

**The Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for
Nursing and Midwifery**

**ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN
2021 – 2022**

***Leading and inspiring nurses and midwives to
achieve and uphold excellence in professional
practice***

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Introduction

The Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council (NIPEC) Annual Business Plan for 2021-22 details how we will make best use of our resources to achieve our strategic objectives, as set out in our Corporate Plan 2017-21¹.

It also details how we plan to improve how we work by:

- Continuing to strengthen a culture of critical enquiry and quality improvement and the use of best available evidence, feedback from stakeholder engagement and other available information sources
- Demonstrating that NIPEC is an agile and flexible organisation which can respond quickly to strategic priorities and in particular the challenges presented by the global COVID-19 pandemic
- Promoting and facilitating innovation and reform underpinned by co-production and co-design
- Maintaining competent and professional staff and promoting and supporting continuous improvement and learning
- Ensuring that NIPEC's functions are underpinned by robust governance and outcomes based accountability framework.

NIPEC's Purpose, Value, Vision and Mission

During 2021-22 NIPEC will be guided by its Corporate Plan 2017-21 which sets out our purpose, our values, our vision and our mission.

Our Purpose

NIPEC was established in 2002 under the Health and Personal Social Services Act Northern Ireland (2002) as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by the DoH.

¹ Please note that NIPEC's sponsoring branch (The Department of Health) have agreed that due to the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic situation, NIPEC should roll forward their Corporate Plan by one year.

NIPEC's Statutory Responsibilities

To promote:

- high standards of practice among nurses and midwives
- high standards of education and learning for nurses and midwives
- professional development of nurses and midwives

and provide:

- guidance on best practice for nurses and midwives
- advice and information on matters relating to nursing and midwifery

Source: *Health and Personal Social Services Act Northern Ireland (2002)*

Achievement of NIPEC's statutory responsibilities is also laid out within its 'Management Statement & Financial Memorandum' as approved by the previous Minister of Health and Department of Finance which sets out the rules and guidance relevant to the exercise of NIPEC's functions, duties and powers as well as how it is held to account for its performance.

Our Values

NIPEC is a unique person-centred organisation guided by a set of values that directly impacts on what we do and how we do it.

Our values, summarised below, reflect that our functions are set in a context of the requirement for all nurses and midwives to adhere to the Nursing and Midwifery Council's (NMC) *Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates*².



² NMC (2018) *The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates*. London: NMC. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/nmc-publications/nmc-code.pdf>

NIPEC is committed to the promotion of good relations between people of differing religious belief, political opinion and, or racial group. As a health and social care organisation we are committed to promoting respect for diversity and to challenging sectarianism and racism in both employment and services. These values will provide a constant reference point for our organisation as we seek to implement the Corporate Plan: 2017-21.

Our Vision

Our vision has been informed through a series of engagement events with our stakeholders, including the public. That means that our vision has been defined by the people with whom, and for whom, we work.

Our vision reflects the intention to work as an organisation that will continue to be:



Our Mission

What we do:

NIPEC aims to further promote the highest standards of practice, education and professional development of nurses and midwives to facilitate the delivery of safe, effective, compassionate, person-centred care and services.

Strategic Context

This Annual Business Plan 2021-22 is influenced by a range of Global, UK and Northern Ireland (NI) strategies and policies including the following:

Rebuilding Health and Social Care Services

The COVID-19 global pandemic dramatically changed the landscape of the Health and Social Care (HSC) system in Northern Ireland as services were significantly reconfigured in order to respond to the pandemic challenge and reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

In June 2020 the Minister of Health, took steps to temporarily change the current governance and accountability arrangements in the Health and Social Care Framework Document

(September 2011)³ and publish the 'Strategic Framework for Rebuilding Health and Social Care Services'⁴. The Strategic Framework provided an analysis of the adverse impact of COVID-19 on the health care system since March 2020 and sets out the approach to rebuilding HSC services as quickly as possible while achieving the right balance between delivering COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 activity. A new temporary management board was created with responsibility for providing oversight and direction on the implementation of the Department of Health's (DoH) 'Strategic Framework for Rebuilding HSC Services'³ for the next two years.

Along with the emergency response to the pandemic the DoH took action to preserve the highest priority essential services such as maternity care and many cancer treatments however it had a significant impact on other HSC services as demonstrated in the Rebuilding HSC Services Strategic Framework³.

There was significant learning from the experience of the first wave of the pandemic and preparations were put in place to be ready and respond to further potential COVID-19 waves taking into consideration the normal winter pressures while maintaining non COVID-19 services as much as possible. In October 2020 the Minister for Health launched the Surge Planning Strategic Framework⁵ which outlined a high level overview of learning from the first wave of the pandemic as well as a number of regional approaches to service delivery in areas such as elective care, orthopaedic services and care homes, to ensure that the HSC is prepared for future surges. In addition, individual Trusts continue to develop their ongoing individual surge planning.

In December 2020 and following a significant increase in coronavirus (COVID-19) cases, the NI Executive imposed a six week lockdown to take effect from 26th December 2020. This was reviewed on 21st January 2021 and further extended to 5th March 2021⁶.

NIPEC have played an active role in supporting the DoH in these challenging times. The organisation quickly reviewed its priorities in order to support the HSC from the outset of the pandemic and a number of NIPEC COVID-19 specific objectives were agreed by NIPEC's Council and the DoH through an updated Business plan.

Nursing and Midwifery Council

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) made some operational changes at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, to prioritise its core regulatory functions and ensure it continued to regulate nurses, midwives and nursing associates effectively.

³ Department Of Health, Social Services And Public Safety (2011) The Health and Social Care Framework Document (The Framework Document). Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/dhssps-framework-document-september-2011>.

⁴ Department of Health (2020) Rebuilding Health and Social Care Services – Strategic Framework. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/rebuilding-hsc.pdf>

⁵ Department of Health (2020) Surge Planning Strategic Framework. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/winter-surge-plans>.

⁶ <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guide-restrictions-january-2021>

On the 25 March 2020 the UK government introduced new emergency legislation that allowed the NMC to set up a COVID-19 emergency temporary register⁷. This enabled the NMC to expand the nursing and midwifery workforce during the COVID-19 response by reaching out to those who had retired or lapsed their registration within the last three years and provide opportunities for the early registration for overseas staff.

The NMC also published Emergency Standards for Nursing and Midwifery Education⁸ which allowed more flexibility for the delivery of pre-registration nursing and midwifery programmes whilst contributing to clinical services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the pandemic continues, the NMC agreed on the 30 September 2020 to phase out these emergency standards and replace them with the NMC Recovery Programme Standards⁹ to support students to return to their normal studies and supernumerary status. NIPEC worked closely with the NMC, DoH, education and practice partners to develop a range of resources and provide support within practice settings.

In response to the consultation about the new education standards for preregistration education of nurses and midwives, it was highlighted that support for new registrants should be a key priority; the NMC updated their previous position on preceptorship and aligned their principles to the new pre-registration education standards. The NIPEC Preceptorship Framework was integral to the development of the NMC Principles for Preceptorship¹⁰ which was created in collaboration with the four Chief Nursing and Chief Midwifery Officers in the UK.

The NMC have also established a UK wide steering group to lead the review of the post - registration standards of proficiency and the associated programme standards for Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN) and Specialist Practice Qualification standards (SPQ)¹¹. NIPEC are supporting this continuing project through representation on this Steering group and regularly respond to consultations on this NMC work stream.

In September 2020 the NMC launched *Caring with Confidence: The Code in Action*¹². This is a series of bite-sized animations demonstrating how the Code can help professionals to feel confident about their decisions and actions in these challenging times and beyond. The animations focus on key themes about nursing and midwifery professionals' roles, and how the Code can support them to uphold high standards, especially in difficult situations.

