



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

ANNUAL QUALITY REPORT 2019/20

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



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Foreword

NIPEC is focused on enabling the professions of nursing and midwifery to provide safe, effective high quality care; we are delighted to present our Annual Quality Report for 2019/20. This report reflects NIPEC's commitment to fulfilling our statutory functions to promote high standards of practice, education and professional development in addition to providing advice and guidance for nursing and midwifery in Northern Ireland. This is possible through the strategic relationships which have been developed with fellow professionals from across the health care family.

Quality 2020 underpins NIPEC activity and this annual report provides an opportunity for us to reflect and showcase the Quality 2020 principles in our work. During this year we continued with the success of three major projects which were resourced from the '*Confidence and Supply Fund*'. This has provided us with the additional capacity to work collaboratively with stakeholders across the region in support of the broader strategic agenda to transform services across Health and Social Care. The enthusiasm and dedication of our Council members, staff, partners and stakeholders is inspirational and without their hard work and commitment we would not be able to deliver on the outcomes evidenced in this report.

In the final quarter of the 2019/20 financial year, the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a pandemic. This had a significant impact on both wider society and on the work of health and social care. NIPEC immediately moved to realign resources to supporting the Department of Health's response.

The initial phases of COVID-19 dramatically changed the programmes of work being taken forward by NIPEC. In mid-March 2020, the majority of work associated with professional work streams had to be stood down which was in recognition of the need for stakeholder organisations and professional colleagues to focus on developing and delivering frontline emergency responses to the Pandemic. The exception to this at that time was the Future Nurse Future Midwife Programme of work which continued to provide invaluable and timely support across Northern Ireland, particularly in respect of the adoption of the NMC Emergency Standards for Pre and Post Registration education.

Across Northern Ireland other new services and ways of working had to be introduced to meet the predicted demands of the Pandemic and NIPEC positioned itself at the outset to provide professional support and advice across a range of services along with the Department of Health (DoH) and Public Health Agency (PHA).

The organisation was very proactive in the early stages of the Pandemic around two main areas:

- ***NIPEC's Emergency response to the Pandemic***
- ***COVID-19 Specific Business Objectives***

NIPEC's Emergency response to the Pandemic

During the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, NIPEC continues to fulfil its Statutory Functions as stated in the NIPEC's Management Statement Financial Memorandum¹. During the emergency response many of the objectives within NIPEC's draft Business Plan 2020/21 (awaiting approval from the DoH) have been temporarily set aside to refocus the priorities of the Organisation in support of the HSC response and surge planning led by the DoH. This has been done in agreement with 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 in mid-March 2020 with restricted access by 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.

COVID-19 Specific Business Objectives

A range of work was undertaken from mid-March 2020 demonstrating the flexible and innovative approaches adopted by NIPEC. This is briefly summarised in the following:

- *Future Nurse Future Midwife (FNFM) – COVID-19 Emergency Standards for Nursing and Midwifery:* On the 25 March 2020 the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) published Emergency Standards for Nursing and Midwifery Education² in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This was to ensure that students would have the appropriate supervision and support during a time when the healthcare workforce would be under significant pressure. It was anticipated that these new arrangements would enable students to achieve their learning outcomes and provide more flexibility regarding student supervision and assessment during the COVID-19 response. NIPEC worked closely with the NMC, DoH and a ranges of partners providing support within practice settings and the rapid development of a range of resources.
- *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 has supported the CNO and the PHA by drafting regional guidance for both Hospital Visiting and Hospital Chaplaincy Services.
- *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

¹ 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

² Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) (2020) Emergency standards for nursing and midwifery education. London: NMC

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.

- *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, NIPEC supported the IPC Teams in the HSC Belfast Trust to provide IPC advice, guidance and recommendations for the Care Homes sector.
- *Expanding the Capacity of the Nursing and Midwifery Workforce in Northern Ireland during the COVID-19 Pandemic:* Under the Enabling Professionalism umbrella, and in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, NIPEC has researched, prepared and developed a surge capacity microsite for the Nursing workforce working within Nursing Homes which will be launched in the near future.

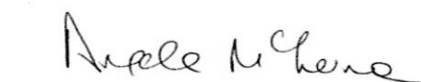
On 9 June 2020 the Minister for Health announced the launch of a Strategic Framework which provides an analysis of the adverse impact of COVID-19 on HSC services and sets out the approach to restoring services across the HSC. The Framework will see the development of incremental service plans, detailing how capacity can be increased in the context of COVID-19.

NIPEC will continue to review and update its Business Plan for 2020/21 in response to strategic priorities identified through the Strategic Framework and in agreement with NIPEC's Council and the Office of the Chief Nursing Officer.

We would like to pay tribute to everyone who works in health and social care and as we move forward into 2020/21 and give our commitment to continuing to respond to the emerging priorities as services are rebuilt and in response to continued pressures as a result of the pandemic. We are proud of all our staff in their early response and in particular to those who immediately stepped forward to be deployed to the Public Health Agency from an early stage.

We especially acknowledge the contribution that nurses and midwives make to our work. Their commitment, dedication and engagement with our organisation is not taken for granted. We will continue to support them to deliver care in new and innovative ways which is coproduced with their patients and service users and we will seek opportunities to build on existing relationships and create new partnerships to extend our influence.

As Chair and Chief Executive, we are pleased to present this Quality report for the seventh year on behalf of the NIPEC Council.



Professor Carol Curran OBE
NIPEC Chair

Angela McLernon OBE
NIPEC Chief Executive

Introduction

As a non-departmental public body (NDPB), NIPEC works with a broad range of stakeholders. We support employers, nurses and midwives to enhance professional practice and facilitate the delivery of safe, effective, compassionate person-centred care.

NIPEC is acutely aware of the multi-professional nature of contemporary service models within which nurses and midwives work. NIPEC is committed to effective, positive partnership working. We continue to establish, form and maintain collaborations and strategic alliances with a wide range of stakeholders from various sectors to promote and support the practice education and performance of nurses and midwives.

The work of NIPEC reflects the requirements set out by the regulatory body for nurses and midwives, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), which is articulated in The Code: Professional Standards of Practice and Behaviour for Nurses and Midwives (NMC, 2018)³.

NIPEC also plays a particular role in supporting the vision and objectives of the Department of Health's (DOH) Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) in the continued pursuit of excellence in the delivery of nursing and midwifery services to the population of Northern Ireland.

In addition to its staff, NIPEC's key stakeholders include the following:

<i>Department of Health</i>	<i>Nursing and Midwifery Council & All Registrants</i>	<i>Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority</i>
<i>Education provider organisations</i>	<i>Health and Social Care Board</i>	<i>Royal Colleges of Nursing and Midwives</i>
<i>Health and Social Care Trusts</i>	<i>Health and Social Care Safety Forum</i>	<i>Service Users & The Public</i>
<i>Independent and Voluntary Sector</i>	<i>Nursing and Midwifery Council & All Registrants</i>	<i>Trade Union organisations</i>
<i>Northern Ireland Social Care Council</i>	<i>Patient Client Council</i>	
	<i>Public Health Agency</i>	

NIPEC supports the principles of *Quality 2020*⁴ and that quality is everyone's business. Health care is delivered to the highest standards across the region by a highly skilled and motivated workforce. This Annual Quality Report sets out what NIPEC achieved during 2019/20 to improve services under each of the five strategic goals outlined in *Quality 2020*:

Transforming the Culture; Strengthening the workforce; Measuring the Improvement; Raising the Standards and Integrating the Care.

³ Nursing and Midwifery Council (2018) *The Code: Professional Standards of Practice and Behaviour for Nurses and Midwives*. London: NMC.

⁴ Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (2014). *Quality 2020 An Attributes Framework for Health and Social Care: supporting leadership for quality improvement and safety*. Belfast: Public Health Agency.

Transforming the Culture

“We will make achieving high quality care the top priority at all levels in health and social care. We will promote and encourage partnerships between staff, patients, clients and carers to support decision making (DHSSPS 2011a)⁵.”

Our Vision and Values

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

NIPEC’s vision reflects the intention to work as an organisation that will continue to be:

Leading and inspiring nurses and midwives to achieve and uphold excellence in professional practice (NIPEC, 2017 p.7)⁶

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 NMC Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses and midwives (NMC, 2018)¹. These values will provide a constant reference point for our organisation as we seek to implement the Corporate Plan: 2017/21.



NIPEC, in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities, places nurses and midwives at the centre of its activities. This includes promoting high standards of practice, education and professional

⁵ Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (2011a). *Quality 2020: A 10 Year Strategy to Protect and Improve Quality in Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: DHSSPS.

⁶<https://nipec.hscni.net/download/409/current/2849/nipec-corporate-plan-2017-2021-pdf/>

development as well as providing guidance on best practice for nursing and midwifery to support the delivery of safe, effective and person-centred care.

NIPEC is not a care provider organisation; however, through its statutory responsibilities it is in a unique position to directly support the delivery of high quality frontline services provided to patients, clients and their families.

Maintaining Quality within Governance Arrangements

NIPEC reports on the quality of its performance through its Annual Report, Annual Quality Report, Financial Statements and bi-annual Accountability Reviews with the DoH.

NIPEC is accountable to the Minister for Health through the Department of Health (DoH). Operating within the legislative and policy requirements of Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) and within the principles of the HSC Framework, the organisation is also accountable to the Chief Nursing Officer in relation to professional issues.

Robust governance structures and systems are in place to ensure accountability within the organisation (Appendix 1). This is overseen by the NIPEC Council ('The Council'). These underpin the roles, responsibilities and functions of NIPEC. They also provide assurance that the contribution of the organisation fits strategically and operationally in support of care delivery across Health and Social Care (HSC). Quality is a standing item on the agenda of all Council, Business and Professional team meetings.

NIPEC Council directs the development and delivery of the Annual Business Plan by regularly monitoring performance against strategic objectives. On an annual basis, Council undertakes a self-assessment of performance which is used to improve the effectiveness of the organisation.

NIPEC's Council is charged with setting the strategic direction of the organisation and overseeing governance responsibilities. Meeting quarterly it monitors NIPEC's activities and performance. Feedback is provided by senior staff by means of written and verbal reports as well as presentations on the initiatives, projects and governance issues.

