



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

ANNUAL QUALITY REPORT 2020/21

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



CONTENTS	PAGE
Foreword by NIPEC’s Chair and Chief Executive	1
Introduction	3
Transforming the Culture	4
▪ Our Vision and Values	4
▪ Maintaining Quality within Governance Arrangements	5
▪ Influencing the Culture	6
▪ Valuing Staff	6
▪ Communication and Engagement	8
Strengthening the Workforce	10
▪ Nursing and Midwifery Workforce	11
▪ Quality Improvement	11
▪ Engagement with the Nursing and Midwifery Workforce	12
▪ NIPEC’s Workforce	14
Measuring the Improvement	16
▪ Gathering Information and Examining Data	16
▪ Measuring Progress and Improving Performance	19
Raising the Standards	20
▪ Transformation and Reform	20
▪ NIPEC’S Electronic Resources	21
▪ Improving Standards in Education and Development	24
▪ Stakeholder Involvement	26
▪ Personal and Public Involvement	28
▪ Standardising Care and Ensuring Person-Centredness	29
Integrating the Care	31
▪ Engagement with Stakeholders	31
▪ Shared Opportunities for Learning and Development	32
Conclusion	34
Appendices	
Appendix 1: NIPEC’s Governance Framework	35
Appendix 2: NIPEC’s Organisational Chart	38

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 2020-21 which 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 (NI). This is possible through the strategic relationships which have been developed with fellow professionals across health and social care.

Quality 2020¹ underpins NIPEC activity and this annual report provides an opportunity for us to reflect and showcase the Quality 2020 principles in our work. The Covid-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges and accelerated the pace of change in the planning and delivery of Health and Social Care (HSC) services in Northern Ireland this year. NIPEC continued to fulfil its Statutory Functions as stated in the NIPEC's Management Statement Financial Memorandum² and play an active role in supporting the Department of Health (DoH) in its emergency response to the pandemic. It quickly adapted its working practices and arrangements so that it is able to deliver business and services in this period of extraordinary uncertainty. 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 line with government policy and to control and prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, NIPEC offices remain temporarily closed from 16 March 2020 with restricted access to staff for the purposes of business continuity. NIPEC quickly enabled all staff to work remotely from home within the first few weeks of the restrictions. *Emergency response to COVID-19: Home Working Standard Operating Procedures* were put in place to offer guidance to staff on processes to be adopted including home working, communication and cover arrangements across the organisation. These were underpinned by a number of supporting documents including NIPEC's Business Continuity Plan and guidelines for data protection when working at home.

The initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically changed the programmes of work being taken forward by NIPEC. In April/May 2020 a range of planned professional work anticipated to be undertaken was initially paused in recognition of the need for stakeholder organisations and professional colleagues to focus on developing and delivering frontline emergency responses to the pandemic.

Significant learning from the experience of the of the pandemic has taken place with new services and ways of working introduced across Northern Ireland to meet the predicted

¹ 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.

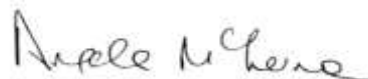
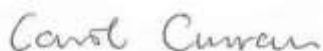
² Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council (NIPEC) (2017) *Management statement between the Department of Health and Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery*. Belfast: NIPEC

demands of the service. NIPEC responded to and quickly reviewed its priorities in order to support the HSC from the outset of the pandemic. A number of NIPEC COVID-19 specific objectives were agreed by NIPEC's Council and the DoH through an updated Business plan. A summary of these objectives are provided within this report.

On the 9th of 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. NIPEC continues to adopt a flexible approach reviewing and updating 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 (CNO).

We would like to pay tribute to everyone who works in health and social care and as we move forward into 2021-22 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 response to the pandemic and in particular to those who have stepped forward to be deployed across services from an early stage of the pandemic.

We especially acknowledge the contribution that nurses and midwives make to our work. Their commitment, dedication and engagement with our organisation are 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 eighth 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 CNO (DoH) 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*¹ 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 2020/21 to improve services under each of the five strategic goals outlined in Quality 2020:

1. *Transforming the Culture;*
2. *Strengthening the workforce;*
3. *Measuring the Improvement;*
4. *Raising the Standards;*
5. *Integrating the Care.*

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

1. 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)⁴.”

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)⁵

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 (NMC, 2018)³. These values will provide a constant reference point for our organisation as we continue to implement the NIPEC 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 development as well as providing guidance on best practice for nursing and midwifery to support the delivery of safe, effective and person-centred care.

⁴ 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.

⁵ [Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council \(NIPEC\) Corporate Plan 2017- 21 \(extended to 2022\). Available at: https://nipec.hscni.net/wpfd_file/nipec-corporate-plan-2017-21/](https://nipec.hscni.net/wpfd_file/nipec-corporate-plan-2017-21/)

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 production of its Annual Report and Accounts, Annual Quality Report 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.

NIPEC applies the principles of good practice in Corporate Governance and continues to strengthen its governance arrangements. This is achieved by undertaking continuous assessment of its compliance with Corporate Governance best practice by assessing NIPEC Council's Governance arrangements against the Department of Health's Governance annual self-assessment tool. This ensures continual improvement in governance and best practice by focusing on the following four key areas:

1. Board Composition and Commitment;
2. Board Evaluation Development and Learning;
3. Board Insight and Foresight;
4. Board Engagement and Involvement.

NIPEC Council is responsible for ensuring that robust governance structures and systems are in place to monitor accountability and performance within the organisation (Appendix 1). These structures 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'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.

NIPEC Council is accountable for the development and delivery of the Annual Business Plan by regularly monitoring operational performance against strategic objectives via the Professional Work plan, corporate performance reporting and other operational aspects of

NIPEC's work. Sponsor Branch representatives regularly attend NIPEC Council and Audit and Risk Committees and in addition, 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.

The NIPEC 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. In November 2020 the Council members participated in NIPEC's annual Council workshop to review and quality assure the business objectives and plan for the next year's goals.