⁷ United Kingdom Government legislation (2020) Coronavirus Act 2020. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/7/contents/enacted/data.htm>

⁸ Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) (2020) Emergency standards for nursing and midwifery education. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/education-standards/emergency-standards-for-nursing-and-midwifery-education.pdf>

⁹ Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) (2020) Recovery programme standards. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/education-standards/recovery-programme-standards.pdf>

¹⁰ Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) (2020). Principles for Preceptorship Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/nmc-publications/nmc-principles-for-preceptorship-a5.pdf>

¹¹ Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). Reviewing our post-registration standards. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/education/programme-of-change-for-education/reviewing-our-post-registration-standards/>

¹² Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). Caring with Confidence: The Code in Action. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/news/news-and-updates/code-in-action>.

In February 2021 the NMC published a new resource *Managing Concerns*¹³ to support employers of nurses and midwives in taking effective action when concerns are raised about someone's practise.

Nursing Now 2020

The three-year global *Nursing Now* campaign (2018-20) was planned to conclude in 2020, to coincide with global celebrations associated with the International Year of the Nurse and Year of the Midwife 2020 and the 200th birthday of Florence Nightingale.

A number of celebratory events were planned in Northern Ireland to celebrate, and raise the profile and the reputation of nursing and midwifery, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic many of these events were cancelled or delivered via other mediums.

A virtual exhibition *Florence Nightingale – Nursing and Midwifery 200 Years* was launched by the Florence Nightingale Foundation and the National Museums Northern Ireland¹⁴ in June to highlight the contribution that nursing and midwifery has made to life in Northern Ireland. The special exhibition explored the vital work of nurses and midwives through two centuries of nursing, covering themes such as nursing in wartime, nursing during the Troubles, and nursing education and innovation in Northern Ireland.

The role and positive contribution of nurses and midwives in stepping up to the challenging COVID-19 emergency response continues to demonstrate the dedication, commitment and compassion of the professions especially in times of need.

The Global Leadership Development Programme forms part of the 2020 Nightingale Challenge Northern Ireland, which aims to equip and empower the next generation of nurses and midwives as leaders, practitioners and advocates in health and build a cadre of strong politically astute nursing and midwifery leaders, well positioned to play a full part in strengthening nursing and midwifery in Northern Ireland.

Dr Catherine Hannaway, Programme Director for the 2020 Nightingale Challenge Global Leadership Development Programme in Northern Ireland attended the NIPEC conference in March 2020 to meet with the 30 young nurses and midwives who are attending this programme. NIPEC fully supports this initiative and provides mentorship support to one of the students.

The *Nursing Now* campaign is extended to May 2021 and continues to celebrate the contribution by nurses and midwives to improving health globally and strengthening health systems – not only through their frontline actions but also through leadership, advocacy and partnership working. Nursing Now's legacy will continue through the *Nursing Now Challenge* and through the on-going work of its group network¹⁵.

¹³ Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Managing concerns: a resource for employers. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/employer-resource/>.

¹⁴ Florence Nightingale Virtual Exhibition. (2020) Available at: <https://www.nmni.com/our-museums/ulster-museum/Florence-Nightingale-Virtual-Exhibition.aspx>.

¹⁵ <https://www.nursingnow.org/nightingale-challenge-to-become-the-nursing-now-challenge/>

EU Exit

The UK left the EU on 31 December 2020 and the Government reached a Trade and Cooperation Agreement on the UK's future relationship with the EU. The European Union Future Relationship Bill came into effect on 1 January 2021.

DoH will continue to provide updates to HSC organisations about the agreement and its impact on health and social care service organisations and providers, including information relating to the Northern Ireland Protocol.

The NMC have been working closely with the UK Government to minimise any disruption to the UK workforce during the transition period. NIPEC will continue to monitor and support the changes that take place.

Programme for Government

The NI Assembly was restored on Saturday, 11 January 2020, having been dissolved for just over three years. Although work commenced on the implementation of the priorities in the *New Decade, New Approach*¹⁶ deal to strengthen public services and to tackle challenges in the economy, health, education and housing, the Coronavirus pandemic resulted in a sharp downturn in productivity across all sectors and a concomitant increase in poverty, hospital waiting lists and increased waiting times for cancer screenings and diagnoses. The DoH has tried to act nimbly to increase the numbers of nurses on the front line by putting in place emergency measures for student measures, implementing recruitment drives to encourage nurses and midwives who had left or retired back to the workplace and enhancing the digital interface to enable remote working.

The four population based outcomes, from the reform agenda were never more apparent than in the lock down decisions taken at the various stages of the pandemic:

- We enjoy long, healthy and active lives
- We give our children and young people the best start in life
- We care for others and we help those in need
- We have high quality public services.

What was previously thought an ambitious 10 year programme of change for health and social care outlined in, *Health and Well Being 2026: Delivering Together*¹⁷ has certainly been fast tracked during the pandemic in relation to all of the key aims:

- Moving towards a model of care focused on provision of services close to home;

¹⁶ Smith, J. and Coveney, S. (2020). *New decade, New Approach*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/856998/2020-01-08_a_new_decade_a_new_approach.pdf

¹⁷ Department of Health (2016) *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together*. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/health-and-wellbeing-2026-delivering-together.pdf>.

- Concentrating specialised procedures on a smaller number of sites;
- Increasing emphasis on prediction, prevention and health promotion rather than 'reactive' care;
- Providing a structure for better citizen engagement;
- Investing in and building capacity within existing health and social care networks; and
- Investing in eHealth to support improved self-management, care at home and use of information.

The main casualty however in health terms has been increased waiting times for cancer screening and treatment, elective surgery and long term condition management.

NIPEC's business will continue to be influenced by a range of broader extant and emerging strategies and policies that drive reform and transformation of services for example:

- Quality 2020¹⁸;
- Making Life Better¹⁹;
- The Right Time, The Right Place²⁰;
- HSC Collective Leadership Strategy²¹.
- DoH Co-production guide²²

Nursing and Midwifery Task Group Report

The Health Minister launched the Nursing and Midwifery Task Group Report²³ at the NIPEC annual conference in early March 2020, having accepted almost all of the recommendations put forward by the independent Nursing and Midwifery Task group. The Minister commended the report saying that it "points the way to a new era for nursing and midwifery in Northern Ireland."

The Report sets out the critical issues facing nursing and midwifery within the context of the evolving health and social care needs of the population in Northern Ireland over the next 10-15 years. The Task Group report also highlights that the voice of nursing and midwifery has been listened to and heard within the context of transforming the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care System.

¹⁸ Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2011) *Quality 2020: A 10 Year Strategy to Protect and Improve Quality in Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland*. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/q2020-strategy.pdf>

¹⁹ Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2014) *Making Life Better. A Whole System Strategic Framework for Public Health 2013 – 2023*. Available at: https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/making-life-better-strategic-framework-2013-2023_0.pdf.

²⁰ Donaldson, L. Rutter, P. & Henderson, N. (2014) *The Right Time, The Right Place*. Available at: https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/donaldsonreport270115_0.pdf.

²¹ Department of Health (2017) *HSC Collective Leadership Strategy*. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/hsc-collective-leadership-strategy>

²² Department of Health (2018) *Co-Production Guide for Northern Ireland: Connecting and realising value through people*. Available at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/HSCB-Co-Production-Guide.pdf>.

²³ Department of Health (2020) Nursing and Midwifery Task Group (NMTG) Report and Recommendations. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/nursing-and-midwifery-task-group-nmtg-report-and-recommendations>

The report, adopts a three phased approach aligned to three strategic themes:

1. Stabilise the nursing and midwifery workforce to ensure safe and effective care.
2. Strengthen the role that nursing and midwifery play in population and public health planning.
3. Enhancing the role nurses and midwives play within multi-disciplinary teams as part of the wider transformation of the health and social care system.

Implementation of this plan will be overseen by the DOH's Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) in partnership with the Central Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Committee (CNMAC) and in partnership with trade unions. NIPEC is well placed to support this significant work as it taken forward.

