



Department of
Health
An Roinn Sláinte
Máinnystrie O Poustie
www.health-ni.gov.uk

GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

**To support the development of
Nursing and Midwifery Career
Pathways**

December 2021

Review Date: December 2024

CONTENT

SECTION		PAGE
1.	Introduction	3
2.	Steps for developing a specific Nursing or Midwifery Career Pathway	4
	Step 1: Identify the Need	4
	Step 2: Development of Career Pathway Proposal	4
	Step 3: Career Pathway Development Process	5
	Step 4: Final Approval, Adoption and Implementation of Career Pathway	8
	Step 5: Career Pathway and Website Review Process	8
3.	Conclusion	8
References		9
Appendix 1	Email Invite Template	10
Appendix 2	Project Plan Template	11
Appendix 3	Equality and Human Rights Screening Template	13
Appendix 4	Nursing and Midwifery Careers Website Governance Steering Group Terms of Reference	21

1. INTRODUCTION

Health and social care in Northern Ireland (NI) is undergoing significant transformational change moving care delivery from predominantly hospital based settings to community, closer to a person's home or in their home. Nursing and midwifery professions are key to making these changes happen in this exciting and yet challenging time.

The professional standards of practice and behaviour for Nurses and Midwives are set by the Nursing and Midwifery Council. The values and principles set out in the NMC Code (2018) apply to all Nurses and Midwives whether providing direct care or bringing their professional knowledge through other roles such leadership, education or research. From 2014 NI's Chief Nursing Officer has commissioned the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council (NIPEC) to coproduce and co-design with key stakeholders a range of professional Career Frameworks, Professional Guidance and specific career pathways. The resources developed provide clarity and identify the distinguishing characteristics of the various roles and the related knowledge and skills required for registered and non-registered staff. They are the building blocks to be adhered to in the development of all nursing and midwifery career pathways and specific roles

In order to meet the challenges of the transformation agenda there has been an increased demand to develop additional service specific career pathways. In response, NIPEC in partnership with the Public Health Agency (PHA), have developed this Guidance Framework to support senior Nurses and Midwives to progress the development of career pathways in line with the *Nursing and Midwifery Task Group Report (2020)* and the Clinical Career Pathways endorsed by the Chief Nursing Officer [Clinical Career Pathway for Nurses and Midwives | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/clinical-career-pathway-for-nurses-and-midwives)

The Department of Health has endorsed career frameworks¹, professional guidance² and career pathways³. The following resources can be used as a reference to guide the development of future pathways:

- *Advanced Nursing Practice Framework* (DHSSPS 2016)
- *Professional Guidance for Consultant Nurses and Consultant Midwives* (DoH 2017)
- *Professional Framework for Emergency Care Nursing* (NIPEC 2017)
- *Resources for Nursing Assistants and Senior Nursing Assistants* (DoH 2018a)
- *Career Framework for Specialist Nursing Roles* (DoH 2018b)
- *Career Pathway for General Practice Nursing* (NIPEC 2019)
- *Career Pathway for District Nursing Services* (pending publication).

¹ A Career Framework comprises core competencies, education requirements and Job Description (JD) for a specific role eg Specialist Nurses.

² Professional Guidance comprises core competencies and education requirements

³ A Career Pathway comprises all the core roles and accompanying competencies education requirements and JDs within a specific service or area of practice.

2. STEPS FOR DEVELOPING A SPECIFIC NURSING OR MIDWIFERY CAREER PATHWAY

2.1 STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE NEED

Practitioners who have identified the need for a specific career pathway must discuss with and have gained approval from the Executive Director of Nursing (EDoN) (or equivalent) within their respective organisations. This should be followed up with the development of an outline proposal.

The EDoN or equivalent, should then submit the outline proposal to the Chief Executive of NIPEC for an initial review before being presented at the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) Business Meeting, to assess regional need and seek agreement to proceed to Step2, Development of a career pathway proposal.

The CNO Business Meeting members will agree priority order and commencement of Step 2 for the agreed proposals. PHA and NIPEC are responsible for overseeing the process in the Career Pathway development and will provide feedback in writing to the EDoN regarding the outcome and next steps.

