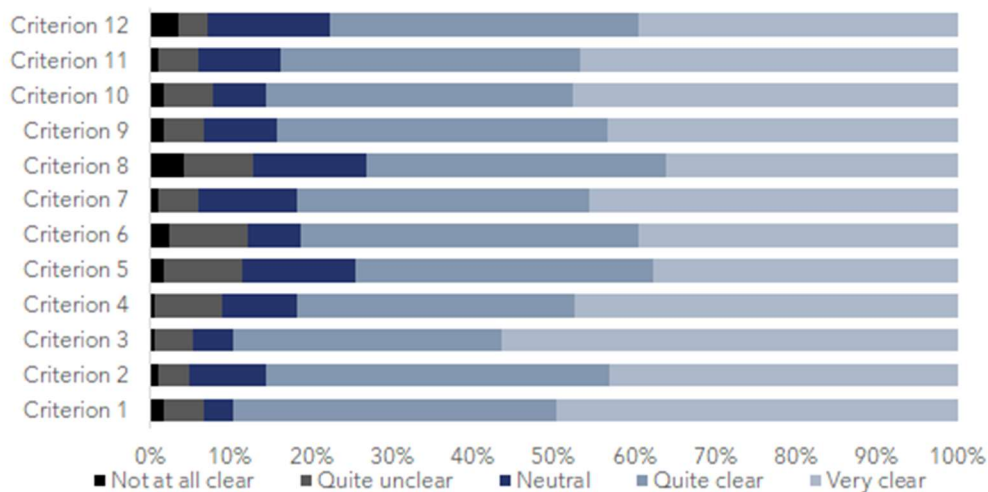
**Criterion 10:** the provider works with teachers and schools to ensure CPD has a positive impact on pupil outcomes

**Criterion 11:** the provider has appropriate systems and processes which are used to monitor and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their CPD programmes

**Criterion 12:** the provider considers broader factors which may affect the impact of CPD and takes steps to address these in order to ensure a positive experience for participants and schools [broader factors may include, for example: venue arrangements; cost and value for money; accessibility, equalities and inclusion; teacher workload and wellbeing]

### Q. How clear is each criterion?

We asked respondents to consider how clear the meaning of each criterion was. Criteria 5 and 8 stood out as the least clear.



Respondents were asked to provide suggestions for how the criteria could be made more clear.

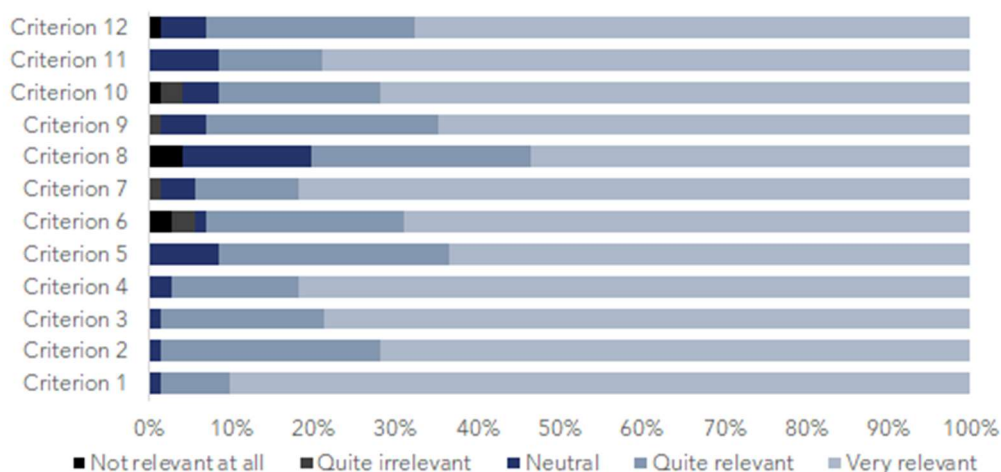
Responses to this question suggest that:

- clarity around key terms that were deemed subjective and/or unmeasurable was needed (e.g. 'impact', 'purposeful collaboration', 'theory')
- it would be beneficial to provide clear examples for each criterion to demonstrate what excellent practice looks like and the types of evidence that would be required
- some respondents felt the criteria were 'too wordy' and could be more concise

### Q. Are these the right criteria for making judgements about quality of CPD?

We wanted to know how relevant each criterion was to respondents and whether they felt there was anything missing from the criteria. Responses showed that generally all criteria were considered

relevant, however criteria 6 and 8 stood out as being the least relevant.