Digital Practice

Northern Ireland (NI) is planning to digitally enable HSC services through an ambitious whole system digital change programme over the next ten years that includes the adoption of a citizen-focused Electronic Health Care Record (EHCR), across integrated, multi-professional services, taking into account the diverse range of health and social care needs of the population. This digital transformation programme, mandated in policy through the EHealth and Care Strategy 2016-2020 (Health and Social Care Board, 2016)²⁴, aims to empower people to be more active in their own care through developing both information technologies for health and social care, and staff and citizens to use them. Nursing and midwifery is the largest professional group in NI healthcare (Northern Ireland Audit Office, 2018)²⁵ with significant potential to enable the required service change. During 2019-20 the Transforming Nursing and Midwifery Data (TNMD) programme began the important work of preparing the professions to adopt digital change. The preparation of the professions of nursing and midwifery and the opportunity to influence transformational digital change across practice areas continues to be a focus of NIPEC's work into the new business planning year. This includes for example: approaches to learning and development, communication and engagement with stakeholders through online meetings and webinars, representing nursing and midwifery practice in digital records of the future and supporting digital capabilities across the professions.

Enabling Professionalism in Nursing and Midwifery Practice

*Enabling Professionalism in Nursing and Midwifery Practice*²⁶ aims to describe, what professionalism looks like in practice in order to support the everyday application of the NMC's professional Code¹ in health and social care settings across the UK. For employers, it identifies key principles that would help them provide practice environments that supported and encouraged professionalism among nurses and midwives. NIPEC will continue to

²⁴ Health and Social Care Board. (2016). *EHealth and Care Strategy for Northern Ireland*. Belfast, HSCB.

²⁵ Northern Ireland Audit Office (2018). *Workforce planning for nurses and midwives*. Available at: <https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/workforce-planning-nurses-and-midwives>

²⁶ Chief Nursing officers for the UK and Nursing and Midwifery Council (2017) *Enabling Professionalism in Nursing and Midwifery*. [Bit.ly/CNOsProfessionalism](https://bit.ly/CNOsProfessionalism)

evidence the Enabling Professionalism framework, winding a ‘golden thread’ through all its business objectives within future business plans.

Over the last year, NIPEC has been working with the Chief Nursing Officers of the UK and Ireland expanding Enabling Professionalism to support the understanding of the public relating to the importance of the diverse roles of nurses and midwives and impact to population health and wellbeing.

NIPEC has continued to focus its efforts on supporting nurses and midwives to successfully adopt and implement the resources which are relevant to specific areas of practice and/or teams.

NIPEC plays a particular role in supporting the vision and objectives of the CNO in the continued pursuit of excellence in the delivery of nursing and midwifery services to the population of Northern Ireland. This support will continue to be offered at this key time of change and opportunity within Northern Ireland.

NIPEC’s Work in 2020-21

During the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, NIPEC continued to fulfil its Statutory Functions as stated in the NIPEC’s Management Statement Financial Memorandum²⁷. During the emergency response many of the objectives within NIPEC’s draft Business Plan 2020-21 were temporarily stood down for a short time to refocus the priorities of the Organisation in support of the Department of Health in its emergency response to the pandemic. This was fully supported by NIPEC’s Chair and the CNO.

In line with government policy and advice, and to control and prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, NIPEC offices were temporarily closed on the 16 March 2020 with restricted access to staff for the purposes of business continuity only. NIPEC quickly enabled staff to work remotely from home within the first few weeks of the restrictions.

NIPEC positioned itself at the outset to provide professional support and advice across a range of services. It also realigned its portfolio to support the DoH and Public Health Agency (PHA) in its emergency response. A range of new specific COVID-19 objectives emerged as a result of the pandemic demonstrating the flexible and innovative approaches adopted by NIPEC. This is briefly summarised in the following:

COVID-19 and Rebuild Specific Business Objectives

- *Future Nurse Future Midwife (FNFM)* – COVID-19 Emergency Standards⁶ for Nursing and Midwifery were introduced to ensure that students would have the appropriate supervision and support during a time when the healthcare workforce would be under significant pressure. The NMC Emergency Standards for Nursing and Midwifery Education enabled students to achieve their learning outcomes and provide more

²⁷ Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council (NIPEC) (2017) Management statement between the Department of Health and Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery. Belfast: NIPEC

flexibility regarding student supervision and assessment during the COVID-19 response. NIPEC worked closely with the NMC, the DoH, and the three AEIs to provide invaluable and timely support within practice settings, developing a range of resources to assist registrants in practice in the adoption of the NMC Emergency Standards for Pre and Post Registration education.

- *Development of Visitors and Chaplaincy Guidance during the COVID-19 Pandemic:* In order to protect patients, their families and all healthcare staff from the spread of the COVID-19 virus the HSC system temporarily restricted the number of visitors across HSC Organisations. This also impacted on the ability to provide a normal chaplaincy service within hospitals. In the early phase of the emergency response, NIPEC supported the CNO and the PHA by drafting regional guidance for both Hospital Visiting and Hospital Chaplaincy Services.
- *Supporting the Infection Prevention Control (IPC) Teams in Care Homes in the HSC Belfast Trust during the COVID-19 Pandemic:* A range of methods were put in place to provide direct advice and guidance in managing outbreaks and limiting the onward spread of COVID-19 in Care Homes. In collaboration with the PHA, a NIPEC Senior Professional Officer worked as part of the IPC Team in the HSC Belfast Trust to visit Care Homes and provide IPC advice and guidance.
- *CNO COVID-19 Professional Digital Communication Platform:* It was essential during the COVID-19 Pandemic that the CNO and the DoH had an effective communication process in place to provide nurses and midwives, healthcare support staff and students with an easy way of sourcing the most up-to-date comprehensive COVID-19 advice and guidance. In partnership with the DoH, NIPEC has developed a CNO COVID-19 webpage/microsite on the NIPEC website which provides a platform for the CNO and the DoH to reach the Nursing and Midwifery family across Northern Ireland. This CNO COVID-19 Professional Digital Communication Platform provides up-to-date advice and guidance, shared information, good news stories and key public health messages. The platform has been updated on a weekly basis and shared across a broad range of stakeholders including the Independent & Voluntary Sectors using social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook and the NIPEC Website.
- *Expanding the Capacity of the Nursing and Midwifery Workforce in Northern Ireland during Surge Demand of COVID-19:* Under the Enabling Professionalism umbrella, and in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, NIPEC researched, prepared and developed a surge capacity microsite for the Nursing workforce working within Nursing Homes which was launched by the CNO during October 2020. This development was supported via engagement with colleagues across the HSC system, including experts in Critical Care, Human Resources and staff side organisations and consultation with HSC Trust senior nursing and midwifery teams and the Independent and Voluntary sector. The microsite provides professional guidance and help for decision making during periods of surge demand of the pandemic on a range of topics e.g.: workforce deployment, delegation and record keeping.

- An essential aspect of the Rebuild agenda is to increase the capacity of the perioperative nursing workforce. The CNO has commissioned this project to promote a career in perioperative nursing and develop a career pathway to support the development of registered and non-registered nursing staff. A Steering Group has been established with membership from HSC Trusts, Education Providers, Professional Bodies and NIPEC Council. It also includes representation from the Royal College of Surgeons and Royal College of Anaesthetists. Surveys and Online zoom sessions are being used to engage with service users including those who have had surgical procedures, staff and students. The Steering Group will focus on a recruitment campaign, review of student nurse practice placements and the development of a career pathway.
- A principle based approach to nurse staffing arrangements in hospital based care environments to support Delivering Care policy arrangements during periods of surge demand on services.

Following the initial surge of the pandemic, NIPEC incrementally recommenced its core work programmes across all its statutory functions. NIPEC will continue to respond flexibly to surges in the pandemic and support DoH strategic priorities identified through the Strategic Framework³.

NIPEC's 2021-22 Business Plan will also, where appropriate reflect the priorities of the DoH in support of nursing and midwifery and continues to proactively engage with its full range of stakeholders to inform the priorities of the organisation.