2.2 STEP 2: DEVELOPMENT OF CAREER PATHWAY PROPOSAL

2.2.1 Develop Career Pathway proposal

Develop a draft Career Pathway Proposal in partnership with the relevant service specific regional network/forum. The proposal should detail:

- The strategic drivers to support and inform the proposal, for example:
 - DoH strategy, including the Nursing and Midwifery Task Group recommendations
 - Legislation
 - Reports
 - Evidenced-based guidance e.g. NICE, professional standards and guidance, service user outcomes, quality improvement
 - Professional regulatory requirements.
- Other key information:
 - A population needs assessment specific to the service area
 - An outline of the service model, existing nursing roles and their remit (registered and non-registered) and proposed developments if known.
- Benchmarking with other similar services.
- Statement of the need, expectations and benefits of the career pathway.

2.2.2 Submission of Career Pathway Proposal Seeking Approval

The Senior Nurse/Midwife who has led the development of the Career Pathway proposal will share the final draft with the nominated Career Pathway Lead in PHA

and NIPEC who will consider the proposal. If the proposal is agreed in principle with the EDoN PHA and Chief Executive, NIPEC, it will be tabled at the CNO Business Meeting for approval and nomination of Chair and Project Lead for the development of the Career Pathway. If appropriate this may also be tabled at CNMAC SWE sub-group.

The Nursing and Midwifery Career Pathways Website Governance Steering Group will be made aware of CNO Business Meeting decision.

The Senior Nurse/Midwife will be informed of the outcome and if successful will be able to progress to Step 3.

2.3 STEP 3: CAREER PATHWAY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

2.3.1 Development of Career Pathway

The Senior Nurse/Midwife Lead of the Career Pathway proposal will be advised by NIPEC and PHA regarding the approved project process, timescales and membership including Chair of the Steering Group and Project Lead. The Project Lead should have allocated time to this role and will be supported by a clinical lead(s) from the specified area of practice.

2.3.2 Establish Steering Group

The Chair and Project Lead are responsible for identifying nominations from key stakeholders who should be invited to sit on the Steering Group (Appendix 1: Email invite template). Representation should be sought as relevant, to include:

- Senior NMC registrants from:
 - DoH
 - HSC Trusts,
 - Education providers - Clinical Education Centre, Queen's University Belfast, Ulster University, Open University
- Professional Bodies - Royal College of Nursing, Royal College of Midwives
- Other representation should be sought such as Human Resources, relevant Trade Unions, Health and Social Care professionals, community and voluntary agencies.
- Service User input in line with Personal and Public Involvement (DHSSPS 2015) and Co-production guidance (DoH 2018c) can be sought using a range of approaches e.g:
 - Disease specific user forum/network
 - Trust/organisation service user fora
 - Survey eg citizen space posted through agreed social media platforms
 - Section 75 groups.

2.3.3 Develop Project Plan

The project lead is responsible for developing the draft Project Plan (Appendix 2, Project Plan template) using the career pathway proposal for background information. This should be agreed with the Chair of the Steering Group and sent with the Agenda to the nominees of the Steering Group in preparation for the first meeting. An Equality screening template should also be commenced in advance of the first Steering Group meeting (Appendix 3, Equality Screening template).

2.3.4 Steering Group and Meetings

Each Career Pathway Project that is approved for development will have a nominated Sponsor from PHA and NIPEC to ensure consistency of approach and standardisation in the development of the respective pathway.

At the first Steering Group meeting the NIPEC and PHA Sponsor will explain the career pathway development process and the following will be agreed:

- Terms of Reference
- Steering Group membership
- Aim and objectives
- Writing group membership
- Timelines
- Core roles including any new roles agreed for the pathway and how this aligns with the current/proposed staffing model.
- Prioritise the order of the development of core competencies, education requirements and Job Descriptions (JDs) for each of the agreed roles
- Frequency of future Steering Group meetings usually 6-8 weekly to enable the writing group to develop the core competencies, education requirements and JDs for each role.
- The process for resolving any issues or difficulties
- The process for approving the career pathway and publication on the Nursing and Midwifery Career Pathways Website.

2.3.5 Writing Group

The Project Lead is responsible for chairing the Writing Group and leading the development of the core competencies, education requirements and JDs. The membership of the writing group should comprise the professional nurse/midwife leads for the area of practice from each employing organisation, Education Providers and relevant staff side representatives including regional Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) Trade Union Forum.

It is vital when developing the competencies and education requirements for each role that existing reliable competency frameworks are used or adapted, with

permission, where applicable. In addition, the following resources should be reflected in the relevant roles: Department of Health endorsed NI Career Frameworks [Clinical Career Pathway for Nurses and Midwives | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#); relevant standards/resources [Standards for Nursing Assistants and associated resources | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#) NMC standards and guidance <https://www.nmc.org.uk/>

The core competencies, education requirements and JDs are developed under the following four core domains:

- Clinical Practice
- Education and Learning
- Research and Evidence-Based Practice
- Leadership and Management.