During 2020/21, NIPEC maintained a robust governance and accountability framework by:

- Ensuring that Risk Management remained firmly integrated within the organisation, reviewing our Risk Management Strategy to take account of the updated version of the Orange Book (*Management of Risk: Principles and Concepts*)⁶ so that risks to the achievement of objectives were managed effectively;
- Maintaining robust financial governance reporting 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 acknowledges that management of information risks is an essential component of good governance. The organisation holds confidential and personal data in respect of staff and some registrant information which supports the running of the business.

NIPEC's information risks are managed within the context of the Risk Management Strategy, Information Governance Strategy, an Information Asset Register, Disposal Schedule and other related information governance policies which are reviewed and updated regularly.

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.

⁶ HM Treasury (2020) The Orange Book: Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts. Available at <https://gov.uk/government/publications/orange-book>

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 2020/21 these included consultations from the NMC and the DoH such as the DoH consultation on the Legislative Options to inform the development of an Adult Protection Bill for Northern Ireland and the DoH Consultation on the Draft Mental Health Strategy.

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 work together to ensure NIPEC continues to meet its objectives. *Appendix 2* details NIPEC team structure.

NIPEC staff remain 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. A suite of Human Resources policies underpin this culture and current governance arrangements support the Senior Management Team in ensuring our values are upheld.

In February 2021, NIPEC was successful in achieving reaccreditation in *Investors in People* for another three years. The assessment report provides feedback which supports NIPEC in ensuring that people management is continuously improved.

NIPEC's successful achievement of its business objectives is enabled by the hard work and commitment of its entire staff. 2020-21 has been a particularly challenging year due to the pandemic and being mindful that all staff were working from home.

NIPEC's Health and Social Wellbeing Committee played an active role, in maintaining a focus on individual and team health and wellbeing of their staff working remotely. Membership of the Committee includes both corporate and professional staff and in addition to promoting a positive working environment ensured that regular staff engagement was encouraged. The Committee organised and facilitated a number of events and initiatives including:

- The 'Step and Photo Challenge' which took place during May and June 2020;
- Virtual coffee and lunch parties to celebrate events such as Christmas, Easter and Halloween along with significant birthdays and retirements;
- The 'Big Bird' Watch which took place during February 2021 supporting the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) to assist them in monitoring bird populations;

- 'NIPEC Pulse'; a newsletter published on a regular basis keeping staff up to date with social activities.

NIPEC's nominated charity for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 is the South Belfast Foodbank. Restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic removed the ability for social gatherings to take place and raise funds for the charity; however staff have contributed in other ways to raise funds such as through the foodbank's donation link or the Trussell Trust website. The Trussell Trust is an organisation that supports a nationwide network of food banks, providing emergency food and support to people locked in poverty and campaigning for change to end the need for food banks in the UK.

In September 2020 the Committee developed a survey to find out how staff had adapted to the new ways of working and offered them an opportunity to say what had gone well and what could be improved. Outcomes from the survey resulted in a number of recommendations which were implemented to enhance support arrangements for staff wellbeing in NIPEC while remote working continued.

BSO Human Resources initiatives were also shared with staff including:

- 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, promotion of the annual flu and the COVID-19 vaccination programme;
- Promotion of regional events such as: Men's Health Week and Disability Awareness Days.

In 2020-21, 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. This work included regular reviews of financial reports, approval of the Annual Report and Accounts and Risk Management Strategy 2020-21, monitoring of NIPEC's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and seeking independent assurance from Internal Audit through Financial and Board Effectiveness audits. A summary of the Committee's work was presented to Council in the form of an Annual Report and detailed the activity of the Committee for the year.

Communication and Engagement

Effective communication is an essential component of NIPEC's work in achieving productivity and maintaining strong working relationships at all levels both on an internal and external basis and this has been particularly important during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Internal Communications

During the year NIPEC used innovative methods, including team and personal virtual meetings, policies and guidance to communicate and support its staff. These included:

- NIPEC's 'Working Well Together' Policy and 'Capability/Competence' Procedures;
- BSO Human Resources policies and procedures;
- Virtual 'Team Huddles' continued throughout lock down on a fortnightly basis with corporate and professional staff to provide updates on upcoming organisational priorities and anticipated pressure points over the forthcoming weeks;
- Internal meetings across team structures including: Business Team, Corporate Services Management Team, Professional Team, Information Governance meetings;
- Personal 1:1 appraisal and development meetings;
- Dissemination of information through the line management structure to all staff when updates or changes have occurred;
- Staff Meetings;
- Working group meetings on a regular or intermittent basis with information shared as necessary with the wider team.

NIPEC's internal communications structure aims to ensure that staff remain engaged and well informed of any changes happening within the organisation. It also aims to foster a culture of listening and responding to staff concerns via the mechanisms identified and provide staff with a variety of opportunities to raise issues as necessary. This has been particularly important during the pandemic when staff have been working remotely.

External communications

External communications with stakeholders is achieved through a wide variety of resources including on-line, written, electronic and face-to-face communication (see page 31-32).

2. 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)³

NIPEC has a particular role in supporting the vision and objectives through the office of the CNO. The launch of the Nursing and Midwifery Task Group Report and recommendations⁷ in March 2020 at the NIPEC conference placed nursing and midwifery as key protagonists for driving transformation. This report and its recommendations will make a significant impact to the nursing and midwifery workforce in Northern Ireland and will contribute to the transformation of health and social care, as set out in the Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together 2026 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 services through enhancing the roles that nurses and midwives play within and across multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs).

Strong leadership is the key to effecting change. NIPEC recognises the importance of the Collective Leadership Strategy (2017)⁸ 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 the HSC 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. NIPEC has a culture of being at the forefront of leadership and innovation within the nursing and midwifery professions in N. Ireland.