Staff Development

NIPEC's successful achievement of its business objectives is enabled by the dedicated and focused work and commitment of its entire staff. NIPEC is committed to investing in its workforce and staff continued to be engaged in a range of learning and development activities during 2020-21.

Embedding Quality Improvement (QI)

NIPEC has focused on developing its staff in improvement science and QI methodologies in line with the implementation of the *Q2020 Attributes Framework (AF)*²⁸. During 2019-20 all staff were engaged in a QI project however with the move to remote working in April 2020 this project was stood down. Building on the experience and flexibility of its committed staff NIPEC was innovative in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic and used QI methodologies to develop, test and implement protocols to support effective remote working including:

- Use of video conferencing and other technologies to support home working

²⁸ Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2014) *Q2020 Attributes Framework*. Available at: https://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/quality_strategy_2020

- Development of 'Working from Home' and 'Office Working' Standard Operating Procedures

HSC Leadership Development

NIPEC strives to be an outward facing organisation: providing leadership for a positive impact and endeavouring to hold the respect of a wide range of stakeholders within a 'values based' approach. NIPEC's approach to its work reflects the approach outlined in the *HSC Collective Leadership Strategy (2017)*¹⁷ and staff continue to be supported, often remotely, to develop their collective leadership skills through engaging in videoconferencing calls, developing surveys and seeking staff views in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

NIPEC Stakeholder Engagement

NIPEC's main vehicle of communication [NIPEC | NIPEC \(hscni.net\)](https://hscni.net) was even more important during 2020-21 as nurses and midwives across NI became more familiar and confident using on line facilities to seek information and attend meetings, workshops and conferences via videoconferencing.

During 2020-21 NIPEC updated its main website to ensure that it was fit for purpose in terms of both reach and legislative requirements. The updated website went 'live' in February 2021.

As outlined previously (page 13) NIPEC's website hosted two essential digital platforms which provided nurses and midwives with easy access to information necessary to support them within practice:

- CNO digital Platform
- COVID-19 Surge Capacity Website

NIPEC has continued to enhance its engagement with stakeholders through social media forums such as; Facebook and Twitter which has seen an increase in its followers. Previously there was a move towards Twitter chats however this did not prove an effective way of communicating with registrants and therefore NIPEC is exploring alternative means of engagement to promote resources and projects.

NIPEC's roadshow approach in arranging and visiting the HSC Trust locations to meet directly with frontline registrants had to be revised due to the government restrictions. NIPEC's Chief Executive and the Senior Professional Officers launched a video clip promoting NIPEC's resources and programmes of work. This is available on the NIPEC website and promoted through various social media forums for registrants to access.

A survey seeking feedback from registrants on NIPEC resources and suggestions for potential future work across Professional Development, Practice, Education and in relation to Advice, Guidance and Information was also launched through the social media forums.

NIPEC was able to continue its roadshows for third year students in Queen's University Belfast, Ulster University and Open University via videoconferencing.

Moving forward during 2021-22, NIPEC will continue to review and further develop its approach to engagement with its stakeholders as services continue to rebuild and new methodologies and technologies become available.

Delivery of key organisational objectives including Covid-19 pandemic related work detailed in the Business Plan 2020-21 and associated work plan includes the following:

Practice:

Recording Care

This regional initiative supported through the 'Transforming Nursing and Midwifery Data' programme of work continued to transform practice, prepare and support the nursing and midwifery professions to lead and implement transformational change and champion an innovative approach to recording plans of nursing and midwifery care across practice and service settings. This work also aligned well with the impending digital transformation expected through the Encompass programme of work and includes:

- Finalisation of core data sets for District Nursing, Children's in-patient, short stay and ambulatory services and Adult Short stay services.
- Support to initiate an evaluative study of the PACE care planning approach in HSC adult hospital based environments.
- Development of resources to support the continued implementation of the PACE approach to care planning.
- Support for the production of a systematic literature review exploring the impact of standardised nursing terminologies on nursing and midwifery practice as part of collaboration across the four UK countries and Ireland.
- Support for testing of the recommendations of the literature review within practice settings in Northern Ireland in partnership with Queens University Belfast and the University of Ulster.
- Support for collaborative conversations relating to building capacity and capabilities for digital practice for nurses and midwives in Northern Ireland.
- Consultation on and review of an all-Ireland Digital Capabilities Framework for Nursing and Midwifery

Supervision

- Produced a graphically designed final draft version of the Reflective Supervision Framework for nurses and midwives in Northern Ireland and aligned resources.
- Developed and agreed a methodology to support small scale testing in of the Reflective Supervision Framework.
- Initiated the small scale testing of the Reflective Supervision Framework for nurses and midwives in Northern Ireland across the five HSC Trusts.

Education:

Future Nurse Future Midwife

During 2020-21 NIPEC continued to lead the implementation of the Future Nurse Future Midwife standards (NMC 2018). The successes for this project have been:

- Establishment of a NIPEC FNFM webpage which hosts a range of FNFM Resources
- Support across the three Universities for NMC approval visits
- Development of a NI Practice Assessment Document (NIPAD) tailored for each field of practice and a NIPAD Practice Learning Handbook
- Development of a Practice Learning Environment Education Audit Tool for Practice Learning Experience applicable for both Nursing and Midwifery
- Development of a range of resources to support implementation of the NMC Education Standards in practice including SSSA preparation programmes (New to Role and Transitioning programmes)
- Establishment of the Northern Ireland Practice Learning Collaborative
- Pre-registration section of the NI Nursing and Midwifery Careers website updated in preparation for publication in June 2021
- Establishment of the Midwifery Expert Reference Group (MERG) with associated Future Midwife work streams
- Successful widespread communication and engagement promoted through NIPEC's website and social media platforms to HSC Trusts, Voluntary and Independent Sector organisations across NI which includes communiques videos and Future Nurse countdown clock.
- Development of a range of resources in partnership with the Independent Sector (e.g. information leaflet focusing on COVID 19 and student placements) to support the Non HSC Organisations toward full implementation of the NMC FNFM Standards.

Review of the HSC Learning Agreement Template

Reviewed and updated the regional HSC Learning Agreement Template to the new Learning Agreement and Evaluation on Learning Framework (2021) to support nurses, midwives and their Line Managers capture the impact and outcomes on practice of undertaking commissioned education programmes

Professional Development:

Enabling Professionalism

- Continued to progress a programme of work linked to the *Enabling Professionalism* framework to support the five country Government Chief Nursing Officers of the United Kingdom and Ireland take forward a collaborative work stream as part of their response to the Year of the Nurse 2020 and the Nursing Now Campaign 2020.
- Produced a website to support the professions during periods of surge demand activity across HSC and independent and voluntary sector organisations.

Career Pathways

- Development of career pathways for specific areas of practice has become an expanding component of NIPEC's work.
- The Perioperative Nursing career pathway was developed to support the Rebuilding of services and regionally agreed job descriptions were developed as part of the District Nursing career pathway.

Preceptorship Framework

- A review of the NI Preceptorship Framework was initiated in light of the *NMC Principles for Preceptorship* (2020) and the draft NI Reflective Supervision Framework for Nurses and Midwives.

Link Nurse Framework

- The NI Link Nurse Framework has been finalised to support and enhance the professional development of registrants in Link Nurse roles.

Competence Assessment Tools

- A review of the Ward Sister/Charge Nurse and Team Leader Competence assessment tools on NIPEC's online portfolio was initiated.

NI Collaborative - Strengthening the Commitment

- Continued to support the NI Collaborative to deliver the DoH objectives.

Advice, Guidance and Information:

Delegation Framework

- Hosted awareness sessions across all HSC Trusts and Independent and Voluntary sector organisations to inform nurses and midwives of the *Delegation Framework* and its use in practice and described a testing methodology for a draft governance framework for multi-professional delegation.