It is important that the core competencies and education requirements are developed for each core role before the Job Descriptions (JDs) are commenced. HR representation from the Directors of HR Forum and representatives from KSF Trade Union Form and Nursing Staff Side Professional Bodies must be actively involved in the development of these.

One of the most vital aspects of the development of the core competencies, education requirements and JDs is testing them with practitioners working in the specific area of nursing practice, in addition to managers, service, Workforce Leads and HR leads. When developing Advanced Nurse Practice roles, engagement with practice based supervisors e.g. medical colleagues, is imperative. Active engagement and consultation along with listening to feedback received and using it to shape the core elements of each role is fundamental to the success of every career pathway.

2.3.6 Career Pathway Gateways and Approval

The following two gateways must be attained prior to submitting a Career Pathway for final approval:

- i) The Steering Group via the Project Lead will submit the final draft of the core competencies and education requirements for each role in the Career Pathway to the PHA and NIPEC Sponsor to sign off, prior to approval. This will then be presented to CNMAC Strategic Workforce and Education subgroup. Other strategic Nursing Groups may need to be informed for example, Education Commissioning Group/ and Delivering Care Programme.
- ii) The development of the JDs is commenced after sign off of the competencies and education requirements for each role. The Steering Group via the Project Lead will submit the final draft of the JDs to the PHA and NIPEC Sponsor to sign off. At this stage the Sponsors and the Chair of the Steering Group/Project Lead will bring the final draft of the core competencies, education requirements and

JDs to the CNO Business Meeting for final sign off and approval prior to submission of JDs for regional job matching and evaluation.

2.4 STEP 4: FINAL APPROVAL, ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CAREER PATHWAY

Once the Career Pathway gateways have been completed it is ready for final approval by the CNO for adoption and implementation. The Chair of the Career Pathway Steering Group and Project Lead will then submit the career pathway for publication on the Nursing and Midwifery Career Pathways Website, to the Chief Executive of NIPEC and Chair of the Website Governance Steering Group (Appendix 4 Terms of Reference).

NIPEC's website guidance must be adhered to in the publication of the Career Pathway on the Nursing and Midwifery Careers website and final approval from the Website Governance Steering Group before going live.

2.5 STEP 5: CAREER PATHWAY AND WEBSITE REVIEW PROCESS

The content of the career pathway and website must be kept up to date and the nominated lead from the NIPEC Website Governance Career Pathway Steering Group is responsible for this and advising NIPEC of website updates which can be facilitated through an annual review.

3. CONCLUSION

This Framework is designed to guide the development of nursing and midwifery career pathways and to facilitate senior nursing and midwifery leaders to promote and progress nursing and midwifery roles in specific areas of practice. The Framework and its effectiveness as a tool to support the development of a broader range of career pathways will be reviewed in 2023-2024.

REFERENCES

Department of Health (2017) *Professional Guidance for Consultant Roles: Supporting Consultant Nurses and Consultant Midwives in Health and Social Care*. Belfast: NIPEC.

Department of Health (2018a) *Standards for Nursing Assistants and Associated Resources* available at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/standards-nursing-assistants-and-associated-resources>

Department of Health (2018b) *Co-Production Guide for Northern Ireland - Connecting and Realising Value through People* available at [126493 H&SCB - Co-Production Guide.indd \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Department of Health (2018c) *Career Framework for Specialist Nursing Roles*. Belfast: NIPEC.

Department of Health (2020) *Nursing and Midwifery Task Group Report*. Belfast: NIPEC.

Department of Health (pending publication) *Career Pathway for District Nursing Services*. Belfast: NIPEC.

Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (2015) *Guidance for HSC Organisations on Arrangements for Implementing Effective Personal and Public Involvement Policy in the HSC* available at [Guidance for HSC Organisations on Arrangements for Implementing effective personal and public involvement in the HSC \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Department of Health Social Services & Public Safety (2016) *Advanced Nursing Practice Framework: Supporting Advanced Nursing in Health and Social Care Trusts*. Belfast: NIPEC.

Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council (2017) *Professional Framework for Emergency Care Nursing*. Belfast: NIPEC available at [Emergency Care Nursing | NIPEC \(hscni.net\)](#)

Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council (2019) *Career Pathway for General Practice Nursing in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: NIPEC.