Popular suggestions for what should be added to the criteria included cost effectiveness and a more overt awareness of different kinds of CPD, such as that provided by teachers.

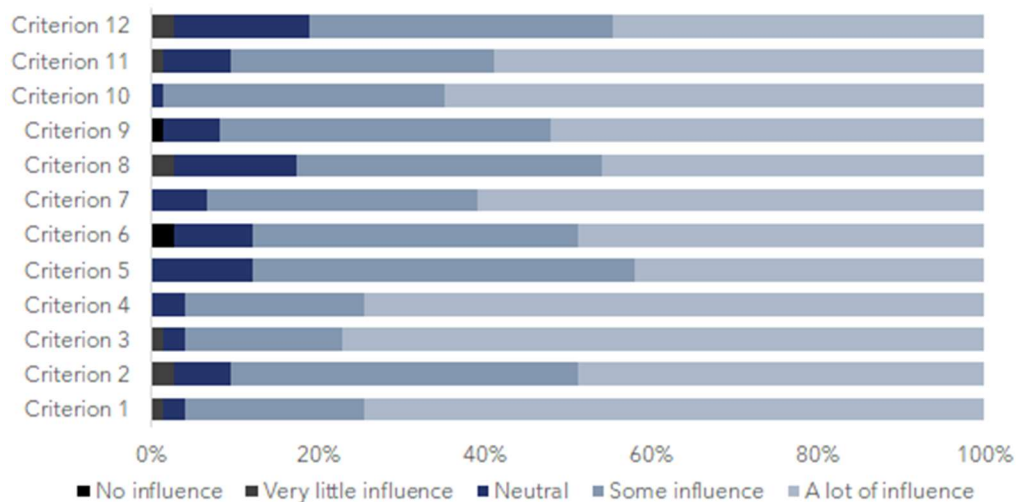
Linked to this, we wanted to know how easily CPD providers felt that they could provide evidence for each criterion. The vast majority of CPD providers responding felt that it *was* important for CPD providers to provide evidence in order to meet each criterion; ‘very important’ and ‘quite important’ made up 89% of responses against each criterion. There was however some concern over the feasibility of providing evidence in areas that CPD providers have limited influence over, particularly criteria 7, 8, 9 and 10.

We also asked if a CPD provider should be expected to meet *all* of the criteria. We asked if, alternatively, there should be a minimum number of criteria they are expected to meet, or if some ‘core’ criteria might be more important than others and deemed essential for CPD providers to meet:

- 29% responded that CPD providers should be required to meet **all of the criteria**
- 25% responded that CPD providers should be required to meet **a minimum number of the criteria** (e.g. 10 out of 12)
- 46% responded that **some of the criteria should be ‘core’**, with providers being required to meet all of these, as well as a proportion of non-core criteria

#### Q. How useful are these criteria for schools commissioning CPD?

Finally, teachers and school leaders were asked how useful each criterion might be when commissioning CPD in their schools. Criteria related to the specific content of the CPD were considered most useful (criteria 3 and 4).



### Additional insights

Respondents were invited to make comments or suggestions alongside each of the questions. These comments provided valuable insights from which to develop the criterion and CPD QA system further. In particular, it was noted that:

- Respondents emphasised the importance of evaluation and longevity in the criteria, while also expressing concern over the limited capacity that CPD providers can have to influence these
- Many respondents questioned the number of criteria and suggest condensing and grouping to avoid overlap/repetition
- Criteria 7 and 5 were most consistently questioned, with the assumption that effective CPD necessitates 'change' being challenged

## Appendix 2.2 Quality assurance criteria for cycle 1

### *CPD criteria for cycle 1*

#### **Section 1: intent and impact**

- 1.1 The provider clearly identifies the intended impact and designs CPD which aims to develop participants' beliefs, knowledge, understanding and/or teaching practice
- 1.2 The provider supports teachers and/or schools to make sustained changes to their practice in light of CPD
- 1.3. The provider supports participants and/or school leaders to increase the impact of CPD within their own specific contexts