Professional Fora

Continued to support Professional Development Fora for:

- Registered Nurses: Learning Disabilities and Endoscopy Lead Nurses.

Independent Sector

Engaged with Nurses working in the Independent and Voluntary Sector through the:

- CNO COVID-19 digital platform
- Enabling Professionalism Surge Capacity website bespoke to Nursing Home settings
- Online meetings with Care Home managers
- Membership of Enhanced Clinical Care Framework Group.

Communication and Engagement

- Submitted responses to consultations on a range of emerging strategies and policies.
- Continued with innovative approaches to engage with stakeholders to promote high standards of practice, education and professional development; such as the CNO Digital Platform, COVID-19 Surge Capacity website, Twitter and Facebook posts, NIPEC information sessions, and the engagement of service users and staff within perioperative care environments using NI Citizen Space surveys.

Governance and Performance

NIPEC's Governance and Performance achievements in regard to objectives within the 2020-21 Business Plan included:

Key Performance Indicators 2020-21		
Indicator	Target	Achieved
Break even on revenue and operating costs	0.25% or £20,000	1.09% or £16,406
Keep within the capital resources limit (CRL)	Allocation was £4000	Achieved £3865
Sickness absence rates	3.5%	1.84%
Invoice prompt Payment percentage within 30 days	95%	100%
Invoice prompt Payment percentage within 10 days	70%	98%

Governance and Accountability Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clean certificate and report obtained from the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Northern Ireland Assembly for NIPEC's Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21. ✓ Completion of 5 Year Review of NIPEC's Equality Scheme ✓ Implementation of Disability and Action Plans 2018-23 (year three) with progress report provided to NIPEC's Business Team on a quarterly basis. ✓ Mid-Year Assurance Statement approved by the Audit & Risk Committee on 13 October 2020. ✓ Completion of Board Governance self-assessment tool. ✓ Sponsor Branch and DoH Accountability meetings completed throughout the year. ✓ Property Asset Management Plan (PAMP) 2020-21 to 2024-25 completed by the target date of 30 September 2020.
<p>Quality:</p> <p>NIPEC's Annual Quality Report</p> <p>NIPEC's Annual Quality Report was submitted in line with the implementation of the <i>Quality 2020 Strategy</i> (DHSSPS, 2011b)</p>

The full range of activities is available on NIPEC's website at [NIPEC | NIPEC \(hscni.net\)](https://www.nipec.org.uk)²⁹

²⁹ It should be noted not every objective aligned to our core functions is detailed within NIPEC's key actions; some objectives are implicit within the work of NIPEC and are demonstrated via the Business Plan as a whole.

NIPEC's Work in 2021-22

The Business Plan 2021-22 is aimed at driving and supporting positive change in the delivery of health and social care services for the population of Northern Ireland.

The scale and pace of change within the HSC system during the COVID-19 pandemic has been unprecedented. It is highly likely that COVID-19 will be with us for some time and will continue to constrain service delivery across the HSC sector. NIPEC is committed to working in partnership with the HSC organisations in its response to the ongoing challenges of the pandemic and its plans to rebuild services. As a regional enabler NIPEC is well placed to support the development of the nursing and midwifery workforce so that registrant's practice, education and development needs are met at an individual, organisational and population level.

NIPEC's business objectives for 2021-22 have been developed to promote the nursing and midwifery professions and to celebrate best practice with a focus on partnership working and supporting the adoption and implementation of NIPEC resources.

It is anticipated that 2021-22 will continue to be a challenging time for the nursing and midwifery professions. It is recognised that there will be new and emerging challenges across the HSC which will present difficulties engaging with stakeholders. The changing needs of the HSC to respond to the needs of patients, carers and communities requires NIPEC to remain strategically focused and flexible in its approach to agreeing new and emerging priorities. This may mean temporarily setting aside work which has already been initiated. NIPEC will continue to work closely through the Office of the CNO and stakeholders to identify these priorities.

Whilst the year ahead will bring new challenges it will also bring unique opportunities through which NIPEC will work flexibly and innovatively with key partners in support of the broader transformation agenda within Northern Ireland. NIPEC will continue to monitor progress of its key and emerging objectives whilst at the same time continuing to fulfil its Statutory Functions.

NIPEC will continue to focus on celebrating the professions, and supporting the implementation of specific resources that NIPEC has developed. This work will be taken forward in partnership with key stakeholders and be achieved through an increased focus on engaging directly with front line staff in a range of practice settings. In addition, NIPEC will also continue to deliver on its core functions and associated areas of practice.

NIPEC's Impact Measurement Framework remains an important resource with which to review resources which NIPEC has co-designed and coproduced with key stakeholders. The impact measurement reviews are completed and actioned following implementation of resources in practice and in line with NIPEC's business objectives.

Whilst the confidence and supply fund is no longer available, NIPEC will continue to seek sources of funding to continue to expand the portfolio of work in partnership with key stakeholders. For example work remains to be undertaken to complete the work of Future

Midwife to support implementation of the new education standards in line with the timescales set by the NMC.

Reports on progress against each of the key actions will be submitted on a regular basis to NIPEC's Council.

In March 2021, a scoping exercise was carried out to review the Corporate Services team's current function with a view to planning ahead and maximising its resources with greatest effect and to ensure it is fit for purpose to cope with any impact of the overall HSC Rebuild agenda. The findings from the scoping exercise were shared with the Corporate and Professional teams in NIPEC and in 2021/22 the recommendations will be considered to ensure that corporate services can deliver an effective service to meet the future corporate, governance and business needs and demands of NIPEC.

The following sections present the key actions under each of NIPECs statutory obligations which have been prioritised using NIPEC's evidence-based prioritisation matrix which is completed on an annual basis.

1. Promote high standards of practice among nurses and midwives

Good health and care outcomes are highly dependent on the professional practice and behaviours of nurses and midwives. Demographic changes, increasing specialisation, new technologies and other advances in healthcare provide opportunities for the nursing and midwifery workforce of the future. Nurses and midwives play a critical role in improving health outcomes, actively enabling co-production and decision making at all levels of policy making and service provision. They have the clinical innovation to help meet the challenges facing health and social care, supporting improvements in practice to uphold the standards of the professions for the good of the public.

The Code: Professional Standards of Practice and Behaviour for Nurses, Midwives and Nursing Associates (2018)¹, provides the professional standards to which nurses and midwives practice and requires nurses and midwives to provide a high standard of practice and care at all times in line with the best available evidence, communicating effectively, working co-operatively, keeping skills and knowledge up to date, working within the limits of competence, keeping clear and accurate records and raising concerns immediately. *Enabling Professionalism in Nursing and Midwifery Practice*²² describes what professionalism looks like in order to support the everyday application of the NMC's professional Code¹ in practice environments across the UK. For employers, it identifies key principles that help them provide practice environments to support and encourage professionalism among nurses and midwives.

The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic arrangements highlighted the safety critical nature of the roles of nurses and midwives. Never before has there been the level of understanding on the part of the public and policy makers relating to the need to enhance the image of the professions, promote professional pride, support nurses and midwives to stay in their professions, and empower them to bring about better health and care outcomes. In addition, the pandemic arrangements provided an opportunity to accelerate innovative models of practice, including the application of technology in health and social care to support effective practice, experience of care and personalisation for the public of Northern Ireland.

In fulfilling NIPEC's responsibility to promote high standards of practice among nurses and midwives during 2021-22, we will continue to provide strategic leadership and the implementation of a proactive, flexible and responsive work programme, underpinned by the *Enabling Professionalism* framework. This includes the creation of high quality innovative solutions which aim to support employers as well as nurses and midwives to enhance professional practice and, in turn, facilitate the delivery of safe, effective and person-centred care.



NIPEC will promote High Standards of Practice by:

- 1a** Completing regional programmes of work within agreed timescales that support continuous improvements in safe and effective care and compassionate person-centred services.
- 1b** Communicating and engaging with stakeholders and partners in ways that maximises opportunities to develop and support professional practice.
- 1c** Sharing and supporting improvement in practice by developing and disseminating best practice throughout Northern Ireland and beyond based on robust evidence.
- 1d** Assessing the impact of our work.