The Council is also the forum whereby the quality of the organisational structures are reviewed and approved as an assurance that NIPEC remains fit to deliver its statutory responsibilities and functions.

The Council engages regularly with key stakeholders to ensure that the work of the NIPEC is co-produced. It maximises every opportunity to share and seek feedback on the work and performance of the organisation. The Council members participate in NIPEC's annual

stakeholder workshops (see *Integrating the Care*) to review and quality assure the business objectives and plan for the next year's goals.

The Council are regularly updated on operational issues of relevance. They actively participate in and advise on decisions regarding organisational developments. These include regulatory and legislative requirements such as those from the NMC, DoH, Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and other inspections and reviews.

During 2019/20, NIPEC maintained a robust governance and accountability framework by:

- Ensuring that Business Risk Management remained firmly integrated within the organisation, so that risks to the organisation were managed effectively and proportionately
- Maintaining its robust financial governance arrangements
- Complying with statutory and regulatory requirements
- Ensuring the safeguarding, and proper and effective use of public funds, together with the stewardship of assets and resources
- Obtaining sources of independent assurance to ensure that processes remain fit for purpose
- Quality assuring its project work through robust evaluative processes including post project evaluation reports.

NIPEC regularly provides information to the DoH through Sponsor Branch meetings. Information shared via these meetings is developed from and fed back to the NIPEC Business and Professional Team meetings. This ensures there is continuous dialogue which is part of the process used to update NIPEC policy and practice.

There is effective and efficient storage and retrieval of records, documents and resources. These are in accordance with NIPEC's Records Management policies and procedures and underpinned by the principles outlined in *Records Management: Good Management Good Records* (DHSSPS, 2011b). IT data security, policies and procedures in NIPEC are updated and reviewed on an ongoing basis as detailed in NIPEC's Information Governance Strategy published in April 2016.

Influencing the Culture

The Council, NIPEC's staff and stakeholders influence policy and practice regionally and nationally by responding to consultations and outcomes of reviews and inspections.

Consultations are an important part of the contribution that NIPEC makes to the quality of the work of regional and national organisations. It is recognised that NIPEC has a particular role to play in ensuring that consultations are meaningful and represent the views of the HSC workforce. To achieve this, NIPEC has facilitated HSC staff to engage in the consultative process for strategies and policies which may impact HSC staff and service users. In 2019/20 these included consultations from the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the Department of Health.

Valuing Staff

NIPEC's Senior Management Team comprises five Senior Professional Officers (SPOs) and the Head of Corporate Services who support the Chief Executive in the operational aspects of the organisation's business. The Senior Management Team is supported by a corporate team who working together ensure NIPEC continues to meet its objectives. (See *Appendix 2*).

NIPEC staff are our most valuable resource. As a person-centred organisation, NIPEC is guided by a set of values that underpin all we do and how we do it. Central to the delivery of our corporate objectives is a strong team ethos and a culture of positivity, engagement and open communication. Within NIPEC there are policies in place to deal with any issues such as whistle-blowing, bully and harassment, unprofessional or inappropriate behaviours or attitudes which are not tolerated within the organisation. Current governance arrangements support the Senior Management Team in ensuring our values are upheld.

In January 2018, NIPEC was successful in achieving the *Investors in People* accreditation. This accreditation lasts for three years and provides recommendations to ensure we continue to improve people management within the organisation. Throughout 2019/20, NIPEC continued to work on the recommendations from our IIP action plan to ensure we are prepared for the re-accreditation process in January 2021.

In 2019/20, the Audit & Risk Committee ensured that the organisation maintained a system of integrated governance, risk management and internal control which supported the achievement of the organisation's objectives. Their work included regular reviews of financial reports, monitoring of NIPEC's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), seeking assurance through Financial, Risk Management and Information Governance internal audits and submission to Council of an Annual Report on the activity of the Audit and Risk Committee for the year.

NIPEC's successful achievement of its business objectives is enabled by the hard work and commitment of its entire staff. Staff support policies and teamwork initiatives are in place including:

- A Staff Health and Wellbeing committee and associated team-building activities
- Team 'Huddle': a fortnightly meeting which lasts 10-15 minutes and is led by corporate and professional staff. The Huddle provides an opportunity to brief colleagues on upcoming organisational priorities and anticipated pressure points over the forthcoming weeks
- Regular communications are shared with staff to promote regional events and initiatives such as Self Care Conferences, Mental Health supportive strategies and Men's Health Week and Disability Awareness Days
- Our approach to staff participation in NIPEC's 'Quality Improvement Lite Programme' has been to bring a sense of joy and team work to training and development. The photographs show the team having fun learning about the art and science of measurement as part of a training day. By investing time in training we are ensuring staff feel valued and also embedding the science of quality improvement methodology into our everyday practice to help improve our internal processes.



Communication and Engagement

Effective communication is achieved both internally and externally through innovative practice and the use of policies to support staff. These include:

- NIPEC's 'Working Well Together' Policy and 'Capability/Competence' Procedure
- A range of HR 'family friendly' policies
- An employee suggestion box
- Internal meeting structure: Business Team, Corporate Services Management Team, Professional Team, Information Governance meetings, staff meetings; 1:1 appraisal and development meetings
- Line management structure which is communicated to all staff when updates or changes have occurred.

There are a number of working groups involving all staff on both a regular basis (e.g. health and safety; health and social wellbeing) and on an ad-hoc basis (e.g. event planning).

In 2019/20, NIPEC ensured that its HR policies and procedures were in line with best practice by utilising the services of the BSO's Human Resources Directorate and Equality Unit. NIPEC's internal communication structure aims to foster a culture of listening and response to staff concerns via the mechanisms in place for staff support, consultation and a variety of opportunities for staff to raise issues. External communication with stakeholders is achieved through a variety of resources including on-line, written, electronic and face-to-face communication. (See page 32).

Strengthening the Workforce

“We will provide the right education, training and support to deliver a high quality service. We will develop leadership skills at all levels to empower staff to take decisions and make changes” (DHSSPS 2011a).

Knowledgeable and competent practitioners are vital in ensuring the delivery of safe and effective care. The NMC requires that nurses and midwives should utilise The NMC Code:

“..as a way of reinforcing professionalism. Through revalidation, nurses and midwives provide evidence of their continued ability to practise safely and effectively.” (NMC, 2018 p.5)¹

NIPEC has a particular role in supporting the vision and objectives of the DoH Chief Nursing Officer. The launch of the Nursing and Midwifery Task Group Report and Recommendations⁷ in March 2020 at the NIPEC conference has placed nursing and midwifery as key protagonists for driving transformation. The report and recommendations will make a significant contribution to the transformation of health and social care, as set out in the Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together 2026⁸ Vision. The recommendations in this report will facilitate the:-

- Adoption of a population public health approach and put prevention and early intervention at the heart of nursing and midwifery practice
- Stabilisation of the nursing and midwifery workforce therefore ensuring safe and effective care transformation of health and social care service through enhancing the roles that nurses and midwives play within and across multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs).

The transformation agenda has continued to have a significant impact on the nursing and midwifery workforce in Northern Ireland including:

- A shift in focus to public health roles with greater investment in health visiting services and the initiation of a review of the post registration education standards by the NMC

⁷ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/nursing-and-midwifery-task-group-nmtg-report-and-recommendations>

⁸ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/health-and-wellbeing-2026-delivering-together>

- Working within integrated teams including the introduction of a number of multidisciplinary teams aligned to General Practice
- Career framework for General Practice Nursing
- Enhancing multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working for example through participation in drafting the Shared Decision Making Framework and participating in the planning for Involvefest, a week-long celebration of user involvement in service design.
- Further development and introduction of Advanced and Specialist Practice Nursing roles such as GP nursing framework and work to introduce Advanced Practitioners to Stroke Nursing.

To ensure that professional development and innovation is supported by informed practitioners, strong leadership is required at all levels. NIPEC recognises the importance of the Collective Leadership Strategy (2017)⁹ for the HSC in Northern Ireland and understands its impact in enabling registrants to identify and articulate the issues to effect the right change at the right time on every occasion. NIPEC has a unique role in developing resources and tools that support staff at all levels within the organisation and across Health and Social Care to identify where improvements can be made. The overarching aim of these developments is to support and take forward transformational change, including addressing and escalating concerns. We have a culture of being at the forefront of leadership and innovation within the nursing and midwifery professions in NI.

Nursing and Midwifery Workforce

In 2019/20, NIPEC worked on the co-production of resources to strengthen the nursing and midwifery workforce. This included the refresh of Enabling Professionalism as part of the Celebration for Nursing Now Campaign and the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife. The Delegation Framework is a further example of resources available to nurses which aim to strengthen the workforce. It is recognised that this is crucial to ensure the provision of high quality care to patients and clients. NIPEC also supports developments to enhance individual career progression as it is recognised that career prospects are an important factor in job satisfaction, workforce sustainability and retention. NIPEC's work to develop career pathways is one example of the support and resources provided to registrants.

Quality Improvement

Using a variety of resources, NIPEC has worked to equip the nursing and midwifery workforce to embrace opportunities and resolve challenges via adoption of quality improvement science. This included support and implementation of the *Attributes Framework* (DHSSPS, 2014)² which aims to enable individuals to assess their current attributes (knowledge, skills and attitudes) in relation to leadership for quality improvement and to determine the learning and development needs for their current and future roles. In

⁹ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/hsc-collective-leadership-strategy>

addition the *Attributes Framework* enables organisations to build the capability and capacity of the workforce to participate in and lead initiatives which develop quality care and services.

To ensure staff are developed to deliver the Ministers vision outlined in the Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together (DoH, 2016)⁶ work has been completed by an SPO and the members of the Professional Leadership Task Group, chaired by the Chief Nursing Officer to update the Level 1 Q2020 Attributes Framework e-learning programme and the regional face to face training slide set, to ensure it is reflective of the most current information available.