#### **Section 2: Content and design**

- 2.1 The provider considers the specific contexts of teachers and/or their schools, using this to inform CPD design (e.g. career stage /subject/ phase/ curriculum/ school context)
- 2.2 The provider ensures content and design is underpinned by robust evidence and expertise and makes explicit links between theory, evidence and classroom practice, where appropriate
- 2.3 The provider designs professional development which includes opportunities for reflection, collaboration and expert challenge

#### **Section 3: Delivery and evaluation**

- 3.1 The provider has established processes to ensure high quality delivery of CPD
- 3.2 The provider has appropriate systems and processes which are used to monitor and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their CPD programmes, facilitators and materials
- 3.3 The provider considers broader factors which may affect the impact of CPD, and takes steps to address these in order to ensure a positive experience for participants and schools

## CPD Quality Assurance (cycle 2)

## Explanation of key terminology

Glossary		
Terminology used	Definition for the purposes of the CPD Quality Assurance Pilot	What is excluded from this definition?
<b>CPD</b>	Intentional processes and activities which aim to enhance the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers, leaders and teaching staff in order to improve student outcomes. This can include (but is not limited to): training courses; one-off events and conferences as well as sustained programmes of CPD; accredited programmes, and leadership programmes; mentoring and coaching programmes; facilitated networks, reading and study groups; online training. We recognise that some schools and organisations use different terms for CPD, such as professional learning, CPDL and INSET; our definition of CPD encompasses the activities which fall into these definitions.	<i>For the purposes of this pilot, our definitions do not include: statutory training that you have to undertake as part of working in a school to comply with the law (for example, health and safety, safeguarding, fire safety, first aid training).</i>
<b>training</b>	Training is used as a sub-category of CPD, whereby participants are typically provided with explicit instruction or guidance in order to develop knowledge of a specific area, or to develop a specific skill or competency	
<b>single programme</b>	CPD consisting of multiple components which are deliberately planned and sequenced to develop beliefs, knowledge, understanding and/or practice over time.	
<b>one-off CPD</b>	A stand-alone CPD activity or training event	
<b>suite of CPD</b>	An offer of multiple one-off training events or CPD, with a common theme (e.g. maths, science, assessment)	<i>For the purposes of this pilot, our definition does not include suites of sustained CPD programmes</i>
<b>provider</b>	We have used the term 'provider' or 'CPD provider' to include any individual or organisation (including schools) which design and deliver CPD (as defined above) to schools and school staff.	<i>For the purposes of this pilot, our definition does not include: facilitators of CPD who are delivering CPD on behalf of an external organisation</i>
<b>aims</b>	The purpose, intention or desired outcome of the professional development activity	
<b>impact</b>	The effects of the CPD on participants, their schools and ultimately their pupils. Impact may be measured in terms of pupil outcome data, but could also take the form of wider data, reported or observable changes, feedback and self-report. For the purposes of this pilot, assessments will only be made against the <i>intended</i> impact of the CPD, and the steps that the providers take to <i>enhance</i> the impact, for	<i>It should be clear that the responsibility of overall impact rests with the teachers and / or schools.</i>