Key actions for 2021-22

Reference Number	Actions	Timescale
1a, 1b, 1c & 1d	Recording Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be agreed by the DOH through the office of the Chief Nursing Officer 	Ongoing
1a, 1b, 1c	Nursing and Midwifery Supervision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead in the coproduction of a model for Nursing and Midwifery Supervision within a single policy framework for Northern Ireland, through testing and refinement of a final version. Support the production of an implementation plan for the reflective supervision model for Northern Ireland. Develop a regional approach to monitoring and evaluation of the reflective supervision model for Northern Ireland. 	Ongoing
1a, 1b, 1c & 1d	Implementation of the DoH standards for the Nursing/Midwifery Assistant role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the DoH to identify systems which need to be in place to support the effective implementation of the DoH standards for the Assistant roles. 	From 1 September 2021 to 31 Jan 22

2. Promote high standards of education among nurses and midwives

Nurses and midwives are accountable and responsible for practising in line with best available evidence and keeping their knowledge and skills up to date, throughout their working lives (NMC 2018)²⁶. The provision of high quality education and learning for nurses and midwives enables the delivery of evidence-informed care that is safe, person-centred and enhances patients' experiences and outcomes. Safeguarding high-quality nursing care requires registrants who have the skills and knowledge to deliver care which is based on the best available evidence and which is also compassionate and caring.

Once registered, it is important that nurses and midwives are supported in their role and continue with their professional development throughout their careers, to further their knowledge and skills and to support innovation in their practice. The Future Nurse Future Midwife standards and proficiencies raise the ambition in terms of what's expected of a nurse at the point of registration and will give nurses and midwives the knowledge and skills they need to deliver excellent care across a range of settings now and in the future³⁰. They are designed to support newly qualified practitioners to develop resilience to enable them to work in today's complex and challenging health care environment. In support of this, the NMC has engaged with each of the four countries of the UK to develop key Principles for Preceptorship⁸. This is to ensure that nurses and midwives are supported by an effective model of preceptorship. The principles will help organisations and employers achieve a consistent standard of preceptorship for NMC registrants, across the UK.

The NMC have embarked on a programme of work to review the post registration education standards for specialist community public health nursing (SCPHN) and specialist practice qualifications (SPQs)⁹ to ensure that any new standards reflect the work that many nurses in local communities are already doing, including complex clinical work, leading and managing teams and shaping local services. NIPEC will contribute to this programme of work ensuring practitioners are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to deliver high quality care now and in the future.

NIPEC will update its resources as necessary including the Northern Ireland's Preceptorship Framework⁸, Career Framework for Specialist Nursing Practice and relevant Career Pathways for example District nursing and General Practice Nursing.

NIPEC's Responsibilities

In fulfilling NIPEC's responsibility to promote high standards of education during 2021-22 we will continue to undertake a range of activities to assure education standards and influence educational developments, for the registrant population. NIPEC will continue to maintain strategic alliances with a range of organisations and contribute to relevant education fora at local, national and international levels, for example; the NMC Strategic

³⁰ Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) (2018) Standards Framework for Nursing and Midwifery Education. London: NMC

Professional Advisory Group, NMC Post-registration Standards Steering Group, the DoH Central Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Committee's (CNMAC) Sub-Committee for Strategic Workforce and Education and the regional Education Commissioning Group (ECG); to ensure it can influence and support the nursing and midwifery workforces to respond to existing and emerging regulatory policy and strategic priorities.

During 2021-22 NIPEC will continue to support the implementation of the NMC Future Nurse Future Midwife pre-registration standards on behalf of the DOH and will ensure a particular focus on supporting the implementation of the Future Midwife standards from September 2021 through the Midwifery Expert Reference group (MERG).

NIPEC will have a lead role in quality assuring non NMC regulated education activities. Monitoring is undertaken in accordance with *The Quality Assurance Framework for Monitoring Development and Education Activities* commissioned by the DoH (Non-NMC Registered or Recorded 2016 revised)³¹.

In addition, NIPEC will update its relevant resources and career pathways to reflect the outcomes of the NMC's Post-registration Standards programme of work including NMC Principles for Preceptorship.

NIPEC will continue to develop resources and undertake work in support of a regionally agreed Continuous Professional Development Framework (CPD) for registered nurses and midwives. This will align to recommendations of the Nursing and Midwifery Task Group¹⁹.

³¹ Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC) (2016) Quality Assurance Framework for Monitoring Development and Education Programmes Commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety. Belfast: NIPEC



NIPEC will promote High Standards of Education among Nurses and Midwives by:

- 2a Contributing to the quality assurance of non NMC approved education, learning and development programmes for nurses and midwives.**
- 2b Developing a range of specific tools and resources to support the education, learning and development of nurses and midwives.**
- 2c Engaging with stakeholders to achieve education, learning and development programmes for nurses and midwives which are fit for purpose and relevant to service need.**
- 2d Engaging with a range of organisations and agencies to support the continued development of inter-professional education.**

Key actions for 2021-22

Reference Number	Actions	Timescale
2a	Quality Assure non-NMC approved education programmes	Finalise 2020-21 QA monitoring cycle by 31 December 2021
2b & 2c	Future Nurse Future Midwife (FNFM) Continue to lead a process to embed the outworking of the new NMC Future Nurse Future Midwife education standards including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring timely system readiness for introduction of Future Midwife standards from September 2021. Embed the rollout of the Future Midwife preparation programmes Develop a range of resources to support the implementation of the MORA Maximise midwifery students Practice Learning Experience with a particular focus on continuity of care and carer 	31 December 2021

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement and communication throughout the life of the project [with a particular focus on Midwifery] Transition oversight of Future Midwife implementation to the Northern Ireland Practice Learning Collaborative Timely Project exit strategy including preparatory work undertaken in support of Post Project Evaluation (PPE) 	
2c and 2d	NMC Post Registration Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work closely with the NMC to support the review of education standards for Specialist Post registration Qualifications (SPQ) and Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (SCPHN) If appropriate support the DoH to implement recommendations from the NMC review of Post registration Education 	Ongoing
2b	Refer to 3b & 3c	
2b & 2d	Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review 'in-house' education programmes delivered within HSC Trusts. Develop a 'CPD Education Passport' system for nurses and midwives. Include a regionally agreed approach to staff induction for Nursing and Midwifery across the HSC Trusts. 	By June 2022 During 2022-23
2b & 2c	Education Support in Practice <p>Review the support required for practice experience for students on pre-registration and post-registration nursing & midwifery programmes</p>	From September 2021

3. Promote the professional development of nurses and midwives

The Nursing and Midwifery Task Group Implementation Framework (2020)¹⁹ details how our nursing and midwifery workforce will be supported to enable the delivery of safe, effective, person centred care. NIPEC's work portfolio during 2020-21 will therefore comprise relevant projects and initiatives which involves co-designing resources to support the workforce in the delivery of services and enhance the capacity and capability of nurses and midwives where they work across NI.

NIPEC will continue to ensure that its work and outputs reflect the NMC's strategy³² and publications that support The Code for example; Confidence with Caring: The Code in Action¹⁰, Principles for Preceptorship⁸.

One of the unforeseen outcomes from the Coronavirus pandemic is that nurses and midwives have become more familiar and confident in accessing online resources to support them in their work. NIPEC will therefore continue through 2021-22 to promote its resources on online platforms via video clips and social media forums such as Facebook and Twitter. NIPEC in partnership with its key stakeholders will use the Nursing and Midwifery Careers website as a vehicle to promote the wide range of careers that are open to nurses and midwives. This will also be useful for those interested in pursuing a career in nursing or midwifery.

