



**Public Health Agency
&
Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for
Nursing and Midwifery**

Critical Care Nursing Career Pathway

DRAFT PROJECT PLAN

November 2022

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1.0 Introduction

The Chief Nursing Officer has commissioned the development of a career pathway for Critical Care Nursing to align with the Delivering Care Phase 1b Critical Care Paper¹. The career pathway will be developed in line with the Guidance Framework². A Project Steering Group will be convened, comprised of nominated key stakeholders, Chair and Project Lead in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC) and the Public Health Agency (PHA).

2.0 Background

The Critical Care service is central to the running of an acute hospital, providing support to both emergency and elective surgery in addition to all medical specialties. The service is focused on delivering time-critical intervention when it is needed³ for those patients who are, or who are at risk, of becoming- seriously ill. This includes those experiencing failure of one or more organ systems (heart, lungs, kidneys, liver or brain). These patients, of whom there are about 200,000 per year⁴ in the United Kingdom (UK); require closer observation and more clinical interventions than can be provided on a standard ward.

Progressive advances in Intensive Care Medicine have led to critically ill patients becoming increasingly complex to care for,⁵ demanding a variety of specialised skills from Critical Care Nurses. These nurses require an in-depth knowledge of Critical Care and the ability to safely apply it to clinical practice.⁶ All seminal documents, within the literature, stress the importance of high-level competent nursing staff in Critical Care.^{7 8 9}

The strategic document Delivering Together¹⁰ recognises the necessity to provide safe, effective and high-quality care which keeps up with the fast pace of

¹ Department of Health (2021) *Delivering Care Phase 1b, Critical Care Paper*. Unpublished.

² Department of Health (2021) *Guidance Framework To support the development of Nursing and Midwifery Career Pathways*. Belfast DOH.

³ Intensive Care Society (2020) *Intensive Care & Beyond; Co-developing the future* P. 6

<https://www.baccn.org/media/resources/ICSIntensivecare2020andBeyond.pdf>

⁴ Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine (2019) *Guidelines For the Provision of Critical Care Services* Cited ICNARC CMP Programme p77.

⁵ Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine (2022) *Guidelines for the Provision of Critical Care. V2.1.*

<https://ics.ac.uk/resource/gpics-v2-1.html>

⁶ Labeau S, Chiche J-D, and Blot S. Post-registration nurses ICU education: plea for a European curriculum. *Int J Nurs Stud* 2012; 49: 127-128

⁷ Department of Health (2000). *Comprehensive Critical Care*.

⁸ Royal College of Nursing (2003) *Guidance for Nurse Staffing*

⁹ Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine and Intensive Care Society (2013). *Core standards for Intensive care Units*.

¹⁰ Department of Health (2016) *Health and WellBeing 2026: Delivering Together*. Belfast DOH

innovation by providing opportunities for skill development and a career pathway. This is re-enforced, in the Health and Workforce Strategy^{11 12}, which advocates the enhancement of best possible skills and expertise of the employees within the Health and Social Care Service of Northern Ireland (NI).

Delivering Care is a nursing workforce policy framework,¹³ which aims to support the provision of high-quality care, which is safe and effective in hospital and community settings through the development of a framework to determine staff ranges for the Nursing and Midwifery workforce in a range of major specialties.

In addition, the ambition of the Nursing and Midwifery Task Group (NMTG) report¹⁴ is that all fields of nursing deliver the right evidence-based care, with the right numbers, at the right time, in the right place, by the right person with the right knowledge, and delivering the right experience and outcomes for our patients. The NMTG report sets out a road map for nursing workforce to maximise the contribution of Nurse's and Midwives in Public Health and Wellbeing and the transformation of health and social care delivery by developing the capacity and capability for nurses and midwives to lead at all levels.

To this end, the Delivering Care Phase 1b Critical Care Paper¹ has outlined recommendations, in collaboration with professional colleagues, which are founded on strategy, professional standards and the best available evidence. In order for these recommendations to be fully realised it is essential that a career pathway in Critical Care nursing be developed.

The rebuilding of Health Services in NI following the impact from the Covid-19 pandemic requires a stable Critical Care nursing workforce, which has the capacity and capability to meet the challenges associated with the changing needs of the service and the population of NI.

The purpose of the creation of a career pathway for Critical Care nursing is to develop and standardise roles with innovative and exciting education and development opportunities; with associated job descriptions which help to recruit

¹¹ Department of Health (2018) *Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy 2026*. Belfast DOH

¹² Department of Health (2022) *Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy Second Action Plan 2022-23 to 2024-25*. Belfast DOH

¹³ Department of Health (2014) *Delivering Care the Policy Framework for Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Planning in NI*. Nurse Staffing Levels in NI. Section 1 & 2. <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/delivering-care-nurse-staffing-levels-northern-ireland>

¹⁴ Department of Health (2020) *Nursing And Midwifery Task Group (NMTG). Report and Recommendations*. Belfast. DoH

and retain Critical Care nurses and ensure the delivery of safe, effective, person-centred and compassionate care for the population of NI.

3.0 Project Aim and Objectives

3.1 Aim

The Project Steering Group will work with key stakeholders to develop a Critical Care Nursing Career Pathway to support the development of registered and non-registered nursing staff.