Engagement with the Nursing and Midwifery Workforce

During 2019/20, NIPEC contributed to the continuous professional development of nurses and midwives through engagement and presentation opportunities. For example:

- Presentation of NIPEC's work and resources to final year nursing and midwifery students across all NI Approved Education Institutions (AEIs)
- Presentation of the Delegation Decision Support Framework to 450 nurses and midwives across the region, including representatives from the Independent and Voluntary sector
- Several large scale engagement events to profile the PACE framework, supported by the Transforming Nursing and Midwifery Data work stream
- Presentation of NIPEC's role and function to participants undertaking Nursing Leadership Programmes delivered by the HSC Leadership Centre and Clinical Education Centre
- Presentation of the Enabling Professionalism Framework to a range of nursing and midwifery staff across a number of organisations
- Two large multi-professional stakeholder events, hosted in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council relating to the production of a governance framework for delegation, that included people with lived experience and carers
- Two large scale events with representation from HSC Trusts, Independent Sector organisations, AEIs, students and a range of professional bodies including RCN & RCM to support the development of a single policy framework for reflective supervision in nursing and midwifery for Northern Ireland
- NIPEC regularly demonstrates its website, resources and online portfolio during regional events. NIPEC staff take the opportunity to promote the online portfolio at these events for registrants to record and reflect on their continuous professional development
- Numerous large scale engagement events across the Future Nurse Future Midwife (FNFM) Project work streams to progress the FNFM project with representation from the service users and carers, HSC Trusts, Independent Sector organisations, AEIs, students and a range of professional bodies including RQIA, RCN & RCM

- Delivery of FNFM Roadshows to 588 nurses and midwives across the region, including representatives from the Independent and Voluntary sector
- Delivery of FNFM to final year nursing and midwifery students across all NI Approved Education Institutions (AEIs)
- Led on the coordination and delivery of Professional Development Forum meetings for RNLDs
- Led and contributed to engagement events for nurses in the Independent and Voluntary sector
- Led on the coordination of the Lead Nurse Endoscopy Forum across HSC Trusts.

NIPEC's Workforce

NIPEC is a person-centred organisation, and every contribution of the workforce is central to the delivery of our corporate and business objectives. NIPEC seeks to develop and model excellent teamwork via our ethos and our activities. Whilst NIPEC is a relatively small organisation our aim is to provide an effective and efficient service to our stakeholders and our impact stretches across the region. Our organisational chart is presented in Appendix 2.

“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.” (NIPEC, 2018 p.27)

Embedded within NIPEC is a robust system of staff development and performance reviews. Individual roles, responsibilities and objectives are clear, regularly discussed and included in staff annual personal development meetings with their line manager to ensure high quality outcomes. In 2019/20 all staff clearly identified their learning and development needs and learning opportunities in their annual personal development plan. For NIPEC professional staff and professional members of NIPEC Council, there are robust assurance systems in place to validate and monitor their NMC registration.

In 2019/20 corporate staff who did not already have an Q2020 Attributes Framework Level 2 qualification or training engaged in a QI Programme developed in-house specifically for



NIPEC staff. The programme was adapted from the South Eastern HSC Trust's SQE Lite programme and was developed by the Internal QI Team. The programme facilitates staff to learn QI methodologies which can be applied to their area of work to support improvement and is a stepping stone to a Level 2 programme. It is important that all staff, including those not on the frontline, continue to develop their knowledge and skill in QI as their jobs impact albeit indirectly on patients and clients.

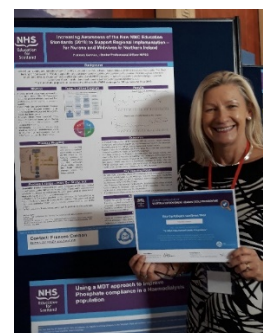
The Project Work that NIPEC leads provides opportunities for HSC staff to acquire and build leadership and strategic professional practice skills under the supervision and direction of senior professional staff. During 2019/20 NIPEC has continued to support the leadership and development of nurses and midwives through temporary and secondment opportunities. Examples during this time include the employment of Professional Officers for the Transformation projects and a refresh of the pre-registration section of the nursing and midwifery careers website.

In 2019/20 NIPEC continued to enhance its capacity to support leadership roles within the HSC via both the Associate Senior Professional Officer (ASPO) and Associate Professional Officer (APO) role. ASPOs have managed a range of projects including a review of the R-Cat tool and the Post Registration Masters Programme.

APOs are managed and supported by SPOs and work with them on their individual work streams.

During 2019/20:

- One SPO completed the HSC Collective Leadership Programme, the project centred on increasing awareness of the new NMC Education Standards (2018) to support regional implementation - for Nurses and Midwives in Northern Ireland, The aim of this project was to increase the visits to the NIPEC FNFM webpage
- One SPO commenced the Scottish Improvement Leadership (ScIL) Programme which aims to build Quality Improvement (QI) capacity and capability. The ScIL programme has enabled the SPO to design and develop a QI project with community midwives in the Belfast Trust, aimed at increasing the number of women offered a postnatal clinic appointment. The programme assisted the SPO to lead and generate support for change, whilst providing expert QI advice
- The Head of Corporate Services completed the HSC Collective Leadership Programme which focuses on building understanding and sharing experiences in relation to the core elements of the HSC Leadership Strategy in particular: compassionate leadership; systems leadership and shared leadership through team based working
- Following successful completion of the IHI Improvement Advisor Programme one SPO has continued to build on the QI networks and skills that have already been developed and is a mentor on the South Eastern Trust's SQE Level 2 programmes for registrants. These skills have been used within NIPEC to support NIPEC staff who are undertaking Level 2 and Level 3 Quality Improvement programmes and to lead the development of NIPEC QI Lite programme for staff who do not have Level 2 training or qualification (see p. 11).



Develop and Model Excellent Teamwork

Improved working relationships, morale and team working are all by-products of effective internal communication. Regular internal briefings, staff noticeboard and informal face to face updates are all utilised to ensure staff remain up to date. Staff meet frequently to share information, provide updates and seek feedback on issues affecting the organisation and to celebrate achievements. Internal meetings are held on a regular basis, which involve and inform staff. The Chief Executive also holds regular 1:1 meetings with members of the senior team to ensure the work of NIPEC is progressing on time and to assure the quality of the projects that are being undertaken. (See page 6).

NIPEC holds accreditation with Investors in People (January 2018). This accolade is evidence of the quality ethos that exists within the organisation and recognises NIPEC structures which strengthen the workforce such as:

- Family friendly policies to support staff in achieving a work life balance
- Promotion of and access to the HSC staff support service ('Inspire')
- Staff updates on BSO occupational health facilities such as mental health awareness training and the annual flu vaccination programme
- The Health and Social Wellbeing Committee.

The Health and Social Wellbeing Committee continued in its objective of nurturing and improving staff relationships and supporting 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, raised a total of £700 for the Welcome Organisation, a Belfast-based charity which provides a range of services for people affected by homelessness.

Activities and events to support the charity in 2019/20 included:

- Easter Tea Party and The Halloween - Soup-a-Licious
- Contributions to The Welcome Organisation's appeal for clothing, food, and toiletries for the homeless
- Christmas Breakfast and Quiz



- Welcome Organisation promoted at NIPEC 2020 Annual Conference.

Measuring the Improvement

“We will improve outcome measurement and report on progress for safety, effectiveness and the patient/client experience. We will promote the use of accredited improvement techniques and ensure that there is sufficient capacity and capability within the HSC to use them effectively” (DHSSPSNI 2011a)¹⁰.

To ensure continuous improvements in the quality of its work and relevance to professional practice, NIPEC examines the impact of its products and resources, all of which are evidence based, designed and developed with stakeholders. NIPEC engages with stakeholders to review the previous year’s work and to identify the needs of registrants to inform the next annual business plan. NIPEC’s performance is monitored by the DoH bi-annually through Accountability Reviews.

Gathering Information and Examining Data

NIPEC is committed to ensuring that all information held, produced, developed and disseminated by NIPEC is managed effectively and based on the best available evidence to support the delivery of the strategic and operational objectives. This is undertaken in partnership with a wide range of key stakeholders across the nursing and midwifery professions within the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors.

Each NIPEC work stream, which has been set up in support of the achievement of a specific corporate objective, is championed and led by a designated senior staff member who is accountable for the effective management and delivery of the aims and objectives of each project. Senior Professional Officers are supported in their professional work by administrative support. The work of NIPEC is informed by evidence and data from a variety of sources including up-to-date evidence obtained by a review of relevant literature.

Organisational Information and Data

Quality is embedded in the organisation at a corporate and professional level and is maintained as a focus within governance arrangements via the use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). NIPEC views monitoring of performance, both financial and non-financial, as an important component of the information needed to explain an organisation’s progress towards its goals and assist in corporate transparency. KPIs have been selected which are relevant to NIPEC’s activity and using the 2019/20 Business Plan, activity is extracted, monitored and recorded within the KPI process as either a monthly or yearly figure. The

¹⁰ Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (2011b). *Records Management: Good Management Good Records*. Belfast: DHSSPS.

KPIs which NIPEC report on are: data information, whistleblowing, financial, purchasing, human resources, and losses due to IT financial or data incidents. A copy of the KPI monitoring table is presented to each meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Council.

During 2019/20 information was shared with NIPEC Council on a quarterly basis through Chief Executive Reports which were tabled at each of the NIPEC Council meetings. This information influenced policy and practice by ensuring that quality initiatives were explored and introduced into the organisation.

Organisational Governance

NIPEC has a published policy and associated procedure for handling complaints. During 2019/20 NIPEC received no formal complaints and responded to two Assembly Questions and three FOI requests, all within the required timelines.

In order to ensure that NIPEC has a systematic and planned approach to the governance of information, and to enable it to maintain information in a manner that effectively services its needs and those of its stakeholders, in line with appropriate legislation NIPEC has in place the following:

- Strategic control over the operation of the organisation via the Council and establishment of Audit & Risk and Remuneration Committees
- Business Planning activity and Risk Management strategy
- Comprehensive budgeting systems approved and reviewed by Council, including monthly Financial Monitoring Returns to DoH and the use of Business Cases to approve expenditure
- Performance Management Processes including professional work matrix and KPIs
- An internal mechanism based on the former controls assurance standards to provide assurance on internal processes to the Chief Executive
- An Information Risk Management structure
- Sources of Independent Assurance including Nursing & Midwifery Council, Internal and External Audit, and Investors in People
- A range of internal meetings and committees including the Business Team meeting, Information Governance Group, Health & Safety committee, Website Governance group and Corporate Services Team meeting.