The International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife will draw to a close in June 2021 and NIPEC along with the CNO and Executive Directors of Nursing will learn the lessons, celebrate the achievements and embed the innovations taken forward by nurses and midwives who have worked tirelessly throughout the COVID-19 global pandemic. Whilst we celebrate we will also be cognisant of the need to support the health and wellbeing of all staff who have risen to the challenges of delivering health and social care in such challenging times.

NIPEC's Responsibilities

In fulfilling NIPEC's responsibility to promote the professional development of nursing and midwifery during 2021-22, NIPEC will continue to maximise its engagement with its stakeholders to lead and collaborate on the development of resources, which are fit for purpose and easily accessible.

NIPEC will continue to professionally support its unregistered workforce that is Nursing Assistants, Senior Nursing Assistants and Maternity Support Workers through for example the relevant sections on the www.nursingandmidwiferycareersni.hscni.net and NIPEC microsites <https://nipec.hscni.net/resource-section/>

³² Nursing and Midwifery Council (2020) *Nursing and Midwifery Council Strategy 2020-2025*
<https://www.nmc.org.uk/about-us/our-role/our-strategy/>



NIPEC will promote High Standards of Professional Development among Nurses and Midwives by:

- 3a Promoting professionalism within the principles of The Code.**
- 3b Leading the collaborative development of a range of resources that will enhance the professional practice of nurses and midwives and are aligned to the strategic transformation of services in Northern Ireland.**
- 3c Supporting the development of professional roles of nurses and midwives across all areas of practice.**
- 3d Promoting innovation in professional development activities through digital technology advances.**

Key actions for 2021-22

Reference Number	Actions	Timescale
3a	Professionalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support UK CNOs to expand the work of Enabling Professionalism. Support the implementation of resources to promote professionalism within Northern Ireland. Support the expansion of the use of the Enabling Professionalism Framework across the UK and Ireland through a programme of work as part of the Year of the Nurse 2020 and Nursing Now Campaigns. 	May 2022
3a & 3c	NI Preceptorship Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In partnership with key stakeholders update the NI Preceptorship Framework to reflect NMC Principles for Preceptorship (2020) and to align with the NI Supervision Framework 	From January 2022

	<p>Link Nurse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and if appropriate take forward the principles of the Link Nurse Framework to reflect the interface between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Independent sector and the HSC ○ Midwifery Services 	<p>Timescales to be agreed with PHA</p> <p>From September 2021</p>
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4. Provide advice, guidance and information on best practice and matters relating to nursing and midwifery

The NMC Code requires nurses and midwives to “*make sure that any information or advice given is evidence-based, including information relating to using any healthcare products or services*” (NMC, 2018)¹. The delivery of safe and effective care within a person-centred culture is the responsibility of all nurses and midwives and their employing organisations. This care must be delivered within an organisational environment that promotes evidence-based practice, co-production, utilising effective risk management processes and which is based on the principles of the HSC Collective Leadership Strategy¹⁷.

NIPEC's Responsibilities

NIPEC fulfils a unique role in Northern Ireland by providing relevant evidence-based guidance on best practice and matters relating to nursing and midwifery. The organisation is committed to supporting practitioners and organisations to deliver safe and effective person-centred care and achieves this by adopting a responsive and proactive approach to the requests and needs of key stakeholders, assisting them to address current and potential challenges. NIPEC's activities focus on supporting nurses and midwives to remain up to date on major strategic and policy issues through the provision of advice, guidance and information.

To support practitioners and organisations to implement key resources which have been developed by NIPEC, a key focus for 2021-22 will be to work alongside colleagues across Northern Ireland and offer support and facilitation at a local level. Planning for this will be progressed through Executive Directors of Nursing and other senior nurse and midwifery leaders. In addition to this, for those areas adopting and implementing NIPEC's resources endorsed by CNO, NIPEC will establish a process that acknowledges and celebrates this achievement.

NIPEC will also continue its commitment through 2021-22 to developing, producing and disseminating evidence-based and accessible information, publications and resources through its main website [NIPEC | NIPEC \(hscni.net\)](http://nipec.hscni.net) and promoting them through its social media platforms; twitter [@nipec_online](https://twitter.com/nipec_online) and Facebook www.facebook.com/nipec

Its microsites and careers website <http://www.nursingandmidwiferycareersni.hscni.net> also provide information to support career planning and development. In addition the updated online portfolio <https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net> supports registrants to record and store their information safely for revalidation.



NIPEC will Provide Advice, Guidance and Information on Best Practice and Matters Relating to Nursing and Midwifery by:

- 4a Facilitating the translation and implementation of strategic policies relating to the practice, education and professional development of nurses and midwives.**
- 4b Supporting the interpretation and application of relevant legislation.**
- 4c Supporting the capacity and capability of leaders at all levels within the nursing and midwifery professions.**
- 4d Ensuring that all outcomes of our work are consistent with regional policy and national regulatory requirements.**

Key Actions for 2021 – 22

Reference Number	Actions	Timescale
4a	<p>Support the DoH to take forward recommendations of the Nursing and Midwifery Task Group Report¹⁹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the DoH to set up and develop Communities of Practice (CoP) as part of the infrastructure to progress implementation of the N&M Task Group recommendations and a Nursing and Midwifery Strategy. Support the DoH to develop a Nursing and Midwifery Professional Excellence/ Assurance Framework. 	<p>From September 2021 to 31 March 2022</p> <p>From March 2022</p>

Reference Number	Actions	Timescale
4a	Communication and Engagement In collaboration with key stakeholders continue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the existing methods of engagement and during 2021-2022 consider the most effective way of communicating with stakeholders. • To monitor the communication statistics of engagement in relation to NIPEC websites, social media forums, workshops and awareness sessions. 	Ongoing
4a & 4c	Delegation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the production of a multi-professional governance framework for delegation across integrated care teams. 	Ongoing
4c	Leadership Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope and develop an attributes framework for leadership development - to support succession planning 	From January 2022
4d	Maternity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of education programme and the development of Maternity Support Worker resources 	From October 2021
4d	Postgraduate access to education for BAME Nurses and AHPs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In support of the DoH set up a mechanism to take forward the monitoring of implementation of recommendations of the Task and Finish Group review of Postgraduate access to education for BAME Nurses 	By 31 March 2022

5. Governance and Performance

NIPEC's Responsibilities

Business planning is identified as an activity to be undertaken in the governance cycle. Strategic and business planning, together with risk management, sit at the centre of governance arrangements within NIPEC, and a framework of good governance ensures that statutory and regulatory obligations, such as compliance with General Data Protection Regulations and ministerial priorities, are properly reflected in the management of all our activities. NIPEC will continue to work collaboratively with colleagues across the Department, HSC and wider to ensure we are appropriately prepared for the end of the transition period.

We are acutely aware of our stewardship responsibilities in relation to the range of resources allocated to us and the coordination and planning needed to ensure that the organisation functions within its Revenue Resource Limit (RRL) and Capital Resource Limit (CRL).

Service Level Agreements

A component of NIPEC's efficiency strategy is that a number of core support services have been outsourced to Business Services' Organisation under Service Level Agreements, including Equality, Finance, Counter Fraud, Human Resources, Procurement & Logistics, Shared Services, Internal Audit, Legal Services, Information Technology Services and specialist General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) advice. NIPEC has procedures and systems in place to monitor these SLAs including a formal annual Customer Board meeting with BSO, receipt of regular performance reports and on-going informal correspondence from relevant service areas.

Financial

NIPEC will seek to deliver this Business Plan within its revenue and capital approved budget allocations. NIPEC has outsourced part of its financial management function under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to the Business Services Organisation (BSO), and works with this organisation during the year to produce monthly management statements and NIPEC's final accounts. Regular reports are submitted to both NIPEC's Audit and Risk Committee and Council.

As a Non-Departmental Public Body, NIPEC is subject to internal audits during the year to ensure that appropriate systems and procedures are in place for both financial and governance internal assurance purposes. NIPEC has an outsourced internal audit function with the BSO, which operates to defined standards. Its work is informed by an analysis of risk to which the organisation is exposed and an annual audit plan is based on this analysis.