	example by supporting teachers and school leaders to implement changes within the setting.	
<b>content</b>	The information and experiences which make up the CPD programme or training. Content may include, for example: written or spoken word, visuals, or video; it may be communicated through printed media, online content or through face to face delivery.	
<b>design</b>	Refers to how the information and experiences are planned; in particular how they are selected, sequenced, presented and delivered in order to create a coherent and effective participant journey in order to achieve the desired outcomes.	
<b>expertise</b>	Having a high-level of skill or knowledge in a particular domain.	
<b>expert input</b>	Input from individuals or organisations who have recognised expertise in the domain. Expert input could include both internal and external expertise. Expert input maybe direct (seeking direct input into content and design) or indirect (drawing upon published material from a recognised authority in the domain, or replicating approaches used in similar formally recognised or evaluated programmes, for example)	
<b>robust evidence</b>	Evidence that has withstood critique, which has been rigorously debated, scrutinised or evaluated; evidence which may be recognised widely by experts, or by a professional body or other authority. Typically this would refer to evidence obtained from research, but may include theory which is supported by robust evidence. Where possible, providers should also be transparent about the strengths and limitations of the evidence.	<i>For the purposes of this pilot, our definition does not include opinion, reflections or claims which are not built on robust evidence</i>
<b>robust evaluation</b>	Rigorous and systematic assessment of the effectiveness, quality or value of the CPD	
<b>beliefs</b>	What we accept or understand to be true. Relating to CPD, teachers beliefs about teaching and pedagogy inform the choices they make about their teaching practice.	<i>For the purposes of this pilot, it should be clear that the term belief is only applied in relation to the professional development aims, and not to wider beliefs (for example, religious beliefs).</i>
<b>peer support</b>	Support from colleagues or fellow participants which contributes to professional development; this could include, for example coaching, mentoring, modelling or sharing of expertise	
<b>sustained change</b>	Changes or enhancements to practice which become embedded or habituated. Changes may be small refinements or developments OR may be more substantial changes, such as the introduction of a completely new pedagogical practice	

<b>outcomes</b>	The effects that education has on pupils - typically academic, but also wider outcomes which may relate to social, emotional or wellbeing of pupils	
<b>context</b>	The circumstances in which the school or participants operate. Contextual considerations might include: school type, phase, staff characteristics, pupil characteristics, location, prior attainment of pupils, Ofsted category, or consideration of any other specific challenges faced by the school, its staff or pupils	
<b>challenge</b>	asking questions, probing assumptions and providing alternative ideas to prompt the development of thinking and practice	
<b>support</b>	providing assistance which contributes to professional development. Support may be in the form of guidance, explanation or modelling; mentoring or coaching; and may involve the provision of tools or resources to aid and facilitate learning and development.	
<b>guidance</b>	Advice or information about how to do something. Guidance may be written or verbal.	
<b>tools</b>	Resources or equipment that can be used to support development.	
<b>underpinning</b>	Where underpinning is used, we refer to the ideas or concepts that form the basis upon which practice is developed.	

## Appendix 4.1 commissioning resources for schools

# What makes high quality CPD?

In 2016, the Department for Education set out a [standard for teachers' professional development](#) outlining five key points for CPD. The guidance states that effective teacher professional development is a partnership between:

- Headteachers and other members of the leadership team;
- Teachers;
- Providers of professional development expertise, training or consultancy.

In order for this partnership to be successful:

It is important to be aware that when it comes to what makes high-quality CPD, while the available evidence base offers us some indication of the common features of quality CPD, it is not necessarily accurate to conclude that those are the active ingredients that make CPD so effective.

We cannot simply use a list of characteristics as a 'checklist'; just because a CPD programme features all of these elements, it does not necessarily mean that it is of quality. Nor does it mean that a programme must contain all of these elements to be effective. Instead, we need to look at how these - and other characteristics - combine with the theory around how teachers learn and develop. We then need to consider how CPD providers draw upon this information to design and deliver a CPD programme (or programmes) in a purposeful and coherent way in order to maximise impact on both teachers and pupils.

## Establishing a Shared Understanding of Quality

We recognise that as school leaders, you may use different terms for CPD such as professional learning, CPDL or INSET. Our definition of CPD encompasses the activities which fall into these definitions. For the purposes of this CPD QA system, we define 'continuing professional development' (CPD) as:

*'intentional processes and activities which aim to enhance the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers, leaders and teaching staff in order to improve student outcomes'.*

This can include (but is not limited to):

- training courses
- one-off events and conferences as well as sustained programmes of CPD
- accredited programmes, and leadership programmes; mentoring and coaching programmes
- facilitated networks, reading and study groups;
- online training.

Training is used as a sub-category of CPD, whereby participants are typically provided with explicit instruction or guidance in order to develop knowledge of a specific area, or to develop a specific skill or competency.

This definition does not include statutory training that you have to undertake as part of working in a school to comply with the law (for example, health and safety, safeguarding, fire safety, first aid training).