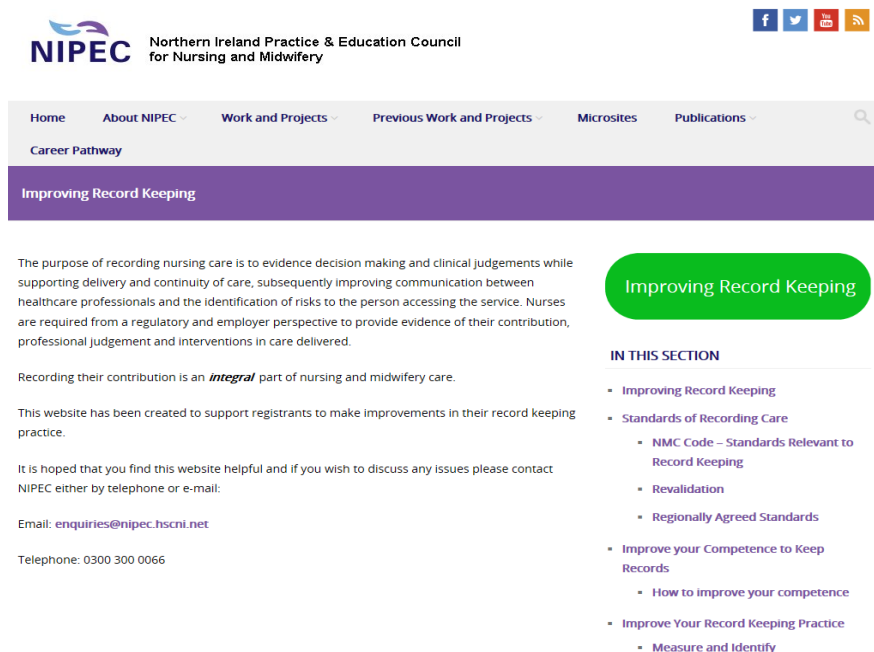
2019/20 saw significant investment in the capacity of NIPEC to support nursing and midwifery governance arrangements and practice specifically through gathering and examining data. Record keeping practice continues to be an area identified as requiring improvement regionally and nationally, therefore NIPEC continues to keep a focus on this area of practice.

This year, NIPEC reviewed and agreed several sets of nursing assessment criteria for a range of care settings, standardising data collection across the region. They included: children's and adult hospital based care; short stay adult and children's areas, learning disabilities and district nursing. These work programmes often included audits of practice prior to commencement.

Audit information relating to the standard of nurse record keeping practice across the five HSC Trusts has continued to be gathered via an audit tool, indicators developed collaboratively with HSC Trusts. The audit scores are reviewed within each organisation and improvement action plans put in place. The scores are presented quarterly to the Recording Care Steering Group for strategic review and following that, to the CNO business meetings attended by Executive Nurses. The standards outlined within the audit tool have continued to be used by the RQIA to review record keeping practice across the region in both statutory and independent and voluntary sector organisations.

Data that has been gathered outside of the organisation is used to support nurses and midwives to remain up to date on major strategic and policy issues through the provision of advice and information, the development and dissemination of a range of relevant publications. On occasions, NIPEC facilitates wider engagement and support for registrants to respond to broader consultations and raise awareness regarding the outcomes of regional and national inquiries.

In addition to this work, and in the current context of health and social care in Northern Ireland where collective leadership, co-production and working well together in multi-professional teams underpin transformation of service arrangements, NIPEC worked in partnership with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) to lead a programme of work to develop a framework within which tasks and duties might be delegated across integrated teams.



The screenshot shows the NIPEC website. At the top, the NIPEC logo is displayed alongside the text 'Northern Ireland Practice & Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery'. To the right of the logo are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and RSS. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, About NIPEC, Work and Projects, Previous Work and Projects, Microsites, and Publications. A search icon is located on the far right of the menu. Below the navigation menu is a purple banner with the text 'Improving Record Keeping'. The main content area is white and contains the following text: 'The purpose of recording nursing care is to evidence decision making and clinical judgements while supporting delivery and continuity of care, subsequently improving communication between healthcare professionals and the identification of risks to the person accessing the service. Nurses are required from a regulatory and employer perspective to provide evidence of their contribution, professional judgement and interventions in care delivered.' Below this is a green button with the text 'Improving Record Keeping'. Further down, there is a section titled 'IN THIS SECTION' with a list of links: 'Improving Record Keeping', 'Standards of Recording Care' (with sub-links for 'NMC Code - Standards Relevant to Record Keeping', 'Revalidation', and 'Regionally Agreed Standards'), 'Improve your Competence to Keep Records' (with sub-link for 'How to improve your competence'), and 'Improve Your Record Keeping Practice' (with sub-link for 'Measure and Identify'). At the bottom of the page, there is contact information: 'Recording their contribution is an integral part of nursing and midwifery care.', 'This website has been created to support registrants to make improvements in their record keeping practice.', 'It is hoped that you find this website helpful and if you wish to discuss any issues please contact NIPEC either by telephone or e-mail:', 'Email: enquiries@nipec.hscni.net', and 'Telephone: 0300 300 0066'.

Based on best evidence the framework was designed to support safe and sustainable integrated working across sectors with people who receive health and social care services. It sought to specify the governance arrangements required to maintain an integrated approach to the appropriate delegation of tasks and duties to meet the care and service choices of people.

The framework, designed to be used by teams making decisions in health and social care settings and also by organisations seeking to ensure that the correct support was available for their employees to enable decisions to be made, was presented to policy leads in February 2020.

Measuring Progress and Improving Performance

NIPEC's projects often include quality improvement approaches and methodologies. In addition, members of project groups, working groups and/or expert reference groups bring a wealth of knowledge and experience in relation to quality improvement. Examples of quality improvement activities include:

- NIPEC continued to work with the Chair and other members of the *Q2020 Professional Leadership Task Group* to support the implementation of the *Q2020 Attributes Framework* across the HSC system. This included updating of the Level 1 programmes and inclusion of Level 2 award in the post-registration Masters Programme for newly qualified nurses
- NIPEC's work to measure progress has included completion of an impact measurement of the NIPEC Preceptorship Framework and submission of recommendations to the DoH CNMAC Workforce and Education sub group in relation to application and selection processes for pre-registration nursing programmes.

Improving performance is demonstrated via the Continuous Professional Development/ Training for staff which in 2019/20 also included:

- Contributing to the HSC Collective Leadership Programme comprising delegates at all levels in organisations including service users and carers
- Continuous professional development training or accreditation pursued by members of the workforce within their professional requirements and mandatory training requirements set out by NIPEC.

These activities contribute to improving performance of NIPEC and the organisations within its influence.

Raising the Standards

“We will establish a framework of clear evidence-based standards and best practice guidance. We will establish dynamic partnerships between service users, commissioners and providers to develop, monitor and review” (DHSSPSNI, 2011a).

NIPEC is at the forefront of raising the standards of care and service provision to our stakeholders and HSC staff and clients. NIPEC does this by leading on projects to deliver improvements in care and contributing to the transformation agenda of the DoH. NIPEC is constantly seeking opportunities to be proactive and make recommendations which contribute to achieving the aims of Q2020 and hence raise standards within the organisation and those organisations within its influence.

Transformation and Reform

The Northern Ireland Transformation and Reform agenda detailed in Health and Well Being (2026): Delivering Together⁶ and the Northern Ireland Executive Draft Programme for Government (2016)¹¹ requires significant transformation and reform of services across the region. In support of the transformation agenda, the ‘Confidence and Supply Transformation Fund’ has been established and through the DoH, NIPEC successfully submitted a business proposal seeking funding to support this programme of work.

The successfully commissioned projects include:

- Future Nurse Future Midwife
- Post Registration Masters Programme
- Transforming Nursing and Midwifery Data.

Future Nurse Future Midwife

During 2019/20 NIPEC - on behalf of the Department of Health continued to work with key stakeholders across the HSC to support the outworking’s of the NMC Future Nurse Future Midwife Education standards published in May 2018. (See page 26)

Post Registration Masters Programme

NIPEC led the testing and delivery of a 2 year Rotation Post Registration MSc level Nurse Development Programme which aimed to support nursing workforce stability and retention by developing future nursing leaders who can deliver transformational change and improve outcomes for patients and service users. In September 2019, 29 participants commenced the academic programme with a focus on quality improvement. Over the two years of the programme, participants will rotated through a series of hospital, community, independent and voluntary placements

¹¹ <https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/newnigov/draft-pfg-framework-2016-21.pdf>

Transforming Nursing and Midwifery Data

The nursing and midwifery workforce is the largest professional workforce. Practitioners record vast amounts of data every day of their working lives. Most of this data is currently difficult to collate – paper, paper-lite and paperless systems not easily analysed for any purpose of scale. Data that cannot be standardised and named cannot be identified appropriately, taught, financed, nor can it transform public policy.

Northern Ireland is continuing to progress the procurement of a digital health and care system to include electronic clinical noting, through the Encompass program of work. It has been recognised that the important role of nursing and midwifery data must be considered, when electronic patient record systems are developed in health care organisations¹². It is therefore of significance, that in moving forward with transformational work relating to nursing and midwifery data capture, the Steering Group of Recording Care/Transforming Nursing and Midwifery Data (TNMD) continues to contribute to this emerging agenda in Northern Ireland.

The current policy position for Northern Ireland is to advance toward a health system founded on principles of co-production¹³, underpinned by the transition of people moving from being passive recipients to partners in care and services. At the heart of this move is the care planning process¹⁴. The importance of person-centred approaches and the need to obtain the views of users and carers as part of assessment and care planning has also been highlighted in multiple regional reviews and public inquiries in Northern Ireland.

The product of a 'ground up' iterative process, the '*PACE*' (*Person-centred Assessment, Care planning and Evaluation*) Framework was introduced in identified clinical areas in conjunction with the activities of living, incorporating relevant risk assessments, prior to the introduction of the TNMD programme of work. The Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), along with the Executive nurses from the statutory sector organisations within the province, had determined that the use of the *PACE Framework* should be extended across the region to support person-centred care planning practice following a funded evaluation pilot of the framework in 2016¹⁵.



Previous progress in *PACE* implementation under the Recording Care programme of work, had established that nursing and midwifery practitioners in Northern Ireland required significant assistance based in practice environments to adjust to, and adopt organisational change of this magnitude. Fundamental to enabling this change was the development of nursing staff to support the 'cultural shift' in practice.