⁷ Department of Health (2020) Nursing and Midwifery Task Group (NMTG) Report and Recommendations. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/nursing-and-midwifery-task-group-nmtg-report-and-recommendations>

⁸ Department of Health (2017) HSC Collective Leadership Strategy. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/hsc-collective-leadership-strategy>

Nursing and Midwifery Workforce

In 2020/21, NIPEC worked on the co-production of resources to strengthen the nursing and midwifery workforce. This included:

- Refreshing the Enabling Professionalism resources to support a campaign and spotlight the contribution of nursing and midwifery across the UK and Ireland.
- It is recognised that career prospects are an important factor in job satisfaction, workforce sustainability and retention. NIPEC has been pivotal in the development of a range of career pathways to support and enhance nurse and midwife career progression within N. Ireland. During 2020/21 particular work focused on District Nursing which resulted in the development of competencies and education requirements for the core roles in the career pathway.
- NIPEC developed a Reflective Supervision Framework for nursing and midwifery which will be tested in 2021-22 across four areas of practice including: district nursing, hospital based nursing, midwifery and safeguarding teams. It is anticipated this new draft framework will enable registrants to reflect on personal, professional and service provision topics to support improved safety, quality and person-centred practice for health and care services.
- NIPEC continues to provide support and lead the regional implementation of the NMC Future Nurse Future Midwife Education Standards (FNFM). This work has progressed significantly since it began in 2018, particularly with the implementation of the Future Nurse Standards in September 2020. Work is continuing to support the regional implementation of the NMC Midwifery Standards with a *go-live* date planned for September 2021.

Quality Improvement

NIPEC works in partnership with nurses, midwives and healthcare support staff to embrace opportunities and resolve challenges using quality improvement science to build the capability and capacity of the workforce in participating in and leading initiatives which develop quality care and services.

One SPO completed the Scottish Improvement Leadership (SciL) Programme and was mentored by the SPO who had completed the IHI IA Programme. This programme enabled the SPO to design and develop a Quality Improvement (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 information and advice.

Following successful completion of the Institute for Health Care Improvement (IHI) Improvement Advisor programme (2017), one SPO has continued to build on the QI networks and skills that have already been developed. These skills have been used within NIPEC to support staff who has undertaken Level 3 Quality Improvement programmes.

NIPEC's 'Quality Improvement Programme', developed for its staff was initially put on hold during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown with staff working remotely, however its internal Quality Improvement Team have developed a proposal for NIPEC Annual Employee Recognition Awards which will be presented to NIPEC Council in June 2021 to include the following categories:

- NIPEC Award for Innovation and/or Leadership;
- NIPEC Award for Promotion of Health & Social Wellbeing;
- NIPEC Award for Outstanding Contribution.

Engagement with the Nursing and Midwifery Workforce

The impact from the COVID-19 pandemic challenged NIPEC in many ways, particularly in accessing opportunities to engage with nurses and midwives. The ability to engage in face to face events or host an annual conference with key stakeholders was unavoidable. See Table 1 for the number of events held this year compared to the previous year.

Table 1: NIPEC's engagements events and attendee rates for 2019-20 and 2020-21

Year	Number of events	Number of attendees
2019-20	50 events (face to face)	2,494
2020-21	29 events (virtual)	800

Throughout the pandemic NIPEC used a range of virtual methods and initiatives to engage with nurses, midwives, healthcare support staff and students such as:

- Progressing the FNFM project in partnership, with a wide representation of stakeholders from across the health care and education sectors, service users and carers, and a range of professional bodies including the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA), Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and the Royal College of Midwifery (RCM).
- NIPEC responded promptly to the NMC's Emergency *Standards for Nursing and Midwifery Education*⁹ in supporting student practice and education during the COVID-19 pandemic. NIPEC expedited this work ensuring that students had appropriate supervision and support during a time when the healthcare workforce was under significant pressure. The NMC Emergency Standards (2021) enabled students to achieve their learning outcomes and provide flexibility regarding student supervision and assessment. NIPEC worked closely with the NMC, the DoH, and the three Approved Education Institutions (AEIs) to provide invaluable and timely support within practice settings, developing a range of resources to assist NMC registrants in practice in the adoption of these Standards. All of this work was

⁹ Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) (2021) Emergency standards for nursing and midwifery education. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/education-standards/current-emergency-and-recovery-programme-standards.pdf>

progressed used a range of virtual mediums including Zoom, Pexip and Microsoft Office.

- Leading on from this, the DoH were in a position to take forward the early adoption of the Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (SSSA) for pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery programmes and for post registration programmes (NMC, 2018).¹⁰
- A range of resources were developed by NIPEC to support this including a NIPEC FNFM COVID-19 webpage; SSSA Fact Sheets for both the Nursing and Midwifery professions, a SSSA Infographic; arrangements for SSSA Support clinics; and frontline support in clinical settings.
- A video presentation providing an overview of the Future Midwife Education Standards with signposts to key resources and information to support the implementation of the Standards across the health and education sectors.
- Virtual roadshows to raise the profile of NIPEC' work streams and resources with students across the AEI's.
- The CNO COVID-19 Professional Digital Communication Platform providing a platform for the CNO and the DoH to share information, news, stories and good practice with the nursing and midwifery family across Northern Ireland during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The development of a COVID-19 Surge Capacity website to offer advice and resources to HSC Trusts and other organisations to support the nursing and midwifery workforce through periods of high service demand. This included: agreed approaches to rapid induction of new staff with appropriate templates for completion; nursing models during high demand and approaches to supporting person-centred practice; advice to the independent and voluntary sector on workforce issues; delegation during periods of high service demand; and record keeping practices.
- Leading fora and engaging with registrants across Northern Ireland to connect across the UK and Ireland on a range of practice areas relating to Digital Health. This included workshops to enable the production of a Capabilities Framework for nursing and midwifery across Ireland and presentations and workshops relating to the use of standardised terminologies in nursing and midwifery practice.
- Leading and engaging within different professional forums such as the HSC Lead Nurse Endoscopy Forum, the Registered Nurses Learning Disabilities Forum and the Adult Safeguarding Forum.

¹⁰ Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC, 2018) Standards for student supervision and assessment. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/education-standards/student-supervision-assessment.pdf>

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)

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

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 2020/21 all staff clearly identified their learning and development needs and learning opportunities in their annual personal development plan.