EMAIL INVITE TEMPLATE

The following email template should be used when inviting stakeholders to nominate individuals to represent their organisation on the Steering Group. It is important that the Chair of the Steering Group highlights the responsibility of Steering Group members to bring information to and from the Group. The Senior Nursing and or Midwifery Teams including the Director of Nursing should be kept informed of the progress of the project.

Email from Chair of Steering Group & Project Lead

To

Dear Colleagues

Re: title of Career Pathway

Intro into strategic context and who has approved the career pathway work to be commenced.

Identify the Project Chair and the Project Lead.

If possible identify the main aim and objectives of the Project and include draft project plan.

Seek nominations from relevant individuals with a reply date and email address to be returned to.

Kind regards etc

PROJECT PLAN TEMPLATE

Development of Career Pathway

In

Insert

Draft Project Plan

Month Year

CONTENT

Page

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Background

3.0 Project Aims and Objectives

4.0 Methodology

5.0 Resources

6.0 Dissemination and Implementation

7.0 Equality and Governance Screening

8.0 Evaluation

Appendices

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS SCREENING TEMPLATE

Insert Title Career Pathway:

Draft commenced Insert Date dd/mm/yy

Insert reference number:

Insert date of screening:

Insert Name of Group/Organisation is required to consider the likely equality implications of any policies or decisions. In particular it is asked to consider:

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories (minor / major / none)?
2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?
3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group (minor / major / none)?
4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

For advice on screening please contact: staff in the Equality Unit Business Services Organisation, equality.unit@hscni.net or Telephone 028 9536 3961

For information (evidence, data, research etc.) on the Section 75 equality groups see the Equality and Human Rights Information Bank on the BSO website – <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1798.htm>

As part of the audit trail documentation needs to be made available for all policies as decisions examined for equality and human rights implications. The screening template is a pro forma to document consideration of each screening question.

(1) INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLICY OR DECISION

1.1 Title of policy or decision

1.2 Description of policy or decision

- **what is it trying to achieve? (aims and objectives)**
- **how will this be achieved? (key elements)**
- **what are the key constraints? (for example financial, legislative or other)**

1.3 Main stakeholders affected (internal and external)

For example staff, actual or potential service users, other public sector organisations, voluntary and community groups, trade unions or professional organisations or private sector organisations or others

1.4 Other policies or decisions with a bearing on this policy or decision

- **what are they?**
- **who owns them?**

(2) CONSIDERATION OF EQUALITY AND GOOD RELATIONS ISSUES AND EVIDENCE USED

For information (evidence, data, research etc.) on the Section 75 equality groups see the Equality and Human Rights Information Bank on the BSO website – <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1798.htm>

2.1 Data gathering

What information did you use to inform this equality screening? For example previous consultations, statistics, research, Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs), complaints. Provide details of how you involved stakeholders, views of colleagues, service users, staff side or other stakeholders.

2.2 Quantitative Data

Who is affected by the policy or decision? Please provide a statistical profile. Note if policy affects both staff and service users, please provide profile for both.

Category	What is the makeup of the affected group? (%) Are there any issues or problems? For example, a lower uptake that needs to be addressed or greater involvement of a particular group?
Gender	
Age	
Religion	
Political Opinion	
Marital Status	
Dependent Status	
Disability	
Ethnicity	
Sexual Orientation	

2.3 Qualitative Data

What are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the categories in relation to this policy or decision and what equality issues emerge from this? Note if policy affects both staff and service users, please discuss issues for both.

Category	Needs and Experiences
<i>Gender</i>	
<i>Age</i>	
Religion	
Political Opinion	
Marital Status	

Dependent Status	
Disability	
Ethnicity	
Sexual Orientation	

2.4 Multiple Identities

Are there any potential impacts of the policy or decision on people with multiple identities? For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people.

--

2.5 Making Changes

Based on the equality issues you identified in 2.2 and 2.3, what changes did you make or do you intend to make in relation to the policy or decision in order to promote equality of opportunity?

<i>In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?</i>	<i>What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?</i>

2.6 Good Relations

What changes to the policy or decision – if any – or what additional measures would you suggest to ensure that it promotes good relations? (refer to guidance notes for guidance on impact)

<i>Group</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Suggestions</i>

(3) SHOULD THE POLICY OR DECISION BE SUBJECT TO A FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

A full equality impact assessment (EQIA) is usually confined to those policies or decisions considered to have major implications for equality of opportunity.