Whilst testing the CPD QA system, we identified three categories of CPD and asked providers to select one of these to submit for accreditation. These three categories are:

1. Single CPD programme: CPD which consists of multiple components which are deliberately planned and sequenced to develop beliefs, knowledge, understanding and/or practice over time.
2. One-off CPD: A stand-alone CPD activity or training event.
3. Suite of CPD: An offer of multiple one-off training events or CPD, with a common theme (e.g. maths, science, assessment).

## The CPD Quality Assurance Criteria

The CPD Quality Assurance process is based on nine quality criteria which together provide an indication of what makes high-quality CPD, based on the latest available evidence.

### ***CPD criteria for cycle 2***

#### **Section 1: intent**

- 1.1 The intended impact of the [training/CPD/CPD programme] is clear
- 1.2 The [training/CPD/CPD programme] aims to develop participants' beliefs, knowledge, understanding and/or teaching practice
- 1.3 Support is given to participants and/or their schools to identify CPD requirements, support implementation and monitor and evaluate the impact of CPD in their own contexts

#### **Section 2: design**

- 2.1 The [CPD / training / programme] design and content is underpinned by robust evidence and expertise
- 2.2 [Training/CPD/Programme] design takes into account the prior knowledge, experiences and needs of participants and/or their school contexts
- 2.3 CPD activities are deliberately designed to facilitate sustained changes to practice - activities may include opportunities for application, practice, reflection, collaboration and expert challenge

#### **Section 3: delivery**

- 3.1 Effective processes are in place to ensure the [CPD / training / CPD programme] is delivered to a high standard
- 3.2 Internal and external evaluation processes are used to review impact and inform ongoing improvements to the programme

3.3 Consideration is given to addressing broader factors that may impede the effectiveness of the [CPD / training / CPD programme] - participant experience; value for money; staff time

## About the Quality Assurance Outcomes

CPD providers who sign up to engage in the QA process provide a portfolio of evidence related to their chosen programme or CPD offer. This is then rigorously reviewed by a panel of at least three expert reviewers, specifically trained in making accurate assessments against the CPD QA criteria. The panellists make a collective judgement about whether or not the CPD meets the standard of quality set by the criteria and those who successfully pass the process are listed in a searchable database of accredited CPD on the Chartered College of Teaching website.

The CPD Quality Assurance outcomes are designed to provide a user-friendly way to easily identify CPD that successfully meets all nine of the criteria listed on the previous page, as confirmed by evidence reviewed by our expert panellists within the last three years.

## Commissioning CPD

### What can the CPD QA outcomes tell me?

When a CPD programme or series of sessions has been quality assured through this system, it should help you commission with the confidence that the provision demonstrates:

Focus on impact: the intended impact of the CPD is explicitly communicated to participants and to leaders like you commissioning CPD, as well as the clear intended impact on pupils where appropriate.

Quality of content: the provider has drawn on a robust evidence base to inform content (rather than relying on fads or trends in education) and makes the evidence explicit to participants, for example linking pedagogical knowledge with subject/specialist knowledge.

Quality of design: the evidence base has also been drawn on to inform the design (structure, sequencing, learning principles) of the CPD and expert input will have been sought during this process. The activities within the CPD have been purposefully designed to develop teacher knowledge and/or practice and to sustain this over time.

Quality of delivery: the provider will have systems to ensure that the CPD will be delivered in a way which is aligned with the evidence on effective professional development, and that there is high quality recruitment, selection and training of those involved in delivering CPD (e.g. facilitators, trainers, mentors, coaches, content/programme designers).

Consideration of needs: the provider ensures that the CPD programme uses information about participants' prior knowledge and experience to secure progression, and where appropriate, adapts the CPD according to phase, subject, specialism, career stage, school context and/or curriculum.

Quality of service: The provider will have proven steps taken to ensure that supporting components such as venue and refreshments are of sufficient quality and cater for a full range of needs (not detracting from the achievement of CPD aims).

## What does it not tell me? What else should I additionally consider?

Clarity of CPD needs: Before selecting a provider to work with, you need to be able to present your needs to a provider of expertise as clearly and specifically as possible. Our quality mark confirms that the provider has systems in place to support participants and/or school leaders in identifying CPD needs and requirements and to ensure that the content presented is suitable, but success also relies on you as a leader identifying in advance:

- Who or what is the target of the CPD?
- What depth of expertise should the CPD programme be aiming to achieve (e.g. a webinar to raise awareness, vs an extended approach over time with expert input to secure entrenched practice)?
- How does the intended CPD contribute or relate to your school improvement plan?