Staff maintain their continuous professional development, training and accreditation within their professional and mandatory training requirements as set out by NIPEC. Robust assurance systems are also in place to validate and monitor the NMC registration of both NIPEC professional staff and professional members of NIPEC Council. Examples of the learning and development opportunities that NIPEC staff engaged in are detailed below:

- NIPEC NMC registered staff undertook additional learning and development to support the DoH and PHA to deliver the regional emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic including:
 - Infection Prevention Control (IPC) training to work in partnership with one of the HSC Trusts IPC teams and provide IPC advice to Care Homes;
 - COVID-19 vaccinations training to support the administration of the national vaccine roll out across Northern Ireland.
- One SPO was supported in a six month secondment to a HSC Trust to enable the development of a number of products strengthening the nursing contribution to the

expansion of elective care services within the regional Day Procedure Centre for Northern Ireland.

- The Head of Corporate Services completed Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) and Personal Data Guardian training remotely to support the role as NIPEC's SIRO and Personal Data Guardian.
- A SPO acted as a mentor to a registrant on the Nightingale Global Leadership programme.
- A number of NIPEC Associate staff were supported to work on projects including:
 - refresh of the pre-registration section of the nursing and midwifery careers website;
 - review of the NIPEC Preceptorship Framework;
 - review of Ward Sister/Charge Nurse and Team Leader Competence Assessment Tools.

Develop and Model Excellent Teamwork

Improved working relationships, morale and team working are all by-products of effective internal communication. With the move to remote working in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, NIPEC was even more conscious of its need to support staff as they adapted to working from home, many for the first time. Using the technologies available, NIPEC was able to maintain regular contact with staff via video conferencing and staff were further supported by consulting on and developing *Working from Home Standard Operating Procedures* and other protocols.

NIPEC staff met frequently through different platforms such as: virtual Team Huddles, staff meetings and ad hoc internal meetings to share information, provide updates and seek feedback on issues affecting the organisation as well as celebrate achievements. The Chief Executive also held regular 1:1 meetings with members of the senior team to ensure the work of NIPEC was progressing on time and to assure the quality of the projects and resources.

NIPEC reaccreditation of the Investors in People award (2021) is evidence of the quality ethos that exists within the organisation and how NIPEC places the importance of staff health and wellbeing as a key priority within its structures. See pages 7-8 for examples of these resources and initiatives.

3. 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)¹¹.

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’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. SPOs 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 2020-21 Business Plan, activity is extracted, monitored and recorded within the KPI process as either a

¹¹ Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (2011b). *Records Management: Good Management Good Records*. Belfast: DHSSPS.

monthly or yearly figure. The KPIs which NIPEC report on are: data information, whistleblowing, finance, 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 2020-21 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 received no written complaints about its services during 2020-21. Our Complaints Policy was reviewed in line with the DoH Guidance in Relation to the HSC Complaints Procedure (revised 2019) and approved by NIPEC Council.

In addition, we responded to two Assembly Questions and one Freedom of Information FOI request, all within the required timelines.

NIPEC receives a number of core support services from the Business Services Organisation (BSO) under annual Service Level Agreements (SLAs). Services provided by BSO include Equality, Finance, Counter Fraud, Human Resources, Procurement & Logistics, Shared Services, Internal Audit, Legal Services and Information Technology Services. NIPEC has processes in place to monitor these SLAs including annual SLA meetings with BSO Chief Executive and relevant Directors, participation in a regional Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) Customer Forum meeting which is attended by BSO representatives and receipt of monthly performance reports from relevant service areas.

During 2020-21, NIPEC participated in a broader service improvement review to re-purpose and review SLAs between the BSO and Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs). The SLAs are the baseline for all agreed activity and financial transactions between the respective organisations and it was jointly agreed to undertake a more fundamental review to keep them current and relevant to customer requirements.

The initial phase of the review involved administrative revisions to the template to achieve a consistent approach, clarifying roles and responsibilities, setting out key contact information for customers, describing service levels and performance standards and setting out review arrangements. Phase 2 of the review focused on redesign of KPIs where required, addressing any areas of concern, and reconfiguration of SLAs to make any necessary improvements or adjustments.

It was agreed that the new versions of the SLAs would come into effect in 2021-22 along with a timetable of annual review meetings, benchmarking reports and monthly customer reports.

In 2020/21 work was led by NIPEC to support record keeping practice, in times of high workload and demand for nurses and midwives as a part of the Enabling Professionalism Surge Capacity Microsite. Following the initial release of the microsite, it became evident that an area of challenge for staff during periods of high service demand was the professional practice of recording care to meet the required governance and regulatory standards. At the CNO's request, NIPEC worked with stakeholders to produce advice and guidance on a range of aspects of practice, underpinned by evidence, which included focused advice on keeping accurate contemporaneous records that reflected safe and effective person-centred care and services. This included advice and guidance tailored to meet the needs of independent and voluntary sector organisations.

Additionally, the surge capacity microsite supported critical decision making on a range of issues relating to models of care, audit, workforce issues and raising and escalating concerns - further information about this is provided at page 22 of this document.

The on-line Competence Assessment Tools outlined in Table 2 were designed to facilitate on-line completion to support staff with reflection and enhancement of knowledge, skills and behaviours. These tools are available to complete on the online portfolio and the NIPEC website at: <https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net/> and 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.

Table 2: Competence Assessment Tools

Q2020 Attributes Framework
Respiratory Competence Assessment Tool (R-CAT)
Competence Assessment Tool for Ward Sisters/Charge Nurses
Competence Assessment Tool for Team Leaders

In line with the Transforming Nursing and Midwifery Data (TNMD) work stream, NIPEC has reviewed and revised the tools and resources available to nurses and midwives on the Recording Care microsite. This work will further support the improvement of standards of record keeping practice in Northern Ireland for nurses and midwives.