At the end of the financial year, NIPEC's Annual Report and Accounts are audited by the Northern Ireland Audit Office who provide independent assurance to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Human Resources

NIPEC's successful achievement of its business objectives is enabled by the hard work and commitment of its entire staff. NIPEC is committed to investing in its workforce and encourages staff to engage in a range of learning and development activities which are agreed each individual's annual Appraisal and Personal Development Plan.

NIPEC's Health and Social Wellbeing Committee seeks to nurture and improve staff relationships and support staff to improve their health and wellbeing. The committee's membership includes both corporate and professional staff and in addition to promoting a positive working environment, staff engages in a number of fund raising events throughout the year to benefit a nominated local charity. In addition, regular staff engagement is facilitated in the annual meetings calendar including a fortnightly Huddle and regular staff meetings.

In February 2021, NIPEC was successful in retaining its *Investors in People* accreditation status. This accreditation includes an IIP action plan which ensures we continue to focus on improving people management and leadership within the organisation.

Property and Assets

With the need to continue to maximise the financial and beneficial returns from property assets in the current austere financial environment in which the public sector operates, property asset management within the public sector remains a significant element as organisations strive to extract the maximum benefits from their assets.

Therefore, NIPEC as an NDPB of the DoH supports and is committed to the objectives of the Executive approved Asset Management Strategy to:

- *reduce the net cost of service delivery through the effective use of public assets*
- *promote effective asset management processes that unlocks value.*

NIPEC's lease in Centre House expired on 30 November 2019 and the Department of Finance (DoF) and Land & Property Services (LPS) led discussions with the Landlord's agent regarding the re-gearing of the lease. These negotiations were successfully concluded with an extension of the lease to 31 August 2022 at which time NIPEC is scheduled to move as part of the DoF reform of property project to James House. NIPEC has joined the James House Transition Management Working Group (TMWG) and will continue to keep its Sponsor Branch and AEMB duly informed of any developments which would have an impact on NIPEC's accommodation.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

NIPEC currently maintains and updates three websites including a number of micro sites. The main websites are:

<http://www.nipec.hscni.net/>

<http://www.nursingandmidwiferycareersni.hscni.net/>

<https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net/>

NIPEC's ICT infrastructure facilitates electronic communication with the nursing and midwifery professions and the public, thus facilitating individuals and organisations within and beyond Northern Ireland to access and make use of various resources and information.

A significant proportion of NIPEC's documentation, policies and information regarding the corporate business areas are available on the website and the preferred organisational method of communication continues to be, in the first instance, by electronic means. During 2020-21 NIPEC updated its main website into the new WordPress template. All three of NIPEC's websites have been audited for compliance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 which came into force on 22 September 2020 and work continues to update the sites to achieve full compliance.

Accountability and Monitoring

The Council of NIPEC is accountable for internal control of the organisation and exercises this control through a system of corporate governance measures including a schedule of matters reserved for Council decisions, a scheme of delegation, a number of corporate documents including Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions, and the appointment of several committees. The Chief Executive is responsible for maintaining a sound system of internal governance that supports the achievement of the organisation's policies, aims and objectives in accordance with the responsibilities assigned by the Department of Health.

The accountability arrangements in respect of the relationship between the Council and the DoH are set out in a 'Management Statement and Financial Memorandum' (MS/FM), which has been published by the DoH and agreed with the Council.

NIPEC's performance is monitored by DoH via regular Sponsor Branch, Ground Clearing, and Accountability Meetings in addition to the production of an Annual Report, Annual Quality Report, Internal and External audits and other *ad hoc* arrangements.

Equality

This Business Plan will be screened for equality implications as required by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the NI Act 1998. Equality Commission guidance states that the purpose of

screening is to identify those policies which are likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to these. Using the Equality Commission's screening criteria, no significant equality implications have been identified and the Business Plan will not therefore be subject to an equality impact assessment.

Key actions for 2021-22

Reference Number	Actions	Timescale
5A	Continue to maintain a robust governance and accountability framework through the effective management and monitoring of corporate and financial performance, taking into account DoH requirements and timescales.	31 March 2022
5B	Comply with HSC corporate governance, legislative requirements and best practice through risk management, internal controls systems and external assurance processes.	31 March 2022
5C	Achieve the financial breakeven target of 0.25% or £20k (whichever is the greater) of revenue allocation by the financial year end.	31 March 2022
5D	Continue to ensure that a suitable skills base is maintained in regard to business cases and for capital, external consultancy/ revenue business cases, ensure that they comply with relevant guidance and that submission to DoH is in line with agreed timeframes.	During 2021-22
5E	Produce a Corporate Plan for the period 2022-25 and a Business Plan for 2022-23, taking account of any targets/outcomes set by the DoH. <i>To note:</i> that the DoH formally indicated in Jan 21 that the production of a Corporate Plan from April 21 should be deferred by one year. As such the extant Corporate plan 2017-21, will be extended by one year.	January 2022
5F	To monitor and maintain staff absence rates below the target of 3.5% (<i>which is a further reduction of 0.2% below the 2019-20 target</i>).	During 2021-22
5G	Meet NIPEC's Equality and Disability Legislative requirements including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Year 4 actions within NIPEC's Equality and Disability Action Plans 2018-23, reporting progress in the Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission NI. 	During 2021-22

Reference Number	Actions	Timescale
5H	<p>Ensure compliance with the DoH processes and timescales for the completion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-year Assurance Statement and End of year Governance Statement. • Board Governance Self-assessment Tool. • NIAO Audit Committee Checklist. • Sponsor Branch meetings, plus DoH mid-year and end of year accountability review meetings. • Asset Management Plan 2021-22 to 2025-26. 	<p>31 March 2022</p> <p>31 March 2022</p> <p>31 August 2022</p> <p>Throughout 2021-22</p> <p>September 2021-22</p>
5I	<p>Continue to review Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) provision, within available financial resources, to ensure effectiveness of NIPEC's work, costs to NIPEC and increased efficiency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review processes to update websites and ensure they meet governance, legislative, professional and statutory requirements. 	During 2021-22
5J	<p>To achieve the prompt payment targets for the payments of invoices of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% for 30 days. • 70% for 10 days. 	During 2021-22
5K	<p>Continue to participate on the finance NI reform of property Centre House communication group with the move to James House in 2022.</p> <p>To update Council, Business Team and staff as and when developments occur.</p>	During 2021-22

Reference Number	Actions	Timescale
5L	<p>NIPEC Quality Improvement Strategy 2019-23.</p> <p>NIPEC will progress its journey in Quality Improvement by ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIPEC's business objectives and work are aligned with the region's QI focus and approach. • NIPEC's Staff's knowledge and skills are further developed in QI methodologies and the Science of Improvement and these are reflected in NIPEC's work where relevant. • Provide mentorship/critical friend support across the HSC in relation to QI programmes. • NIPEC Council members effectively monitor and support the quality of NIPEC's internal processes and external work streams. • Provide assurance through the Annual Quality Report. 	Throughout 2021-22

Abbreviations

ALBs	Arm's Length Bodies
BSO	Business Services Organisation
CNO	Chief Nursing Officer
CNMAC	Central Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Committee
DoH	Department of Health
ECG	Education Commissioning Group
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HSC	Health and Social Care
HSCB	Health and Social Care Board
HSCT	Health and Social Care Trusts
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ISBN	International Standard Book Number
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
NI	Northern Ireland
NIPEC	Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council
PGN	Promoting Good Nutrition
PHA	Public Health Agency
PPI	Patient Public Involvement
QA	Quality Assurance



Alternative Formats

NIPEC is committed to making information as accessible as possible and to promoting meaningful engagement with those who use our services.

This document can be made available on request and where reasonably practicable in an alternative format.

Should you wish to request a copy of this document in an alternative format please contact NIPEC.

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