¹² Hunt, E.C., Sproat, S.B., and Kitzimmer, R.R. (2004). *The Nursing Informatics Implementation Guide*. Health Informatics Series. New York, Springer.

¹³ Department of Health. (2016). *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together*. Belfast, DoH.

¹⁴ Philips, J. (2010). Care planning: more than meets the eye. *British Journal of Community Nursing*. 15,1.

¹⁵ Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council. (2016). *PACE Pilot Project: Planning Person-Centred Nursing Care Evaluation Report July 2016*. Belfast, NIPEC.

At the end of March 2020, 151 out of 182 wards in adult hospital based care settings had implemented PACE, with some work also completed in Type 1 Emergency Departments, children's, Learning Disabilities and short stay care settings. A regional team of 22 registered nurses located in the five HSC trusts had been developed, working to consistent standards and being managed centrally by NIPEC staff. In addition, one team in each District Nursing Locality in the five HSC trusts was piloting the PACE approach to determine utility in such care settings. Learning from the programme of work included the need to sustain implementation through guidance and support, within a quality improvement framework of audit, facilitated reflective supervision and subsequent development for teams.

NIPEC's Electronic Resources

NIPEC Website

A review of NIPEC's main website during 2019/20 and a survey of visitors to the site confirmed the need to make it easier to navigate and more accessible via smart phones. NIPEC has planned to include this in its update of the main website scheduled in the 2020/21 Business Plan.

NIPEC keeps its main website up-to-date with all its projects and events and it also uses the website to promote other important professional information relevant to NMC registrants. NIPEC SPOs and the administrative support staff and IT officers ensure that each project page is regularly updated and NIPEC has a latest news section on the website which advises of professional, newsworthy items, for example, launch of new resources such as the Delegation Framework; International Year of the Nurse and International Year of the Midwife; PHA 'Flu' vaccine campaign and CNO's launch of Northern Ireland's Nursing Now campaign.

NIPEC's Website Governance Team also meets six-weekly to review the website and ensure its information is current, accessible, and useful. During 2019 the website information team maintained the sites by:

- Creating additional microsites to promote resources
- Regularly posting latest news about NIPEC resources and events
- Using google analytics to collect data to understand visits to the websites
- Broken web links are kept to a minimum by running software which completes a monthly check.

The website has continued to grow in popularity as can be seen from its activity in Table 1. The number of visits¹⁶ has increased by almost 11,000 from 2018/19 and the number of hits have increased by just over 25,000. It is likely that the increase in traffic to and through the

¹⁶ *Visits* are the unique visitors to the site and *Hits* are the number of individual web pages viewed during each visit.

site is linked to the increased numbers of engagement events and road shows related to the Future Nurse Future Midwife project.

Table 1. Statistics for NIPEC website <https://nipec.hscni.net> during 2019/20 compared to 2018/19.

	Number of Hits	Number of Hits Figures in 2018/19	Number of Visits	Number of Visits Figures in 2018/19	Average Length of Visit (Mins)	Average Length of Visit in 2018/19 (Mins)
April 2019	11,050	6,705	2,890	1,636	02:48	02:40
May 2019	9,725	5,781	3,190	1,663	02:08	02:29
June 2019	9,171	5,942	2,758	1,487	02:24	02:38
July 2019	8,754	5,240	2,709	1,461	02:22	02:21
August 2019	8,938	5,975	2,622	1,745	02:25	02:33
September 2019	11,186	6,558	3,557	1,906	02:09	02:32
October 2019	11,540	8,503	3,738	2,793	02:14	02:02
November 2019	9,113	8,478	3,241	2,677	02:01	02:04
December 2019	5,704	6,136	2,095	1,956	02:05	02:24
January 2020	9,289	9,681	3,291	2,898	02:32	02:19
February 2020	9,739	8,359	3,556	2,723	02:08	02:06
March 2020	9,394	10,853	3,533	3,315	02:00	02:18
Overall Totals to date for the year 2019/20	113,603	88,211	37,180	26,260		

NIPEC has continued to enhance its engagement with stakeholders through social media, Facebook and Twitter and has increased its followers on both platforms (see Table 2).

Table 2. NIPEC Facebook and Twitter Posts and Followers

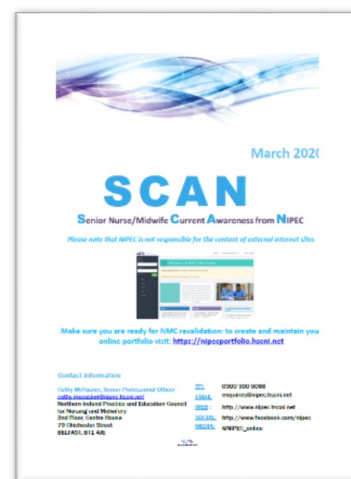
Social Media Platform	Quarter	Number of Posts/Tweets per quarter	Number of people 'reached' from NIPEC posts/ tweets per quarter	Number of new followers per quarter	Number of followers at the Quarter End
FACEBOOK	Apr - Jun 19	8	1,191	20	411
	Jul - Sept 19	12	1,632	11	422
	Oct -Dec 19	6	882	9	431
	Jan - Mar 20	5	658	21	452
	Overall Total	31	4,363	61	
TWITTER	Apr - Jun 19	40	60,100	145	1567
	Jul - Sept 19	52	70,300	222	1789
	Oct -Dec 19	34	45,900	138	1927
	Jan - Mar 20	12	32,537	152	2079
	Overall Total	138	208,837	657	

In addition to the posts on Twitter and Facebook, NIPEC held a Twitter chat on 25 July 2019. The chat was led by the NIPEC Senior Professional Officer responsible for the FNFM project and was focussed on Northern Ireland's Model for student supervision and assessment. The Twitter chat was associated with an increase in activity on NIPEC's Twitter account (see Table 2. Jul-Sept 2019, 70,300 people reached). NIPEC also hosted a masterclass in November 2019, for the Professional Officers involved in FNFM project in order to optimise the use of Twitter to promote the FNFM project and resources. In light of the requirements for social distancing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, NIPEC will review the use of Twitter chats or online workshops in order to increase engagement with registrants and the adoption and implementation of relevant NIPEC resources.

Publications

SCAN is a monthly publication, with ten issues over the year and has been circulated to 427 recipients. NIPEC includes updates on its project work as well as information on current reports and articles which can be relevant for Nurses and Midwives for example:

- Revised Adult Hospital Based Person-Centred Nursing Assessment and Plan of Care Data Set and Document (SCAN May 2019)
- Cook, N. et al. (2019) *The Nurse's Anatomy, Physiology and Pathophysiology Glossary: An A-Z quick reference with over 1900 essential terms explained*. London: Sage Publications UK. (SCAN June 2019)
- Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On (SCAN March 2020).



NIPEC also facilitates small organisations/networks to promote their information through SCAN such as the:

- Cross-border Healthcare Intervention Trials In Ireland Network (CHITIN); a unique cross-border partnership between the Public Health Agency and the Health Research Board in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) employing research nurses
- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Nurses working in Primary Care
- Ministry of Defence CPD for all Nurses.

On-line Competence Assessment Tools: The competence assessment tools outlined in Table 3 (see below) are designed to facilitate on-line completion to support staff with reflection and enhancement of knowledge, skills and behaviours. Competence assessment tools are available on the online portfolio and the NIPEC website. These resources enable nurses and midwives to complete a self-assessment in order to identify their learning needs and develop their knowledge and skills. In each of NIPEC's career pathways there are competencies developed for each of the roles. Registrants and their line managers and supervisors can use these to help support the practitioners development in clinical skills, knowledge and behaviours.

In line with the TNMD work stream, NIPEC has reviewed and revised the tools and resources available to nurses and midwives on the Recording Care micro-site. This work will further support the improvement of standards of record keeping practice in Northern Ireland for nurses and midwives.

Table 3: Competence Assessment Tools

<p>NIPEC's Competence Assessment Tools are available to complete online at https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net/ (individuals must be registered on the site to complete the online resource)</p>
Q2020 Attributes Framework
Respiratory Competence Assessment Tool (R-CAT)
Competence Assessment Tool for Ward Sisters/Charge Nurses
Competence Assessment Tool for Team Leaders

Improving Standards in Education and Development

During 2019/20 NIPEC continued to lead the FNFM Project and work in partnership with stakeholder colleagues to develop regional resources and products to support full implementation of the nursing standards from September 2020.

The project has delivered on a range of objectives including:

- hosting a number of stakeholder workshop to ensure the 2020 nursing curricula across the three Universities and each of the fields of practice reflects the NI strategic direction and transformation agenda – aligned to the Future Nurse standards
- development of a Northern Ireland Practice Assessment Document (NIPAD) for Nursing which will be used by the three universities. The NIPAD has been adopted for each of the fields of practice
- regional agreement on the model for Student Supervision and Assessment in practice
- development of a range of products for those supporting student supervision and assessment in practice including a suite of eLearning resources available to HSC Trusts and the Independent Sector
- Development of a new Practice Learning Environment Education Audit (PLEEA) to maximize practice learning experiences and ensure learning opportunities are exploited to their full potential to create rich student learning experiences
- Delivery of a comprehensive Engagement and Communication Strategy including:

- a significant number of FNFM Roadshows from October 2019, these were geographically spread across Northern Ireland and accessible to staff both in the HSC and Independent Sector (circa 686 participants attended)
- Hosted FNFM Twitter Chats



Bi- monthly FNFM Communiques Future Nurse Practice education Team workshops.

On the 15 January 2020 the NMC held the first of the four UK country launches in Northern Ireland of the new [Midwifery Standards](#) 'My Future, My Midwife'

In the past, NIPEC has reported on projects for nurses and midwives with the aim of raising standards. An update on progress with regards to these projects is provided below.

Enabling Professionalism

Evidence continues to be provided to NIPEC that nurses and midwives across the UK are using this framework to guide reflection for revalidation and improve professional practice. During 2019/20, the Enabling Professionalism Framework was presented again to a workshop of nurses and midwives in Northern Ireland to support further thought on how the framework might be used in the region. The resulting action plan was presented to the Chief Nurse in November 2019 for consideration.