3.2 Objectives

To achieve this purpose, the Steering Group will be guided to meet the following objectives:

- Development of core competencies and education requirements for regionally agreed core roles in a Critical Care Nursing Career Pathway.
- Development of regionally agreed Job Descriptions (JDs) for the core Critical Care Nursing roles.
- To submit a Career Pathway for the Chief Nursing Officer's endorsement.
- To seek approval for the inclusion of the Critical Care Nursing Career Pathway and associated resources onto the Nursing and Midwifery Careers website.

3.3 Scope of the Project

The components of the Critical Care Nursing Career pathway will be developed, during the first phase of the project, commencing in November 2022. It is intended that phase two will focus on the inclusion of the pathway on the Nursing and Midwifery Careers Website.

4.0 Methodology

A Steering Group will be established, once the Chair is confirmed and will comprise of Senior Nurses from the following organisations: Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts, PHA, NIPEC, Clinical Education Centre (CEC), Department of Health (DoH), Royal College of Nursing (RCN), Trade Unions, Queen's University Belfast (QUB), Ulster University (UU) and Open University (OU). Also included on the Steering Group will be Human Resources representation, Intensive Care Medicine representation and National Critical Care Nursing

representation. Service User representation will be sought through existing HSC Trust fora.

Given the challenges of holding meetings and progressing project work the project will maximise the use of digital technologies to engage with stakeholders and achieve the various project outcomes for example video calls for meetings.

The outputs developed will be tested with colleagues in service and with education providers before being signed off by the Steering Group and submitted to the Chief Nursing Officer for final approval.

5.0 Resources

Provision of professional project management support will ensure successful achievement of the project outcomes.

6.0 Dissemination and Implementation

6.1 Communication and consultation processes will be ongoing throughout the project using various mechanisms, along with utilisation of key stakeholders' communication mechanisms. This will reflect the progress of the project and encourage individuals to contribute to and participate in the project at various stages.

7.0 Equality and Governance Screening

This project plan has been screened for equality implications as required by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the NI Act 1998.

As a result of these considerations the screening has identified some equality impacts for a number of groups and outlines the way these will be addressed.

The equality screening has been accepted for publishing on the Business Services Organisation (BSO) website and can be accessed at <https://hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3320.htm>

In addition, to ensure NIPEC/ PHA and their stakeholders are meeting their legal obligations and responsibilities under various Corporate Governance areas, the project plan, its aims and objectives and outcomes have been examined and screened for any issues relating to the following areas:

- Risk Management
- Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)
- Personal Public Involvement (PPI)

A summary of these considerations and any action required is documented in Appendix 2.

8.0 Evaluation

- 8.1 Ongoing evaluation of the management of the project will be undertaken by the Steering Group. This evaluation will address the achievements of the objectives outlined in the project plan and the project management process.

Membership of Steering Group**Appendix 1**

| Name | Role/Organisation |
|--|--|
| Paula Forrest | Co-Chair |
| Brian McFetridge | Co-Chair |
| Cathy McCusker | Career Pathways Lead, NIPEC |
| Sheila Kinoulty | Critical Career Pathway Lead, PHA, Nurse Consultant, PHA |
| Elizabeth Thompson | Project Management Lead |
| Nathan Tate Ruth McLarnon Fiona Moody PICU | Belfast HSC Trust |
| Kay Johnston | Northern HSC Trust |
| Jennifer Hamilton Shauna Lynam | South Eastern HSC Trust |
| Emmajane Kearney | Southern HSC Trust |
| Annmarie O'Dwyer | Western HSC Trust |
| Tracey Mc Kitrick | Human Resources (South Eastern Health Social Care Trust) |
| Katy Rennick | Department of Health |
| Linzi McIlroy | Royal College of Nursing |
| Ann Speed | Unison |
| Maura McKenna | Regional Trade Union |
| Graham Divine, | Clinical Education Centre |
| Dr Una.St-Ledger | Open University |
| Nuala Devlin | Queen's University Belfast |
| Dr Debbie Goode | Ulster University |
| Julie Platten | UK Critical Care Nursing Alliance (UKCCNA) |

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|-----------------|--|
| Dr Esther Davis | Regional Advisor for Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine Training |
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Outcome of Screening Assessment

| Screening Assessment | Comments |
|---|--|
| Risk Management questions | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have any risks been identified? If no - no further action is required. If yes then, • What is the potential impact of these? • How can these be mitigated or have alternatives options been identified which would have a lower risk outcome? • Where negative impacts are unavoidable, has clarity been given to the business need that justifies them? | No |
| Privacy Impact Assessment questions | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the project/initiative use personal information and/or pose genuine risks to the privacy of the individual? • Will the project/initiative result in a change of law, the use of new and intrusive technology or the use of private or sensitive information, originally collected for a limited purpose, to be reused in a new and unexpected way? | No No |
| Personal and Public Involvement questions | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the project/initiative require input from patients/clients? If no - no further action is required. If yes - please apply NIPEC's Personal and Public Involvement Policy. | The Steering Group will seek to have input from service users through existing Trust PPI forums. |