<https://nipec.hscni.net/microsites/recording-care/>

NIPEC developed resources and products to support the implementation of the Future Nurse Standards (September 2020) and also the Future Midwife Standards which are due for implementation in September 2021. See page 24, *Improving Standards in Education and Development*, for more information.

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:

- Engagement with service users (73 responses) and staff (165 responses) in the perioperative environment using NI Citizen Space surveys to inform the development of the perioperative nursing career pathway.
- Providing updates on Covid-19 related information via the CNO communication platform. This is a useful resource as NIPEC sends the key updates out with the web-link to the platform via an email circulation list in addition to social media sites including: Facebook and Twitter.

Continuous Professional Development/ Training opportunities for staff are important for staff career development and improving the performance of NIPEC in meeting their business objectives. This is demonstrated through the examples identified on pages 14-15.

4. 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)¹² requires significant transformation and reform of services across the region. During 2020/21 and in support of the transformation agenda, the DoH through the ‘Confidence and Supply Transformation Fund’ supported NIPEC to continue with and progress the Future Nurse Future Midwife project. A number of the key deliverables include:

- Development of a range of resources to support the delivery of Future Midwife preparation programmes (similar to Nursing preparation in May 2021);
- Preparation of the wider system to deliver the new education standards – in particular the new learning and assessment requirements (from May 2021);
- Maximisation of Midwifery students Practice Learning Experiences with a particular focus on Continuity of Care and Carer (on-going);
- Engagement and communication with key stakeholders including a number of awareness sessions (on-going for the life of the project);
- Support for transitioning from the current pre-registration midwifery programme to the new Future Midwife Programme (May 2021);
- Development of a regional Practice Assessment Document for Midwifery (Midwifery have adopted the Midwifery On-Going Record of Achievement) (MORA) (proposal that this will be an electronic resource from May 2021);
- Transition and mainstreaming of Future Midwife implementation to the Northern Ireland Practice Learning Collaborative (September 2021).

¹² Draft Programme for Government Framework 2016 – 21. Available at:
<https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/newnigov/draft-pfg-framework-2016-21.pdf>

NIPEC's Electronic Resources

NIPEC Website

During 2020-21 NIPEC also updated its main website - <https://nipec.hscni.net> - into the new WordPress theme to ensure that it was fit for purpose in terms of reach and to improve it in relation to accessibility legislative requirements. Work remains ongoing to improve accessibility for all users and the updated website went 'live' on the 11th February 2021 with positive feedback from stakeholders.

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 along with IT support staff ensure that each project page is regularly updated. NIPEC also has a latest news section on the website which advises of professional, newsworthy items, for example, International Year of the Nurse and International Year of the Midwife; CNO Digital Platform; Perioperative Nursing Brochure and launch of recruitment campaign; and launch of printable PACE Resource sheets.

NIPEC's website also hosted two important digital platforms which were developed on behalf of the CNO and to support the nursing and midwifery workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- *CNO COVID-19 Professional Digital Communication Platform*

It was essential during the COVID-19 pandemic that the DoH, through the office of the CNO, 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 developed and launched the microsite in April 2020, which provided a platform for the CNO and the DoH to reach the Nursing and Midwifery family across Northern Ireland during the pandemic. This microsite can be accessed at <https://nipec.hscni.net/covid-19-cno-news-updated>

View the latest news on COVID-19 from the Chief Nursing Officer's Digital Platform page.

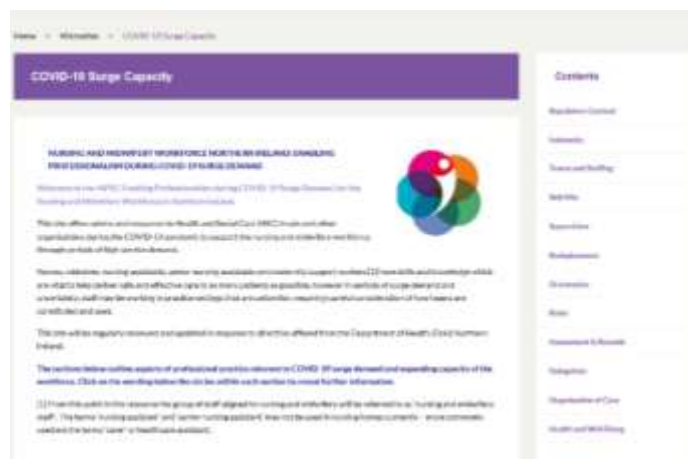


In addition to up-to-date advice and guidance the microsite was an essential platform to share information, good news stories and key public health messages. It was refreshed initially on a weekly basis and then monthly as well as on an ad hoc basis. This information was shared across a broad range of stakeholders including

the Independent and Voluntary Sectors using social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and NIPEC's website. See Table 4.

- *COVID-19 Surge Capacity Microsite*

Through *Enabling Professionalism*, and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, NIPEC researched, prepared and developed a surge capacity microsite for the nursing and midwifery workforce working across the statutory and Nursing Homes service providers in Northern Ireland. The product was consulted on and launched by the CNO during October 2020.



This resource was supported via engagement with colleagues across the HSC system, including experts in Critical Care, Human Resources, staff side organisations and consultation with HSC Trust senior nursing and midwifery teams in addition to the Independent and Voluntary sector. The microsite can be accessed at <https://nipec.hscni.net/microsites/covid-19-surge-capacity/> and provides professional guidance and support for decision making, during periods of surge demand, on a range of topics e.g. workforce deployment, delegation and record keeping.

NIPEC's Website Governance Team regularly reviews the website and ensures its information is current, accessible, and useful. During 2020/21 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;
- Running monthly software checks to maintain the effectiveness and efficiency of the website.

NIPEC's main website has continued to grow in popularity as can be demonstrated from its activity in Table 3. Stakeholders continued to visit the site throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As demonstrated in the table, the number of visits to the main website increased from 37,180 in 2019-2020 to 50,269 in 2020-2021 and the number of hits increased from 113,603 to 138,848 during the same period.