Impact on pupils: Though the CPD QA criteria provide an indication of what makes high-quality CPD based on the latest available evidence and look to assess various factors that are most likely to contribute to this, including that the provider undertakes robust evaluation of the effectiveness of their programmes, our panel reviewers do not rely on evidence of pupil outcomes to inform their judgements about whether the CPD is high-quality or not. The "CPD Quality Assured" badge should not be taken as a failsafe road to raising attainment.

Participant satisfaction: The CPD QA process does not take into account customer reviews and the badge does not incorporate any sort of satisfaction ratings; i.e. the accredited CPD might not always be the most popular amongst participants! However, it should assure you that the provider actively seeks

feedback from participants and their schools and draws upon this to improve their ongoing quality and effectiveness.

Greatest value for money: As above, any programme that has been CPD Quality Assured will have demonstrated that value for money for schools has been considered, but as a leader it is up to you to make a judgement as to whether the price of the service be justified within your budget, or if there other genuinely equivalent services, experts or courses which might provide similar for less.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What do we mean by ‘CPD provider’?**

We have used the term 'provider' or 'CPD provider' to include any individual or organisation (including schools) which design and deliver CPD (as defined above) to schools and school staff. Our definition does not include facilitators of CPD who are delivering CPD on behalf of an external organisation.

### **Does the CPD QA accreditation apply to different types and sizes of providers?**

The CPD QA system has been tested with a range of provider types including large providers, smaller providers, independent consultants, school-based providers, and even subject or specialist associations.

### **Does the QA process quality assure a provider themselves or the CPD they offer?**

The quality assurance badge refers to an individual programme or series of CPD, and will not be able to give assurances about other support or services offered by the provider not submitted for assessment.

## Top tips for finding the right provider

### Advice shared by other school leaders

#### **1. Pick up the phone**

Use the commissioning criteria and template, clarify some minimum expectations and be a discerning customer – if you are paying for a programme of development, don't feel you can't have a conversation about it!

#### **2. Look for opportunities to adapt**

Many providers will arrange a meeting, send a form or survey in advance to better understand your needs. Check that this is available to you if you don't think something "off-the-shelf" will achieve your aims.

#### **3. Ask to be put in touch with other users**

Many leaders say it's more helpful to hear testimonials directly from past participants – providers should be happy to arrange this.

#### **4. Involve participants**

If you are commissioning CPD for individuals or teams other than yourself, make sure to include them in the process to ensure it's fit for purpose. Do they require a facilitator with specialist



experience? Can subject leaders corroborate the content and research used to inform specific programmes?

## Further Resources

There are a number of different criteria to consider as a school leader to find CPD that is suitable to help achieve your chosen goal. Many of these are encompassed in the criteria designed for this process, but as the DfE Standards highlight, for a partnership to be successful there needs to be active involvement from both sides.

### CPD Commissioning Template

*The template below has been designed for school leaders and decision makers to support you to ensure that you engage with the highest possible CPD. This can be used either alongside the CPD Quality Assurance outcome; e.g. where you would like to request additional detail from the provider about a specific area of the QA criteria, or can be used to gauge some sense of quality from a provider who has not yet undertaken the process.*