How would you categorise the impacts of this decision or policy (refer to guidance notes for guidance on impact)

Please tick:

Major impact	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minor impact	<input type="checkbox"/>
No further impact	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you consider that this policy or decision needs to be subjected to a full equality impact assessment?

Please tick:

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give reasons for your decisions:

--

(4) CONSIDERATION OF DISABILITY DUTIES

4.1 In what ways does the policy or decision encourage disabled people to participate in public life and what else could you do to do so?

<i>How does the policy or decision currently encourage disabled people to participate in public life?</i>	<i>What else could you do to encourage disabled people to participate in public life?</i>

4.2 In what ways does the policy or decision promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and what else could you do to do so?

<i>How does the policy or decision currently promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?</i>	<i>What else could you do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?</i>

(5) CONSIDERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

**5.1 Does the policy or decision affect anyone’s Human Rights?
Complete for each of the articles**

ARTICLE	Yes/No
Article 2 – Right to life	
Article 3 – Right to freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment	
Article 4 – Right to freedom from slavery, servitude & forced or compulsory labour	
Article 5 – Right to liberty & security of person	
Article 6 – Right to a fair & public trial within a reasonable time	
Article 7 – Right to freedom from retrospective criminal law & no punishment without law	
Article 8 – Right to respect for private & family life, home and correspondence.	
Article 9 – Right to freedom of thought, conscience & religion	
Article 10 – Right to freedom of expression	
Article 11 – Right to freedom of assembly & association	
Article 12 – Right to marry & found a family	
Article 14 – Prohibition of discrimination in the enjoyment of the convention rights	
1 st protocol Article 1 – Right to a peaceful enjoyment of possessions & protection of property	
1 st protocol Article 2 – Right of access to education	

If you have answered no to all of the above, please move on to **Question 6** on monitoring

5.2 If you have answered yes to any of the Articles in 5.1, does the policy or decision interfere with any of these rights? If so, what is the interference and who does it impact upon?

List the Article Number	Interfered with? Yes/No	What is the interference and who does it impact upon?	Does this raise legal issues?*
			Yes/No

** It is important to speak to your line manager on this and if necessary seek legal opinion to clarify this*

5.3 Outline any actions which could be taken to promote or raise awareness of human rights or to ensure compliance with the legislation in relation to the policy or decision.

(6) MONITORING

6.1 What data will you collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the policy or decision on any of the categories (for equality of opportunity and good relations, disability duties and human rights)?

Equality & Good Relations	Disability Duties	Human Rights

Approved lead officer: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

Policy/decision screened by: _____

Please note that having completed the screening you are required by statute to publish the completed screening template, as per your organisation’s equality

scheme. If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, you will need to review the screening decision.

Please forward completed template to: equality.unit@hscni.net

If you require this document in an alternative format (such as large print, Braille, disk, audio file, audio cassette, Easy Read or in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English), please contact:

Email:

Tel:

Template produced June 2011 (revised November 2013)

NURSING AND MIDWIFERY CAREERS WEBSITE GOVERNANCE STEERING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose:

The Group has been established to ensure a robust and formal process is in place to oversee the promotion, content management, monitoring and refreshing of the web-based NI Career Pathway for Nursing and Midwifery.

Key Role of Group Members:

To achieve this purpose, the Group will function within the following terms of reference:

1. Share knowledge and expertise to promote and inform the content of the career pathway website, ensuring that it is current.
2. Oversee the content, information and resources provided on the web-based Career Pathway.
3. Update and advise Group members of Career Specific Pathways being developed by stakeholders across the health and social care system which should be included on the website.
4. Provide advice and guidance via NIPEC to the relevant Career Specific Pathway Lead to ensure new specific pathways are aligned to the overarching Career Pathway.
5. Agree processes and timescales for the delivery of any agreed programmes of work as and when required.
6. Ensure effective communication and engagement with key stakeholders including dissemination of relevant information within each of the participating organisations.
7. Submit any agreed considerations and recommendations as and when required e.g. the DoH Chief Nursing Officer and/or Executive Directors of Nursing.

For further Information, please contact:

NIPEC

Centre House
79 Chichester Street
BELFAST, BT1 4JE

Tel: 0300 300 0066

This document can be downloaded from the NIPEC website

[NIPEC | NIPEC \(hscni.net\)](https://www.hscni.net)

ISBN: 978-1-903580-73-8

December 2021