Table 3: Statistics for NIPEC website <https://www.nipec.hscni.net> during 2020 - 2021 compared to 2019 - 2020

Month	Number of Hits 2020/21	Number of Hits 2019/20	Number of Visits 2020/21	Number of Visits 2019/20	Average Length of Visit 2020/21 (Mins)	Average Length of Visit 2019/20 (Mins)
April	10,422	11,050	4,153	2,890	02:03	02:48
May	11,914	9,725	4,077	3,190	02:18	02:08
June	13,810	9,171	4,328	2,758	02:42	02:24
July	13,666	8,754	4,475	2,709	02:26	02:22
August	9,270	8,938	3,527	2,622	02:03	02:25
September	12,856	11,186	4,051	3,557	02:41	02:09
October	11,454	11,540	4,826	3,738	01:50	02:14
November	10,825	9,113	4,647	3,241	01:57	02:01
December	7,506	5,704	3,633	2,095	01:43	02:05
January	10,324	9,289	4,919	3,291	01:44	02:32
February	13,784	9,739	4,412	3,556	02:06	02:08
March	13,017	9,394	3,221	3,533	02:53	02:00
Total	138,848	113,603	50,269	37,180		

NIPEC continued to engage with its stakeholders through its social media sites posting information on Facebook and Twitter as well as promoting NIPEC's resources on its website. Table 4 (below) presents a numerical summary of the social media activity for 2020-21. The reduction in activity on both of these platforms is likely to be directly attributed to the reduction in NIPEC engagement activities as a result of the impact from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 4: NIPEC Facebook and Twitter Posts and Engagement

	Monthly Quarter	Number of Posts 2020-21	Number of Posts 2019-20	Number of people 'reached' 2020-21	Number of people 'reached' 2019-20	Number of followers 2020-21	Number of followers 2019-20
FACEBOOK	Apr - Jun	17	8	2,359	1,191	479	411
	Jul - Sept	7	12	214	1,632	478	422
	Oct -Dec	23	6	248	882	487	431
	Jan - Mar	9	5	1,434	658	553	452
	Total	56	31	4,255	4,363		
TWITTER	Apr - Jun	26	40	38,421	60,100	2,163	1567
	Jul - Sept	12	52	21,930	70,300	2,224	1789
	Oct -Dec	27	34	57,500	45,900	2,303	1927
	Jan - Mar	17	12	41,195	32,537	2,385	2079
	Total	82	138	159,046	208,837		

Improving Standards in Education and Development

During 2020/21 NIPEC continued to lead the FNFM project and work in partnership with stakeholder colleagues to finalise regional resources and products to ensure full implementation of the Future Nurse Standards in September 2020 and support the implementation of the Future Midwife Standards planned for September 2021. The FNFM Programme Board and FNFM Working Group continue to meet on a regular basis to provide oversight of the regional implementation of this work.

Under the direction of the FNFM Programme Board a Midwifery Expert Reference Group (MERG) was established to ensure timely system readiness for the introduction of Future Midwife Standards.

The MERG has delivered on a range of objectives including:

- Hosting a stakeholder workshop to ensure the QUB 2019 Midwifery curriculum reflects the NI strategic direction and transformation agenda – aligned to the NMC Future Midwife standards;
- Development of a range of products for those supporting student supervision and assessment in practice including a suite of Future Midwife practice assessor Preparation eLearning and face to face resources;
- Development of a range of resources to support the implementation of the Midwifery On Going Record of achievement (MORA);

- Application of the regionally agreed Practice Learning Environment Education Audit (PLEEA) to maximize the Practice Learning Experiences for midwifery students with a particular focus on continuity of care and carer;
- Engagement and communication throughout the life of the project (with a particular focus on Midwifery);
- Delivery of a comprehensive Engagement and Communication Strategy with a particular focus on Midwifery including:
 - A short video presentation that provides an overview of the Implementation of the Future Midwife Standards in Northern Ireland and signposts to additional resources and information. This is available at <https://nipec.hscni.net/service/fnfm>;
 - Bi- monthly FNFM Communique.



NIPEC plays a lead role in quality assuring non-NMC regulated education activities. It works closely with stakeholders to quality assure a broad range of education programmes in accordance with the Quality Assurance Framework for Monitoring Development and Education Activities Commissioned by the DoH¹³. The impact of the priorities of health care staff during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in delays in completing the monitoring visits however the Quality Assurance reviews of the following programmes during 2020/21 will be finalised in 2021/22:

- Postgraduate Certificate in Education for Healthcare Professionals (Inter-professional course);
- Neurosciences Pathway programme (Undergraduate or postgraduate level);
- Preparing for Ward Sister/Charge Nurse Post for the complex world of today's Healthcare (Short Course);
- Enteral Feeding (Adult) education programme (One day);
- Medicines Management (Adult) programme (Half day);
- Midwifery Examination of the Newborn module (Standalone module).

NIPEC led on a series of work streams and projects as directed by the CNO (DoH) and in partnership with a range of key stakeholders to raise and maintain high standards for nurses, midwives and healthcare assistants. An update on progress with regards to a number of these projects is provided below.

¹³ Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council (NIPEC) (2016) Quality Assurance Framework for Monitoring Development and Education Programmes Commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety. Belfast: NIPEC.

Enabling Professionalism

During 2020/21, this framework was used to present a microsite of resources to support capacity and capability during surge demand.

In addition, the work stream to refresh Enabling Professionalism aligning 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 continued throughout the financial year in collaboration with a range of external partners. The product of this work will support the definition and the contribution of nurses and midwives across the UK and Ireland, enhancing the understanding of the important role of the professions in meeting the health and social care needs of the population.

Soft intelligence in the form of emails and phone calls directly to NIPEC officers continues to inform NIPEC that nurses and midwives across the UK are using this framework to guide reflection for revalidation and improve professional practice.

A Reflective 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. Testing of the draft reflective framework began during 2020/21 to determine utility and implications for implementation. This work was taken forward with teams in district nursing, midwifery, hospital base nursing and safeguarding services. This work included the up-skilling of 50 supervisors in restorative supervision approaches, to meet the emerging reflective personal, professional and practice demands and will report in 2021/22.