In addition, the six Government Chief Nursing Officers across the UK and Ireland commenced a refreshed Enabling Professionalism work stream aligned with the preparations for the Year of the Nurse 2020 and Nursing Now 2020 campaigns supported by the World health Organisation and the International Council of Nurses. By March 2020, a refreshed suite of resources had been developed to support the release of a social media campaign in 2020, articulating the contribution of nurses and midwives to population health.

A Supervision Framework for Nursing and Midwifery

The Central Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Committee (CNMAC) chaired by the CNO, commissioned NIPEC to lead work to explore the development of a *Nursing and Midwifery Supervision* Framework for Northern Ireland that could be positioned under one policy directive. The work recognised that whilst nursing and midwifery are two separate professions, legislative changes to the Nursing and Midwifery Order (2001), to remove the statutory supervision of midwives has required a revision of the operationalisation of midwifery supervision. Through engagement and partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, NIPEC produced a final draft document for submission to the Chief Nursing Officer in October 2019 to support nursing and midwifery supervision under a single policy framework. Testing will be the next stage of this work to determine utility and implications for implementation.



Stakeholder Involvement

During 2019-20 NIPEC continued with its innovative approach to engage with stakeholders to promote standards of practice, education and professional development through the following:

- Ten publications of SCAN distributed directly to 447 recipients
- Twitter chats
- Twitter, Facebook and Instagram posts
- NIPEC roadshows in locations close to front line staff
- NIPEC information sessions for 3rd year students across the HEIs
- NIPEC Annual Conference.

Stakeholder Frontline Events

NIPEC continues with its roadshow approach to increase the number of frontline staff it engages with. Once again Trust Executive Directors of Nursing supported NIPEC to hold its events in HSC Trust locations across NI with a total of ninety-three registrants attending eleven events from September to November 2019. This was in addition to the number of registrants attending other NIPEC events such as Future Nurse Future Midwife roadshows and Delegation Framework Awareness sessions held between October 2019 and February 2020, see Table 4 for numbers attending the various events.

Table 4. Numbers of Nurses and Midwives attending some of NIPEC Events

Events	Number of Events	Numbers Attended
Stakeholder Roadshows – updating on NIPEC work and seeking views on future work	11	93
FNFM Roadshows	15	588
Delegation Framework Awareness Sessions	Across 5 Trusts	450
Pace ¹⁷ Workshops	2	180
Professionalism Event	4	129
Supervision Framework	2	59
Independent and Voluntary Sector Forum - NIPEC update	2	60
General Practice Nurses	1	30
Total	42+	1589

- Many other events were also undertaken engaging with registrants in relation to, NIPEC projects. In addition, one of the Senior Professional Officers also promoted NIPEC's work and resources and clarified its role and function to pre-registration nursing students in Ulster University and for the first time pre-registration nursing and midwifery students in Queen's University Belfast.

NIPEC also had promotional stands at the following events:

- Launch of the Public Health Agency's Project Retain, Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim;
- Public Health Agency Transformation of Care Homes, Parish Centre, Seagoe;
- Northern Health and Social Care Trust's Conference, Tullyglass Hotel, Ballymena;
- Launch of International Year of the Nurse & Midwife, Stormont Hotel, Belfast; and
- Balmoral Health Care – 20 year anniversary Celebration.

Personal and Public Involvement

NIPEC promotes a partnership approach in its projects and work-streams and in the development of resources. Representation from the voluntary and independent sectors are sought and included in all NIPEC projects. NIPEC has also set up a number of actual and virtual forums through which opinions might be sought, for example, the Independent and Voluntary Sector Forum and the Personal and Public Involvement Forum.

¹⁷ Person-centred, Assessment, Care and Evaluation (PACE)

During 2019/20, NIPEC continued its efforts in relation to Personal and Public Involvement (PPI). Specifically, this included an SPO being part of the planning committee for Involvefest, a week-long celebration of user involvement in Health and Social Care. An SPO has also attended the Regional PPI forum which is made up of representatives from across the region and has a strong service user representation. NIPEC continued to engage with the small personal and public involvement e-forum, comprising of members of the public interested in the work of NIPEC. We recognise the power, importance and impact of PPI in our work streams and take opportunities, where possible and/or relevant, to engage with service users, carers and the general public through seeking their views and opinions in online or face to face consultations.



The following are evidence of NIPEC's commitment to PPI in 2019/20:

- NIPEC is a member of the *Regional Personal & Public Involvement Forum* which directs the approach to this engagement and activity in the region
- People with lived experience and carers were represented at all the FNFM stakeholder workshops across the project work streams including Curriculum Development and Engagement and Communication
- People with lived experience and carers were represented across HSC Trusts at two stakeholder workshops to support the development of a governance framework for multi-professional delegation
- An SPO attended workshops to develop a Shared Decision Making Framework
- NIPEC promoted and supported several meetings with people with lived experience and carers as part of the Enabling Professionalism 2020 national work. This included representatives from England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
- The regional 10,000 voices project, continued to be considered in the planning, development and review of all NIPEC's work
- Development of the Career Pathway for District Nursing Services engaged with a number of service users.

Standardising Care and Ensuring Person-Centredness

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 and utilises effective risk management processes.

NIPEC fulfils a unique role in Northern Ireland by providing 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 high-quality, person-centred care and achieves this by adopting a responsive and proactive approach to the requests and needs of key stakeholders, to assist them in addressing current and future challenges.

NIPEC's activities focus on enabling nurses and midwives to improve their practice to ensure person-centredness and to meet the needs of patients/clients and their carers through:

- Enhancing information and communication processes to meet the needs of stakeholders
- Supporting safe and effective practice through the delivery of a wide range of activities, providing resources, advice and information for registrants and their employers
- Implementing a work programme that focuses on activities which impact on quality and safety in relation to the delivery of care alongside a person-centred focus
- A Professional Officer contributed to the RQIA Clinical Audit Programme through awareness sessions with inspectorate staff.

NIPEC's projects are informed by literature and underpinned by robust, evidence based research in order to support quality improvement. NIPEC's SPOs also lead or contribute to a wide range of strategic fora and networks to support innovation and quality improvement and to build links with local research organisations. The following examples in 2019/20 demonstrate this:

- NIPEC contributed to the RQIA Planning to Birth at Home guidelines which were launched in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings on the 14 November 2019
- NIPEC are currently represented on the Steering Group for the Regional Case Audit of the RQIA Guidelines for Admission to Midwife Led Units in Northern Ireland as well as the Northern Ireland Normal Labour and Birth Care Pathway

- NIPEC supported the commencement of a partnership project between the University of Ulster and Queens University Belfast to evaluate the impact of the PACE care planning approach to person-centred nursing practice. This included coordinating staff in the five HSC Trusts to support the commencement of the programme of research inquiry.

Integrating the Care

“We will develop integrated pathways of care for individuals. We will make better use of multidisciplinary team working and shared opportunities for learning and development in the HSC and with external providers” (DHSSPS, 2011a).

Health and Social Care provision in Northern Ireland is delivered within a context that requires effective working across a wide number of organisations, agencies and health care professions.

NIPEC works through robust strategic alliances to strengthen the capacity and capability of the nursing and midwifery professions in Northern Ireland. This involves effective, positive multi-professional partnership working and collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders from various sectors. NIPEC continually explores opportunities for increasing its involvement in multidisciplinary projects and initiatives.

Engagement with Stakeholders

NIPEC has a strong ethos of collaborative working with key stakeholders across all areas of health care and has developed a reputation for facilitating successful regional projects and initiatives.

Engagement with stakeholders is a fundamental part of NIPEC’s work and is crucial to achieving our aim of influencing and guiding improved standards of practice, education and the professional development of nurses and midwives. This process enables NIPEC to ensure that the voice of stakeholders is heard at the highest level of the organisation.

During 2019/20 NIPEC worked with its stakeholders to understand key priorities and needs across the HSC system and across independent, voluntary and education provider organisations and at individual registrant level. This has formed the basis of a formal review of NIPEC’s consultations with stakeholders and a review of its Public Involvement Policy. The policy reflects the regional standards and values underpinning Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) and endorses the HSC standards and guidance on the involvement of disabled people.

An Engagement and Communication Strategy continues to influence, guide and support NIPEC’s work streams with the aim of ensuring the wider HSC and its organisations remain

informed of NIPEC's work. During 2019/20 NIPEC continued to use a range of methods to encourage an open dialogue with external stakeholders, including: Business, Governance and Accountability meetings with our sponsoring branch (the Chief Nursing Office at the Department of Health), other ALBs and special agencies, HSC Trusts, HSC organisations, the voluntary, independent and private sector, the education institutions, BSO and other key stakeholders, such as the NMC and those across the devolved UK administrations. This is important to ensure the role and remit of NIPEC is fully understood in order to influence, develop and maintain working partnerships and relationships which support NIPEC as an organisation.

The following are examples of how engagement with stakeholders has been taken forward:

NIPEC's Independent and Voluntary Sector Forum

NIPEC continues to engage with the voluntary and independent sector through its Forum and various projects including NIPEC SCAN, and NIPEC's Annual Conference. NIPEC also attended an event facilitated by Queen's University Belfast for staff in Care Homes, where it promoted its resources for registrants. The Independent and Voluntary sector were also invited to NIPEC stakeholder events and FNFM Roadshows were provided for Care Home staff.

Delegation

Following the launch in 2019 of the decision support framework for delegation of nursing and midwifery tasks and duties, a further phase of work commenced with the Executive Directors of Nursing, Social Work and Directors of Adult Care to consider governance arrangements to enable multi-professional delegation supporting personal choice within health and social care services. This work, commissioned by the Chief Nursing and AHP Officer and the Chief Social Worker, in collaboration with the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, was presented and approved for the next stage of testing in 2020, prior to lockdown and the pandemic arrangements.

Strengthening the Commitment: NI Action Plan

During the past year NIPEC continued to work in partnership with the RCN at the request of the NI Collaborative to support the Professional Development Forum for Registered Nurses Learning Disabilities (RNLDs).

The Forum aims to provide a platform to exchange best practice, explore professional issues and promote networking opportunities topics this year include Dysphagia – Best Practice Interventions, Deciding to Delegate and Future Nurse Future Midwife. The average



attendance is 45 RNLDs from across all settings. The Forum maintains strong links with the Royal College of Nursing and RNLD Nursing Network.