<b>1. Clarity of needs</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can you engage the provider at an early design stage so that they can inform the CPD design process?</li><li>• Can you work with the provider or to refine your success criteria at the earliest possible stage?</li><li>• Are you suitably open to challenge as to whether your desired impact is feasible within the resource available?</li><li>• Are you able to flex your resourcing and thinking to create an effective partnership?</li></ul>	<i>Your notes here</i>
<b>2. Quality of content</b>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is there an established and well-evidenced criticism of the CPD content, strategy or approach that provides a note of caution? Perhaps there's a summary or review of the research to help you?</li> <li>● Are any claims being made about good practice (e.g. 'school inspectors want to see this') actually aligned with latest practice/advice, or are they rumours or out of date?</li> <li>● Is research behind the CPD content being made explicit with references so that participants can follow-up with deeper reading?</li> <li>● Has the programme content been accredited or quality-assured by a reputable organisation in the field?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Your notes here</i></p>
<h3>3. Quality of delivery</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does the CPD include suitable preparation materials and pre-tasks, tools for ongoing diagnosis/ evaluation/ assessment as well as follow-up?</li> <li>● Is the delivery of CPD and service quality assured in any way?</li> <li>● Are there independent reviews of the delivery, from previous users/ participants or other experts?</li> <li>● If there are multiple views being presented – such as different documents or speakers on a panel – then has diversity been considered? Is this provider considering how to represent and promote the views and needs of the full range of backgrounds, or giving only a narrow view?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Your notes here</i></p>
<h3>4. Suitability of content being presented</h3>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is the CPD appropriate for the needs of the range of teachers who will engage with it?</li> <li>● Will participants already have the requisite prior knowledge, competency and skill?</li> <li>● Is the CPD in a form that is most likely to deliver the outcome you need? Are you looking for sustained engagement or a one-off event within a longer programmes?</li> <li>● Can it be delivered in a location that offers value for money? Would it be better to bring the expertise to your school or to send a colleague to a more central location? Could you pool resources with nearby schools and put on a local event?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Your notes here</i></p>
<h3>5. Quality of service and value for money</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Will this individual or organisation be responsive and business-like, making the buying process painless?</li> <li>● Do they respond quickly to queries and provide sufficient information at all stages?</li> <li>● Are any venues and refreshments of sufficient quality and do they cater for the full range of needs?</li> <li>● Can the price of the service be justified?</li> <li>● Are there other genuinely equivalent CPD services, experts or courses which provide similar for less?</li> <li>● On the other hand, are any claims of value for money based on a genuine like-for-like comparison of quality and content?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Your notes here</i></p>
<h3>6. Evidence of impact</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have there been robust studies of the impact of this advice or expertise on the CPD outcomes which you are seeking?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Your notes here</i></p>

## 7. Quality of tools and follow-up

- Does the provider's expertise come with materials to diagnose existing needs and skills? Are there any preparation activities to help focus participants' minds on the right areas?
- Does the CPD come with assessment and evaluation tools to use before, during and after the engagement, to help participants, leaders and facilitators to adjust and refine their approach?
- Are there ways for participants to get further or more detailed information about information presented? Can they check on areas of controversy and explore alternative views?
- Are there suggested follow-up services, processes and expertise?
- Are there suggested organisations and individuals to contact to see the ideas in action, to create networks and to foster dialogue and discussion?

*Your notes here*

### Feedback from providers and panellists involved in the CPD QA pilot

*This document contains stories from colleagues involved in the CPD QA pilot to illustrate both short and long-term changes they have made as a result of taking part in the process. They were collected separately to Sheffield Institute of Education's independent evaluation in order to be able to be used for future marketing purposes, if necessary. All respondents have given permission for their names and responses to be used. The examples have been chosen to reflect particular key enablers and barriers highlighted throughout the two cycles of testing in Phase 2.*

#### 1. Supporting providers to raise standards

Many providers shared that submitting a portfolio of evidence as part of either Cycle 1 or 2 had been a developmental experience (whether or not this was their initial motivation for registering to take part in the pilot). They reported that as a result of being supported to engage with the QA criteria and having discussion about strengths and weaknesses, they felt their knowledge about high-quality CPD design and delivery had improved. Some have also shared the subsequent changes they have since made to their personal practice and within their organisations.

One such example of this is Exceed Institute, a Teaching School linked to a Multi-Academy Trust with 5 central members of staff designing and managing CPD programmes, and 550 further staff/facilitators/teachers across the Trust. In Cycle 1 of the CPD QA Project, Exceed submitted a single portfolio of three CPD programmes selected from its overall 'menu' of provision.