Learning Agreement and Evaluation of Learning on Practice Framework (2021)

NIPEC in collaboration with a range of key stakeholders undertook work to revise the existing *Learning Agreement Template for DHSSPS/ECG Commissioned Courses template* (2016). The new template, now the *Learning Agreement and Evaluation of Learning on Practice Framework (2021)*, aims to support nurses and midwives and their Line Managers within the HSC Trusts to capture the impact and outcomes on practice of undertaking commissioned education programmes. This Framework can be used for short programmes and standalone modules including NMC accredited programmes.

Stakeholder Involvement

During 2020-21 NIPEC adopted a wide range of virtual methods to engage with its stakeholders to promote high standards of practice, education and professional development and provide advice and guidance on matters relating to nursing and midwifery. Some examples of these were:

- CNO COVID-19 Digital Communication Platform developed to share information, news, stories and good practice (see page 21);
- COVID-19 Surge Capacity website developed to offer advice and resources to HSC Trusts and other organisations to support the nursing and midwifery workforce through periods of high service demand (see page 22);
- Twitter and Facebook posts;
- NIPEC information sessions via videoconferencing for 3rd year nursing and midwifery students in the HEIs;
- Engagement with service users and staff in the perioperative environment using NI Citizen Space surveys to inform the development of the perioperative nursing career pathway;
- Collaboration with HSC Trusts to publish an e-Brochure for two recruitment campaigns promoting perioperative nursing careers;
- FNFM Communiques – bimonthly emailed to over 400 Northern Ireland NMC registrants and for onward wider circulation;
- FNFM Curriculum Development with Midwifery Expert Reference Group;
- NI Supervision Framework – Supervisor network meetings and HSC awareness sessions;
- Building digital capabilities engagement with nurses and midwives across Ireland via surveys and workshops.

Virtual Meetings

The restrictions imposed from the Government COVID pandemic guidance limited NIPEC's ability to engage with registrants and promote its work and resources. Fortunately media platforms such as Zoom and Pexip enabled NIPEC to facilitate virtual "face-to-face" meetings with its key stakeholders to progress projects that were part of the rebuilding services agenda. It also enabled NIPEC to engage, inform and share its resources and projects with a range of key stakeholders, as outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Numbers of Nurses and Midwives attending NIPEC Zoom Engagement Events in 2020-2021

Zoom Events	Number of Events	Numbers Attended
Digital Practice	18	230 ¹⁴
Endoscopy Professional Lead Nurse Forum	1	5
FNFM Midwifery Expert Reference Group – Curriculum Development	1	43
Independent and Voluntary Sector Forum	1	12
Recording Keeping Practice	2	8
RCN Community Nursing Network	1	33
NI Supervision Framework HSC awareness	2	29
University Nursing & Midwifery Students (QUB & Ulster)	3	435
Total	29	795

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.

During 2020/21, NIPEC continued its efforts in relation to Personal and Public Involvement (PPI). NIPEC recognises the 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 by seeking their views and opinions.

NIPEC's commitment to PPI in 2020-21 includes the following:

- NIPEC is a member of the *Regional Personal & Public Involvement Forum* which has a wide stakeholder membership including service user representation from across Northern Ireland.
- People with the 'lived experience' and carers were represented at all the FNFM stakeholder workshops across the project work streams including Curriculum Development and Engagement and Communication.
- The regional 10,000 voices project, continues to be considered in the planning, development and review of all NIPEC's work.
- Development of the Career Pathway for Perioperative Nursing engaged with people who had surgery and sought their views about perioperative nursing. 73 responses were collected using NI government Citizen Space online survey.

¹⁴ Of the 230 who attended the Digital Workshops, an additional 17 viewed one of the Digital Workshops via a YouTube recording

- Held a workshop with RCN Community Nurse Network to update them on the District Nursing Career Pathway and seek their views on the relevant Job descriptions.

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.

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 2020/21 demonstrate this:

- NIPEC supported the launch of a systematic literature review '*Representing What We Do as Nurses and Midwives*' undertaken by the Five Countries Digital Leadership Group for the UK and Ireland exploring the use of standardized terminologies in nursing and midwifery practice.
- NIPEC continued to support and seek to advance data collection processes to evaluate the impact of the PACE care planning approach to person-centered

practice alongside the partnership project between Queens' University Belfast and the University of Ulster.

- Development of perioperative nursing career pathway included a detailed review of the literature surrounding perioperative practice and sharing ideas with colleagues in National Health Service Education for Scotland (NES).

5. 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.

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 2020/21 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 (CNO, DOH), 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.

A number of examples of stakeholder engagement have been demonstrated throughout this document. In addition the following are further examples of engagement with stakeholders:

- ***NIPEC’s Independent and Voluntary Sector Forum***

NIPEC continues to engage with the voluntary and independent sector as a member of the Enhanced Clinical Care Framework Workforce sub-group. A NIPEC

SPO along with one of its Council members facilitated a virtual meeting with Care Home Managers to share information about NIPEC resources and seek their views on future events

- NIPEC's Chief Executive and SPOs are members of a range of multi-professional regional and UK fora within which they provided strategic and professional advice and guidance on matters related to the nursing and midwifery professions. Examples of this in 2020/21 include:
 - Inquiry into Hyponatraemia - Related Deaths (IHRD) Work stream 6 – Education and Training (DoH);
 - NMC Post Registration Review Steering Group;
 - NMC Professional Strategic Advisory Group;
 - Five Country Chief Nursing Officer Digital Leadership Group for Nursing and Midwifery;
 - Northern Ireland Postgraduate Healthcare Education Forum;
 - Primary Care Steering Group;
 - Regional PPI Forum (PHA);
 - Expert Review Panel for Nursing and Midwifery, Republic of Ireland.