NIPEC's Chief Executive and SPOs are members of a range of multi-professional regional fora within which they provided strategic and professional advice and guidance on matters related to the nursing and midwifery professions. Examples of this in 2019/20 include:

- Enquiry into Hyponatraemia - Related Deaths (IHRD) Work stream 6 – Education and Training. NIPEC is represented on the Education and Training Work stream to address a number of the actions related to the 96 recommendations in the report of the Inquiry into Hyponatraemia - Related Deaths (2018). This work stream aims to support how the education and training issues arising from the IHRD recommendations are identified and addressed and how effective learning can be reflected in HSC practices, processes and behaviours
- Northern Ireland Postgraduate Healthcare Education Forum NIPEC participates in the Northern Ireland Postgraduate Healthcare Education Forum. This forum meets twice a year to engage in strategic discussions concerning inter-professional education across the HSC and promote cross-organisational relationships, understanding and collaborative working. There is representation from a wide range of health professional educational organisations across Northern Ireland on the Forum. The Forum enables a mutual understanding of the standards and recommendations of the different health and social care regulators and shares areas of learning and good practice between organisations responsible for healthcare education
- Strategic Information Group (DoH)
- NIPEC partnered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) to develop a Governance Framework for Multi professional Delegation (GFMD). Following a meeting in February 2020 with DoH professional advisors and policy leads, a plan for small scale testing to determine the utility of the draft was developed. In the context of COVID-19, where delegation across multi-professional teams has anecdotally increased, this work has been deemed critical to ensuring professional accountability arrangements underpinning safety, quality and experience for the people of Northern Ireland
- Primary Care Steering Group
- Quality 2020 Project Groups (DoH, HSCB)
- Regional PPI Forum (PHA).

Annual Stakeholder Engagement

In 2019/20 the NIPEC Stakeholder formal engagement continued to use the revised format developed in 2017 and engaged directly with our stakeholders in direct face to face contact as well as utilising information technology and social media (see pages 24-25).

Feedback from stakeholder surveys gathered at stakeholder sessions and on an online stakeholder survey supports these approaches for engagement and NIPEC will continue with this approach in 2020/21). NIPEC continued to enhance information systems and communication processes to meet the needs of its stakeholders in support of safe and effective practice by providing resources, advice and information for registrants and their employers, and in addition, exploring opportunities to increase its involvement in multidisciplinary projects and initiatives.

Shared Opportunities for Learning and Development

One of NIPEC's statutory functions includes the promotion of high standards in the education and training of nurses and midwives. NIPEC supports a flexible approach to the learning and development of nurses and midwives and continues to explore the production of resources, to enable registrants to enhance their competence and performance in order to improve the quality of care they provide to their patients and clients. In addition, NIPEC continues to engage in opportunities to spread awareness and use of its resources across other professions, where appropriate.

NIPEC collaborates with education and service providers to promote high standards in the delivery of education for nurses and midwives. This objective is achieved through active engagement with key stakeholders, and taking forward a range of activities to support and monitor the quality of education delivery.

The role of NIPEC in supporting learning and development has already been highlighted in the section *Transforming the Culture* (online portfolio) and *Strengthening the Workforce* (quality assurance of non-NMC commissioned programmes). During 2019/20 NIPEC collaborated with the NMC on the Future Midwife programme of work which contributed to the development of the NMC Future Midwife pre-registration standards launched in January 2020. NIPEC is currently supporting and collaborating with the NMC on a review of the Post – Registration education standards.

NIPEC Annual Conference

This year marked the 200th birthday of Florence Nightingale and was also designated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as the first ever global Year of the Nurse and the Midwife. NIPEC therefore chose to use its 2020 conference to celebrate all that was good about Nursing and Midwifery in Northern Ireland. The “*International Year of the Nurse and Midwife - A Celebration*” was held on 10 March 2020.

Attended by 170 delegates, including the Minister of Health Mr Robin Swann, who took the opportunity to

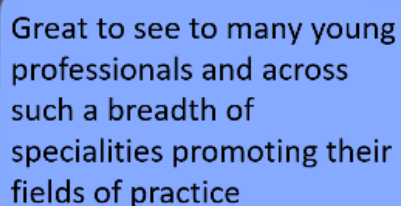


launch the Nursing and Midwifery Task Group report⁵; other speakers included Dr Catherine Hannaway, Global Health Consultant and Andrea Sutcliffe, Chief Executive and Registrar of the Nursing and Midwifery Council.


This year the number of on-line places offered for the Conference was increased to forty; all of which were allocated shortly after being made available on NIPEC's website. The remaining places were allocated to key stakeholders who included Trusts, Education Providers, Independent Sector, Professional Bodies, GP Federations, Public Health Agency, Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and Department of Health (DoH). As in previous years the speakers' presentations are recorded and posted on YouTube on NIPEC's website, to be accessible to a wider audience <https://nipec.hscni.net/home/previous-events/conferenceevents/nipec-annual-conference-2020/>. This was confirmed as a useful resource following the 2019 conference.



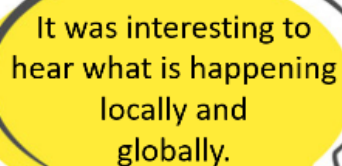
To ensure a high quality conference that delivers its aims and objectives NIPEC has an internal planning team responsible for the overall organisation of the conference including reviewing feedback from the previous events to improve the subsequent one. The evaluations of the 2020 conference were extremely positive and affirmed that the aims were achieved, with participants stating that they valued the opportunity to learn from the speakers presenting and they also stated that the theme was highly relevant to their practice. The following feedback from the NIPEC Conference 2020 demonstrates that this was achieved:




Great to see so many young professionals and across such a breadth of specialities promoting their fields of practice



The passion in the room – the conference was professional from beginning to end



It was interesting to hear what is happening locally and globally.



Delighted to hear from Minister – important for morale to hear from him

Conclusion

This report demonstrates the activities which NIPEC has engaged in during 2019/20 to maintain and improve the quality of care provided by nurses and midwives in Northern Ireland. NIPEC has a vision and a strategy which is focused on achieving the quality principles outlined in Quality 2020. NIPEC will continue to play a key role in driving transformation across Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland. We will continue to support and inspire nurses and midwives to achieve and uphold excellence in professional practice.

NIPEC will focus on developing the knowledge, skills and expertise of its staff to ensure they can fully support the Transformation agenda to deliver sustainable high quality changes to service delivery that will result in improved outcomes for the population.

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges for the planning and delivery of Health and Social Care (HSC) services in Northern Ireland. On 9 June 2020 the Minister for Health announced the launch of a Strategic Framework which sets out the approach to restoring services across the HSC.

Moving forward, 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 setting aside work which has already been initiated. NIPEC will continue to work closely with the CNO and stakeholders to identify priorities.

Whilst the year ahead will be challenging there will be unique opportunities through which NIPEC will seek to work with key partners in support of the broader transformation agenda within Northern Ireland. The regional approach adopted by NIPEC secures effective, timely and efficient processes which reduce duplication of effort across other ALBs and ensures consistency of practice which is evidence-based and impartial to commissioning or provider pressures.

Further examples of projects undertaken by NIPEC can be accessed on <https://nipec.hscni.net/>

NIPEC's Governance Framework

NIPEC applies the principles of good practice in Corporate Governance and continues to strengthen its governance arrangements. NIPEC does this by undertaking continuous assessment of its compliance with best practice, by having in place an 'Annual Governance Cycle' for the Council. This covers the areas of:

- Strategy
- Performance
- Risk
- Regulatory
- Other (Equality, etc.).

The Council receives an annual report and quarterly feedback from the Audit and Risk Committee, which monitors and adheres to the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) governance policy and guidance.

With regard to the wider control environment, NIPEC has in place a range of organisational controls, commensurate with the current assessment of risk, designed to ensure efficient and effective discharge of its business in accordance with the law and Departmental direction.

Every effort is made to ensure that the objectives of NIPEC are pursued in accordance with the recognised and accepted standards of public administration. For example, NIPEC's recruitment and selection policies are based on the principle of equality of opportunity, and controls are in place to ensure that all such decisions are taken in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Governance Framework

- The Council exercises strategic control over the operation of the organisation through a system of corporate governance, which includes: a schedule of matters reserved for Council decisions
- the regular review of governance documents, including standing financial instructions, standing orders, the standards of business conduct for all staff and the review of this Governance Statement
- a '*scheme of delegation*', which delegates decision-making authority within set parameters to the Chief Executive and other Officers
- The establishment of an Audit and Risk Committee and a Remuneration Committee, and a regular review of their terms of reference.

Membership of the Council and the Committees is as follows:

- **Council Membership:**

- Chair
- Chief Executive and eight Professional Members (who all must hold a current registration on the Nursing and Midwifery Council register)
- Six Lay Members
- Ex-Officio Member (Chief Nursing Officer, DoH).

- **Council Functions:**

NIPEC was established on 7 October 2002 under the Statutory Rules, "*The Health and Personal Social Services*" (2002) Act (Commencement) Order (Northern Ireland) SR2002 No.311 (C.25).

Within the *Health and Personal Social Services Act* (Northern Ireland) 2002, Chapter 9, Section 2, NIPEC was established as an NDPB, sponsored by the DHSSPS. The Act identifies the following responsibilities for NIPEC:

"It shall be the duty of the Council to promote:

- (2) (a) High standards of practice among nurses and midwives
- (b) High standards in the education and training of nurses and midwives; and
- (c) The professional development of nurses and midwives.

Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (2) the Council may:

- (3) (a) Provide guidance on best practice for nurses and midwives
- (b) Provide advice and information on matters relating to nursing and midwifery.

The Council shall, in the exercise of its functions, act

- (4) (a) In accordance with any directions given to it by the Department
- (b) Under the general guidance of the Department."

- **Audit & Risk Committee Membership:**

- Two Professional Members
- Two Lay Members

- Also, in attendance are the NIPEC Chief Executive, Head of Corporate Services and representatives from NIPEC's External Auditors (Northern Ireland Audit Office), BSO Internal Audit and when required a financial representative from the BSO. Representative from NIPEC's Sponsor Branch attended the February 2020 meeting of the committee.