The Institute's Head of Professional Learning, Emma Dobson, returned to sit on the panel as an assessor for Cycle 2 in October 2020. Here she reflects on her experience on both sides of the process:

*I wanted to get involved in this project because I was new to post at the Teaching School. Through that initial process of submitting programmes that weren't mine, it was really interesting to critique the gaps in them. Particularly in terms of defining the intended impact of the CPD on students, **I could see by submitting various pieces of evidence that quality was there, but it wasn't consistent.***

***It's really impacted on my practice since.** We've made small changes like to our Eventbrite pages to make sure those outcomes are really clear for participants upon signing up - not just on the flyer. That level of consistency has changed.*

***But I think the biggest change for me is that I've endorsed a lot of principles in the design, content and delivery of a new project** I've just taken on across the whole Bradford Opportunity Area. My awareness of the QA criteria influenced my marketing strategy and I ended up recruiting over 100 participants! I think that's because of the clear communication of intended impact and outcomes of the CPD. Then, in terms of the design and content, **I honed in on evidence-based practice a little bit more;** making sure it's not just seen as 'dusty journals', but that participants actively engage with the research. That's heavily influenced my facilitation. **I've also gone through a really careful selection process of facilitators** - not just of their expertise, but of their pedagogical approach and ensuring that the content is fit for purpose. Going through the whole QA process has made me look critically at whether that facilitation process is always rigorous enough.*

*It wasn't just being exposed to the criteria that helped me, but the doing, discussing, and being part of a wider network. I found it really valuable being a panel member and I learned a lot from others. **It was powerful being part of a wider collegiate group.** I think if I'd been given a crib list that said 'this is what good CPD looks like', I wouldn't have got as much out of it.*

*I do feel that being exposed to what I have **has consciously and subconsciously impacted my practice.** The notion of deliberate practice - of implementing CPD and seeing it through with participants, gauging impact - that was the missing link when we initially submitted our portfolios.*

*I feel that my professional skills have improved from engaging with this process, and being more accountable to external bodies like the Opportunity Area. **They were blown away by the things that I've done as a result of what I've learned through the CPD QA project** - I've laboured over the impact strategy and KPIs. I've never known anyone at the Teaching School do that for a programme. Colleagues are very keen for me to drive this forward from a Teaching School Hub perspective. **We're keen for these principles to be at the heart of teacher development** and the Opportunity Area now wants other authorities to be able to learn from this too.*

## 2. Maximising accessibility for smaller or independent providers

Consultation responses and discussion at the CPD QA Advisory Group suggest that a common concern about a future CPD QA system is that the process might disadvantage smaller providers or independent consultants with fewer resources and less capacity to collate evidence than bigger providers or large commercial organisations. A future business model would therefore need to be accompanied by deliberate messaging and marketing which seeks to reassure smaller providers with these concerns, such as through hearing testimonials from others who have gained value from undertaking the process.

Two independent consultants submitted portfolios in Cycle 2, one of whom was Eowyn Crisfield of Crisfield Educational Consulting. Eowyn reflected:

*It definitely was a lot of work, but also really valuable. I have a lot to think about now, in terms of where to go with all of the work I've done developing this programme, and reflecting and finding evidence for the different points has been very satisfying.*

Additionally, one member of the panel who is also a CPD provider, said that having been involved in assessing others' portfolios against the CPD QA criteria, she would feel comfortable submitting her own programme without fear of being disadvantaged in comparison to commercial organisations with bigger teams or more time and capacity available:

*I think for a very small provider like the partnership that I'm part of, the CPD evaluation process is still very manageable. We would be confident about filling in the documentation and providing evidence and would simply draw on resources and evidence that we already have. It would not be an onerous task.*

*Even if we were less experienced or our provision was less research informed than it currently is, I still think that we would want to engage with the process and would benefit from the feedback we would be given. Any organisation that's really committed to benefiting teachers and students should want to self-evaluate and improve.*

*It's also very important to us that the process is rigorous, otherwise schools will not buy into it. We want an efficient and robust process that people buy into because it will ultimately benefit us, both professionally and financially.*

#### **Further testimonials:**

*"I just want to say thank you for the opportunity to take part in the process and I have definitely found it extremely useful and informative. There has been huge benefit for me and the English team in engaging in this process." Samantha Chapman, Babcock International*

*"This is fantastic feedback, really helpful to get an external view to help sharpen how we see it ourselves. We will look carefully at how we can incorporate this feedback into making the next iteration of our programme even more robust." Sarah Houghton, Place2Be*