1. **NMC Education Standards**: The Nursing and Midwifery Council appointed IFF Research to undertake independent evaluation of the pre-registration nursing and midwifery standards. NMC Council will be discussing IFF’s findings on 27 January with the expectation that new pre-registration standards will be published by the end of 2017. The NMC has confirmed (via a letter in December 2015) that they will automatically extend the approval of all current pre-registration programmes until 31 August 2019 to accommodate the review and transition to the new standards. If AEIs wish to proceed with programme reapproval whilst new standards are being developed, they may do so. The NMC has requested that AEIs notify them by Monday 28 January if they intend to continue with new programme development during the current or next academic year.

2. **NMC Revalidation**: With NMC revalidation set to start in April this year, we are running a workshop on 11 February in London to help prepare NMC registered staff working in universities and wider university staff. Information and registration details. Members are reminded that for registrants whose renewal date is April 2016, online applications open 60 days before and during this time registrants will need to log into their application via their NMC online account and address each of the revalidation requirements.

3. **Health and Care Professions Council, Amendments to the Registration and Fees Rules and Practice Committee Rules**: We responded to the consultation in January. Our response supported plans to replace the requirement for applicants to provide a character reference when they apply for registration with a self-declaration.

4. **HCPC Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students**: The HCPC has asked for Council feedback particularly relating to plans to change wording on delegation. Our response will be submitted by the closing date on 29 January and comments should be sent to Rachel Craine.

5. **HCPC Review of Standards of Education and Training (SETs)**: The HCPC Professional Liaison Group on the SETs review meets in late January. So far, issues that the group has discussed include: inter-professional education and ‘values’ in education, with practice placements expected to be a key theme at the next meeting.

6. **Health Professional Regulation Review**: Health Minister Ben Gummer made a brief statement on 17 December on health professional regulation, announcing an intention to consult on a review of regulation and referencing the Professional Standards Authority’s paper Rethinking Regulation. A consultation on reviewing health professional regulation would be significant and we will be monitoring developments over the coming months.

7. **REF Review**: The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has appointed Lord Stern to lead a review of the Research Excellence Framework, which is expected to report in summer 2016. The review will include options for future iterations of REF,
focusing on a ‘simpler, lighter-touch method of research assessment’. We will be responding to any call for evidence or consultation in due course.

8. **AHP Prescribing**: Following a consultation on proposals to introduce independent prescribing by radiographers and paramedics; supplementary prescribing by dieticians and the use of exemption within the Human Medicines Regulations (2012) by orthoptists, the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM) has concluded that it is:
   - Unable to recommend independent prescribing for diagnostic radiographers on the grounds that there was insufficient information as to the range of conditions they might be expected to prescribe for, and how they would be trained in the assessment and diagnosis of these conditions.
   - Able to recommend the case for independent prescribing by therapeutic radiographers
   - Unable to recommend independent prescribing by paramedics on the basis that they encounter a wide range of conditions and it was not clear if training is adequate in assessment and diagnosis. Further information on pages 3-6 of the summary of the CHM meeting held on 15/16 October 2015.
   - Able to agree in principle to the proposals for dietitians (supplementary prescribing) and orthoptists (use of exemptions). Further information on pages 2-4 of the summary of the CHM meeting held on 17/18 September 2015.

Any recommendations from the CHM are subject to ministerial approval.

9. **The Future Nurse**: We are using feedback from workshops at the Full Council meeting last October to structure a paper setting out the Council’s vision about what the future registered nurse will look like. This work aligns closely with work the NMC is currently undertaking. We have agreed to hold a joint event with the NMC in March 2016 which will focus on the future nurse and the outcomes for the future Standards of Education. Further details will be announced in the Policy Bulletin.

10. **Learning Disability Nursing**: The Council attended LIDNAN’s meeting in December to agree how best to take forward the recommendations in our joint report on promoting LD competence in other field of nursing pre-registration education.

11. **Podiatry**: We recently attended a College of Podiatry meeting to discuss and understand issues affecting the profession such as sustainability and funding. We will be inviting the College to one of our Executive Team meetings to explore the issues in greater detail and how the Council may be able to support the profession.

12. **AHPs in Public Health**: Following publication of the report of a joint scoping project with Public Health England looking at how public health skills and knowledge are delivered within AHP pre-registration curricula, #WeAHPs will be leading a twitterchat on 28 January which will be guest hosted by @HindleLinda and @councilofdeans on Equipping AHPs in Public Health.