○ **Audit & Risk Committee Functions:**

The Audit and Risk Committee is an advisory body with no executive powers, other than those specifically delegated in its Terms of Reference. It is authorised by the Council, however, to investigate any activity within its terms of reference and to seek any information it requires from staff who are requested to co-operate with the Committee in the conduct of its enquiries. Requests for work and reports received from internal audit will be channelled through the Chief Executive.

The Audit and Risk Committee is authorised by the Council to obtain outside legal or other independent professional advice and to secure the attendance of outsiders with relevant experience and expertise, if it considers this necessary. The Committee assesses itself on an annual basis against best practice as contained within the National Audit Office's Audit Committee Self- Assessment Checklist.

○ **Remuneration Committee Membership:**

- All the Council Members, with the exception of the four who serve on the Audit and Risk Committee.

○ **Remuneration Committee Functions:**

The role of the Remuneration Committee is the management and overseeing of the NIPEC performance management process by:

- Encouraging effective appraisal of staff
- Scrutinising objectives for:
 - Consistency
 - Robustness
 - Alignment with Government and Department priorities and local priorities.
- Ensuring that robust process has taken place
- Monitoring for consistency of assessment
- Recommendation of an overall banding and award for the Chief Executive.

NIPEC Council and Audit & Risk Committee both met four times in 2019/20 and were quorate on all occasions. There was no requirement for a Remuneration Committee meeting to be held during this financial year as the interim Chief Executive post was being filled as a secondment from the DoH. The Internal Audit Plan for 2019/20, agreed by the Audit and Risk Committee in May 2019 was based on 19.5 days' work and focused on the areas of Finance and Governance. The financial review audit covered payroll, non-pay expenditure, income, procurement and travel expenses while the governance audit covered Information Governance and Risk Management. All audit assignments for 2019/20 were completed and outcomes were as follows:

- **Financial Review - 'Satisfactory Assurance'**
No priority 1 weaknesses were identified.
- **Information Governance & Risk Management - 'Satisfactory Assurance'**
No priority 1 weaknesses were identified

The Head of Internal Audit presented a Mid-Year Assurance Statement to the Audit and Risk Committee meeting in October 2019, to support the Chief Executive in the completion of the DoH Mid-Year Assurance Statement.

The Head of Internal Audit is required to provide an annual opinion on risk management, control and governance arrangements. The purpose of the annual opinion is to contribute to the assurances available to the Accounting Officer and the Council which underpin the Council's own assessment of the effectiveness of the system of internal governance.

The Head of Internal Audit's Annual Report 2019/20 for the Year gave the following opinion for NIPEC:

"Overall for the year ended 31 March 2020, I can provide satisfactory assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's framework of governance, risk management and control."

All NIPEC Internal and External Audit reports together with the management responses go to the Audit and Risk Committee for consideration.

As well as the normal formal organisational two way information channels for NIPEC to communicate to and from staff, NIPEC has in place a 'staff suggestion box' which enables staff to anonymously raise an issue together with suggested ways to improve the matter.

All responses are considered by NIPEC and feedback is given to the staff via staff meetings.

Information on the quality of NIPEC's activities

At each Council meeting a number of reports were provided and normally included:

- A report by the Chief Executive on NIPEC's activities
- A corporate services update report and 'executive financial management summary'
- An overview of NIPEC's work streams/initiatives which is generally complemented by a more detailed presentation on a specific initiative.

Operational Management

In addition to the above, NIPEC has a Senior Management Team (SMT), which is comprised of the Chief Executive, five Senior Professional Officers and the Head of Corporate Services. The SMT meets on a monthly basis as part of the organisation's Business Team. This team supports the Chief Executive in the operational aspects of the organisation. The Chief Executive held and continues to hold a regular, one-to-one meeting with each member of the SMT, which covers all aspects of each officer's work.

Governance Performance

NIPEC has in place a robust governance and accountability framework through the effective management and monitoring of corporate and financial performance. At an operational level and on a day to day basis the Head of Corporate Services plays a key role in this regard. Key activities and achievements which are of relevance to *NIPEC's Quality Report 2019/20* include the following:

- During the year 8 risks were recorded on the NIPEC Corporate Risk Register. At the year end the standing of the risks was 2 closed, 2 High risks, 3 Medium and 1 Low remained open and were being managed.

For the HSC, 2019/20 was an exceptionally challenging financial year. NIPEC's Revenue Resource Limit allocation for 2019/20 was £1,167,109.

Further additional funds were awarded to NIPEC during the year as follows:

- Confidence and Supply Transformation Fund:
 - An allocation of £523,000 for the Future Nurse Future Midwife Project
 - An allocation of £865,000 for the Nursing and Midwifery Transforming Data Project
 - An allocation of £116,000 for a Masters in Nursing.
(*All of the above allocations were ring fenced*)

- 23 December 2019 funding of £36,467 for the employers' superannuation rate increase
- 9 March 2020 funding of £49,128 for the AFC pay award 2019/20
- Capital Funds (August and October 2018):
 - £4,944 for the ICT Tranche 12 refresh

NIPEC surrendered under easement the following funds during the year as follows:

- General RRL £15,000
- Transformation projects:
 - i. FNFM £199,000
 - ii. N&M Transforming Data £281,000
 - iii Masters in Nursing £6,000

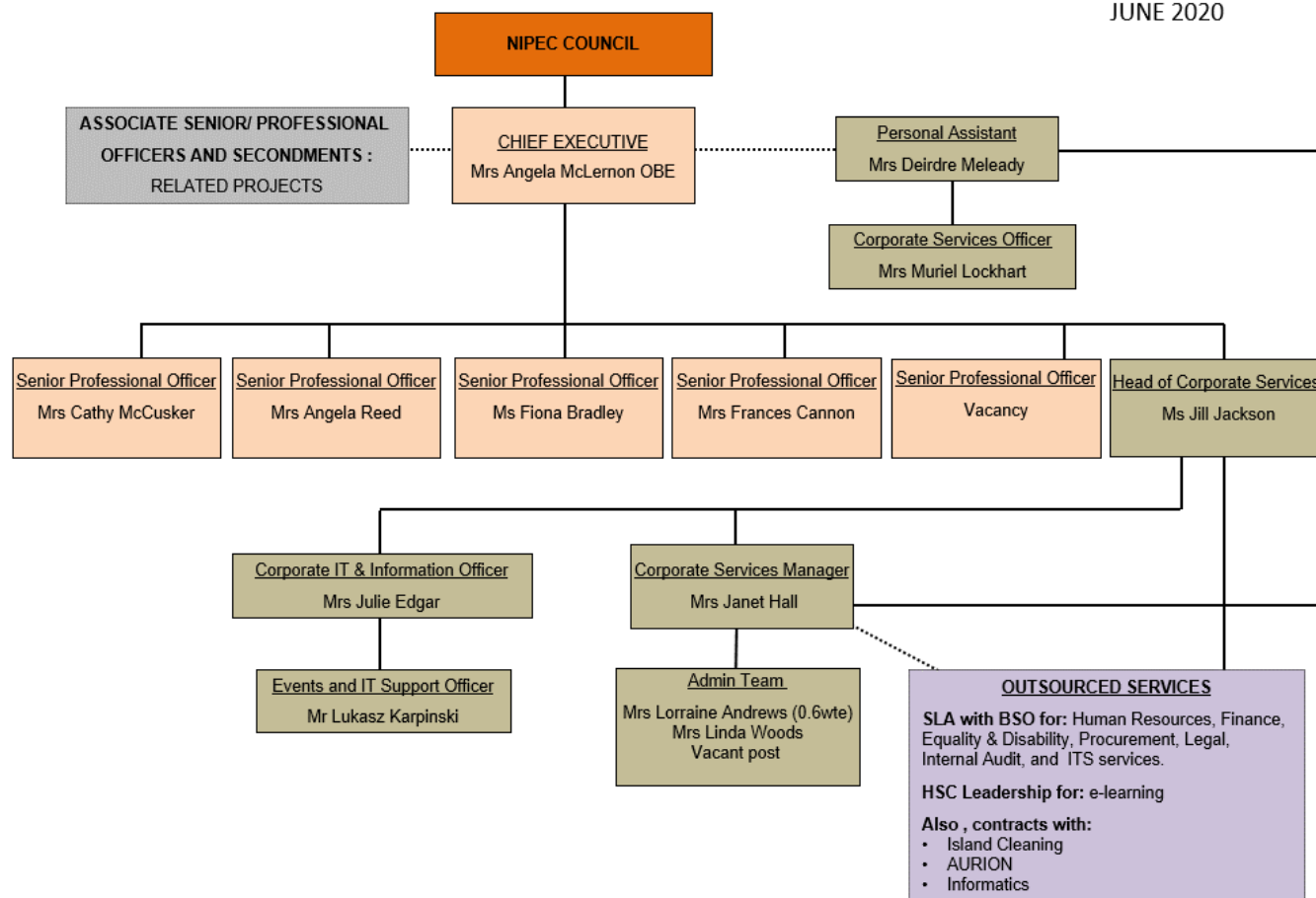
The end of the year RRL figure for NIPEC was £1,240,704.

Financial estimates and expenditure statements for each quarter were considered by the members.

- NIPEC's financial accounts for the year ending 31 March 2019 showed a surplus of £17,813 or 0.74% which was within the HSC breakeven target of either 0.25% or £20,000. An unqualified audit report was obtained from the NIAO on the 2019/20 financial accounts
- As part of its efficiency programme, within its Property Asset Management Plan (PAMP), NIPEC continued to provide office space to PCC staff within its current accommodation until 28 February 2020
- The Statutory Duty for Sustainable Development applicable to public authorities is set out in section 25 of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006. NIPEC continues it's committed to make a contribution to those areas which it can influence in regard to energy/carbon reduction, including increased use of multi-functional devices, docking stations for laptops and remote access for the entire team. We also maximise opportunities for the utilisation of telephone-conferencing, web-conferencing and web-cam equipment for meetings thereby reducing the environmental carbon footprint as well as travel costs.

Controls Assurance Standards (CAS) ceased with effect from 1 April 2018 when ALBs were asked to ensure that suitable and proportionate assurance arrangements be put in place for each of the standards from 1 April 2018. Since then and in the absence of a regionally agreed approach, NIPEC has utilised an internal mechanism based on the former controls assurance standards.

JUNE 2020





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