- *Annual Stakeholder Engagement*

Due to the restrictions on gatherings of people and the requirement for social distancing during 2020-2021 NIPEC's usual face-to-face approach to stakeholder engagement was ceased. The impact resulted in NIPEC being unable to host its annual conference in the 2020-2021 business year and NIPEC Professional Staff could not facilitate roadshows in HSC Trust locations which were previously used to as an opportunity to meet with registrants from the statutory and independent sectors as a means to provide updates on NIPEC's resources.

The impact can be demonstrated when comparing engagement activity with the previous year:

- During 2019-20, NIPEC hosted over 50 events with 2,494 in attendance;
- During 2020-21, NIPEC facilitated 29 virtual events with approximately 800 in attendance.

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: *Strengthening the Workforce* in projects including the Future Nurse Future Midwife project, Quality assurance of non-NMC commissioned programmes and the Reflective Supervision Framework for Nursing and Midwifery.

NIPEC has also been supporting the NMC to increase registrants' awareness to assist them in their responses to the NMC's consultation on the draft Standards for Community and Public Health Nursing.

Conclusion

This report demonstrates the activities which NIPEC has engaged in during 2020/21 to maintain and improve the quality of care provided by nurses and midwives in Northern Ireland. This year has been particularly challenging for all organisations in accessing and maintaining effective and meaningful engagement with stakeholders. NIPEC has been able to undertake many virtual events to ensure it promotes best practice and improve performance. 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 and rebuilding services 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 maintain a 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.

Moving forward and taking into consideration the long lasting and sustained impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is recognised that there will be new and emerging challenges across the HSC which will present difficulties engaging with stakeholders. NIPEC will remain strategically focused and flexible in its approach. It will work closely with the CNO (DoH) and its stakeholders to identify and agree new and emerging priorities. There will also 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 and 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 and 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.

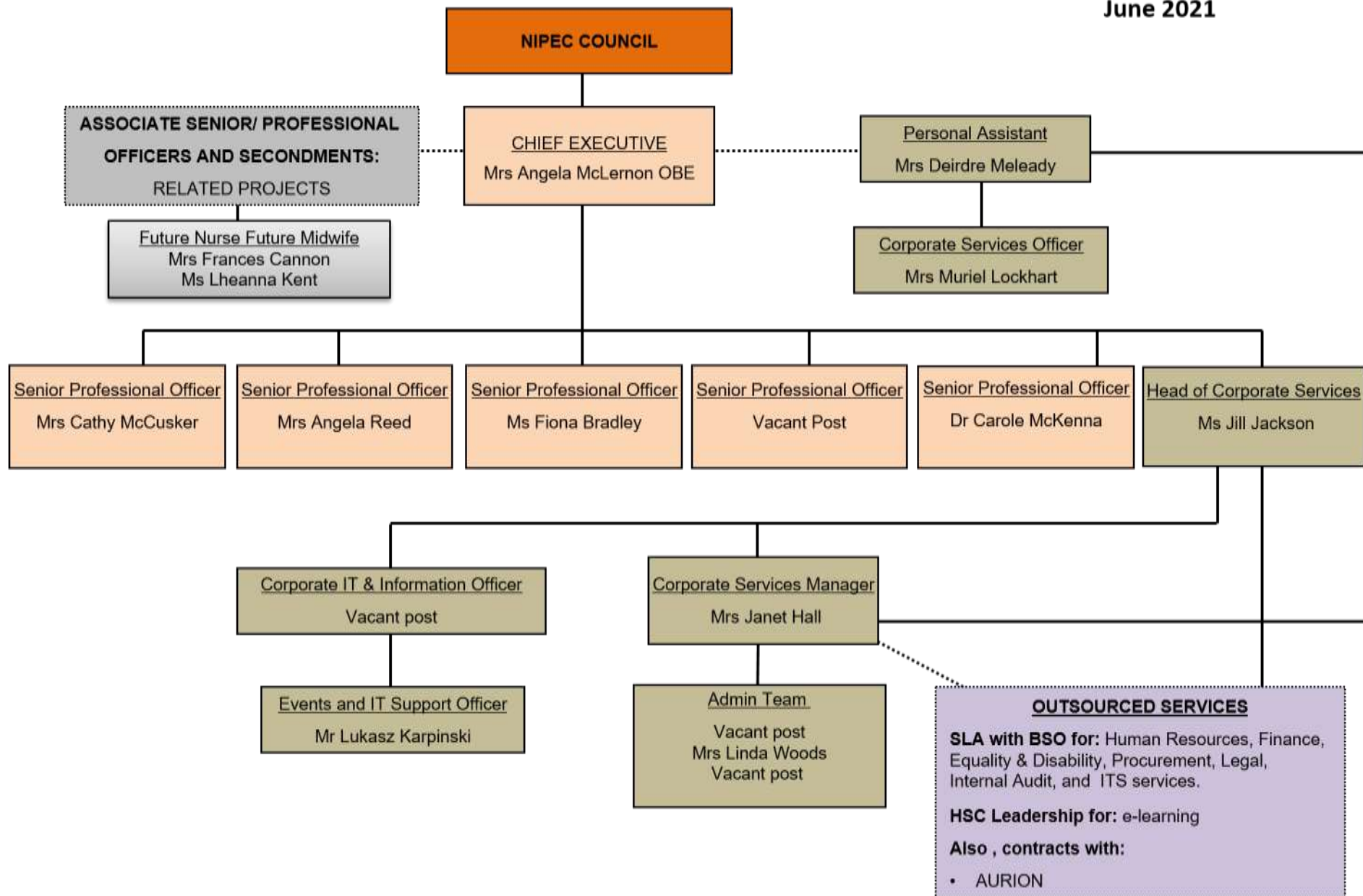
- **Remuneration Committee Functions:**

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:
 - o Consistency;
 - o Robustness;
 - o 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.

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

June 2021





For further Information, please contact:

NIPEC
Centre House
79 Chichester Street
BELFAST
BT1 4JE

Tel: 0300 300 0066

This document can be downloaded from the NIPEC website
<https://nipec.hscni.net>

JULY 2021

ISBN: 978-1-903580-72-1