13. **Florence Nightingale Foundation/Council of Deans of Health Leadership Scholarships**: Our new health higher education leadership scholars for 2015/16 are: Sarah Green, University of the West of England; Alison Twycross, London South
Bank University; Karen Strickland, Robert Gordon University; and Tracey Moore, University of Sheffield.

14. **Member visits:** We have had a good response from members asking us for visits. These visits are an important opportunity for us to understand and discuss members' specific issues and priorities and to brief members and their staff about the Council, our work and HE health policy. If you would like a visit, please contact Jon Eames.

**England**

15. **Spending Review: Pre-registration Education Funding Reform:** The changes to the funding arrangements for pre-registration nursing, midwifery and AHP education in England from 1 August 2017 have prompted significant discussion, including an Adjournment Debate and Westminster Hall Debate within the House of Commons. We expect the consultation on implementation of the reforms to be launched in February and are currently in discussion with both DH and BIS officials on the key areas that may be included. Following our internal seminar in December, we plan to host another meeting in March to shape our consultation feedback. We have also begun planning our communications work and will be asking all members in England for a communications contact point in February.

16. **Higher Education Green Paper: Fulfilling Our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice:** We have responded to the higher education Green Paper and have published a briefing paper. A detailed consultation on the TEF is expected later this year and the Council will be responding.

17. **BMP/Contract, 2016/17:** UUK and CoDH will be meeting with HEE’s Chief Executive and Director of Finance on 12 February, the earliest it has been possible to secure a meeting to discuss 2016/17 in the light of HEE’s financial settlement in the Spending Review.

18. **“Nursing Associates”:** Health Minister Ben Gummer has announced a plan to create a new nursing support role, provisionally called nursing associates. There is little information available on a series of important questions posed by the announcement (including regulation, scope of practice and funding model). There will be a consultation on the specifics of the scope of the role which is expected to be announced in January.

19. **Apprenticeships:** Alongside the announcement of the ‘nursing associate’ proposal, the Government has also signalled support for an apprenticeship route to becoming a registered nurse. Since an apprenticeship is a framework for qualifications rather than a qualification itself, it would be possible to embed a pre-registration programme working to the NMC Standards into an apprenticeship (similar to the secondment model). However, there are a number of obstacles to this and previous discussions of this model in 2013 and 2014 could not overcome these. Some early communications that juxtapose the ‘university’ and ‘apprenticeship’ routes suggest a lack of understanding of both existing work-based learning and the set AEI responsibilities within the NMC Standards.
20. **Shape of Caring**: NMC Council will consider the NMC’s response to the eight recommendations which are applicable to them at their Council meeting on 27 January.

21. **HEE Commissioning and Investment Plan, 2016/17**: HEE has published the proposed education and training commissions for 2016/17 (see page 13). There have been marginal increases in some nursing fields and cuts in most of the allied health professions. Among nursing and midwifery places: adult up 1.8%, learning disability - 3.9% decrease, mental health 3.1% increase, no change for children's nurses and midwifery. There are increases for diagnostic radiography (1.4%), paramedics (53.8%) and orthoptics (1.3%) and no change for orthotics/prosthetics. There is a decrease for the other AHPs, with the largest decrease for podiatry (-9.7%).

**Northern Ireland**

Updates to be given at the Council’s AGM

**Scotland**

22. **Scottish Government announcement: nursing and midwifery students**: The Scottish Government has confirmed a 5.6% increase in the number of nursing and midwifery students for 2016/17 with bursary levels protected at existing levels.

Further updates to be given at the Council’s AGM

**Wales**

23. **Cyngor Work Programme/Policy Support**: Cyngor is developing a work programme based on the themes: workforce development, education and development, election manifesto, clinical academic careers and modernising careers. They will also be considering the funding of health professions’ education following the changes announced in England. The Council in conjunction with Cyngor will also consider what policy support is required to support the delivery of the work programme.

24. **Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Bill**: The Bill passed through Stage 2 on 25 November 2015. The word ‘Safe’ has been removed from the title of the Bill. The Bill has moved the Stage 3 proceeding which will consider amendments to the Bill (as amended at Stage 2). The deadline for tabling amendments is 27 January 2016.

18 January 2016. Further details: Fleur Nielsen, Head of Policy, CoDH.